

**DRAMATIZATION OF NORTHERN NIGERIAN HISTORY: [ADAPTATION, TRADITION
AND PERSONAGES] OF BEN TOMOLOJU'S *AMINATU QUEEN OF ZAZZAU*, AHMED
YERIMA'S *ATTAHIRU*, AND UMARU LADAN AND DEXTER LYNDERSAY'S *SHAIHU UMAR***

BY

**BILKISU ABUBAKAR
MA/ARTS/13599/ 2007-2008**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
LITERARY STUDIES AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR MASTERS IN LITERATURE (M.A)**

MARCH, 2014

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me and that it is a record of my research work. All quotations are indicated and the sources of information are acknowledged by means of references.

BILKISU ABUBAKAR
MA/ARTS/13599/2007-08

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis titled “DRAMATIZATION OF NORTHERN NIGERIAN HISTORY: [ADAPTATION, TRADITION AND PERSONAGES] OF BEN TOMOLOJU’S *AMINATU QUEEN OF ZAZZAU*, AHMED YERIMA’S *ATTAHIRU*, AND UMARU LADAN AND DEXTER LYNDERSAY’S *SHAIHU UMAR*” by ABUBAKAR, BILKISU meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

PROF. YAKUBU. NASIDI
(CHAIRMAN, SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE)

SIGNATURE

DATE

PROF. TANIMU.N. ABUBAKAR
(MEMBER, SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE)

SIGNATURE

DATE

DR. LIMAN ABUBAKAR
(HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)

SIGNATURE

DATE

PROF.A. A. JOSHUA
(DEAN OF POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL)

SIGNATURE

DATE

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother Hadiza Audu Abubakar, whose prayers and guidance throughout the years has helped in remodeling me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like first, to thank Almighty Allah (SWT) for His benevolence. My sincere gratitude goes to Professor Tanimu Abubakar not only for taking time out of his busy schedule to supervise this work, but also for encouraging me to work twice as hard. Thank you too for suggesting the area of study for me. I am deeply appreciative of the late Professor Yakubu Nasidi. The depth of his comments and criticism has helped in no small measure to make this work a much better piece. I am thankful to my friend Professor Unoma Azuah (USA) for making useful contribution and assisting with editing the work. To Ibrahim Muhammad Bui for all the materials he assisted me with, thanks for everything. My special thank you also goes to Dr. Charles Bassey for his useful contribution. To Professor Unuje Idegbe, I say a big thank you. Not also forgetting Malam Rabiu Isa for his brotherly advice, Thank you for all the suggestions, time and books. I am grateful to my friends and course mates, Mohammed Labo and Arhodoro Speta for lending their support. I owe a special thank you to my entire family, particularly my sister Zainabu, for all the encouragement and support. I can never thank you enough. My special thanks are due to my husband, Engr. Bashir Suleman for his kind assistance. Mere words cannot express my gratitude. Thank you so much for being there. And to all the children especially, Nana Hauwa'u, Safiyya, Ameena, Ahmad, Khalid, Mustapha and Faiza, thanks for being an inspiration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	i
DECLARATION	ii
CERTIFICATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	viii

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	2
1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	4
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	4
1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY	5
1.6 METHODOLOGY OF STUDY	5
1.7 HISTORICAL AND LITERARY DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN NIGERIA	5
1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
1.9 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	12

CHAPTER TWO:

2.0 GIVING LIFE TO THE PAST: *ATTAHIRU* AS A HISTORICAL ADAPTATION----- 46

CHAPTER THREE:

3.0 CULTURE, TRADITION AND RELIGIOUS MORALITY IN *SHAIHU UMAR* -----61

CHAPTER FOUR:

4.0 DRAMATIZING THE AMAZON: BEN TOMOLOJU’S *AMINATU, THE*

LEGENDARY QUEEN OF ZAZZAU-----74

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSION-----83

BIBLIOGRAPHY-----86

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the interplay between the adaptation of historical materials for dramatic purpose and the production of what may be referred to as 'hagiographic personages. The study argues that this interplay underscores the relationship between history and hagiography in the discursive construction of tradition in Northern Nigeria as evident in Hausa literature. This interrelatedness of discourses and discursive formations is complex and requires multiple reading and interpretive strategies. The study demonstrates that there is a great need to revisit the past in order to understand the present. The dramatization of the past in Northern Nigerian literature has been achieved through the technique of adaptation and the hagiographic presentation of historical personages. The strategy of historicity has made possible a better comprehension of 'tradition' in contemporary Hausa society. Thus, we see dramatic literature dealing with the past and historical personages contributing in no small measures to the structural understanding of Hausa tradition and culture as seen in Yerima's Attahiru, Ladan and Lyndersay's Shaihu Umar and Tomoloju's Aminatu Queen of Zazzau, that the study used as illustrative texts.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature has recreated history in different societies of the world. African literature has been noted to have reconstructed specific historical moments in Africa. The pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods especially in Nigeria has been creatively engaged through the mediums of drama, prose and poetry. However, little attention has been given to the genre of drama in its role of dramatizing the history of a people. This thesis focuses on Northern Nigerian history and the dramatization of its history in dramatic texts.

In geographical terms, Northern Nigeria is the area herein referred to as the former Northern protectorate, province or region. Presently, it comprises the nineteen of the thirty six States of Nigeria including Abuja the federal capital (Hickey, 2000:280). The people are largely Muslims and predominantly Hausa/Fulani. However, there are other ethnic groups who are also significant in number. They lie in the middle belt area with a number of ethnic groups. In pre-colonial times, Hausa States or Hausa Kingdoms were a collection of independent city-states situated in what became Northern Nigeria. Although, the people have been Muslims for many centuries, traditional beliefs and paganism were often mixed with the practice of Islam. In 1808, Usman dan Fodio, the head of the Sokoto Caliphate warned the Hausa rulers that if they did not stop the practice of paganism, a war would be waged against them. The Hausa State was finally conquered by Usman dan Fodio and incorporated into the Sokoto Caliphate. The role of the caliphate was to unite the people to become responsible to each other. Today, that position has not been let down as it has been providing unity within and outside the statutory and religious boundaries of the caliphate.

Dramatic literature—more than the novel and poetry combined—bears the greater weight of history through its undeclared intention to reconstruct the past. This is evident in the large corpus of plays that have reflected and re-presented that past, in all its cultural and socio-political complexities, as a prism through which the present can be fruitfully apprehended. It is in light of this that Umaru Ladan and Dexter Lyndersay's *Shaihu Umar*, Ben Tomoloju's *Aminatu Queen of Zazzau* and Ahmed Yerima's *Attahiru* have been selected for this study to dramatize Northern

Nigerian history.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The process of narrating and interpreting the African past has long been an intellectual struggle against European assumptions and prejudices about the nature of time and history in Africa. Some European historians have noted that the major issue in the reconstruction of the African past is the question of how far voices outside Africa shape the presentation of Africa's past and present. Many historians, especially those without any background or training in African historiography, have assumed, incorrectly, that prior to European contact with Africa, indigenous "traditions" were ancient, permanent, and reproduced from generation to generation without change. This is the false image of cultural isolation and temporal stagnation that has been disseminated in many parts of the world.

Representation is an issue that lies at the heart of the current debate in African studies regarding the cultural composition of Africa itself. On one side of the debate are those who argue that there is such a thing as an "African" identity whose deep essence goes beyond the surface differences that distinguish one African culture from another. On the other side are those who argue that culturally the people of Africa have far less in common than is usually assumed. Some notable African scholars like the Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah have argued that there is no cultural unity in Africa, and that Africanist discourse has inaccurately grouped together different cultures. They maintained that "whatever Africans share, we do not have a common traditional culture, common languages, and common religious or conceptual vocabulary and that we do not even belong to a common race."

In much of what has been written about Africa's past, especially by European authors, very little or no attention was paid to indigenous African views of the past or to the role Africans played in the shaping of global developments, processes, and structures. More crucial to the study, is the fact that little attention has been paid to how African writers have been reconstructing the past. It is important that those who teach and study Africa today try to solve the issue of representation in order to locate and unpack the economic, political, personal, or other motivations that might underlie any particular image of Africa. In other words, how have African history and culture been represented in writing? And on what authority do authors have to represent a continent and its identities?

This study focuses on the history of Northern Nigeria as part of African history. The study is an attempt to apprehend that history in the contexts of tradition, historical personages and cultural processes that have shaped the identity of the North as a cultural and political formation. It is observed that despite the dominance of exogenous views on the African past, there are quite a number of African writers that have been writing ‘with a view from within’. These writers have been producing literary works that attempt to address the past, not as a monolithic event, but in terms of its contemporary relevance. In looking at the past, we have had abundant works published by African writers. Most of these works are in the different genres of literature, but there is a noticeable scarcity of historical novels compared to poetry addressing the past. Part of the argument of this study is that, with the exception of Kole Omotosho’s, *Just Before Dawn* (1988), a historical novel about Nigeria, there is scarcity of historical novels in the strict sense of the word but there is an abundance of historical plays. The study also argues that it is the playwrights, more than the novelists and poets, who have been responding to the clarion call by notable African writers like Wole Soyinka and Dennis Brutus that African writers should be involved in the full retrieval of the African past in the quest for a contemporary self-apprehension and design for the future. The playwrights have been doing this through the adaptation of myth and historical materials and personages, as portrayed in Ben Tomoloju’s *Aminatu Queen of Zazzau*, Ahmed Yerima’s *Attahiru*, Dexter Lyndersay and Umaru Ladan’s *Shaihu Umar*. The plays under study are not merely in the service of reflecting on the past, but more as a means of contemplating the present and projecting into the future.

Based on the issues above, the following hypotheses will guide the analysis that will be carried out in the remaining chapters of this study:

1. *Attahiru*, by Ahmed Yerima, is mainly a documentation of history.
2. *Shaihu Umar* by Umaru Ladan and Dexter Lyndersay is more of an exercise in hagiography than a historical drama.
3. *Aminatu, The Legendary Queen of Zazzau* by Ben Tomoloju is a re-enactment of history and a celebration of womanhood than an exercise in historiography.

In apprehending the three plays selected for this study, the following criteria have been used.

- a. That the plays are adaptations of historical materials.
- b. That the plays have a historical personage (fictional or drawn from a known and documented

history, as the case may be) as the hero/heroine

c. That in composition and the presentation of the personages, the plays must be in tandem with how martyrs are presented in hagiography

d. That the plays must, overtly or otherwise, be a celebration of history and culture of northern Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad aim of this study is to examine the three plays selected as dramatization of Northern Nigerian history through the processes of adaptation, invocation or subversion of historical personages and celebration of tradition. More specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Illustrate that the dramaturgy of the three plays falls within the tradition of contemporary African drama and theatre, especially in its exploration of the postcolonial condition.
2. Investigate the strategies and extent of adaptation of historical materials and myth making in the three plays and to demonstrate that in adaptation, there is always an infusion of creativity and myth making.
3. Illustrate the view that, in presenting historical personages (especially those presented within religious contexts), there is a tendency by the playwrights to celebrate their lives and exploits as saints.
4. Determine the appropriateness or otherwise describe the three playwrights as postcolonial dramatists.

1.4 Significance of Study

Since this study is a historical and hagiographic reading of some selected plays, it is a useful addition to a number of works within drama and postcolonial studies. Such works are becoming common like Westmore (2002) in his book-length accounts of Greek tragedy in African theatre and in African American theatre. There are several works devoted to the study of historical consciousness and myth in African literature. There are also several book-length studies of oral texts and historical resources in Africa. This study is an addition to this kind of scholarship. Finally, this study attempts to give insights into the multiple meanings embedded within the three plays and how history, tradition and personages are constituted as tropes for reflecting the present condition of postcolonial Africa.

1.5 Scope of Study

The study is on dramatization of Northern Nigerian history. It is thus historical and focuses on the way the selected playwrights have been influenced by culture and political factors. The study covers the plays of Ahmed Yerima, Ben Tomoloju and Umaru Ladan and Dexter Lyndersay. The three plays are adaptations of historical events in Northern Nigeria. In engaging the three plays, attention will be given to how history is dramatized through the invocation of historical personages and the celebration of tradition. Through the exposition of these plays, the crucial issues raised in the objectives above will be responded to.

1.6 Methodology of Study

This study is text-based and so, analysis of the selected plays will be adopted. In other words, the texts selected for the study will be analyzed using the analytic strategies of textual analysis. For additional data, archival and library sources, articles published in journals and full-length studies published in books will be incorporated.

1.7 Historical and Literary Development in Northern Nigeria

Between 500 CE and 700 CE Hausa people had been slowly moving westward from Nubia and mixing with the local Northern and Central Nigerian populations. They established a number of strong States in what are now Northern, Central Nigeria and Eastern Niger. With the decline of the Nok and Sokoto, who had previously controlled Central and Northern Nigeria between 800 BCE and 200 CE, Hausa emerged as the new power in the region. Closely linked with the Kanuri people of Kanem-Bornu (Lake Chad), the Hausa aristocracy adopted Islam in the 11th century CE. By the 12th century CE, Hausa was becoming one of Africa's major powers. Their architecture is perhaps one of the least known but most beautiful of the medieval age. Many of their early mosques and palaces were bright and colourful. It included intricate engraving or elaborate symbols designed on the facade. By 1500 CE they utilized a modified Arabic script known as Ajami to record their own language. They compiled several written histories, the most popular being the Kano Chronicle. The Hausa Kingdoms emerged in the 13th century as vibrant trading centers competing with Kanem-Bornu and Mali. The primary exports were leather, gold, cloth, salt, kola nuts and animal hides. Except for minor alliances, the Hausa city-States functioned independently. Rivalries generally inhibited the formation of one

centralized authority.

There were fourteen Hausa Kingdoms: The "Hausa Seven" and the "Bastard Seven." The Hausa Kingdoms began as seven States with a shared mythology with its founders being the sons of a Queen. They are known as the Hausa Bakwai meaning Hausa Seven. The States include: Daura, Kano, Katsina, Zazzau, Gobir, Rano and Biram. The growth and conquest of the Hausa Bakwai resulted in the founding of additional States with rulers tracing their lineage to a concubine of the Hausa founding father, Bayajidda. Thus, they are called the 'Banza Bakwai (Bastard Seven). The Banza Bakwai adopted many of the customs and institutions of the Hausa Bakwai but were considered unsanctioned or copy-cat kingdoms by non-Hausa people. These States include: Zamfara, Kebbi, Yauri (also called Yawuri), Gwari (also called Gwariland) Kwararafa (a Jukun State), Nupe (of the Nupe people), Ilorin (a Yoruba State).

Usman dan Fodio led a war against the Hausa States and united them into the Muslim Empire. The Fulani Empire was under the overall authority of the Commander of the Faithful, Usman dan Fodio, who also used the title, Sultan of Sokoto. Under him the Empire was divided into two territories each controlled by an appointed vizier. Each of the territories was further divided into autonomous Emirates under mainly hereditary local Emirs. The Bornu Empire was initially absorbed into the Fulani Empire of Usman dan Fodio, but broke away after a few years. Initially the British involvement in Northern Nigeria was predominantly trade-related, and revolved around the expansion of the Royal Niger Company, whose interior territories spread northward from about where River Niger and River Benue were joined at Lokoja. The Royal Niger Company's territory did not represent a direct threat to the powerful Fulani Empire.

Northern Nigeria was a British colony formed in 1900. The basis of the colony was the 1885 Treaty of Berlin which granted Northern Nigeria to Britain, on the basis of their protectorates in Southern Nigeria. Britain's chosen Governor, Frederick Lugard, with limited resources, slowly negotiated with, and sometimes coerced the emirates of the north into accepting British rule, finding that the only way this could be achieved was with the consent of the local rulers through a policy of indirect rule which he developed from a necessary improvisation into a sophisticated political theory. British domination in Northern Nigeria like other parts of present day Nigeria was fiercely contested. This contestation has been recreated

and adapted in the selected plays for the study.

The earliest literatures in Hausa were mostly poetry and written in Arabic and Ajami. According to Yahaya (1988), they were written right about the seventeenth century by Islamic scholars such as Abdullahi Suka who wrote *Riwayar Annabi Musa* in Ajami, and Wali Danmasani Abduljalil who wrote the Hausa poem *Wakir Yakin Badar* also in Ajami, etc. Literary writing in Hausa land came to its height in the nineteenth century during the period of the Islamic Jihadist, Shehu Usmanu dan Fodiyo, who wrote hundreds of poems in Arabic, Fulfulde and Hausa. Hausa literature in Boko script were mostly novels that have since become classics, published from the winning entries of a writing competition in the 1930s. These include *Ruwan Bagaja* (Abubakar Imam), *Shaihu Umar* (Abubakar Tafawa Balewa), *Gandoki* (Bello Kagara), *Idon Matambayi* (Mohammadu Gwarzo) and *Jiki Magayi* (M. Tafida and Dr. East). *Six Hausa Plays* edited by Dr. R. M. East and published in 1930 were the first plays to appear in Hausa. *Kidan Ruwa*, *Yawon Magi* and *Kalankuwa* are traditional forms of drama among the Hausa (Kofoworola 1981). After the pioneering efforts of these writers, Hausa literature has continued to flourish, becoming one of the most vibrant strands of Nigerian literature in the indigenous languages.

Hausa literature has flourished in the last few decades. One noticeable aspect of this growth is the development of an Onitsha-type 'Market' literature in Kano. This can be linked to the economic conditions of book production. The problem was how to break out the 'chicken and egg situation' whereby it was not possible to create a reading public unless there were sufficient, affordable, and readable books that a potential reader would want to read. On the other hand, without an existing commercial market for books, how could any publisher continue to publish? (East, 1943). The main government-funded agency, the Northern Region Literature Agency (NORLA), that undertook the publication of the majority of Hausa language books in the 1950s (Skinner 1970), was forced to close when its losses became unsustainable.

In the early 1980s it looked as if a breakthrough was about to occur. A new generation of young people were benefitting from the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976, even if that introduction was less than 100 per cent effective. At the same time, the economic boom in Nigeria had meant that a large number of publishers had geared up to cash in on the schoolbook market, forming partnerships between existing or new local publishers

and international conglomerates (Macmillan's with the Northern Nigerian Publishing Company, (NNPC); Hodder & Stoughton with Huda Huda Press; OUP with Ibadan University Press; Longman Nigeria). In 1980 it was said that NNPC had a list of some 75 titles that they were preparing to publish over the ensuing years. Some publishers continued to publish on a much reduced scale; some like NNPC, the holders of the backlist which represents the bulk of Hausa publishing, almost stopped publishing and have produced little or nothing new ever since. The economic measures which made the Naira drop sharply cut back on Ministry of Education book purchasing budgets. It severely reduced the purchasing power of public sector salaries, and brought State education to its knees. effectively kicked any prospect of a take-off in formal publishing well into touch. Babangida's nominal refusal to accept IMF terms for a financial deal, and his subsequent introduction of SAP, measures to meet their demands, put paid to a lot more than publishing.

However, the young people who were ten or twelve years of age when UPE was introduced were, by the end of the 1980s, in their early twenties. They were already familiar with reading and had access to typewriters and word-processors on their desks. As such, some of them decided to do it themselves. Ironically, when formal publishing collapsed, there was an explosion of writing in Hausa. This surely was not something the World Bank would have expected as a consequence of its carefully modeled econometric outcomes. Against all the odds, and the IMF, Hausa cultural creativity took a new turn. This new turn, according to Graham Furniss (1998), was facilitated and sustained by the writers' club. Clubs and societies have played a significant role in the development of Hausa literature-poetry writing in the early 1970s in Kano, for example, was an activity fostered by two poetry circles, the Hikima Club and Hausa Fasaha (Furniss 1994). The former was a functioning association where members met each week to read and discuss their poems; the leader, Mudi Spikin, exercised control over who was given access to the regular weekly radio slot that the Club had obtained on Kano radio, and also led the debate over appropriate topics for public poetry and appropriate positions to take on a variety of moral and social issues. Fissiparous tendencies arose as a result of contention over the degree of control he exercised and through quarrels about relative status within the Club. The rival association at that time, Hausa Fasaha, under the leadership of Akilu Aliyu, hardly ever met, had a membership spread across Northern Nigeria, and was essentially a mechanism for establishing relative status among poets who rarely if ever met under the auspices of the

association.

Poetry writing and performance was, and still is, a mechanism for public debate about many topical social and political issues-all within a strong moralistic framework of debate. Forming clubs and associations for the purpose of status ascription rather than to pursue a particular activity is not uncommon. Reading and discussion circles were a feature of early northern opposition to colonial rule (Yakubu1999:33-34). However, the establishment of groups of intellectuals to debate the nature, norms and prospects of society were not an innovation of the colonialists. The Islamic reform movement of the early nineteenth century was centred around a veritable intellectual debate and discussion on Islam and society. Notable within that movement according to Boyd and Mack (1997) were a woman and her sisters, Nana Asma'u, daughter of the Shehu.

That which is in Northern Nigeria now sometimes called Adabin Kasuwar Kano, meaning 'Kano Market Literature' (sometimes called Soyayya Books or 'love stories'), was the subject of a long-running public debate in the newspapers, (particularly in the section of the New Nigerian entitled 'The Write Stuff' edited then by Ibrahim Sheme), and cultural magazines such as Garkuwa; a debate led by journalists and university academics such as Ibrahim Malumfashi, Ibrahim Sheme, Yusuf M Adamu, Abdalla Uba Adamu, Muhammad Danjuma Katsina, and others. These debates have been documented by Abdalla Uba Adamu through an 'Annotated Bibliography of Soyayya Criticism from Newspapers', deposited at Bayero University Library in July 1999. The literature has been written about by Brian Larkin (1997), by Novian Whittsit, and briefly by Furniss (1996) outside Nigeria. The popularity of cultural magazines such as Garkuwa and film magazines-film edited by Ibrahim Sheme, and Tauraruwa, attest to the widespread interest in many aspects of current forms of cultural production among particularly younger urban people in Nigeria.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The plays in this study are located within the historical milieu of Northern Nigerian society. The study therefore examines the cultural and political situations that define the region. Thus, postcolonial discourse will be used as the theoretical framework of the study. Postcolonial discourse as a theory is utilized because it is primarily directed at reconstructing a past which had

been defined by a colonialist theory. This theory is concerned mainly with the question of representation and identity. The term in the general sense refers to the study of the interactions between the imperialist European nations and the societies they colonized in modern times.

Research in Postcolonial discourse allows for a wide range of investigations into power relations in various contexts. They include looking into the impact of colonization on postcolonial history, culture, economy, the cultural productions of colonized societies and agency for marginalized people, etc. The idea of Postcolonial discourse was conceived in the 1970s with the publication of Edward Said's *Oriental Studies* (1978). This had to do with the scholarly knowledge of Asian cultures, languages and people. Postcolonial discourse has undergone several changes; its broad perspective is taken to mean the material effects of the historical conditions of colonialism. According to Ashcroft (1989:2), the term 'postcolonial' covers:

All the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression.....it is most appropriate as the term for the new cross-cultural criticism which has emerged in recent years and for the discourse through which this is constituted.....concerned with the world as it exists during and after the period of European domination and the effects of this on contemporary literatures.

Postcolonial discourse became an expansive field of study with critical works by scholars such as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, (1998), Webster (1996), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1985-1987) Homi K Bhabha (1983- 1985), Abdul Jan Mohammed (1983-1985) and Fanon(1961) analyses the gross misrepresentation of Africans in European discourse. He argues that the true story of African history has not been told because European falsified facts and celebrated only those aspects that sought to demean Africans. In the interpretation of texts, postcolonial theory, as Abel (2005:61) puts it, "attempts to project them in a manner that they (texts) subvert the project of the colonizer (center) by interrogating the hegemonic relationships between the colonizer and the colonized." Postcolonialism is therefore primarily concerned with reclaiming a past which had been defined by colonialism.

Most African writers employ this theory in their works: Sembene Ousmane's literary and film works were concerned mainly with the conflicted relationship between the colonizers and the colonized, the State and the people; men and women; the rich and the poor; the elders and the youths. His works reflect and identify with the problems, the struggles and hope of his people since, as Abel (2005:56) argues, "Literary text does not occupy a "trans-historical aesthetic realm," or to use Ngugi's words, "literature does not exist in a vacuum." Sembene's *The Black Docker* is an exposition of social injustice in postcolonial Africa and tries to see if it is an inheritance of African tradition or acquired as a legacy of the colonial encounter between Africa and Europe. The field of postcolonial discourse is extensive. Women have also contributed in no small measure to its literature; notable among them are, Bessie Head, Flora Nwapa, Mariama Ba, Tsiyi Dangaremba, Buchi Emecheta, Nasrin Taslima, Zaynab Alkali and a lot more have also made their marks in creative arts.

First generation writers in particular have explored the different genres of literature either as protest or as a form of cultural identity. Sheikh Hamidou Kane's novel, *Ambiguous Adventure* (1964), among other themes, portrays the simple traditional religion, ancient values and modernity of the African people. Poets like David Diop in his poetry collection *Hammer Blows* indicate the bitterness of his attitude towards colonialism and other European ideals. Other poets that chart the same course are Dennis Brutus, Okot Bitek, Mazizi Kunene, etc. The effect of colonialism is also reflected in Fugard's comical satire entitled *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*. The play is used as a tool to condemn racism and colonialism among other things in South Africa.

This theory has also generated controversy which arises as a result of its vast definition and ambiguous nature. The term "postcolonial" does not mean that the approach is geared towards elements "after colonialism," but a kind of transformation on language, geographical location and history (Jatau, 2005:4). Its broad perspective is taken to mean the material effects of the historical conditions of colonialism. In essence, postcolonial discourse entails the complex process in which people, societies and cultures were manipulated within the imperial system and the response which this has generated. It brought about a kind of "writing back," "reaching back," or "talking back," the aim of which is to decolonize the mind, make a discovery and claim a space in which former colonized people can develop a sense of genuine humanism (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin 2000b).

There are essentially four assessment criteria within which postcolonial theory operates, and it is these assessment criteria that undergird the present study. They include:

1. A process of ‘writing back’, of questioning and re-presenting history, especially the history of domination or imperialism.
2. A mode of writing that is based on pastiche, on parody, and on blatant self-referentiality, especially in terms of language use.
3. A discourse and construction of subjectivity, especially heroic subjects and agencies.
4. An attempt to link the past and the present as one long continuum, especially with regard to the experience of colonialism and neo-colonialism

In some instances, we may also find the use of interpolation, mimicry, hybridity and identity. Thus, the study explores the ways in which Northern Nigeria as a former British colony defines her past in the context of the larger society. This is shown through dramatization as portrayed in the works of Ben Tomoloju, Ahmed Yerima, Dexter Lyndersay and Umaru Ladan.

1.9 Review of Related Literature

Modern African drama has evolved from many dramatic and theatrical traditions. From its earliest beginnings, it has always been an amalgamation of different parts of the theatre integrated into a composite form generally regarded as total theatre. In fact, what exists in Africa, aside literary drama, is performance, that is, an assemblage of art forms integrated into a single discipline having “a prismatic frame with a pentagonal structure pivoted on a wheel of transcendental essence” (Adedeji, 1978: 14).

In traditional African societies, there are various forms of theatre for which this description is fitting. In Francophone Africa, much of this theatrical tradition is based on the griot tradition rooted in each community’s oral history. A number of Francophone countries—particularly in Cote d’Ivoire – have, in fact, re-examined the role of the griot through crossover forms that connect past to present, storytelling to collective tradition (Don Rubin 1997: 14). In parts of Anglophone Africa, the concert party, with its many well-known travelling companies,

brings together elements of burlesque, comedy and communal improvisation, folk song and social satire. In East Africa, storytelling traditions are vital and extra ordinarily advanced Theatre – for – Development movement. This movement is rooted in both urban and rural communities. It is a movement involving health, educational and social issues in the belief that it is possible to find communal solutions to communal problems. Contemporary African drama of the literary or purely spoken form has its roots in these dynamic African performance traditions. Modern African dramatists like Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Efua Sutherland have borrowed extensively from the rich tradition of drama and theatre subsisting in local communities. Folk songs, various forms of communal improvisations, myth, dance and social satire have been integrated, generously into the creative composition of these dramatists and the picture that has emerged is that of multilayered performance tradition.

Aside borrowing from indigenous resource base, contemporary African drama also subsists on adaptation. Dramatists like Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan and Efua Sutherland have adapted stories and mythologies from their indigenous folklore and cultural repertory to engage contemporary social problems and other issues. For these dramatists, particularly Soyinka and Osofisan, African myths and ritual forms are materials for adaptation. These materials form the basis of their creativity. In *The Strong Breed* for instance, Wole Soyinka adapted the myth of Ogun in constructing the character and personality of “Eman” who represents a moral force which transcends social boundaries. In several of Ola Rotimi’s plays, particularly in his *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* and *Kurunmi*, there is plenty of historical adaptations i.e. adaptation of historical occurrences to create a play of contemporary social relevance. This is also true of Femi Osofisan who has published plays adapted from history and myth more than any other African dramatist today.

In addition to adapting from historical, mythological and ritual sources, modern African dramatists also borrow extensively from Western classics. The classical works of Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus have been re-worked and adapted for the African stage notably by Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan and Ola Rotimi. Soyinka’s *Bacchae of Euripides* is a classic example of this tradition of adaptation. Other classic examples include Femi Osofisan’s *Tegonni*, which is an adaptation of Sophocles’ *Antigone*, Ola Rotimi’s *The God’s Are Not to Blame*, which is an adaptation of *Oedipus Rex* and more recently *Women of Owu*, which is Osofisan’s

adaptation of Euripide's *Trojan Women*. As Barbara (2006:111) has rightly noted that adaptations of classical drama by Africans are "increasingly important to student of classics and the humanities generally, not least because classical drama has been integral to the notion of the western tradition, and African adaptations raise questions about what it means to claim a western tradition in the wake of colonialism." Such adaptations also struggle with the fact that the very presence of Greek and Roman classics within African culture, however fruitful for creative endeavour, testifies to the disruption of African history by decades of colonial exploitation. Most of such adaptations address more or less explicitly the ways in which the conditions of their possibility can also undermine their project (Etherton 1982: 102- 142; Gilbert and Tompkins, 1996: 38-43).

Dramatizing History through Adaptation

Before examining how 'history', as a trope, is dramatized in contemporary African literature, it is useful to start with a brief consideration of certain salient issues arising from the efforts that have been made by critics to theorize the connection between history and myth in African literature. Although considerable attention has been given to the explication of myth, history, and literature in African literary discourse, the vast amount of that attention is given to myth and literature, with little for history and literature. For example, the small quantity of exclusive or general essays on the "African historical novel" published in *African Literature Today: Myth and History* 11 (1980), and in a special publication of the Calabar Studies in African Literature entitled *African Literature and African Historical Experiences (ALAHE)* is indicative of this practice. It is significant that both publications have "history" in their titles but actually have more essays on myth than on history. *ALT* 11 in fact privileges myth over history by making Isidore Okpewho's "Rethinking Myth" the opening article, thus giving it the privilege of being a keynote essay. Of the fourteen essays published in the number, ten are on myth and literature, while only three are specifically on history and literature. However, when compared to *ALAHE*, *ALT* 11 is considered better because the former has just two. The concentration on myth in both publications no doubt accurately reflects the proportion of postcolonial African writings that deploy myth—rather than actual events—as objective correlatives of the past.

But the persistent pairing of both also signifies a denial of autonomy to the historical imagination and is therefore unfavourable to the development of historical perspective in African

literature. It takes off by mixing both, goes on to subsume history under myth, and ends by substituting it for history. S. E. Ogude's and Theodora Akachi Ezeigbo's essays in *ALAHE* illustrate the critical muddle that the displacement can produce and the need to discriminate between them. In his essay titled "African Literature and the Burden of History: Some Reflections" (1991:1-8), Ogude starts with two remarks: a work of literature is historical if it dramatizes 'actual historical events,' " and there is "a close connection between African imaginative writing and significant historical events". His actual historical events, which he bases his survey are the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism and neocolonialism. After a quick exploration of the writings of Phillis Wheatley, Olaudah Equiano, and George Horton, he goes on to identify and review a large group of contemporary African novels that include all of Achebe's and Ngugi's, and virtually all of Armah's. He concludes the paper with the general observation that postcolonial African literature has been informed by the historical, rather than the literary imagination. Ogude's idea of units of historical events, which allows him to create a list that includes all of Achebe, Armah, and Ngugi's novels, is based on triad of the slave trade, colonialism, and neocolonialism. It is arguable whether neo-colonialism can be called an historical event like the other two since it is still present continuous.

What is more crucial, however, is that, taken as historical units, the two events become more general than specific—as he himself reminds us, they span five hundred years! Neither the slave trade nor colonialism was a single event but a complex of discrete though related events featuring different agencies, causes, and consequences, happening in even more diverse societies and locations. The trans-Saharan slave trade is, for instance, very different historically, from the trans-Atlantic. To take them as single, unified events is to take the zoo for one animal—to lose sight of the concrete public and private details that differentiates them, and which are vital to the historical writer's imagination. In effect, Ogude has traded the particularity of his borrowed definition for a sweeping and amorphous view of history. It is clear to see, then, why he ignores, in his list and discussion, the implication of his criterion: if an historical novel is about an actual historical event, one or two of the characters should also be historical. His list also includes novels that one would seriously hesitate to call historical, as well as those whose writings were obviously concurrent with the political situation they fictionalize—Achebe's *A Man of the People* and Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*, for instance. Although the former is a fictional depiction of politics in Nigeria between 1960 and 1966, no important actor or crucial political event of the

regime features in the novel, least of all those that contributed to and hastened its collapse (indeed, Nigeria is not identified by name). True, the actual regime, like the fictional one, collapsed in a military *coup d'état*, but this is mere coincidence. Lastly, the novel's publication before the actual military overthrow is proof that it was written well within the period of which Ogude imagines it to be a fictional history.

Ogude's peculiar reading of history as resource and a vital trope in contemporary African literature is suggestive of the way history is generally engaged with in the critical establishment, a situation that has made history a less represented phenomenon in the discussion of African literature. Akachi Ezeigbo's view of what constitutes the historical novel raises the same kinds of problem as Ogude's essay. She, however, approaches her subject, "History and the Novel in Africa" (1991:12-19), more diligently. She begins by making references to important figures like Sir Walter Scott, Georg Lukács, and David Daiches. She cites Daiches's three conditions of the historical novel: it should feature real events and people; its setting should be at least two generations from the author's own time; the narrated past should be related to the present. She quotes Walter Scott on his purpose for writing the *Waverley* novels: to "contribute somewhat to the history of my native country; the peculiar feature of whose manners and characters are daily melting and dissolving into those of her sister and ally." She also refers to Lukács's observation that Walter Scott's (and in general, European) historical novels arose as a result of the French Revolution and its ideological consequences, which anticipated a "transformation of man's existence and consciousness throughout Europe". Yet she too sets aside all these when it comes to making a list of African historical novels (substantially the same as Ogude's). And she goes on to replace the "attributes of the form as it is practiced in the West" with supposedly African ones: prehistory, legend, myth, and folklore. She justifies these as historical materials in her conclusion by resorting to a tried and tested formula: the African historical novel is different. It is different because it fuses on oral tradition and the history of Africa. This, she says, "is a result of the close affinity that exists between the oral and written modes in African literature and culture." Adopting such criteria as myth and folklore in defining the African historical novel will seem to suggest that Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* as well as all of Amos Tutuola's tales will qualify as historical novels. As Ogundele (2002) pointed out, these two essays between them raise four crucial issues. First, by using a contradictory and shifting definition of what is historical, they fail to persuade as to the existence of the African historical novel as a distinct

genre. Second, by far the majority of the novels they consider as historical are novels that are not even specific contemporary events, but general social-political situations. Third, they confuse the realistic novel generally with the historical novel. Lastly, the essays raise the issue whether myth and folklore *are* history.

On the first issue, both critics start by assuming that the African historical novel not only exists but does so as a distinct genre—like, say, the English historical novel. But as the statements of Walter Scott and Georg Lukács that Ezeigbo cites show, the European historical novel did not emerge until more than a century after the novel, the new and catholic form of prose narrative, was born. It took certain definite political, social, and cultural events (the French, Industrial, and Romantic Revolutions, and a new historiography) to bring a new kind of historical consciousness into being, and therefore the narrative genre to express it. The deductions to be made from this in speculating about the origins of the putative African historical novel are lost on both critics.

The second issue arises out of a mixing of two related but distinct meanings of history: history as reality, existence, or being generally, and history as the deeds of human beings, done by particular individuals or groups at specific moments and places, with discernible motives, causes, and consequences. The first meaning tends to align history with myth; the second sees history as process, its rationality knowable through investigation, and knowledge of which illuminates the past. Both critics have ignored this second meaning and stuck to the first, and in so doing blurred the distinction between history-as-reality and the novel generally, and the distinct genre called the historical novel. So most of the novels they list as historical are about the broad political realities of the present, or of the immediate past. Also, this reduction of history to the contemporary and the recent past truncates both the African historical memory and imagination to the relatively short periods of colonialism and after. Gone is the long perspective that is the hallmark of historical consciousness. Both translate not only into a partial apprehension of the present, but also an absence of even a short vision of the future, for the historical imagination can also project into the future. Be it two generations or twenty, the temporal distance, which is also an aesthetic one, is necessary in the historical novel, for the genre is not just a narrative of the past but what William Styron calls “a meditation on history” (Quoted in Fleishman, 1971: 4). It is an ethical meditation requiring all the available truths of the

historical moment being narrated. Wole Soyinka and Dennis Brutus (1974:8) recognized this in the Declaration of African Writers conference when they called for “the full retrieval of the African past in the quest for a contemporary self-apprehension and design for the future”.

It is appropriate at this point to consider the subject of adaptation and how it has figured in African literature. One question that has often been asked is what is the best source for a play idea? Writers have also tried to find out whether there really is any “new” idea when it comes to writing a play. If one looks at what Hollywood has offered in the recent past, one may come to the conclusion that there is really no new idea. What with *The Adam’s Family*, *My favourite Martian*, and *Titanic*, to name but a few. It seems to be an industry standard, even here in Nigeria, if there is a story that works, goes with it, even if it has been done before. Stage plays are no different. One may take the biblical story of Job, for instance. Both Archibald MacLeish and Neil Simon wrote adaptation of that story that became *J.B* and *God’s Favourite* respectively. Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* has been produced many times through the years, adapted by dozens of different writers, on stage, in film, and television. But what, one must pause to ask, is, what is adaptation? It was the great English director, Peter Brook, who once said, ‘if you just let a play speak, it may not make a sound.’ The goal of a good adaptation is to make a play speak to contemporary audiences. What amounts to a ‘general’ definition of adaptation, as it relates to playwriting, was offered by John Glen (2006:3). He wrote that adaptation is a “film/movie, book or play that is based on a particular piece of work but that has been changed for a new situation”. Adaptation is a regular feature of arts production. Although it is always nice to think that one has discovered, uncovered or created something never before, but it has often been said that “there is nothing new under the sun.” According to Glen (2006:4) “nearly every story or plot ever conceived has been able to be placed under one of about 20 master plot lines.”

In theatre, film/movie, and fiction, there have been several adaptations but it is often difficult to define precisely what constitutes “adaptation.” For example, the almost universal haziness, among filmmakers and film critics, about what adaptation is and what it should do makes any authoritative definition similar to walking a minefield. But there have been a few bold attempts. Dudley Andrews (1976:13) says that the distinctive feature of adaptation is the matching of the cinematic sign system to a prior achievement in some other system and every representational film adapts to a prior conception. He argues further that adaptation must delimit representation by insisting on the cultural status of the modes. As conclusion to this definition,

he suggests that “in a strong sense, adaptation is the ‘appropriation’ of a meaning from a prior text. Steven C. Early (1989:17) suggests that in order to understand the demands of adaptation the peculiarities of both the source and the adapting medium must first be understood:

In transferring novel into film, for instance, numerous differences exist. Faint praise and searing criticism often result when those already familiar with the novel view the film version. The novel depends upon individual creation and language, and often has a limited audience. The film, on the other hand, depends upon a moving image and industrial production to achieve its effects, its appeal to a mass audience. It makes it appeal to the perceiving senses and is free to work with the endless variations of physical reality, while literature is a symbolic medium that stands between the perceiver and the idea (p17).

Adrian Tutler (1998:48) says, in respect to theatre adaptation, that when writing an adaptation, the plot, character, action and usually much of the dialogue is already there, and if the adaptation is from a classic work, or by a good writer, it is already tested and is known to work. Referring to his own adaptations, Tutler writes:

My job then, as an adapter, is to take all those elements (the plot, character, action, and dialogue), distil them to the very essence of the story, and turn it into something that can be practically done on a stage. And since I write a lot for community and amateur theatre, it must also be able to be produced with limited resources...it requires both technical and creative skills to find the sizeable part of the story, present it, so it can be feasibly done on stage, and ensure the original soul of the story remains intact (p48).

There are important legal considerations when one is making a decision to adapt an original story. First, it should be borne in mind that there are two main sources of works to be adapted: work still under copyright and works in the public domain. The latter group includes essentially everything originally published prior to 1920, such as Shakespeare, Mark Twain, Jules Verne and Edgar Allan Poe, and certain modern works whose copyright has expired (Alan

Grey, 2008:13). According to Grey (2008), adapting a public domain work requires no permission and no monetary compensation. However, says Grey, for work under copyright, it is a much different story. Not only must permission be granted by those who hold the copyright, but financial arrangement be made, too. Referring to his own experience, Grey writes:

For miracle, I received permission from valentine Davies' children, and we worked out a split in the royalties. I made a similar arrangement with Steve Allen. In the case of Elizabeth Ann Scarborough, my publisher and her agent were also involved, and the negotiation were a bit more complicated. If you're unsure of the copyright status, do whatever you can to track down the truth, any oversight here could be costly, in both time and money.

The above refers to adaptation of published plays; there are, however other sources of adaptation. Myth, ritual stories, and history are other common sources of adaptation. The recourse to these sources is common among African playwrights for whom indigenous oral lore and myths are parts of the dramaturgical assemblage.

It is important to know why some writers adapt other people's stories rather than write their own. In attempting to respond to this observation, Andrey Blytone (2007:4) offers the following reasons for adaptation of other plays:

1. The reason the play needs to be adapted is usually because the original playwrights' language now falls flat on our ears.
2. We also need to adapt in order to find a play with a theme that resonates with audience.
3. Sometimes it is necessary to adapt (especially classical plays) because of the need to limit the number of characters. Older plays (19th century and earlier) usually have many more characters than today's playwrights keep in their heads.
4. It is also necessary to adapt because of the need to reduce the length to what is typical today. Playwrights in the good old days used to take audiences for very long rides.

Commenting on how these "reasons" have guided his own attempts at adaptation, Blytone (2007:48) writes:

When I wrote my adaptation of Valentine Davies' miracle on 34th street, which took a full year, I took about 60 characters and as many scenes,

and worked it into a show of 17 speaking parts that could be done by as few as 10 actors, and 23 scenes, utilizing about 12 different, flexible, and simple sets (48).

The experience of other playwrights may vary. Adaptation involves introducing modifications and changes into an adapted version of a source story. Nigerian theatre has had an illustrious and vibrant history. The theatre is also diverse both in form, style, ideological orientation and thematic preoccupation. Although the increase of modern reproductive technology has focused current theatre towards video production, and the countless social problems may be preventing a number of people from going to the theatre. However, the theatre is still in existence and popular in some places. One distinctive aspect of theatre practice, as far as literary theatre is concerned in Nigeria, is the issue of adaptation. As we said earlier, Nigerian dramatists across the generations have often adapted other plays or historical and mythological materials as grist for their creative mill. Adaptation of other plays and historical materials is done either wholesale or in part. Classical plays of Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus have been reworked and given local flavours by dramatists like J.P Clark Bekederemo, Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi and Femi Osofisan. Barbara Goff (2006:111) has observed that the adaptation of classical dramas has been integral to the notion of the western tradition, and African adaptations have raised questions about what it means to claim a 'western' tradition in the wake of colonialism. Such adaptations, according to Goff, also struggle with the fact that the very presence of Greek and Roman classics within African culture, however fruitful for creative endeavour, testifies to the disruption of African history by decades of colonial exploitation. Whether this observation is true or not, remains to be seen but suffice it to assert that adaptation, especially of non-African or classical 'Western' dramatic works has had useful contribution to the development of literary drama in Nigeria.

Among the first generation dramatists, J.P Clark Bekederemo was best known for his adaptation of classical forms of tragedy. In 1964, Clark published three plays, which contained the two plays *Song of a Goat* and *Masquerade*. The emphasis on inevitable, retributive consequences made many critics speculate on the influence of Greek tragedy on his work. The strong emphasis on European classics in the Ibadan curriculum at the time makes it possible that this influence was present. Clark's friend, Okigbo, for example, had studied for a degree in

classics at Ibadan and there were Greek tragedies in translation on the Ibadan English syllabus, which both Clark and Achebe studied. Although, in early interview, Clark drew attention to the fact that his own Ijaw culture also used a chorus and that he incorporated many elements from Ijaw burial rituals in the play, he also acknowledged that he owed a debt to Euripides, Sophocles and T.S Eliot, especially in his well known preference for the use of poetic dialogue in the theatre (Nkosi, 1972). These early plays by Clark are obviously influenced by European dramaturgical practices, but here this influence is balanced with a much stronger element of traditional Ijaw cultural forms and thematic materials.

Another writer whose early works were based on adaptation of the classics and materials from oral history is Ola Rotimi. Rotimi wrote a number of plays, variously employing English, Yoruba and other Nigerian languages. All of these draw on Yoruba historical material, such as *Kurunmi* (1971), *Ovoramwen Nogbaisi* (1974) and *Akassa Youmi* (1977). In all of these plays, historical events, such as the Ijaiye wars of the 19th century in the case of *Kurunmi*, the British expeditions against Benin city in *Ovoramwen Nogbaisi* and the Akassa wars in *Akassi Youmi*, are adapted and used in various ways to make points which are relevant to the present. However, it is in *The Gods are Not to Blame*, that one sees a very clear instance of classical adaptation. The play, which is based on an adaptation of Sophocles *Oedipus Rex*, is a re-interpretation of Greek tragic drama for African cultural milieu. Wole Soyinka too, has adapted classics such as *The Bacchae* by Euripides which he re-christened *The Bacchae of Euripides*. He has also adapted *Opera Wonyosi* from Bertolt Brecht's *Beggars Opera*.

Adaptation of historical materials, as we noted, is a feature of theatrical and dramatic practice in Nigeria. Indeed history—as a conceptual category—and various historical personages has been deployed as tropes in the service of adaption by Nigerian dramatists. What may be called ‘the dramatization of history,’ as we observed above, is often a conscious attempt by Nigerian, nay African, dramatists to “recapture the past, use it as an analytical tool to reflect on the present, and to preserve it for posterity” (Adeyemi, 2006: 17). But it is not only through or in drama that the past has come to be a symbolic resource in the creative imagination of African people. The whole range of oral literature has resonance within historical frame. As a matter of fact, it is within ‘oral tradition’ that we can appreciate how history is a symbolic resource in African dramatic tradition, be it in the numerous popular theatre traditions or in the elitist literary

drama. It is also in this regard that we can develop an understanding of how historical personages in the north of Nigeria have been deployed in the service of adaption. It is important to observe, by way of charting an explicit course for our intention here, that the category 'oral tradition' covers a wide range of different sorts of material. A basic distinction can be drawn between traditions which have, in principle, text (such as poetry and songs, but also including some forms of prose recitation) and those which comprise merely a body of information which may be verbalised in a variety of ways. In general, it may be assumed that, other things being equal, traditions that have certain texts will tend to be transmitted with less alteration than those with free texts (Law, 2007). A related (but overlapping rather than identical) distinction may be made between those traditions whose preservation and transmission is entrusted to specialists, and those transmitted more informally by anyone interested in doing so. Here again, the preliminary working assumption would normally be that the existence of specialist custodians of a tradition constitutes in some measure a guarantee of some sort of transmission. If, however, as is often the case, the specialist tradition-bearers are closely associated with the ruling authorities of the society concerned, the presumption of more accurate transmission is counterbalanced by the evident fact that the operations of such official state historians are likely to be more vulnerable to politically motivated censorship and manipulation. (see Law, 2007;Thompson,1985;Okpewho, 1992).

Although oral tradition has been utilized in the study of many fields of history, in recent years it has been associated especially with the history of sub-Saharan Africa, and more especially of sub-Saharan Africa during the pre-colonial period (that is, the nineteenth century and earlier). The most useful and influential recent analyses of the historical use of 'oral tradition' have been written by African historians and have drawn most of their illustrative materials from African history. When the serious study of African history at universities in Africa, Europe and America began in the early 1950s, from the outset great emphasis was placed on the use of oral tradition. This reflected the belief that there was for Africa south of the Sahara a relative dearth of contemporary written sources, and that emphasis needed therefore to be placed on less conventional sorts of historical sources, including, above all, oral tradition. There was an element of exaggeration in this view, since sub-Saharan Africa was not by any means wholly non-literate (a circumstance which has also had a significant influence on the character of local oral tradition). Written sources survive for many African societies - most obviously,

Islamic societies with written sources in Arabic (and occasionally, in African languages written in Ajami), but also some coastal societies under European/Christian influence which produced written documents in European languages. More widely, there were many societies which, although themselves non-literate, were in touch with literate societies through trade, and for whose history there are therefore written sources produced by outsiders. It remains true, however, that this sort of written documentation is limited and (more critically) uneven in its incidence and coverage. Oral tradition remains the only source for the history of some African societies, and the only form of internal source for many.

Too much was made of the supposed innovation of the use of oral tradition. The use of oral tradition as a significant source had, in fact, been a normal feature of historical research, back to the 'Father of History' himself, the Greek historian Herodotus in the fifth century BC; and it was characteristic of both Christian and Islamic historical scholarship in medieval times. One consequence of this is that 'oral tradition' is the basis for many classical written sources, as well as being the only source available for the history of non-literate societies. Quite apart from such remoter antecedents, in the study of the history of sub-Saharan Africa itself, the academic historiography which developed from the 1950s had been preceded by a tradition of historical writing by local amateur scholars, often making extensive use of oral tradition, which stretched back well into the nineteenth century. This interest in the study and writing of the history of indigenous African societies had arisen initially in West Africa in the late nineteenth century, as part of a wider movement of 'cultural nationalism', which involved the study of indigenous African culture and religion as well as history, and attempts to develop a vernacular literature (including the recording of indigenous oral literature). This movement arose essentially out of a crisis of identity among European-educated (and Christian) West Africans, faced with growing racial prejudice and discrimination from Europeans, and responding to this rejection by European culture by seeking to re-establish an identity with indigenous African culture. The most vigorous early tradition of such local historical studies emerged among the Yoruba of south-western Nigeria where writing on Yoruba history (mainly in English, but with some works in the Yoruba language) began on a significant scale from the 1885 *onwards*. An especially distinguished example was the *History of the Yorubas* of the Revd Samuel Johnson, a Yoruba clergyman, written in 1897 (although not published until 1921). Elsewhere in West Africa, similar early historical-work was produced on the Gold Coast (modern-Ghana) to the west,

where the Revd C.C. Reindorf, another African Christian clergyman, published his *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* in 1895. A tradition of historical writing of comparable ancient times existed among the Buganda (of modern Uganda) in East Africa, where Apolo Kagawa published *Basekabaka be Buganda; a history of the kings of Buganda* in the Luganda language, in 1901. Much of the 'oral tradition' used by modern historians, in fact, is taken at second-hand from the writings of such literate local scholars, rather than recorded in oral form. In Europe, however, a more sceptical attitude towards oral tradition had begun to develop from the eighteenth century onwards. The Scottish social philosopher Adam Ferguson (1767) dismissed the traditional accounts of Classical ancient times on the grounds that traditions were necessarily distorted in the process of their oral transmission:

They are, for the most part, the mere conjectures or the fictions of subsequent ages; and even where at first they contained some degree of truth, they still vary with the imagination of those by whom they are transmitted, and in every generation receive a different form. They are made to bear the stamp of the times through which they have passed in the form of tradition, not of the ages to which their pretended descriptions relate. (see Henige, 1974).

A similarly skeptical attitude towards oral tradition was taken by Archibald Dalziel (another Scotsman), the author of one of the earliest European attempts to study the history of African societies. In his history of the kingdom of Dahomey (in the modern Republic of Benin) published in 1793, he writes that "the blacks have no records, but those traditional ones, the legends of their bards; which are so politically affected: that they are but little to be depended upon". In consequence, Dalziel argued that the history of a State such as Dahomey would have to be based mainly on the evidence of outsiders the European traders who visited or resided in it. For the period prior to European contact, therefore nothing could be known with any confidence. "All before this time stands on the ground of tradition which is ever more or less precarious, in proportion to the number of relations, and the frequency of repetition."

By the twentieth century, it was conventional wisdom among professional historians that history could be based only upon written documents, and that the history of non-literate societies, including most of Africa, was therefore effectively written off: 'History only begins when men take to writing.' The pioneers of academic African historiography in the 1950s, therefore, in

seeking to emphasize their use of oral traditions were obliged to address the methodological issues that this involved, in order to vindicate the professional legitimacy of their project. This was done most systematically and influentially by Jan Vansina, a Belgian historian (though later settled in the United States of America). He had worked in Central Africa, in his classic study *Oral Tradition*, originally published in French in 1961 (and in English translation in 1965). Vansina insisted that oral traditions could be subjected to the same sort of criticism as any other sources. Such criticism was partly internal to the tradition concerned - to assess not only the likely reliability of the original information from which a tradition is ultimately derived, but also the likelihood of its having been accurately transmitted down to the present; but partly also external-by comparison with other available sources referring to the same events. Vansina acknowledged the many difficulties presented by the interpretation and evaluation of oral traditions, but argued that they were, in principle, not different from those arising with regard to any sources, including written ones. He did concede that additional possibilities of distortion arose out of the process of oral transmission itself. All documents are likely to be distorted by the particular circumstances which generate them, but written documents once created, may survive by inactivity, and thus preserved unchanged from their original form. Oral traditions, by contrast, can only survive by being constantly repeated, and each repetition, as Adam Ferguson had pointed out, provides both an opportunity and potentially (since the precise purpose for which the tradition is used may change overtime) a motive for further distortion. Even Vansina, therefore, regarded oral traditions as affording 'a lower degree of probability' than other sorts of historical sources. He maintained, however, that oral traditions, like any other sources, could be utilized to the extent that they were subject to corroboration through comparison with other evidence, and that the material with which a tradition might be compared included not only written documents (where these were available), archaeological and linguistic evidence, and inferences from comparative ethnography, but also (critically) other oral traditions: if two or more independent traditions agreed, this was good ground for supposing that they were accurate. Vansina's *Oral Tradition* became a sort of moral charter for a whole generation of historians seeking to use oral tradition for the reconstruction of the pre-colonial history of African societies. It is now clear, however, that early consideration of the use of oral traditions in African history, including that of Vansina's in a way, very substantially underestimated the problems involved, and over-simplified the relationship between oral traditions and history.

The last twenty or so years have seen a significant refinement of our understanding of oral traditions, which has changed our perceptions of their nature in ways which radically problematize their use as historical sources. African dramatists have been most influential in this project of refining our understanding of oral tradition in the context of history, and they have been doing this mainly through the use of history as resource for their dramatic engagement. With the deployment of history, we are able to have a better understanding of oral tradition, and by implication the culture and traditions of the African people.

Drama as Hagiography: The Mythologization of Historical Personages

According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (1996), a hagiography is a 'biography of saints or venerated persons' or an 'idealizing biography.' Whether it concerns the factual details of a saint's or venerated person's life or a fabricated story about an idealized or idolized individual, the hagiography characteristically paints a morally uplifting, though usually not happy, picture of an individual existence. The authenticated hagiographies of saints constitute part of the sacred literature of churches. Two stages have been identified in the development of hagiography as church literature by Evelyn Ellerman (1993:26-27). She calls the first stage *passio*, otherwise known as the martyr story, and describes it as "an autobiographical document that testified to the martyr's faith and described his or her reactions to trial, detainment, and torture.' This document, which subsequently became 'a biography that was written down shortly after the martyr's death', systematically evolved into a tradition 'within the Christian church for centuries' and was distinguished by 'its concern with completely opposed ideologies that are presented to readers in dialogic confrontations between the saint and government or family representatives' who are attempting 'to persuade the Christian to renounce his or her faith.' The second stage in the development of hagiography as identified by Ellerman is the *vita*, also known as saint's life. This form, which developed after the fourth century CE, replaced the dialogic mode and confrontational tone of the *passio* with contemplative narration of the stage of the spiritual growth and experiences of the saint (26-27).

The most striking quality of hagiography as literature (and one which finds resonance in its deployment in this study), in either its *passio* or *vita* form, is its idealizing or idolizing mode of characterization. An individual becomes transformed from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Martyrs, for instance, show superhuman courage and endurance in facing torture and challenge

to the faith or belief. It is also not unusual for saints to perform miracles. Clearly, then, what hagiography as narrative literature does, is to mythologize the individual and thus ritualize history. This is, interestingly, the opposite of the process by which characterization in realistic literature came into being. Alfred Lord (1978) has identified this latter process as that of “the progression from supernatural to semi-supernatural to human”—that is, a movement from stories about gods to semi-gods to full-fledged mortal (‘Gospels’ 34-36).

Assessing the historical value of medieval hagiography has engaged researchers for more than three centuries. Miracle stories, reliance on topoi, and the fabrication of events often rendered the sources suspicious. When applied to such texts, the historical-critical method aimed to sift the paucity of fact from the abundance of fiction. Yet the pursuit of “historical kernels” did not occur without an awareness of what might be lost. Even some of the more “scientifically” minded researchers sensed they were asking questions that hagiography, as religious literature glorifying saints and edifying the faithful, could hardly answer.

As her introduction to a recent book, *Imagining the Sacred Past: Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy* (2009) shows, Samantha Kahn Herrick knows these pitfalls. In the light of that knowledge, she asks questions that yield remarkable, far-reaching results. The author focuses on three saints: Taurinus, Vigor, and Nicasius. All have a murky past in the history of early Gallic Christianity, but they come to prominence during the eleventh century, within clearly demarcated geographical boundaries. Why did such obscure saints become so important in the 1020s and 1030s? The author addresses this question at different levels of complexity. Her answers will likely impress specialists and thinkers exploring the interconnectedness of medieval religion and society.

The study itself is well constructed, with the answers to highly specific questions leading to broader and more probing observations. For example, determining the sources' dates of composition becomes crucial for considering the political function of the hagiographic corpus under investigation. She compellingly argues that the lives of Taurinus, Vigor, and Nicasius “all appear to have enjoyed marked attention at particular moments in the early eleventh century” (33). In telling readers why they received such attention then, Herrick exposes the characteristics of a distinctive Norman hagiography, which she links to the political aspirations of the dukes whose authority these literary productions legitimized (p 115).

What follows the dating is interesting, with the elaborate geographic, monastic, and political ties explicated carefully and clearly. Each of the main texts receives sustained treatment that uncovers the distinctive circumstances surrounding the source's function in specific locations. Impressive is the way the author creates an interlocking explanation out of the most disparate kinds of evidence, including the way the texts reflect their natural environment. The bike rides through the Norman countryside that the author mentions. Most readers would likely miss the way this hagiography relates to rivers, islands, purification, and the Viking raids (p107). Such evidence, especially the depictions of religious conversion, shows hagiographers turning to an obscure Christian past to make sense out of the region's violence and to justify ducal claims to political power.

What emerges, then, is a view of history. By placing the sources in various contextual layers, Herrick captures hagiography appropriating a religious past to validate, as part of a "divine plan," the Norman present. She thus demonstrates the potential saints' lives offer contemporary historians, for the hagiographer's imaginative projections are rendered here as valuable to current historical knowledge as any "reliable" document might be.

Contemporary Hagiography

According to Lawrence Cunningham (2002), hagiography, in a conventional sense, is the story of saints and martyrs, and its purpose is to edify the reader. He notes that works on saints in general and martyrs in particular has become popular lately. Cunningham's work focuses on literature about martyrs and, more specifically, modern martyrs because of the prominence which Pope John Paul II put on that phenomenon with his insistence on the sign value of the martyr as a witness to the perennial value of the gospel and its message (Cunningham, 2002). According to Cunningham, the theological significance of martyrdom in the writings of pope is a conspicuous characteristic of his thinking. He puts such emphasis on the theological significance of martyrdom, especially martyrdom in our day that he singles out, among other things, the significance of those who died for the sake of Christ as a kind of primordial ecumenical bond prior to the actual workings of ecumenical reconciliation. His reflection in *Ut unum sint* bears remembering:

In a theocentric vision, we Christians already have a common martyrlogy. This

also includes the martyrs of this century, more numerous than one might think, and it shows how, at a profound level, God preserves communion among the baptized in the supreme sacrifice of life itself (Ut unum sint no. 84; text in Origins 25 (June 8, 1995) 67).

No account of contemporary martyrdom, however, can ignore the background of ancient and early martyrdom in the Christian tradition if only to understand how more recent understandings of martyrdom stand in contrast to, or, conversely, as a mirror of, the ancient martyr tradition. Over the past few years, to aid this understanding, we have had the advantage of a number of excellent works on early martyrdom that help us contextualize the contemporary discussion. Daniel Boyarin's (1999) book focuses on the narrative quality of martyrdom as a constructive element in creating as well as sustaining a religious tradition. He asserts that we should "think of martyrdom as a `discourse'--as a practice of dying for God and of talking about it, a discourse that changes and develops over time ..." (p.94) The importance of discourse is worth underscoring since, in the Christian tradition, the martyrs are remembered both by telling their stories in various ways and by enhancing the stories of some martyrs by performative narration in liturgical and non-liturgical worship. Boyarin's book is influenced by postmodern literary discourse. Without being analytic, it is useful to remember, when reading the somewhat cerebral discussion of Boyarin, that it is both the actual witness of the martyr and also the memory of the martyr captured in some form of discourse that enters most completely into a religious tradition. The death of the martyr, in other words, happened, then subsequently gets "constructed" both as a narrative of fact and as a moment remembered by the community.

Such a discourse, however, as a constructed one will lead different people to construct the discourse differently. How such discourses differ is amply illustrated by the work of Brad Gregory (1999) who examines martyrdom narratives of every kind emanating from Protestant (including Anabaptist) and Catholic sources in the post-Reformation period. Gregory roots his analysis in the medieval literary tradition as a way of showing its flowering in everything from visual illustrations to drama. He is sensitive to the classic texts of Scripture as well as to the opportunity that such narratives provide for polemical and homiletic purposes. What is particularly striking about Gregory's book is his resistance to reductionism. He reads his sources as coming from persons both Protestant and Catholic who died for their faith. That seemingly

obvious point sometimes gets lost in contemporary analyses of martyrdom literature but Gregory makes it forcefully. As such his book is important in its own right and as a counterbalance to the work of Boyarin precisely by his insistence on the faith element in the witness of the martyr.

Drama and Hagiography

The transmutation of hagiography from a strictly Christian faith-based literary genre to the realm of imaginative literature is not limited to the lives of saints and martyrs in terms of form; more frequently, the hagiographic strategy is becoming popular with dramatists, especially where the subject of dramatic enactment is a historical or religious personage as we have in Ahmed Yerima's *Attahiru* and Ladan Umaru and Dexter Lyndersay's *Shaihu Umar*. The idealization of cult heroes in dramatic literature often follows the progression identified by Alfred Lord earlier discussed. Several historical figures and personages have been mythologized in popular imagination and folklores, but when they become the subject of dramatic literature, they are made to go through a process of mystification or mythologization before being stripped of whatever mythic essence they may have been imbued with in the first place. In other words, what many African dramatists often do is to mythologize a historical personage. While doing this, these dramatists would, consequently, also be deconstructing history for subversive purposes (see Awodiya, 1995).

One dramatist with a flair for this sort of *re-reading* of myth and history is Femi Osofisan. Beginning with *The Chattering and the Song*, which was first published in 1976, Osofisan's concern, in the early days of his career as a Marxist dramatist, was with revolutionary ethos and class struggle. In his early days, in line with his revolutionary philosophy as a radical writer and critic with an articulated commitment to social transformation, Osofisan reconstructs history, myth and consensus opinion in order to create a more desirable society. In this play, Osofisan reconstructs the history of the Oyo Empire under the reign of Alafin Abiodun to suit his radical vision of a contemporary society. In the *play-within-a-play* which is a flashback to the confrontation between the revered leader Latoye and Alafin Abiodun, Osofisan makes Alafin Abiodun no longer a benevolent king whose reign was peaceful and prosperous (as is the case in historical accounts), but instead portrayed him as a dictator who uses religion and custom as a cover to exploit his people. In addition, the playwright makes Latoye, the rebel, challenge Alafin's authority and win the war against the king with the aid of the king's guards whom he has indoctrinated. In this play, through the flashback, Osofisan suggests that if an ordinary man

like Latoye in the past could revolt against a dictatorial ruler like the Alafin, the contemporary man should emulate such a precedent by questioning and challenging their leaders, urging them to improve the people's social, economic and political conditions. The flashback also raises mass consciousness to revolt against oppressive and tyrannical leadership or political system.

In *Morountodun*, a play written and produced for the University of Ife (now the Obafemi Awolowo University) 1980 convocation ceremony, Osofisan employs the same strategy of deconstructing history. In this play, he reinterprets the Moremi myth and legend of the past through the characters of Titubi who plays the role of Moremi. Titubi's heroic impulse is spurred by the courage of Moremi who, according to the legend, had earlier ensured victory for Ile-Ife people through her espionage activity. Titubi, unlike her legendary role-model Moremi, fights for the government forces with the aim of suppressing the peasant farmers' revolt against injustice and oppressive system of taxation. But after experiencing the peasant farmers' sufferings, Titubi commits class suicide when she abandons the rich class to identify and fight with the peasant farmers. Although this was unlike the mythical Moremi who fought for the government in order to ensure victory for her ruling class in the ancient Ile-Ife kingdom against the onslaught of the Igbo warriors, Osofisan attempts, in the latter part of the play, to present Titubi in hagiographic lights as she faces tribulations in the hands of the ruling class. Thus, Osofisan reinterprets in this play the Moremi myth to suit the exigencies of contemporary Nigeria: he employs the energies of the past to confront the forces of exploitation, oppression and injustice of the present society. These issues are quite noticeable in the three selected plays as the study will show.

It should be mentioned that critical works on the texts under study are scanty but the appraisal of Yerima's *Attahiru* will suffice. Adeoye (2013: 2) observes that *Attahiru* as a historical play and history has to grapple for attention in many dramatic works. History as material for dramatic text is often distorted for aesthetic reasons because the creative imagination of the playwright presents the action they have experienced to the audience, yet the underlining message is never lost. Thus, Adeoye (2013:85) sees the play as a chronicle of the collapse of African traditional institutions just at the beginning of colonialism in Nigeria. Worthy of note in the research of Adeoye is the dream motif he mentions in the play. Adeoye (2013:85) observes that the dream is a metaphor in the play and it suggests that the monarch has a supernatural

foreknowledge of the impending disaster that is to befall the kingdom. Attahiru recounts his dream to his son Mai Wurno and his spiritualist, Mallam:

Always it starts in the early hours of the morning. There is smoke, heavy smoke. It is at the battlefield. Dead warriors litter everywhere. Then images of my ancestors appear in a cloud round me. They pass the flag from one hand to another. As they chant la illah ha illalah, I watch them helplessly stretching my hands as Caliph Atiku gives it to Muazu, then to Caliph Umaru, then to Abdul-Rahman and, as he passes it to me, the flag falls, dripping blood. In all the smoky confusion; Dan Magaji, tries to help me pick it up, but he is tripped by a white pebble, he too; falling on his sword. The dream subsumes me in thought. (Pg 12)

In his analysis, Adeoye (2013:86) notes that this dream reveals three facts to the audience. The first fact is that he lists the various Caliphs before Attahiru in order to make known to the people his right to the throne; secondly, the manner of his death as a warrior in battle through white pebbles which becomes symbolic of the British forces; and thirdly, the falling flag becomes the impending downfall of Sokoto caliphate.

Uwatt (2007: 124) sees *Attahiru* as a play lacking “stagecraft, construction of plot and the evocation of royal dignity and cultural glamour” This is aptly so considering the fact that the period of Attahiru’s ascendancy to the throne coincided with the period that the British annexed his domain and as a warrior, in the view of Adeoye (2013:87) Attahiru “assumes the position to embark on war of territorial defense that claims his life and that of his warriors”. Thus, the seriousness of the issue and the revolutionary stance of the monarch would not allow for the development along the line of cultural glamour or the evocation of royal dignity. Also, in presenting a classical protagonist, delving on palace paraphernalia may reduce the intensity of the tragedy that the monarch symbolized.

Adeoye (2013: 101,102) also discusses the thematic preoccupation of *Attahiru*. He pencils nationalism, fate and pride as dominant themes in the play. The fate of Sultan Attahiru rests entirely with the gods; hence, it becomes nearly impossible to escape the gods. What is clear

from the foregoing is that there is a connection among history; myth and narrative hagiography in the context of dramatic literature and theatre. The selected plays for the study resonate with the recreation of history and hagiography.

WORKS CITED

- Abimbola, W. (1997). *Ifa Will Mend Our Broken World*. Roxbury Massachusetts: AIMS Books.
- Abel, J. (2005) PhD Thesis, The Nature and Development of the novel in English in Northern Nigeria.
- Achebe, C. (ed.) (1975). Named for Victoria, Queen of England. *Morning Yet On Creation Day*. London, Ibadan: Heinemann.65-70
- Achebe, C.(1958) *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, 1958.
- (1964)“The Role of the Writer in a New Nation.” *Nigeria Magazine* 81, pp157-60.
- (1975)“The Novelist as Teacher.” *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. London: Heinemann, pp 42-45.
- Adamu, A. U. (1999) "Idols of the marketplace: literary history, literary criticism and the contemporary Hausa novel." *New Nigerian Weekly*, 12 June.
- (2000) "Criticism and the growth of knowledge: coda to an unfinished sympathy." *Weekly Trust*, May 5-11.
- Adamu, Y. M. (1998) "Hausa novels: beyond the great debate." *New Nigerian Weekly*, 18 July.
- Adedeji, J.A. (1981). Alarinjo: The Traditional Yoruba Travelling Theatre. *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Ed. Y. Ogunbiyi Lagos: Federal Ministry of Social Development, Youths, Sports and Culture. 221-247.
- Adedeji, A. (1987) A Profile of Nigerian Theatre 1960-1970 *Nigeria Magazine* 107-109 (Dec. Aug. 1970: 3-14).
- Adeoye J. (2013) The Drama of Ahmed Yerima, A PhD Thesis submitted to the Leiden University
- Adeyemi, S. (ed.) (2006) *Portraits for an Eagle: Essays in Honour of Femi Osofisan*. Bayreuth African Studies: Germany.

Agovi, K. 1985, Is There an African Vision of Tragedy in Contemporary African Theatre?

Presence Africaine

Aiyejina, A. (1988) Recent Nigerian Poetry in English: An Alter/Native Tradition. ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi *Perspectives on Nigerian Literature*. Lagos: Guardian Books Ltd, Vol.1. 112-128.

..... (2009) Esu Elegbara: A Source of an Alter/Native Theory of African Literature and Criticism. A CBAAC Lecture

Akporobaro, F.B.O. (2001). *Introduction to African Oral Literature*. Lagos: The Lighthouse Publishing Company Limited

..... (2008) *Introduction to Poetry*. Lagos: Princeton Publishers.

Andrew C. (ed.) (1998) *The Terrible Alternative*. London: Cassell.

Andrews, D. (1976) *Film in America*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Ashcroft, Bill. Garreth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin (1989) *The Empire Writes Back*. London & New York: Routledge (1995 eds.) *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. London & New York: Routledge.

Ashcroft, B. and Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. (2000). *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concept*. New York: Routledge.

Awodiya, M.P. (1995) *The Drama of Femi Osofisan: A Critical Perspective*. Ibadan: Kraft Books.

----- (ed.) (1993) *Excursions in Drama and Literature: Interviews with Femi Osofisan*. Ibadan: Kraft Books.

----- (1975) *Femi Osofisan: Interpretive Essays I* Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts & Civilization.

Awoonor, K. (1974). *Guardians of the Sacred Word: Ewe Poetry*. New York: Nok

Publishers.

- Awonusi, S. (2004) The Functions of Nigerian English in Relation to other Nigerian Languages. eds. Segun Awonusi & A.B.K. Dadzie, *Nigerian English Influences and Characteristics*. Lagos: Concept Publishers. Pp67-82
- Azuonye, C. (1998). Kaalu Igiirigiri: an Ohafia Igbo Singer of Tales. *The Oral Performance in Africa*. (ed.) I. Okpewho. Ibadan: Spectrum Books. 42-79.
- Behr-Sigel, E. (2001) "The Kenotic, the Humble Christ," in *Discerning the Signs of the Time*, (ed.) Michael Plekon and Sarah Hinkley (Crestwood, N.Y.: Saint Vladimir's Seminary, 2001) 31-32;
- Blytone, A. (2007) Creativity and Adaptations: Theoretical Issues. In Grey D. ed. *Theatre and Drama: A Practical Approach* Ibadan: Institute of African Studies.
- Boyd, J. and Mack, B.B. (1997). *Collected Works of Nana Asma'u, Daughter of Usman dan Fodiyo (1793-1864)*. East Lansing, Michigan State University Press.
- (2000) *One Woman's Jihad: Nana Asma'u Scholar and Scribe*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Brad, S. G. (1999) *Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University.
- Brent, S. (1993) "The Passion of Perpetua," *Past and Present* no. 139 (May, 1993) 3-45.
- Budelmann, F. (2004) *Greek Tragedies in West African Adaptations. Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*.
- Chinweizu, O. (et al) (1980). *Towards the Decolonisation of African Literature*. Vol.1. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Clerk, E. (1980). *Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre*. London: Oxford University.

- Croff, B. (2006) *Antigones Boat: The Colonial and the Post colonial in Tegoni: An African Antigone* by Femi Osofisan in Sola Adeyemi (ed.) *Portraits for an Eagle: Essays in Honour of Femi Osofisan* Bayreuth African studies.
- Cunningham, L.S. (2002) Contemporary Martyrs: Some Recent Literature. *Theological Studies*. 63 (2): 374-412
- Cunningham, L.S. (1999) "Saints and Martyrs: Some Contemporary Considerations," *Theological Studies* 60: 529-37.
- Daniel, B.(1999) *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University.
- Darah, G. G. (1981) Dramatic Presentation in Udje Dance Performance of the Urhobo *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Ed. Y. Ogunbiyi Lagos: Federal Ministry of Social Development, Youths, Sports and Culture. 221-247.
- (1982) Satire in Udje Dance Songs of the Urhobo. PhD Dessertaion, Department of English, University of Ibadan.
- (1988) Literary Development in Nigeria. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 1-9
- Deliziosi, F. (2001) *Don Puglisi: vita del prete palermitano ucciso della mafia* (Milan: Mondadori, 2001).
- Doherty, J. (1997) "The Wider Horizon of the Algeria of the Heart," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 32 , 195-221
- Early, S. C. (1989) Film Adaptations in America. In *Ibadan Theatre Studies* (1): 14-9.
- East, R. M. (1943). "Recent activities of the Literature Bureau, Zaria, Northern Nigeria." *Africa* 14(1): 71-7.
- Echeruo, M.J.C. (1981) The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Ritual In Ogunbiyi, Y., ed. *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book* Lagos: Nigeria Magazine.

- Emenyonu, E. (1988) The Rise and Development of Igbo Literature. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi 33-38
- Ellerman, E. (1993) The Passion of Perpetua: A generic Approach to Beti's Perpetue *Research in African Literatures* 24(3):25-34.
- Ezeigbo, T. (1991) "History and the Novel in Africa." *African Literature and African Historical Experience*. Ed. Chidi Ikonne, Emelia Oko, and Peter Onwudinjo. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1991. 11-21.
- Falola, T. (1988) Earliest Yoruba Writers. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 22-32
- Finnegan, R. (1970). *Oral Literature in Africa*. London: Oxford Press.
- Fleishman, A. (1971) *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1971.
- Furniss, G. (1998) Documenting Kano 'Market' Literature. *Africa* 98 (3): 123-141.
- (1994). Ideology in Practice: Hausa Poetry as Exposition of Values and Viewpoints. Koln, Rudiger Koppe.
- (1996). Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture in Hausa. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute.
- Gail, A. (2000) *The Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography* (New York: Routledge,
- Gilbert, H. and Tompkins, J. (1996) *Postcolonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge).
- Gillian, C. (1998) "Bodies and Blood: Late Antique Debate on Martyrdom, Virginity, and Resurrection," in *Changing Bodies*, ed. Dominic Montserrat. London: Routledge 99-115.
- Guillon, R. (2001) *Si nous nous taisons ... Le martyre des moines de Tibhirine* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 2001).

- Glen, J. (2006) *Contemporary Theatre Practice* London: Routledge.
- Hall, E. (2004). Introduction: Why Greek Tragedy in the late Twentieth century?
- Hardwick, L. (2004). Greek Drama and Anti-Colonialism: Decolonizing classics. In Hall, E., F. Macintosh and A. Wrigley eds., *Dionysus since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*. Oxford University Press.
- Hardwick, L. and Gillespie, C. (eds.) (2007) *Classics in Post – Colonial Worlds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hagher, I. (2003) *The Kwagh-hir Theatre (A Metaphor of Resistance)* Ibadan: Caltop Publications Nigeria Limited.
- Herrick, S.K. (2007) *Imagining the Sacred Past: Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press
- Irele, A. (2001) *The African Imagination Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Isola, A. (1988) Contemporary Yoruba Literary Tradition. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 73-84
 (2004) Being and Becoming Anglophone, Then and Now. A Public Lecture Delivered at the instance of the Department of English, University of Ibadan.
- Jeyifo, B.(ed.) (2002) *Modern African Drama* New York and London: W.W. Northern & Company, Inc.
- (1988) The Language Factor in Modern Nigerian Literature. ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 68-72.
- John C. (2000) *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of the Saints in the Early Christian West* New York: Oxford University.

- (2000) *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of the Saints in the Early Christian West* New York: Oxford University.
- Joyce S. (1997) *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman* (New York: Routledge.
- Kiser, J. (2002) *The Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love, and Terror in Algeria* (New York: St. Martin's,)
- Kofoworola, E. O. (1981) *Traditional Forms of Hausa Drama*. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 164 180.
- Larkin, B. (1997). "Indian films and Nigerian lovers: media and the creation of parallel modernities." *Africa* 67(3): 406-39.
- (1999). "Theaters of the profane: cinema and colonial urbanism." *Visual Anthropology Review* 14(2): 46-62.
- (2000). "Hausa dramas and the rise of video culture in Nigeria." In Jonathon Haynes (ed.) *Nigerian Video Films*, pp. 209-41. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.
- Law, R. (1977). *The Oyo Empire C. 1600- C. 1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (1997) "Oral Tradition as History." *Writing and Africa*. Ed. Mpalive-Hangson Msiska and Paul Hyland. London: Longman, 159-73.
- Lindfors, B. (1982) *Early Nigerian Literature* Ibadan: Caltop Publications Limited.
- Loraux, N. (2002) *The Mourning Voice: An Essay on Greek Tragedy*. Trans. Elizabeth Trapnell Rawlings. Ithaca, NY, and London Cornell University Press.
- Lord, A. (1978) *The Gospel As Oral Traditional Literature*. In William O. Walker, Jr. Ed., *The Relationship Among the Gospels: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, 33-91. San Antonio:

- Trinity University Press.
- Mabogunje, A.L. and Omer-Cooper, J.D.(1971) *Owu in Yoruba History*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Malumfashi, Ibrahim (2000). 'Jana'izar adabin kasuwar Kano', *Garkuwa* 1 (January): 23; 2 (April): 31.
- Malumfashi, Ibrahim (n.d.) "Current trends in Hausa fiction: the emergence of Kano Market Literature", Unpublished paper.
- McDonald, M. and Walton, J.M (eds.) (2002) *Amid Our Troubles: Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy*. London: Methuen.
- McGlynn, D. (1997) "Atlas Martyrs," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 32 (1997) 149-87.
- Mora, A. (ed.) (1989) *The Abubakar Imam Memoirs*. Zaria: NNPC.
- Muhlenberg, E. (1997) "The Martyr's Death and its Literary Presentation," *Studia Patristica* 29: 85-93.
- Ogundeji, P.A. (2003) Forms of Traditional Theatre Practice in Nigeria. (Introduction). *Dapo Adelugba on Theatre Practice in Nigeria*. ed. A. Dasylva. Ibadan: Ibadan Cultural Studies Group. 3-33.
- Ogundele, W. (2002) Devices of Evasion: The Mythic versus the Historical Imagination in the Postcolonial African Novel. *Research in African Literatures* 33(3): 125-139
- Ogude, S. E.(1991) "African Literature and the Burden of History: Some Reflections." *African Literature and African Historical Experiences*. Ed. Chidi Ikonne, Emelia Oko, and Peter Onwudinjo. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, pp. 1-10.
- Ogude, S. (1983) *Genius in Bondage A Study of the Origin of African Literature*. Ile-Ife:

University of Ife Press, Ltd.

Ohaeto, E. (1982) *The Nature of Tragedy in Modern African Drama. Literary Half Yearly.*

Okonjo-Ogunyemi, C. (1988) *Women and Nigerian Literature.* Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 60 67.

Okpewho, I. (1980) "Rethinking Myth." *African Literature Today* 11

Omotoso, K. (1975) *The Form of the African Novel.* Akure: Fagbamigbe Publishers.

Omotosho, K. (1988) *Just Before Dawn.* Spectrum Books, Nigeria.

Osofisan, F. (1997) *Playing Dangerously: Drama at the Frontier of Terror in a Post Colonial State.* Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.

Osofisan, F. (2001) *Insidious Treasons: Drama in a Post Colonial State* (essays) Ibadan: Opon Ifa Readers.

Osundare, N. (2002). *Singer of the New Dawn: Modern Nigerian Writers of the Second Generation.* Unpublished paper.

Pieterse, C. and Duerden, D. (ed.) (1972) *African Writers Talking* London. London: Heinemann.

Richard, M. (2001) "The Saints: An Ecclesiological Reflection," *Theology Digest* 48 (Winter, 2001) 303-17.

Richards, S. (1996). *Ancient Songs set Ablaze: The Theatre of Femi Osofisan.* Washington: Howard University Press.

Robert R. (2000) *The Catholic Martyrs of the Twentieth Century* New York: Crossroad.

Rubin, D. (1997) *African Theatre in a Global Context.* In *The World Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Theatre* Vol. 3. ed. Don Rubin. London & New York Routledge.

Sekoni, R. (1988) *Oral Literature and the Development of Nigerian Literature.* ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 46-52.

- Skinner, A. N. (1970). "NORLA: an experiment in the production of vernacular literature 1954-1959." *Revue des Langues Vivantes* 36(2): 166-75.
- Sobrino, J. (2001) *Christ the Liberator: A View from the Victims* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis).
- Soyinka, W. (1976). *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Soyinka, W. and Dennis B. (1974) "Declaration of African Writers." *Issue* 4.4 pg8.
- Spidlik, T (1986) *The Spirituality of the Christian East* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1986) 138-39
- Tutler, A. (1998) Play Composition. In Grey B. ed. *Theatre and Drama: A Practical Approach* Ibadan: Hopes Publications
- Uka, K. (1980) Drama and Conscientisation. *Readings in African Humanities African Cultural Development*. Ed.O.U.Kalu. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers. 185-204.
- Umar, B (2000). 'Shugabannin kungiyoyin marubuta sun zama dodanni!', *Garkuwa* 1 (January): 27.
- Ut unum sint no. 84; text in *Origins* 25 (June 8, 1995) 67.
- Uwatt, E.B. (2007) "Yerima's Theatre and Nigerian History: The Trials Of Oba Avoramwen and Attahiru" in Gbemisola A. (ed.), *Muse and Mimesis: Critical Perspectives on Ahmed Yerima's Drama*, Ibadan Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Uzochukwu, S. (2001). *Traditional Funeral Poetry of the Igbo*. Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
- Wa Thiongo, N. (1986) *Decolonising the Mind The Problems of Language in African Literature*. London & Nairobi: James Currey/Heinemann.
- Wetmore, K.J. 2002. *The Athenian sun in an African Sky: Modern African Adaptations of Classical Greek Tragedy* Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Yahaya, I. Y. (1988) The Development of Hausa Literature. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 10-21.

Yakubu, A. M. (1999). Sa'adu Zungur: An Anthology of the Social and Political Writings of a Nigerian Nationalist. Kaduna, Nigerian Defence Academy Press.

CHAPTER TWO:

GIVING LIFE TO THE PAST: *ATTAHIRU* AS A HISTORICAL ADAPTATION

Ahmed Yerima is one of Nigeria's prolific dramatists and playwrights. With more than a dozen plays, most of which explore historical and contemporary issues, Yerima has carved a niche for himself as one of Nigeria's leading dramatists. He is a University teacher, (he currently teaches drama and theatre at Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria), a playwright, a literary critic, a business manager, and an administrator. He was the General Manager of the National Theatre, Lagos, Nigeria, between 2004-2009 where helped to resuscitate the National Theatre. He was also the director of the National Troupe of Nigeria. Some of his best known historical plays include *The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen*, *The Bishop and the Soul with thank You Lord*, *Kaffir's Last Game* and *The Silent Gods*. His plays reveal a variety of themes and panoply of techniques and influences, including traditional African dramaturgical practice.

In *Attahiru*, Yerima's concern is with history: a specific moment in the history of Northern Nigeria in general and the Sokoto Caliphate in particular. In the Author's Note, Yerima explains that the play owes its provenance to two significant considerations; one was the need to reconstruct the past and subject it to a process of self-criticism, and the other was a response to the challenge by Alhaji Shehu Suleiman, his good friend who after watching *The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen* dared him to turn the history of the Sokoto Caliphate into drama. In responding to these two challenges, Yerima, rather than see what he was doing as 'faction'—that is, the art of mixing facts of history with the fiction of the mind of the playwright—saw his attempt as a process of 'giving life to the past...to the dead, so that it makes new and more immediate meaning to the present.' For Yerima, 'art or drama signifies history from the written word into the visual images on stage'. This process is what Wole Soyinka describes when he says that the playwright takes 'the inhabitants of textual history on a short, trip into the realistic hinterland of the poet's imagination.' In Yerima's experience, this process 'is often subjected to further contradictions between the playwright's historic consciousness and the selective and protective sometimes elitist, arrogance of the owners of the history or worse still, the stumbling block often created by the narrow-minded ideophyte of history... Either way, I am often humbled by the outcome of the fiction of minds which guides me to the historical plays I can put my name on, and which the owners of the history can call "their own." I am, therefore, grateful to my reality'

(Author's Note, p. 7). Yerima describes his dramaturgical response to history thus:

Most times, history as told by great historians evokes sympathy, especially colonial history, as one sees one domineering force bully the minor one. But fate constantly intervenes and interrupts the lives of the people the history emerges from. For a playwright who wants to write drama out of history, I am able through the materials history provides, to subject it to a process of self-criticism, while empowering even the sometimes historical contradictions presented with illusion, immediacy and theatrical magic.

Attahiru illustrates the above process. First published in 1999, *Attahiru* is a dramatization of the heroic times of Sultan Attahiru 1, the eponymous hero of the play, and his warriors who fought and lost their lives for the freedom and integrity of their people at the battle of Burmi in 1903. In a sense, the play is also the dramatization of a momentous period in the history of Sokoto Caliphate and Northern Nigeria during the colonial period. To fully understand how the play fits into and recalls that history, it may be helpful to, first of all, lay out the significant events before and during the reign of Sultan Attahiru.

The British penetration of the hinterland of Northern Nigeria began sometimes around 1886 when Frederick Lord Lugard led his soldiers and colonial expedition team through Hausa land in an attempt to introduce the indirect rule system. Each of the kingdoms that constituted the Hausa kingdom was conquered and either had their emirs removed and replaced with another who was loyal to the British or tamed and coerced into pledging allegiance to the colonial government. A few of these kingdoms offered resistance but they were quickly defeated by the vastly superior firepower of Lugard's men. With these conquests came the establishment of British rule. The local rulers (that is, the emirs) were co-opted into the British administration through a policy of indirect rule which Lugard developed from a necessary improvisation into a sophisticated political theory.

The last kingdom to be conquered was the Sokoto emirate, the political and spiritual headquarters of the Caliphate. Prior to the conquest of the kingdom in 1903, Sokoto Caliphate had been under the leadership of Caliph Abdul-Rahman, a benign ruler who had begun

preliminary negotiations with the British colonial masters before his untimely death in 1901. In 1902, his son, Muhammad Attahiru, became the new caliph and took on the title of a Sultan. Barely three months into his reign, Sultan Attahiru found himself in a most uneasy situation: the British who had recently conquered Yola, Zaria, Kano, Kontagora, Ilorin, and Katsina, were advancing on Sokoto, the last stronghold of Hausa kingdom. As was characteristic of them, the British had written a letter to the new caliph on two different occasions offering him friendship but the Caliph did not reply. On the third occasion, he sent a reply, rejecting the offer of friendship and challenging, instead, the British to a war. The Caliph's understanding of the issue was that there was no basis for friendship or negotiation with the Whiteman because he was an infidel. On the sixth month of his ascension to the Caliphate as the twelfth Caliph of Sokoto and Sarkin Musulmi, Attahiru went to war with the British, and after one month, he was defeated. He lost his life alongside over ninety-nine of his soldiers after bravely defending his religion and the honour of the Sokoto caliphate.

As historical drama, *Attahiru* captures the last few months of Sultan Muhammadu Attahiru's reign as the Caliph of Sokoto. The play is pre-occupied with the military conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate as well as the heroic resistance put forth by the Sultan and his soldiers. The play opens on a rather humorous note. Three characters, Ahmed, the seller of date palms, Yakubu, the seller of Islamic books, prayer rosaries and other religious items, and Abbas, a blind beggar, are at the entrance gates to a mosque, exchanging banter and discussing what has happened to Abbas, who is robbed by a thief that disguised as a fat woman. It is from their discussion that we learnt that the former caliph, Caliph Abdul-Rahman, has died and a new Caliph is set to be named. It is also from their discussions that we learnt of the military conquests of Kano, Kontagora, Zaria, and Ilorin and the impending invasion of Sokoto.

When Caliph Muhammed Attahiru is sworn in, the first task he is confronted with is the restoration of peace and the impending visit of Sokoto by the British expedition team. The times were uncertain, and the new Caliph alludes to this in his first speech to the people on ascension of the throne:

CALIPH: *I am becoming the Caliph at a time when the history of our lives is at a delicate balance. At a time when the Whiteman is determined to upset the peace of our lives. But it is too early to*

dare enemies, or look for one. I shall await their moves. But let us pray for Allah's hand in the matter. Let us pray for peace. Let us pray for our children. Let us pray for the growth of our lives and position in the Islamic world. Thank you all.

In the above excerpt, the Caliph alludes to the colonial period when he refers to the 'Whiteman', as determining 'to upset the peace of our lives'. This shows that the play is set during the time of white colonial intrusion into Nigeria. It is instructive that these lines echo Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* particularly in the memorable line where one of the elders says: 'The White man has put a knife through the thing that holds us together, and things have fallen apart.'

As the play progresses, the caliph's character as a just, peace-loving and devote Muslim begins to emerge. In a significant case of land dispute between two communities in the Caliphate, his adjudication is presented as fair and just, and on every occasion when he is opportune to address the people or members of his emirate council, he never wavers in enjoining them to fear Allah, worship Him, and follow His injunctions. A few weeks after his ascension to the throne of the emirate, he receives a third letter from the colonial government of Lugard, asking for his co-operation in their plan to introduce indirect rule. The letter informs him that the Emirs of Kontagora and Bida have been removed for 'oppressing their people, engaging in slave trade, attacking traders, organising stealing parties' and their crowns taken from them. He is therefore requested to select 'new and better Muslim leaders and persons in the place of these deposed leaders to rule these new territories'. He is also reminded that 'though the British government is willing to work with' him, the British soldiers 'have already established British rule over Muslim lands all over the world.'

The letter does not go down well with the Caliph and some members of this emirate council, and after an extensive debate, it is decided that the emirate should go to war. The Caliph predicates his reasons for choosing war on the Whiteman's meddlesomeness, particularly his interference in the religion and cultural affairs of the Hausa people:

CALIPH: *(Gestures to speak, there is complete silence.) Great servants of the faith we have heard you all. Friendship is a delicate aspect of human life put there by Allah to test human will.*

To have a friend, a wise Mallam once told me, you must close one eye, but to keep the friendship going takes sacrifices, so you close both eyes. But can there be friendship between an infidel and a believer?

ALL: *No.*

CALIPH: *We have sat and listened to the different reactions to the Whiteman's letter. From the time of my grandfather, Caliph Atiku, I knew that the Whiteman smiles more than he speaks. His white flesh covers his thick, dirty and hardened soul. As for me I have never trusted a man who asks too many questions about your culture, and shows you only drawings and photographs about his.*

(...)

At every wedding fatiah, we not only pray that there should be love between the bride and the groom, but also the Holy Book says there must be honesty and patience. Without them, the marriage is built on quick sand. It will slowly sink. May Allah forbid!

(...)

To this effect, the Waziri must write to him this reply. Tell the infidel that we did not invite him to interfere with our problems. He has his religion and we have ours. (Rises. The whole court rise). As my predecessor Caliph Abdul-Rahman had earlier said, the only relationship that can exist between a believer and an infidel is...war!

In the dramatic space of the above quotation, what is clear is that the Caliphate accepts what is about to happen as a sort of manifest destiny, as the inevitable confrontation between the forces of evil and of good, between the infidel and the servants of Allah. This confrontation is given vitality by the Caliph's determined speech, his recall of his native wisdom, his reference to what

his grand fathers said about the Whiteman, and his desire to prove to himself and his people that it is a thing of destiny that they would eventually be on collision course with the Whiteman. With this declaration, the stage is set for an inevitable confrontation between the Sokoto Caliphate and Lugard's soldiers. Lugard and his men are of course reluctant to go to war, but since the caliph has declined their offer of peace, they are left with no option but to go to war. Shortly before the war, Sultan Attahiru begins to have a premonition that he will not return alive from the war. In order to forestall any confusion in the event of his death, he calls his son, MAI WURNO, and begs him never to let the caliphate down in the event of any mishap during the war. It is also at this time that we get to know that it has been predicted that one hundred years after the death of Usmanu dan Fodiyo, the progenitor and founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, the caliphate would be conquered. This much is also revealed to Sultan Attahiru in a preternatural dream.

Finally, when the war comes, the caliph and his soldiers put up a stiff resistance, defeating the British soldiers in some key territories and areas. They are also assisted by soldiers from Katsina, Kebbi, Kano, Gombe, and Nupe, all of whom come with supplies and plenty of encouragement. After several weeks of fighting, the Caliph and his soldiers are defeated in Burmi, but not without drawing much blood from the British soldiers. As is expected, the major player in the last moment of the war is the Caliph himself as captured here by Yakubu, a member of the remnant of Attahiru's warriors on flight:

YAKUBU: *Yet, the greatest moment was when the Caliph fell. As the bullet struck him, he raised up his sword and screamed Allahu-akbar! Allahu-akbar! He was a great man indeed. With the bullet he still cut down two more soldiers, then his Rawani loosened, and his cap fell. He twisted in pain. Holding on to nothing but his guts. Slowly, he started to fall. And as he fell, the Madawaki noticed him; he covered him with his shield, the Ubandoma, all forming a human shield. But the Caliph had fallen, and with his last breath, he screamed again. Amidst the noise of the gun, and dying men, a gentle breeze blew, and as if we all knew...the Caliph had gone with the passing breeze. That was when the thunderous call came...*

Yakubu's speech above should be seen in terms of how it attempts to make certain historical

personages, heroes, mainly the Caliph. By mentioning the names of the Madawaki and the Ubandoma and the roles they played in the brave battle against the White soldiers, the playwright, through Yakubu, is deliberately casting the mentioned people in the mould of historical personages. Here, we can, as people of the present seeing these people in dramatic enactment, can appreciate their roles, their bravery, and their place in history.

The significance of *Attahiru*, in the context of colonial history is emphasized. The play is set at the beginning of the 20th century, a time when colonial conquest of Northern Nigeria was at its apogee. The fall of the Sokoto Caliphate is symbolic of the defeat of Hausa land and the institutionalization of colonialism. Sokoto Caliphate represented the last bastion of Uthman dan Fodio's jihad and the defeat of that Caliphate and the Caliph may be said to symbolically indicate the conquering of a people, despite their strong will and desire to survive. But it is to the credit of the people that this conquest did not signify the erosion of their faith and culture. For, indeed, more than one hundred years after that unfortunate conquest, Sokoto is still one of the bastions of Islamic religion and Hausa culture in Nigeria today. It has also retained its designation as the seat of the Caliphate in contemporary Nigeria.

It is not easy to distil from the play how much is the figment of the author's imagination and how much is *actual* history. In other words, how does one establish the level of historical accuracy from a dramatic adaptation of historical material? The play is based on actual history. But then, the author himself also provides a suggestion regarding how this might be profitably done when he states that his purpose, in writing the play, is to subject the materials history, provides him to a process of self-criticism, while empowering even the sometimes historical contradictions presented with illusion, immediacy and theatrical magic. In other words, it would be foolhardy to imagine that everything that is presented within the theatrical space of the published drama or the open space of the theatre (were we to watch the play come alive on stage) is historically accurate. As even historians and historiographers would readily admit, history is a subjective phenomenon, often it is the product of jaundiced imagination. We remember only what we wish to remember and how we wish to remember is ours to decide. This is why Lindsay DuBoi (2000) makes the following insightful observations regarding how we should treat historical materials:

Stories about the past need to be thought about not only,

perhaps not even chiefly, as texts, but as social events. They are socially produced under specific conditions and for particular purposes, sometimes more, sometimes less consciously. Context, intent and audience shape narratives in crucial ways.

Although *Attahiru* is clearly a literary text, a historical imagination actually, it is also a social event since it is an adaptation of a known history. Thus it is important to pay attention to the baggage of politics that is wound around it. It is not simply a straightforward recollection of the life and time of Sultan Attahiru; it is this and more. A careful reading of the play reveals that the author might have deliberately recounted the events of the time the way he does for some reasons, and these reasons, which might be said to be subversive in nature, are in the spirit of postcolonial literary strategy. Firstly, there appears to be two distinct agenda underpinning the tale—one political and the other religious/ethical, but the two are certainly interlinked in crucial ways. The political agenda relates to the important issues of colonial conquest and the institutionalization of British rule. Yerima's historical imagination begins from the crucial moment of British invasion of Northern Nigeria and ends with the defeat or crushing of the resistance put up by the Sokoto Caliphate. It also offers a glimpse into the organization of social life prior to that invasion, or during that invasion, as well as the crucial role of Islam in the social and spiritual life of the people. Although this is not expressly stated in the play or in the Author's Note, Yerima's intention in the play appears to be akin to what Chinua Achebe does in *Things Fall Apart*. Achebe's motivation for writing *Things Fall Apart* was to counter the image of Africa as a historical-cultural *tabula rasa* waiting to be inscribed with European creations by Christian missionaries and colonial adventurers. It was also a reaction to novels like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson*, which depict Africans as helpless primitives and delinquent adults, respectively. Achebe (1964:157) himself expressed this corrective aim very succinctly:

This theme—put quite simply—is that African peoples did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth, value and beauty, that they had

poetry and above all, they had dignity.(157).

If one reads *Attahiru* through the same prism as *Things Fall Apart*, it is not difficult to see why one can assume that part of Yerima's unstated intention in writing the play is to refute the claim that Hausa people did not have a distinct way of life (culture) before colonial invasion, or that during colonial invasion they did not put up resistance or that they were not heroic in their rejection of Western domination. Although the play is expressly a dramatization of a specific moment in the history of Sokoto Caliphate, anyone who wishes to have a bit of cultural education (Northern or Hausa culture) can have his/her quest fulfilled by reading the play. For example, the third scene in the play gives a glimpse into the social organization of life among the Hausa, the culture of seniority, the importance of kingship institution, and the process of social justice—and all of these are compressed into one slim, very brief scene, yet no one can miss the import of that scene in the universe of that play. The world that the play invokes is one that is rocked by crisis, no doubt, but it is also one where indigenous culture and tradition hold sway. It is a world where belief in the supernatural is still rife, where the customs and traditions, social norms and etiquette, and the cultural economy of agriculture among the people—though greatly moderated by Islam—are still very much alive and relevant. There are references to political and social institutions, prominent among which are marriage and family. All these are grounded in daily rounds of activities and human emotions presented through the narrative technique of verisimilitude, and particularly in the speeches of the Sultan and one or two dramatizations.

One crucial element in the society invoked in the play is Islam, the religion around which virtually everything about the people is determined. Islam came to Northern Nigeria mainly through the trans-Saharan trade route, but its eventual popularization and spread is traceable to the highly successful jihad of Sheikh Usman dan Fodio of Sokoto in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The jihad led by Dan Fodio was directed at purifying and reforming Muslim society which at that time was marked by religious syncretism. It led to the establishment of a federation of Islamic States which recognized the overall supremacy of the Sultan of Sokoto. This Fulani Empire, which covered most of the present Northern Nigeria and Northern Cameroon, maintained its momentum for close to one hundred years. Later, it was inherited by the British colonial administration at the beginning of 20th century and received a new lease of life through the system of indirect rule fostered by Sir Frederick Lugard who became the first

High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria shortly before the invasion of Sokoto. Nearly sixty-five years after the history dramatized in *Attahiru* when Nigeria became independent in October 1960, the powerful Northern Region was still largely ruled through the Muslim emirs and their Native Administrations. The Premier of the Region until his assassination in 1966 was Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sark of Sokoto, and a devout Muslim who claimed direct descent from the Prophet. As Vice-President of the World Muslim League, he strove to draw Northern Nigeria into the main stream of Islam and was responsible for a crusade of conversion among the small 'pagan' tribes of the Region in the last years of his life. Only the Tiv area eluded the control of the Northern People's Congress, political arm of the Muslim establishment, and was the scene of violent clashes.

So, for more than two centuries now, much of Northern Nigeria has been more of an Islamic entity. This is the society invoked by Yerima in *Attahiru*. It is fitting, therefore, that the action in the opening scene of the play takes place on a Friday, Muslim's holy day, and at the entrance of a masjid, or that virtually every character in the play is a practicing Muslim. So important is religion in the lives of the people that every utterance is punctuated by a word from the Qur'an or a reference to the Qur'an. It is also significant that the war with the British is seen by Sultan Attahiru and his people as a jihad, a holy war, against the infidels who have refused to mind their business and who are seeking to impose their system of government on the people. The Caliph himself, the political and spiritual head of the caliphate, states the matter thus:

CALIPH: I hear he plans another battle for here in Burmi. I am not afraid. Allah is here with us. After two months of flight, I believe the hijra is over, let the battle begin. I am not afraid, because Allah is with us. And even if we die today, he will take us straight to heaven, because we died for him. I am not afraid because I am ready to shed the last drop of my blood to free my people. To spread the light of Islam. Are you afraid?

HAGIOGRAPHIC COMPOSITIONAL STRUCTURE OF *ATTAHIRU*

Attahiru is the eponymous hero of both the play *Attahiru* and the resistant battle against the imperial domination of Sokoto Caliphate by British forces. The framing of his character and role in the history of that heroic confrontation with the forces of imperial domination is hagiographic. This is clear from the somewhat idealizing mode he is presented in the play. As had been pointed out what hagiography as narrative literature does, is to mythologize the individual and thus ritualize history. Attahiru is a historical personage whose historical contribution to the sustenance of Islamic faith in Northern Nigeria and the preservation of the integrity of the Sokoto Caliphate in the face of colonial onslaught has continued to be ritualized. The dramatization of his life and heroic exploit in *Attahiru* is part of that ritualization of history. But beyond that, this ritualization and idealization had begun both before and immediately after his defeat and death in the battle of Burmi. Consider the following conversations between Ahmed and Abbas:

AHMED: Abbas are you mad? Sitting here begging when the whole of Sokoto is agog with fear. The white men are coming. In fact, we hear that they are now at the city gates.

ABBAS: Let them come. Let them come. The Caliph will cut them down, one by one. Let them come.

AHMED: The Caliph? Did you not hear that he lost the battle at the city gates?

ABBAS: I hear, but Allah is with the Caliph. I hear that he only left in order to prepare for the bigger war.

While it is possible to dismiss Abbas' statement as the ranting of a poor helpless beggar, the fact is that it speaks volume about the popular perception and idealization of the Caliph as a saint and a great soldier, capable of defending the Islamic faith and the integrity of the Sokoto Caliphate. When the coalition of soldiers from Kano, Kontagora, Nupe, and Gombe join forces with Attahiru's soldiers and Attahiru himself prepares to lead the battle against the British forces, the Madawaki and all present immediately seized the opportunity to indicate that they hold the

Caliph in high esteem by insisting that he inspires them with a speech:

CALIPH: I am not an orator, but a scholar of Islam, the upholder of the light of Islam, the defender of the flag, the Sarkin Musulmi, by the grace of Allah; the Commander **MADAWAKI:** They continue to pour in. Even the emir of Katsina smuggled some foodstuff to us. Gusau sent us a meat. We have enough for now. Great caliph, a speech. A speech from the Caliph!

ALL: A speech!

CALIPH: (The Caliph steps forward and the others gather round him.)

In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful. May peace and blessing be upon the Holy prophet Muhammed, his family, his companions and those like us here today who strive to follow them in goodness till the Day of Judgment.

ALL: Amin!

of the faithful.

This idealization of the Caliph is due to the fact that Sokoto, and indeed the whole of Hausa land, is a veritable fiefdom where the monarch is practically idolized, and this is also the substance of which hagiographies are made. It is important to note, also that in keeping with the hagiographic compositional structure of the play, the idealization of the Caliph is derived from a religious sentiment that recognizes the Caliph as a leader and a defender of the faith. This is why when the time comes to take on the enemy headlong; he volunteers to lead the battle himself. Thus, it is significant that even when the battle is lost, his subjects still regard him as a true hero. But his heroism does not suggest that he is beyond reproach or that he is superhuman; the fact that he dies, despite all the resources and men, and even magic, is a testament to his humanity. This ultimately, is the point of the dramatic hagiographer. As we maintained in the first chapter of this work, the aim of the dramatist is to show a historical personage in all his humanity—together with his frailties and all. In the popular imagination of Sokoto people, Caliph Attahiru was a hero

and his heroism is gradually being mythologized. But, in a typical postcolonial strategy, Ahmed Yerima's play has stripped Attahiru of any mythical essence; although we appreciate the Caliph's heroism in fighting the forces of imperial domination, we do not fail to see him as a human being capable of failing, of loving, of faltering, and of dying. What is important to us, in essence, is the moral of his exploits and the object lesson therein for this postcolonial period.

One aspect of the characterization of Attahiru as a hero is the manner in which Yerima models him after Prophet Muhammad particularly in terms of his experience. The point should be made that Yerima in *Attahiru*, is not simply utilizing images of Islam or invoking Islamic culture as a point of reference; Attahiru's status as hero depends on his Muhammad-like stature and involves an acceptance of Islamic mythology. We may draw a brief parallelism between the experience of Prophet Muhammad and that of Attahiru to press home this point. The most obvious area of convergence in the experiences of the two is to be found in the opposition they faced and their flight from persecution. Prophet Muhammad's troubles started when he delivered verses that condemned idol worship and the Meccan forefathers who engaged in polytheism. However, the Qur'an maintains that it began as soon as the prophet started public preaching. What is generally agreed upon is that as the number of followers increased, he became a threat to the local tribes and the rulers of the city, whose wealth rested upon the Ka'aba, the focal point of Meccan religious life, which Muhammad had threatened to overthrow. Opposition to his preaching became intense that he was regularly and severely condemned and persecuted until he was forced to flee Mecca in what is generally called hijra, or the flight. Along with his followers, they went to Medina where he continued his onslaught against paganism. He later waged a war against Mecca and won. Like Prophet Muhammad, Attahiru also faced persecution in his homeland, but it was a different type of persecution; it was an onslaught from external aggressors and was forced to flee his kingdom. That flight was, for Attahiru, a sort of hijra, but unlike the Prophet, he did not defeat his enemies. Nevertheless, his defeat did not deny him apotheosis, at least in the sight of his followers who regarded him (and still do) as a hero. And like Prophet Muhammad, the war he fought was against infidels. It is on these scores that Northern Nigerian Muslims will find it easy to establish an intuitive connection with *Attahiru*.

On a final note, suffice it to say that far from being a treaty on Islamic culture, *Attahiru* is an attempt to respond to Wole Soyinka and Dennis Brutus' challenge that African writer's

should attempt “the full retrieval of the African past in the quest for a contemporary self-apprehension and design for the future.”

WORKS CITED

Achebe, Chinua (1964) "The Role of the Writer in a New Nation," *Nigeria Magazine* 81, 157-60.

DuBois, Lindsay (2000) Memories out of Place: Dissonance and Silence in Historical Accounts of Working Class Argentines. *Oral History*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Landscapes of Memory (Spring), pp. 75-82

Yerima, Ahmed (1999) *Attaihru*. Ibadan: Kraftgriots

CHAPTER THREE:

CULTURE, TRADITION AND RELIGIOUS MORALITY IN *SHAIHU UMAR*

Unlike *Attahiru*, which is an outright adaptation of historical materials, *Shaihu Umar* the central focus of this chapter, is not historical in the sense of borrowing materials from a known and documented history of an important personage. Thus, the hero of the play, Shaihu Umar, is not a known historical personage. But the play is historical in the sense that the story is locatable in recognizable historical moments. It is a fiction, but one with considerable historical import.

Shaihu Umar is a play adapted from the novel by late Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. The novel contains the essence of Hausa and Islamic culture carefully compacted and relayed in a beautiful language. The novel was adapted by Umaru Ladan and Dexter Lyndersay in 1975 and since its publication it has remained one of the reference materials in the discussion of Northern Nigeria literature. At the time of adapting the novel for stage, Umaru Ladan, who was born in Zaria and a graduate of Ahmadu Bello University, had had broadcasting, teaching and public relations experience. In 1972, he was Research Fellow in Drama with the Centre for Nigerian Cultural Studies and followed this with a year at Leeds University where he took an MA in Drama. He was part of the directing and production of the film version of *Shaihu Umar* in 1976. Dexter Lyndersay, with whom he co-adapted the play, was a Trinidadian graduate of Yale University School of Drama and a Senior Arts Fellow in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, and Project director of Unibadan Masquees, its performing company. He has written, adapted and produced many plays. With his wife Dany, he created *Children's Theatre Time* for Ibadan, and later Kaduna, TV, and he produced the Trinidad-Tobago entry for the first World Festival of Black Arts in Senegal. *Shaihu Umar* is the first collaboration at adaptation between the duo.

Shaihu Umar can be read on multiple levels: in a generic sense, it can be read as a morality play or even a mystery or miracle play; from a critical-theoretical perspective, it can be seen as articulating some of the concerns of postcolonial literature; and finally, in a sociological sense, it can be analyzed as embodying the essence of Hausa and Islamic culture. In coming to grips with the play and in order to fulfill the primary aim of this chapter, we will engage the play on all of these levels.

Shaihu Umar recounts the story of a great Islamic teacher, Sheikh Shaihu Umar, whose life history is something of a mystery. The play opens on a setting in Bida, present day Niger State, at dawn, in an Islamic School where a group of young scholars are receiving instruction on the Qur'an under the tutelage of an Imam. After a short while, Shaihu Umar appears and it becomes clear that he is being awaited by two older scholars to whom he is going to narrate the story of his life. The rest of the play is devoted to the enactment of that story. As Shaihu and the scholars take their positions somewhere on stage, the narrative begins. Shortly before his birth, Shaihu's father, a poor farmer, dies leaving behind a distraught wife, Fatima, and the young son, Shaihu. A couple of months after the death of her husband, Fatima is persuaded to remarry by her mother-in-law, who recommends Makau, the most faithful servant of the Chief of Kagara, the town where they are resident. The chief is a slave merchant who constantly raids the neighbouring villages where he takes the peasant farmers into slavery and sells them. His henchmen included Kwatau, who is also his younger brother, Sarkin Zagi the protector of the Chief, and Shantali, Kwatau's kinsman. Shortly after the wedding between Fatima and Makau, one day, the Chief organized a raid which is, as usual, led by Makau. It is not a particularly successful raid but the men return with a few slaves. On their return, it becomes clear that Sarkin Zagi has evil intentions towards Makau whom he is unhappy with for being very close to the Chief as his most trusted servant. When they return to the palace ahead of Makau, he quickly tells the Chief that Makau has been plotting evil against him (the Chief) and that he does not always tell the truth about the number of slaves he captures. The Chief is incensed and quickly sends for Makau. Nothing Makau says can prevent him from being banished from the town. He is allowed to leave without his wife and son whom he promises to come for later when he is settled in another town. Later, he becomes a successful and wealthy farmer and sends for his family. However, just before his wife and son join him, Sarkin Zagi kidnaps and runs away with the young Umar. But in a twist of fate, Umar is rescued by a hyena which decapitates Sarkin Zagi and leaves Umar to the mercy of some slave raiders who take him away and leaves him with a couple in another town. Shortly after being taken to the couple, a band of slave merchants attacked the couple and take them away. The merchants later sell Umar to a wealthy Egyptian slave-trader, Abdulkarim, who takes him to Egypt and makes him his son. In Egypt, Umar is apprenticed to a great Islamic scholar who teaches him the Qur'an and turns him into a world class scholar. In the meantime, Fatima has been told that Umar is sighted in the compound of

Gumuzu, the slave-trader that takes him and his foster-parents and sells them to Abdulkarim. When she arrives in the compound of Gumuzu, it is too late; Umar has already been sold into slavery, but Gumuzu does not tell her. Instead, Gumuzu sells her to another slave-trader who takes her to Tripoli. In Tripoli, she becomes uncontrollable, insisting that she has to see her son and refuses to cooperate with her captives. For many years she is there, she refuses to do what she is told to do and rejects most of the food she is offered. She grows gaunt and very skinny. Meanwhile, in Egypt, Umar is through with his Qur'anic learning and has become a renowned Islamic Scholar, rising to the position of an Imam after the demise of the former Imam who is his teacher. Then suddenly, he begins to worry about his parents and tells Abdulkarim, who has become very fond of him, that he wishes to visit his parents in Hausa land. Abdulkarim decides to go with him, but the journey is going to be hazardous because the regular route to Hausa land has been blocked by fighters in Sudan. It is also around that time that Umar begins to have a strange dream about a Lioness whose cub is captured by a group of hunters. The Lioness, like Fatima in reality, goes out to find her cub and has to endure many days of hardship and disappointment until she finds it but cannot save it before she is killed by the hunters. The dreams dovetail perfectly with Umar's experience in real life, for, indeed, Fatima and Umar are later united in Tripoli, in the home of her captors where Umar and Abdulkarim have gone to enquire about another safe route to Hausa land. Their re-union is brief but very emotional. She is content to have seen her son alive before she surrenders to death.

Umar returns to Hausa land where he meets Makau who has become a vegetable on account of old age and disappointments of life. In Kagara where the story begins, the Chief is dead and Kwatau, who has become very vicious and wicked, is the new Chief. Like his predecessor, he organizes the raiding of neighbouring villages where he takes the pagans—mostly farmers—into slavery. When Umar returns, a revolt is planned against Kwatau by the people but Umar stops them from killing him, appealing to him and others to stop their evil deeds and turn to Allah. He also forgives Kwatau for conniving with Sarkin Zagi in the incident that led to the banishment of Makau and the ordeals that led to the death of Fatima and his own sale to slavery. The play ends on a moralistic note with the following speech by Shaihu Umar:

SHAIHU: People and brothers in Islam, I beg you,

Consider the lessons taught you by your Imam

Of Allah's infinite wisdom and forgiveness
Matters are not as difficult as you imagine;
Difficulties pass as they come.
Who has ever seen a farm yield crops
Where it has been badly infested by weeds?
Indeed, whoever cuts off his fingers
Simply because dirt touches them?
My good tidings for you is: Forgive each other
Because forgiveness is sweeter than honey
And full of blessings forgiver and receiver.
Your brother Kwatau has sinned, there is no denying;
His sins are long and wide and deeply tainted.
But he was born to your ruling family.
And should he now ask for your forgiveness
I entreat you to give it freely, for Allah's sake.
[a grumbling murmur begins, but SHAIHU cuts into it sharply]
And now to your constant raids on pagan farmers.
[the crowd is stilled.]
You know full well:
As God created you so He created them.
Your raiding is for worldly possessions

Not for the sake of God and his Prophet.

You also know that we all leave this world

As we came into it—indeed we are true brothers.

The late Chief, may Allah forgive him, was a man,

An able ruler, but a slaver of his brothers!

This evil was also in Kwatau's blood.

And whose blood among us is free of evil?

I will pray, and ask our Imam to pray for Kwatau

To keep him and ourselves on the path of Islam.

As should be evident now, *Shaihu Umar* is a classic morality play. The moral of the play is multifaceted and multidimensional. The theme of forgiveness is of course central to the play as a whole and it is the sort of forgiveness that is Qur'anic or Biblical—the sort that says forgive your enemies and do not repay evil for evil. Despite all the evils committed by Kwatau and Sarkin Zagi against Umar and his family and humanity as a whole (in the shape of slavery), Umar still finds it easy to forgive and asks others to forgive. This of course may sound impracticable but we can understand it within the world invoked by the play: a world dominated by religious morality where, despite slavery and other evils that are epiphenomenal to it, everything is done through and by way of religious conviction. For example, when the former Chief is organizing a slave raid, he does it in the name of Allah, praying for success and invoking the name of God for protection and success:

CHIEF: Pray, Imam, for our success. [*The Imam prays.*]

ALL: Amin.

Also central to the idea of religious morality in the play is the theme of Passion. The Passion here is like the Station of the Cross in Christian mythology where the sufferings of Jesus Christ are re-enacted especially during the Easter celebrations. The idea of passion, of suffering

and attaining apotheosis in the end, is central to both Christian and Islamic religions. Both Christ and Prophet Muhammad went through suffering and attained apotheosis at the end, and like them, Shaihu Umar has to go through the furnace before he becomes a renowned Islamic scholar. He is sold into slavery, his parents are persecuted, he loses his father before he even knows him, and he does not enjoy a re-union with his mother when she finally finds him. This is a classic passion play, and Umar is the quintessential historical hero. Aside the suffering that he goes through, Shaihu Umar also goes through a process of learning—he learns about the world and about the Qur'an, about how and why to forgive, and about the qualities of good leadership. Although his is not like the folklore tale of the dunce who goes out into the world seeking adventure and learns wisdom the hard way (a form that became so popular in Germany and was later to be raised to literary heights in Wolfram von Eschenbach's medieval epic *Parzival* and in Hans Grimmshausen's picaresque tale *Simplicissimus* (1669)), it is also a tale of character development. Umar's sojourn to Egypt and his tutelage under the great Imam are powerful learning experiences that are akin to what one finds in the early lives of historical heroes. And typical of such narratives, which traditionally ends on a positive note, though its action may be tempered by resignation and nostalgia, the story of Shaihu Umar ends on a note that is satisfactory to everyone (including Shaihu Umar himself), that is everyone that is in love with morality in the telling of tales. It is also a tale that is tempered by nostalgia but not resignation. Umar does not resign to his fate as an exile in Egypt despite attaining greatness as an Imam. In fact, it is of immense cultural significance that when he begins to have nostalgia about Hausaland and his parents, he recalls a saying among his people to the effect that 'whoever forsakes his home; his home will forever forsake him.' So home to him is more important than anything else, including fame and fortune.

At the beginning, the point was made that *Shaihu Umar* can be approached, from a critical-theoretical perspective, as articulating some of the concerns of postcolonial literary strategy. There are three strategies of postcolonial literary theory that are evident in the play, but before we discuss them, suffice it to say that no claim is being made here that *Shaihu Umar* is a typical postcolonial drama. If we accept Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins' definition of postcolonialism as "an engagement with and contestation [sic] of colonialism's discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies", it is not plausible to categorize *Shaihu Umar* as a postcolonial text. But then, as we said, some of the strategies employed in the play have close affinity to what

is found in several postcolonial literatures. It is important to recall that post colonialism deals with the cultural identity matters of colonized societies: the dilemmas of developing a national identity after colonial rule; the ways in which writers articulate and celebrate cultural identity (often reclaiming it from and often maintaining strong connections with the colonizer); how a colonized people's knowledge served the colonizer's interests, and how the subordinate people's knowledge is generated and used; and the ways in which the colonist's literature justified colonialism via images of the colonized as a perpetually inferior person, society, and culture.

These subject matters of post colonialism have been given more than tangential consideration in *Shaihu Umar*. Firstly, it is important to note that the play was published after the formal dismantling of imperial structures in Nigeria and at a time when Nigerian writers, as formally colonized people, were engaged in a struggle to define their cultural identity against the backlash of previous imperial dominance. It is also important to note that the novel from which the play was adapted was written and published at a time when the disparate ethnic nationalities that make up Nigeria were making serious effort to define their ethnic identity within Nigeria's national language as it includes its political and cultural formation (Falola, 1999). The novel was part of a cultural politics aimed at asserting the cultural individuality of the North of Nigeria as a separate and distinct community of people bound by an identity of culture and destiny. Finally, it is significant that the original novel was written in Hausa language. The significance of writing the novel in Hausa will become apparent if we juxtapose the assumptions of commonwealth literature and postcolonial criticism. Critics of African literature have always assumed that African writers have to write in English. Commonwealth criticism, on its own part, enthusiastically celebrated oral traditional "vernacular" literatures in Africa, but assumed that modern writers would naturally wish to write in English, in order to be able to make their distinctive contribution to the Great Tradition. But it also made it clear that they had little choice in the matter, if they wished to secure an audience worthy of the name (Larson 1972:11; Roscoe 1971: 4; Povey 98; Adetugbo 1971: 173). The idiom of choice, in these discussions, is oddly blended with the idiom of compulsion: the African writer chooses to write in English because he or she has to. Postcolonial criticism, in an apparently radical reversal of the assumptions of Commonwealth criticism, represents English language and literature and indeed literacy itself as instruments of imperial domination. In the British colonies, the imposition of English language and English literature represented claims to the superiority of British civilization which were

ultimately backed by force. Postcolonial criticism, following Fanon, argues that indigenous languages and literatures were devalued and displaced, and the colonial subject culturally and linguistically dispossessed, leading to deep loss of self-esteem and cultural confidence (Barber, 1995). African writers who, though literate in English language, choose to write in indigenous languages can, thus, be said to be responding to the ideas and agendas of postcolonial criticism. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the original writer of the novel upon which *Shaihu Umar* is based, was educated in English but chose to write in Hausa no doubt to assert his individuality and cultural particularity.

Taken together thus, apart from attempting to assert the essence of Hausa and Islamic culture in the context of Northern Nigeria as a distinct and separate society within Nigeria's socio-cultural and political heterogeneity, the play (and the novel from which it was adapted) can be analyzed as a postcolonial attempt to articulate and celebrate Hausa and Islamic cultural identity in Nigeria. Like Ahmed Yerima's *Attahiru* which we considered in the previous chapter, and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* which we have made repeated references to, *Shaihu Umar* should be thought of as a play that attempts to show that despite the unfortunate history of slavery, African pre-colonial societies were not bereft of culture and the people were not trapped in perpetual inferiority. This is the point which postcolonial literature has been making since its formal recognition as a distinct genre that is worthy of rigorous academic treatment. Indeed, as Ashcroft (1990) maintained, colonized peoples have been replying to the colonial legacy by *writing back to the centre*, when the indigenous people's write their own histories and legacies using the colonizer's language (i.e. English, French, Dutch, et cetera) for their own purposes. "Indigenous decolonization" is the intellectual impact of postcolonial theory upon communities of indigenous peoples, thereby, their generating postcolonial literature. This is one of the strategies adopted in *Shaihu Umar*, both in the novel and the play adaptation. The cultural literacy that is at the heart of the novel is a strategy of *writing back*. It is about cultural self-assertion and about reconstructing history in order to deny the claim in imperial literatures that African's past was one long history of darkness and barbarity. Colonialist's literature (like *Mister Johnson* and *Heart of Darkness*) justified colonialism via images of the colonized as a perpetually inferior person, society, and culture, but *Shaihu Umar*, like other work of that kind, is written to counter that claim. Thus the play can be said to be counter discursive in its articulation of the cultural particularity of Hausa society and people.

The other postcolonial literary strategy employed in the play is the use of allegory. The allegorical mode allows postcolonial writers to navigate seemingly difficult political and cultural terrains and to occlude whatever sense of cultural patriotism that might appear to dominate their work. Thus *Shaihu Umar* can be read as a symbolic expression of indigenous people's journey to cultural retrieval through an agonistic path that is choked by all sorts of dangers (Olaniyan, 1995). *Shaihu Umar*, the eponymous hero of the play, is symbolic of Africa's people's experience in the process of retrieving their sense of dignity and cultural pride which slavery and imperialism had denied them. Just as Umar is kidnapped and taken into slavery when he is quite young and innocent, so is the continent of Africa violated and taken hostage by all sorts of marauders, including Arabs and European slave traders. But the blame for this rape of the continent, as the play suggests, should not be attributed to the marauders alone; the people of the continent themselves should share in the blame. After all, it is not the slave marauders who triggered the wave of misfortunes that befell Umar and his family; it is Umar's kinsmen that should be blamed for starting the fire that later threatened to consume the entire town.

The final level on which the play can be engaged is the way in which it purveys the essence of Hausa and Islamic culture. From the opening scene, the general cultural tone of the play is established. All of the actions of the play are situated in the Islamic world. The actions alternate between North Africa and Hausa land in Northern Nigeria. Umar's homeland, Kagara, is an ancient town in Bida emirate, in present day Niger State. The dominant religion is Islam and the prevailing economic activities are agriculture, farming, trading and hunting. Slavery is also a big business, but it is a business that is associated with the high and powerful in that society. There is abundant evidence that the play is set during the advent of European colonial incursion into Africa. This is apparent in the conversation below between some Islamic Scholars at the beginning of the play:

SCHOLAR 1: I have heard that some Europeans have again entered Bida. Could this be true?

SCHOLAR 2: I have heard it is. They say the *bature* came along the river—along the Tsadda.

SCHOLAR 3: They have now covered everywhere like

Yajuju and *Majuju*. An Arab I met in Zango said that Egypt is now under their control.

SCHOLAR 4: Not Egypt alone, even all of Hind.

SCHOLAR 5: Yesterday a pilgrim from Mali was saying that a great Wangara warrior called Samure is resisting the French.

SCHOLAR 6: May Allah make him successful.

ALL: Amin!

SCHOLAR 7: Even now the Sultan of Istanbul is forced to consider these Europeans, otherwise...

SCHOLAR 8: What?

SCHOLAR 7: Well, as the saying goes, 'the white man shows his true colour only when he is finally leaving'.

Shaihu Umar is set around the same historical period as *Attahiru*, that is, about eighty years after the death of Uthman dan Fodio, as indicated in the conversation below among the Islamic Scholars at the beginning of the play:

SCHOLAR 1: May Allah protect us from the evil of these white people. And I have heard that the Turks are as bad as the bature.

SCHOLAR 7: It could not be.

SCHOLAR 4: It is true. How is it that you have not heard? It was Muhammadu Ahmed who drove away the Turks of Egypt from both Dar Fur and Sannar!

SCHOLAR 7: Ah! Is that the man who claims to be the

Mahdi? Allah knows how many followers he has gathered.

SCHOLAR 1: But is he the true Mahdi?

SCHOLAR 2: It is almost eighty years now since Shaihu Usman Dan Fodio talked about the coming of the Mahdi. And now many people have gone to the East just to see this Muhammadu Ahmad.

SCHOLAR 5: I heard a courtier saying that the Sultan has received some letters from Shaihu Bukar of Borno concerning the recognition of Muhammadu Ahmad as the true Mahdi.

At that time, the Islamic religion had only just begun to take root in Hausa society; hence the prevalence of pagans and the reference to the Mahdi. It is these pagans that were roundly and routinely captured and sold into slavery.

In terms of the organization of social life, the society invoked in *Shaihu Umar* is a compact one where the circle of life is defined by numerous ceremonies and rituals. For example, when Shaihu Umar is born, the naming ceremony takes place seven days later in a ceremony that included plenty of eating and drinking. Similarly, during the marriage ceremony between Fatima, Umar's mother, and Makau, the atmosphere is dominated by festivities:

[Guests gather for the continuing marriage ceremony—men to one side being entertained by the 'Yan Kama, the women to one side dancing to the music of the Amada music. The rhythms come together happily and there is some teasing as the women try in vain to get Fatimah into the dance. The lead singer makes a great comic effort to help and is rewarded with a new *riga*.]

A demonstration of the compact nature of the society can be found in the way the people relate with one another as neighbours; life is communal. For example, when Fatima is to travel to see her parents in Kano, she has no problems leaving her son to the care of her friend and neighbour, Amina. Among the children too, a similar pattern of socialization is observable; it is while the children are playing that Umar is kidnapped. The society is largely untainted with modern, western civilization while belief in magic and all sorts of supernatural manifestations

are still rife. For instance, during the birth of Shaihu Umar, there is plenty of thunder and lightning, confirming that the newborn is a being apart. Another indication of Shaihu Umar's quality as a being apart is the fact that throughout his life time, right from birth to the moment the play opens when he has become a Sheikh, he is being protected by an invisible being, probably an angel, called RUHANI. Another instance of belief in magic can be found in the scene where Makau is helped by a hunter to assume invisibility while travelling through the forest to the village where he has been banished. This shows that the Hausa society during the period actively covered by the play was dominated by religious syncretism—while the people practiced Islam, they had no aversion for magic, which is usually associated with the pagans.

WORKS CITED

- Adetugbo, Abiodun (1971) "Forma and Style". Introduction. *Nigerian Literature*. ed. Bruce King. Lagos and London: University of Lagos and Evans Brothers.
- Barber, Karin (1995) African-Language Literature and Postcolonial Criticism. *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Winter, 1995), pp. 3-30.
- Ladan Umaru and Lyndersay, Dexter (1975) *Shaihu Umar* London: Longman
- Larson, Charles R. (1972) *The Emergence of African Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana UP
- Olaniyi, Tejumola (1995) *Scars of Conquest/Masks of Resistance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Povey, John. "The Novels of Chinua Achebe." King 97-112.
- Roscoe, Adrian A. (1971) *Mother Is Gold*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DRAMATIZING THE AMAZON: BEN TOMOLOJU'S *AMINATU, THE LEGENDARY QUEEN OF ZAZZAU*.

Ben Tomoloju's *Aminatu, The Legendary Queen of Zazzau* (henceforth *Aminatu*) is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is the only play among the three plays selected for this study which celebrates the historical achievement of a woman; second, the heroine of the play, Queen Amina, is titled after the play and appears to be more iconic in the history and literature of Northern Nigeria than either Attahiru or the fictional Shaihu Umar; and finally, it is the only play (among the three selected for this study) where the idea of postcolonial subversion can be said to have achieved its profoundest impact. In explaining the play, therefore, we shall endeavour to examine each of these claims while attempting to fulfill the primary objective of this study.

Ben Omowafola Tomoloju, the author of the play, was born on December 18, 1954 in Ilaje Local Government Area, the coastal part of Ondo State Nigeria. He had his primary education in various parts of the old Western Region between 1960 -1967. He attended Christ School, Ado-Ekiti for his School Certificate and Higher School Certificate between 1968- 1974. He proceeded to the University of Ibadan and graduated with a degree in English and Literary Studies in 1978. While in the University, he also had a comprehensive training in theatre and dramatic arts. He effectively combines his career as a dramatist with that of a pace-setting arts journalist. In both cases his motive-force is humanism, especially one that protests against man's inhumanity to man across age-groups, sexes, races and creeds. His role in the development of journalism in Nigeria clearly shows the masonry of a visionary intent upon building a viable legacy for future generations of professional arts journalists. More importantly, his plays, published and unpublished, celebrate the rites and rights of posterity with "the child" at the centre of their philosophical articulation. His play *Jankariwo* (Italy, 1987), *Mujemuje* (Italy,1992) and *Amona* (Germany,1996) projected his critical poise against the political and cultural decimation of modern-day Africa, a situation that continually alienates children, youth and women in the general scheme of things. In 1997, while serving as consultant to Goethe Institut's "Afrika Projekt," he was commissioned by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to produce his play *Askari* for a campaign on tolerance and peaceful co-existence.

Against the backdrop of the genocide in Rwanda, the pogroms in Liberia and Sierra Leone and the brutal military dictatorship in Nigeria, Ben Tomolaju led his theatre train on a tour of 20 out of the 36 States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The play highlighted the plights of the child-soldier, children, women, the aged and disabled in Africa's horrendous theatres of war. In 1999, his adaptation of Goethe's "Iphigenia in Tauris," titled "Iphigenia finds Aiyelala" was produced by Goethe Institute to emphasize the essence of peace. A combination of his theatre and cultural activities in the late 1990s earned him "The Platinum Award," an initiative of *Platinum Bank of Nigeria*, as reward for professional excellence. Within the last ten years (2001-2011), Tomolaju has remained consistent in productivity and relevance in the advancement of the Nigerian culture. He led a Nigerian troupe to Ghana and the Ivory Coast in 2001 with a Germa-Susan Amatosero's play *Asylante*, a dramatic expose on young Africans seeking asylum abroad. In 2003, his play *Alafia* was produced for a UNDP/EU/TMG CAMPAIGN ON VOTER-Education in Nigeria. Also in 2003, he was appointed a member of the Creative Task Force of the 8th All-Africa Games chaired by Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka. He wrote and produced the play *Aminatu - the Legendary Queen of Zazzau* for the continental event. Two of his plays, *Askari* and *Aminatu* have been adapted and produced as movies. Quite a number of his published and unpublished plays are being read and produced in Nigeria's institutions of learning. *Aminatu* was published in Lagos, Nigeria in 2005. The play, in essence, is a dramatization of the times and life of Aminatu (or Amina), the legendary queen of Zazzau who, according to legend, expanded the territory of the Hausa people in Northern Nigeria to the largest borders in history. More than 400 years later, the legend of her persona and political acumen have continued to inspire popular imagination all over the Black world.

Amina was the warrior queen of Zazzau (now Zaria). She is also known as Amina Sarauniyar Zazzau. Sarauniya is of course the Hausa word for *queen*. It is believed that she lived approximately 200 years prior to the establishment of the Sokoto-Caliphate, the federation that governed much of Northern Nigeria before the period of British colonial rule following the Islamic *jihād* (holy war) that overtook the region in the nineteenth century. According to popular historical accounts, Queen Amina ruled for 34 years at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Her domain of Zazzau, a city-State of Hausa land, was eventually renamed Zaria, a city in present-day Kaduna State in Nigeria. Although many details of her life remain largely in dispute among historians, the fact that she existed is a matter of general acceptance. Much of

what is known of Queen Amina is based on information related in the *Kano Chronicles*, translated by Muhammed Bellow of pre-colonial African tradition based in part on anonymous Hausa writings. Other details were pulled from the Hausa oral traditions and factoids of Nigerian public. As a result, the memory of Queen Amina assumed legendary proportions in her native Hausa land and beyond. The extent of her military prowess and her performance in battle was augmented by lore and remains unclear.

The reign of Amina occurred at a time when the city-State of Zazzau was situated at the crossroad of three major trade corridors of northern Africa, connecting the region of the Sahara with the remote markets of the southern forest lands and the western Sudan. This is evident even in Tomoloju's play. It was, as Tomoloju's play indicates, the rise and fall of the powerful and more dominant Songhai (var. Songhay) people and the resulting competition for control of trade routes that incited continual warring among the Hausa people and the neighbouring settlements during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was not until later that a ruling arrangement between the Hausa and the Fulani people ultimately brought a lasting peace to the region and survived into the colonial era of the nineteenth century.

In Tomoloju's play and based on popular belief, Amina was the twenty-fourth *habe* queen, as the rulers of Zazzau were called. She is believed to have been the granddaughter of King Zazzau Nohir. Speculation suggests that she was born sometime during his reign, around 1533. This theory lends credence to the belief that Amina ruled Zazzau at the end of the sixteenth century. The citizens of Hausa land at that time displayed advanced skills in the industrial arts of tanning, weaving, and metalworking in contrast to the inhabitants of the neighbouring territories and surrounding cultures, where agriculture remained the dominant activity. The Hausa social hierarchy, as a result, was bound less rigidly in the social standings of tradition, which were based on hereditary factors.

Amina was born the eldest of three royal siblings. She was 16 years old when her noble parents, the powerful Bakwa of Turunku (var. Barkwa Turunda), inherited the throne of Zazzau. Historical accounts of Bakwa, the twenty-second *habe* of Zazzau, vary as to his relationship with Queen Amina. Although the reign of Bakwa was known for peace and prosperity, the history of the Hausa people was nonetheless characterized by military campaigns for the purpose of increasing commerce. Between the years, 1200-1700 Hausa land was, in fact, fraught with

warring parties. These descended into neighbouring territories that were inhabited by the Jukun and the Nupe to the south, in an effort to control trade and to expand the Hausa communities into more desirable environs. The Hausa, in turn, were conquered intermittently during those years by various other peoples. The Mali, Fulani, and Bornu were among the aggressors in these clashes. During the reign of Bakwa, the teenaged Amina occupied herself in honing her battle skills, under the guidance of the soldiers of the Zazzau military.

As was the custom of the region, the rule of Zazzau fell to Amina's brother, Karama, upon the death of Bakwa in 1566. Although Karama was the younger of the two, it was the male heir who took precedence in ascending the throne. The third sibling, a sister named Zariya, eventually fled the region. By the time that Amina assumed the throne, following the death of her brother in the tenth year of his rule; she had matured into a fierce warrior and had earned the respect of the Zazzau military. Amina established her dominance as the head of the Zazzau cavalry even before she came to rule the city-State.

Within three months of inheriting the throne, Queen Amina embarked on what was to be the first in an ongoing series of military engagements associated with her rule. She stood in command of an immense military band and personally led the cavalry of Zazzau through an ongoing series of campaigns, waging battle continually throughout the course of her sovereignty. This is graphically recounted in Tomoloju's play. She spent the duration of her 34-year reign in military aggression. Although the military campaigns of Amina were characterized as efforts to ensure safe passage for Zazzau and other Hausa traders throughout the Saharan region, the practice proved effective in significantly expanding the limits of Zazzau territory to the largest boundaries before and since. African chronicler, P. J. M. McEwan (1959) quoted the *Kano Chronicles*, which stated that Amina, "conquered all the towns as far as Kwararafa (to the north) and Nupe (in the south)]." According to all indications and as shown in Tomoloju's dramatization of those events, she came to dominate much of the region known as Hausa land and beyond, throughout an area called Kasashen Bauchi, prior to the settlement of the so-called Gwandarawa Hausas of Kano in the mid 1600s. Kasashen Bauchi in modern terms comprises the middle belt of Nigeria. In addition to Zazzau, the city-States of central Hausa land included Rano, Kano, Daura, Gobir, and Katsina. At one time, Amina dominated the entire area, along with the associated trade routes connecting the western Sudan with Egypt on the east and Mali in

the north. In keeping with the custom of the times, she collected tributes of kola nuts and male slaves from her subject cities. Also, as was the custom of the Hausa people, Amina built walls around the encampments of the territories that she conquered. Some of the walls survived into modern times; thus her legacy remained entrenched in both the culture and landscape of her native Hausa city-States.

Some have suggested that a neighbouring king from Kano named Sarkin Kanajeji, held Amina at a serious disadvantage in waging battle against his army, because Kanajeji's soldiers wore iron helmets for protection. Tomoloju's play does not provide veracity for this claim. Others, however, have credited Amina with the introduction of metal armour, including the iron helmets and chain mail. In Tomoloju's play, this claim is not dramatized or reported. It has been further suggested that she was responsible for the introduction of the new armour to the Hausa city-State of Kano. Because the Hausa of Zazzau were well skilled in the metalworking crafts, it is not unreasonable to infer that Amina's army was well protected by body armour.

Some historians have credited Amina with originating the Hausa practice of building the military encampments behind fortress walls. A 15-kilometer wall surrounding the modern-day city of Zaria dates back to Amina and is known as *ganuwar Amina* (Amina's wall). The opening scene of *Aminatu* gives a graphic picture of a town that is a fortress as a result of the walls surrounding it. Additionally, a distinctive series of walls, wind throughout the countryside in the vicinities of the ancient city-states of Hausa land. These came to be called Amina's walls to the rest of the world, although not all of the walls were built during the reign of Amina.

Information about the history of Hausa land during the era of Amina is sketchy, but Tomoloju's play provides a broad historical backdrop that reflects the author's indebtedness to many of the scattered historical accounts. Foreign visitors who travelled to Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries collected many of the historical accounts of those times. Other information was garnered from the oral traditions of the descendants of the early Hausa people. Historians J. F. Ajayi (1974) and Michael Crowder (1978) suggested that Amina lived in the fifteenth century rather than the sixteenth century. Ajayi and Crowder attribute their conclusion to information found in Bellow's *Chronicle*. The chronicles, which are believed to portray the history of Africa with some accuracy, date Amina back to the time of *Sarki* (king) Da'ud whose father was believed to have ruled from 1421 until 1438. In this regard there may be

some confusion with the reign of Da'ud, conqueror of Macina, who ruled from 1549 until 1582. Ajayi suggested that Hausa land suffered desperately from severe aggression from Songhai to the west during the sixteenth century. This may be unlikely that the expansionist policies of Amina prevailed at such a difficult time. Likewise reports that Amina collected tribute from Bornu may be improbable in the context of the sixteenth century, as Zaria and many other Hausa city-States had, by that time, fallen to the control of Songhai and had suffered further aggression from Bornu to the east. Such domination by Songhai and Bornu, if depicted with accuracy, preclude the possibility that the Hausa achieved extensive domination during the reign of Amina, if indeed she lived at the end of the sixteenth century.

The dearth of facts combined with the significance of the conquests of Amina has defined a legendary persona for the warrior queen of Nigeria. According to oral tradition and as dramatized in *Aminatu*, Amina took a new husband from the legions of vanquished foes after every battle. After spending one night with the Zazzau queen, each man was slain. Additionally, it is common belief that Amina died during a military campaign at Atagara near Bida in Nigeria. In the twentieth century the memory of Amina came to represent the spirit and strength of womanhood.

What Tomoloju has done is to reconstruct the factoids and lore from which the legend of Amina is constructed. Much of this is clear in the Author's Note. The play is set in Zazzau, present day Zaria, sometime around the 15th century, as noted in the Author's Note. The story begins with the return of Aminatu from one of her numerous battles cheered by her soldiers and countless admirers. She is followed in tow by a retinue of slaves—all men—captured from some of the lands she has conquered. The wider historical backdrop is the expansionist war of the 15th century where Amina was a towering figure. It was an expansionist war that saw the displacement and enslavement of large groups of people until the capture and death of Aminatu during the military campaign at Atagara. Each one of Tomoloju's characters corresponds to one of history's characters, and his play follows, in large part, the plot structure of Aminatu's story as encapsulated in popular factoids and historical accounts. The court room or palace is deliberately designed to reflect the pattern of palace designs in Hausa land during the period the play is set. Thus there is preponderant emphasis on decor which is achieved most significantly through the use of mural, colour and costume. There is a great deal of action, especially in the war scenes

before the capture of Aminatu and during court sessions when the playwright attempts to portray Aminatu as not just a Queen but a Queen with a lot of steel and savvy. For the most part, the play achieves its effect through a robust deployment of dance and music and a good deal of verbal exchanges. It is difficult not to recognize its Hausa setting particularly with the way emphasis is laid on royalty, culture and tradition.

Ben Tomoloju's *Aminatu, The Legendary Queen of Zazzau* is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is the only play among the three plays selected for this study which celebrates the historical achievement of a woman; second, the eponymous heroine of the play, Queen Amina, appears to be more iconic in the history and literature of Northern Nigeria than either Attahiru or the fictional Shaihu Umar; and finally, it is one play in which there is an attempt at projecting a virile feminist ideology against a dominant patriarchal system. This is done in the context of postcolonial criticism. The first claim has been shown, so far, to be largely true in light of the general explication of the play attempted here. The second claim can also be substantiated quite easily in few words. In Northern Nigeria, it could be said that there is no historical personage that has enjoyed the status of an icon more than Queen Amina. Many schools, streets, and several monuments have been named after her. Books have been devoted to the celebration of her achievements; and not a few feminist writers have drawn inspiration from her exploits in a male dominated world. As a result of her achievements, she has all but been hagiographised, like Attahiru. In fact, there is a sense in which we can argue that *Aminatu* is also a dramatic hagiography since it is an overly celebration of Queen Amina's achievement as a historical personage.

We may recall that in hagiography, the historical personage is often idealized or even idolized, and what the modern dramatist does is to make him or her go through a process of demystification before being finally stripped of whatever mythic essence she/he may have been imbued with in the first place. In the case of Aminatu, we see that even in her life time, she was not only idealized, she was to some extent, idolized. In *Aminatu*, we see the same process of idealization which borders on myth-making, but at the end we cannot fail to see Amina as a human being capable of feeling all the human emotions and having some of the usual human frailties. But it is in her portrayal as an Amazon that we can fully situate Ben Tomoloju's postcolonial intent. Amina's presentation as an Amazon is intended, obviously, to debunk the

claim in certain quarters that pre-colonial African societies—especially Hausa societies—were thoroughly patriarchal.

In a sense, we can argue that Tomoloju's presentation of Amina is in the classic tradition of feminism, the defining agenda of which is the problematization of patriarchy as an endangering discursive practice, and the valorization of female subjectivity "through the transformation of gendered power relations (which) might involve reshaping socially determined categories of masculinity and femininity, addressing dominant forms of (hetero) sexuality and contesting material inequalities associated with gendered differences in employment, in institutional representation and in household and personal relations" (Spelman, 1988:285). The society presented in *Aminatu* is male-dominated, no doubt, but the patriarchal institution in place does not succeed in stifling Amina's voice or in stopping her from reaching the height of her vocation. The essential transgressive idiom embedded in the play is the valorization of female power despite the numbing and demobilizing impact of patriarchy. During her time, Amina proved that a woman can rise to power, can subdue all the forces of thralldom, and can achieve greatness despite all the odds. This discursive valorization of *female power* is *a la* post colonialism as a discursive method of textual explication. In essence, it is about debunking dominant ideology; it is pointedly, about deconstructing ideologies that subdue and seek to demobilize. The ideology of patriarchy is a demobilizing ideology, and *Aminatu* should be seen as an attempt to deconstruct it.

Aminatu, The Legendary Queen of Zazzau is also an invocation of history for the purpose of underscoring its contemporary relevance. The play is basically a 're-enactment of some of the highlights in the life of the legendary Queen Aminatu of Zazzau.' As the author himself stressed, the creative exploration of the life of this legend is not an attempt at historiography.' It is in this regard that the analysis that has been done here should be seen as merely an attempt to understand the creativity of a writer rather than the apprehension of history. But then, it is not possible to carry out this analysis without situating it in historical context. In a nutshell, this is what has been attempted in this study.

WORKS CITED

- Abdullahi, S. (1970) "Some Notes on the History of Zauzau under the Hausa Kings," in M. J. Mortimore, ed., *Zaria and its Region: A Nigerian Savannah City and its Environs* Zaria.
- Adamu, M. (1984) "The Hausa and their Neighbors in the Central Sudan," In D. T. Niane, (ed.), *UNESCO General History of Africa* London and Los Angeles.
- Arnett, E.J. (1910) "A Hausa Chronicle" *Journal of the Royal African Society* 9.
- Hogben S.J and Kirk-Greene, A.H. (1966). *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of their Historical Traditions* London.
- Tomoloju, B (2005) *Aminatu-The Legendary Queen of Zazzau*. Lagos: Orbit Press

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSION

This study examines the dramatic representation of certain historical dynamics in Northern Nigeria. The thrust of the texts under study, especially, *Attahiru* and *Shaihu Umar*, are the dramatization of reality, power and the complexities of colonial history and its contemporary relevance to the postcolonial situation of Hausa land. The balance of power between Africa and Europe/America in this postcolonial period is tilted in favour of the later. The use of allegorical historiography is widening the private history of Shaihu Umar to embrace a national culture and history.

The three plays used for the study namely, Ben Tomoloju's *Aminatu Queen of Zazzau*, Ahmed Yerima's *Attahiru*, Dexter Lyndersay and Umaru Ladan's *Shaihu umar* depict the collapse of traditional arrangements in the face of colonial invasion. In *Attahiru*, the demonstration of force by the colonial invaders that sought to disrupt the balance of power in Sokoto caliphate can serve as a template for contemplating the misuse of power by various rulers in contemporary African societies. Several African countries are today in the throes of improper governance because of the legacy of colonialism. Perhaps if African societies had not experienced colonialism in the first place, the continent would have developed along a path that is determined by the African people themselves. In other words, the state of underdevelopment in Africa today is as a result of colonial history, part of which is dramatized in *Attahiru*. In the case of *Attahiru*, the study reveals that the institutionalization of the indirect rule system, following the conquest of Sokoto and other Hausa States, has a direct link with the present day system of political administration in many of the Northern States of Nigeria where chiefs and emirs wield almost the same amount of influence as elected political office holders.

The study argues that the colonial conquest of Hausa land can be seen as foreshadowing the ongoing neocolonial engagement with Africa by Europeans whereby the terms of such engagements are defined from a strictly Eurocentric perspective. Just as Lord Lugard and the colonial government determined how the conquered Sokoto people were to be ruled, in contemporary times the same Europeans control the political and economic spheres in an unequal context of engagement. The balance of power between Africa and Europe/America in

this postcolonial period is tilted in favour of the latter; it is the latter who determines the rules and contexts of engagements. This is what in postcolonial theory is referred to as ‘marginal discourse’. In *Shaihu Umar*, there is a particularly innovative approach to the explication of this scenario. The use of allegorical historiography is effective in widening the private history of Shaihu Umar to embrace a national ethos and history. Scholars maintain that allegory can be used to contest (usually imperial) versions of history and to reclaim a lost or occupied territory of meaning. They have argued that all third-world texts are necessary and are to be read in a very specific way.

This study is derived from a library based research on Tomoloju’s *Aminatu Queen of Zazzau*, Yerima’s *Attahiru*, Lyndersay and Ladan’s *Shaihu Umar*. In carrying out the analysis of these plays, resources from a variety of scholarly works were consulted. Integrated into the study are books, journals, articles, unpublished dissertation as well as magazines. Also, the study uses postcolonial discourse as its analytical framework. “Postcolonial discourse” as a theory is utilized because it is primarily directed at reclaiming a past which had been defined by a colonialist theory. This theory is concerned mainly with the question of representation and identity. The term in the general sense refers to the study of the interactions between the imperialist European nations and the society they colonized in modern times. There are essentially four assessment criteria within which postcolonial theory operates and it is these assessment criteria that undergird the present study. They include: a process of ‘writing back’, of questioning and re-presenting history, especially the history of domination or imperialism; a mode of writing that is based on pastiche, on parody, and on blatant self-referentiality, especially in terms of language use; a discursive construction of subjectivity, especially heroic subjects and agencies; an attempt to link the past and the present as one long continuum, especially with regard to the experience of colonialism and neo-colonialism. The study shows that postcolonial African literature responded and still responds with a more mythical than historical imagination to the historical experience that brought it into existence. That imagination kept it in vital touch with elements of traditional African worldview and ethos, in spite of its inspirations coming from Western literary modernism, or its linguistic and other dissociations. Through the culture-and-tradition fictions that it generated, it also gave the literature grounds from which to reject and rise above the circumstances of its own birth. Perhaps this genre of ‘dramatic historiography’ has run its course, perhaps not; it certainly has served its purpose in establishing the integrity of African

cultures. But narratives and dramatizations of the factual pre-colonial past, which should complement and give reality to the fictions, are yet to emerge fully. With a genuine interest in the actual—as opposed to the mythical—past, the great wall separating pre- from postcolonial Africa can be breached. The dramatization of this immensely long and real past is still relevant, because that past remains relevant. The internal economic, social-political, cultural, and psychological realities that made possible, and sustained for centuries, the inhumanity of slavery and the slave trade are still worth pondering over even in twenty-first-century Africa. The crime in which virtually all societies collaborated with enthusiasm and the abolition of which some resisted to the bitter end cannot go on for so long on a continent reputed for her humane values. Contemporary African drama, as seen in the study, owes the exorcising dramatization of these harrowing centuries to the victims of the trade and their descendants in the black Diaspora, and above all to the continent. As a combination of scholarly investigation and creative imagination, the historical drama is better suited than mythical accounts to do this, and to explore issues of basic morality.

The study further reveals that historical drama can give both historical and cultural self-knowledge that ordinary scholarship cannot. The documentation of the happenings in society for future generations takes many methods and one of the methods is drama. The dramatist as seen in the research enjoys a large amount of artistic license to employ materials that will create high standard drama. The use of historical materials in the plays used for the study help to celebrate the rich culture of Northern Nigeria, as well as show the decline of traditional institutions in the face of colonial onslaught. Tomoloju's *Aminatu Queen of Zazzau* is used to reconstruct the factoids and lore from which the legendary Amina is constructed. It also celebrates the historical achievement of a woman in a male dominated society. Dexter Lyndersay and Umaru Ladan's *Shaihu Umar* also celebrates Hausa and Islamic cultural identity in the country, while Yerima's *Attahiru* chronicles the fierce resistance of European imperialism by the natives in Northern Nigeria. Thus, a meditation on the actual past through historical drama is also a meditation on the present—and an anticipation of the future as depicted in Ben Tomoloju's *Aminatu Queen of Zazzau*, Ahmed Yerima's *Attahiru*, Dexter Lyndersay and Umaru Ladan's *Shaihu Umar*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Achebe, C. (1958) *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, 1958.

Ladan U and Lyndersay, D. (1975) *Shaihu Umar* London: Longman

Tomolaju, B. (2005) *Aminatu-The Legendary Queen of Zazzau*. Lagos: Orbit Press

Yerima, Ahmed (1999) *Attaihu*. Ibadan: Kraftgriots

Secondary Sources

Abubakar, S. (2003) 'The Hausa Oligarchy? Notes and Rebuttals'. In Toyin Falola (ed.) *Northern Nigeria in Historical Transition*. Ibadan: Caltop

Abdullahi, S. (1970) "Some Notes on the History of Zauzau under the Hausa Kings," In Mortimore, M. J (ed.), *Zaria and its Region: A Nigerian Savannah City and its Environs* Zaria.

Abimbola, W. (1997). *Ifa Will Mend Our Broken World*. Roxbury Massachusetts: AIMS Books.

Abel, J.(2005) *The Nature and Development of the Novel in English in Northern Nigeria; A PhD Thesis Submitted to the Department of English and Literary Studies Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.*

Achebe, C. (Ed.) (1975) *Morning Yet On Creation Day*. London, Ibadan: Heinemann.

----- (1964) "The Role of the Writer in a New Nation," *Nigeria Magazine* 81

Adamu, A. U. (1999) "Idols of the marketplace: Literary History, Literary Criticism and the Contemporary Hausa Novel," *New Nigerian Weekly*, 12 June.

----- (2000) "Criticism and the growth of knowledge: coda to an unfinished sympathy." *Weekly Trust*, May 5-11.

Adamu, M. (1984) "The Hausa and their Neighbours in the Central Sudan," in D. T. Niane, (ed.), *UNESCO General History of Africa* London and Los Angeles.

Adamu, Y. M. (1998) "Hausa Novels: Beyond the Great Debate." *New Nigerian Weekly*, 18 July.

Adedeji, J.A. (1981). *Alarinjo: The Traditional Yoruba Travelling Theatre. Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Ed. Y. Ogunbiyi Lagos: Federal Ministry of Social Development, Youths, Sports and Culture. 221-247.

- (1987) A Profile of Nigerian Theatre 1960-1970 Nigeria Magazine 107-109.
- Adeoye J. (2013) The Drama of Ahmed Yerima, A PhD Thesis submitted to the Leiden University
- Adeyemi, S. (ed.) (2006) Portraits for an Eagle: Essays in Honour of Femi Osofisan, Bayreuth African Studies: Germany.
- Adetugbo, A. (1971) "Formal and Style". Introduction. Nigerian Literature. Bruce King (ed.) Lagos and London: University of Lagos and Evans Brothers
- Agovi, K. (1985), Is There an African Vision of Tragedy in Contemporary African Theatre? Presence Africaine
- Aiyejina, A. (1988) Recent Nigerian Poetry in English: An Alter/Native Tradition. Yemi Ogunbiyi (ed.) Perspectives on Nigerian Literature. Lagos: Guardian Books Ltd.
- (2009) Esu Elegbara: A Source of an Alter/Native Theory of African Literature and Criticism. A CBAAC Lecture
- Akporobaro, F.B.O. (2001). Introduction to African Oral Literature. Lagos: The Lighthouse Publishing Company Limited
- (2008) Introduction to Poetry. Lagos: Princeton Publishers.
- Andrew Chandler (ed.) (1998) The Terrible Alternative. London: Cassell.
- Andrews, D. (1976) Film in America. New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Arnett, E.J. (1910)"A Hausa Chronicle" *Journal of the Royal African Society* Vol. 9
- Ashcroft, B. et al (1989) The Empire Writes Back. London & New York: Routledge
- Ashcroft, B. (2000) Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concept. New York: Routledge.
- Awodiya, M.P. (1995) The Drama of Femi Osofisan: A Critical Perspective. Ibadan: Kraft Books.
- (ed.) (1993) Excursions in Drama and Literature: Interviews with Femi Osofisan Ibadan: Kraft Books.
- (1975) Femi Osofisan: Interpretive Essays 1 Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts & Civilization.
- Awoonor, K. (1974). Guardians of the Sacred Word: Ewe Poetry. New York: Nok Publishers.

- Azuonye, C. (1998) *Kaalu Igiirigiri: an Ohafia Igbo Singer of Tales*. In Okpewho I. (ed) *The Oral Performance in Africa*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Behr-Sigel, E. (2001) "The Kenotic, the Humble Christ," In Michael Plekon and Sarah Hinkley (ed.) *Discerning the Signs and the Times*. Crestwood, N.Y.: Saint Vladimir's Seminary,
- Barber, K. (1995) *African-Language Literature and Postcolonial Criticism*. *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Winter, 1995), pp. 3-30
- Blytone, A. (2007) *Creativity and Adaptations: Theoretical Issues*. In Grey D. ed. *Theatre and Drama: A Practical Approach* Ibadan: Institute of African Studies.
- Boyd, J. and Mack, B. B. (1997) *Collected Works of Nana Asma'u, Daughter of Usman dan Fodiyo (1793-1864)*. East Lansing, Michigan State University Press.
- (2000). *One Woman's Jihad: Nana Asma'u Scholar and Scribe*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Brad, S. G. (1999) *Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Harvard University.
- Brent, S. (1993) "The Passion of Perpetual," *Past and Present* no. 139 (May, 1993) 3-45.
- Budelmann, F. (2004) *Greek Tragedies in West African Adaptations*. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*.
- Chinweizu, O. J. Madubuike, I. (1980). *Towards the Decolonisation of African Literature*. Vol.1. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Clerk, E. (1980) *Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre*. London: Oxford University.
- Croff, B. (2006) *Antigones Boat: The Colonial and the Post colonial in Tegoni: An African Antigone by Femi Osofisan* In Sola Adeyemi (ed.) *Portraits for an Eagle: Essays in Honour of Femi Osofisan* Bayreuth African studies.
- Cunningham, L.S. (2002) *Contemporary Martyrs: Some Recent Literature*. *Theological Studies*.
- (1999) "Saints and Martyrs: Some Contemporary Considerations," *Theological Studies* 60: 529-37.
- Darah, G. G. (1981) *Dramatic Presentation in Udje Dance Performance of the Urhobo Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Ed. Y. Ogunbiyi Lagos: Federal Ministry of Social Development, Youths, Sports and Culture.
- (1982) *Satire in Udje Dance Songs of the Urhobo*. PhD dessertaion, Department of English, University of Ibadan.

- (1988) *Literary Development in Nigeria*. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi.
- Daniel, B. (1999) *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University.
- DuBois, L. (2000) *Memories out of Place: Dissonance and Silence in Historical Accounts of Working Class Argentines*. *Oral History*, Vol. 28, No. 1, *Landscapes of Memory* (Spring)
- Donovan, S and Fjellestad, D and Lunden, R. (2008) *Authority Matters: Rethinking the Theory and Practice of Authorship*. New York and Amsterdam: Rodopi
- Deliziosi, F. (2001) *Don Puglisi: vita del prete palermitano ucciso della mafia* (Milan: Mondadori).
- Doherty, J. (1997) "The Wider Horizon of the Algeria of the Heart," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 32
- Early, S. C. (1989) *Film Adaptations in America*, *Ibadan Theatre Studies* (1): 14-9.
- East, R. M. (1943). "Recent activities of the Literature Bureau, Zaria, Northern Nigeria." *Africa* 14(1): 71-7.
- Echeruo, M.J.C. (1981) *The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Ritual* In Ogunbiyi, Y. (ed.) *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book* Lagos: Nigeria Magazine.
- Emenyonu, E. (1988) *The Rise and Development of Igbo Literature*. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi 33-38
- Ellerman, E. (1993) *The Passion of Perpetua: A generic Approach to Beti's Perpetua Research in African Literatures* 24(3):25-34.
- Ezeigbo, T. A. (1991) "History and the Novel in Africa." In *African Literature and African Historical Experience* Chidi I. (ed.) Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Fredric, J. (1986) "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism", *Pretexts*, III/1-2, (1991) 86.
- Falola, T. (1988) *Earliest Yoruba Writers*. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 22-32
- Finnegan, R. (1970). *Oral Literature in Africa*. London: Oxford Press.
- Fleishman, A. (1971) *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP.
- Furniss, G. (1998) *Documenting Kano 'Market' Literature*. *Africa* 98 (3): 123-141.
- (1994). *Ideology in Practice: Hausa Poetry as Exposition of Values and Viewpoints*. Koln, Rudiger Koppe.

- (1996). *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture in Hausa*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute.
- Gail A. (2000) *The Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography*. New York: Routledge,
- Gilbert, H. and J. Tompkins, J. (1996) *Postcolonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Gillian C. (1998)"Bodies and Blood: Late Antique Debate on Martyrdom, Virginity, and Resurrection," in *Changing Bodies*, ed. Dominic Montserrat. London: Routledge 99-115.
- Guillon, R. (2001) *Si nous nous taisons ... Le martyre des moines de Tibhirine*. Paris: Calmann-Levy.
- Glen, J. (2006) *Contemporary Theatre Practice* London: Routledge.
- Grey, A. (2008) *The Practice of Adaptation*.
- Hall, E. (2004) Introduction: Why Greek Tragedy in the late Twentieth century?
- Hardwick, L. (2004) *Greek Drama and Anti-Colonialism: Decolonizing classics* In Hall, E. et al (ed.) *Dionysus since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*. Oxford University Press.
- Hardwick, L. and Gillespie, C. eds. 2007. *Classics in Post – Colonial Worlds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hagher, I. (2003) *The Kwagh-hir Theatre (A Metaphor of Resistance)* Ibadan: Caltop Publications Nigeria Limited.
- Hogben S.J and Kirk-Greene, A. H. (1966) *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of their Historical Traditions* London
- Herrick, S.K. (2007) *Imagining the Sacred Past: Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press
- Irele, A. (2001) *The African Imagination Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Isola, A. (1988) *Contemporary Yoruba Literary Tradition*. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 73-84
- (2004) *Being and Becoming Anglophone, Then and Now*. A Public Lecture Delivered at the instance of the Department of English, University of Ibadan.
- Jeyifo, B. (ed.) 2002 *Modern African Drama* New York and London: W.W. Northern & Company, Inc.

- (1988) *The Language Factor in Modern Nigerian Literature*. ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 68-72.
- John C. (2000) *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of the Saints in the Early Christian West* New York: Oxford University.
- Joyce S. (1997) *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman* (New York: Routledge.
- Kiser, J. W. (2002) *The Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love, and Terror in Algeria* (New York: St. Martin's, 2002)
- Kofoworola, E. O. (1981) *Traditional Forms of Hausa Drama*. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 164 180.
- Larson, C. R. (1972) *The Emergence of African Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana UP
- Larkin, B. (1997). "Indian films and Nigerian lovers: media and the creation of parallel modernities." *Africa* 67(3): 406-39.
- (1999). "Theaters of the profane: cinema and colonial urbanism." *Visual Anthropology Review* 14(2): 46-62.
- Larkin, B. (2000). "Hausa dramas and the rise of video culture in Nigeria." In Jonathon Haynes (ed.) *Nigerian Video Films*, pp. 209-41. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.
- Law, R. (1977). *The Oyo Empire C. 1600- C. 1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (1997) "Oral Tradition as History." *Writing and Africa*. Ed. Mpalive-Hangson Msiska and Paul Hyland. London: Longman.
- Lindfors, B. (1982) *Early Nigerian Literature* Ibadan: Caltop Publications Limited.
- Loraux, N. (2002) *The Mourning Voice: An Essay on Greek Tragedy*. Trans. Elizabeth Trapnell Rawlings, Ithaca, NY, and London Cornell University Press.
- Lord, A. (1978) *The Gospel As Oral Traditional Literature*. In William O. Walker, Jr. (Ed.) *The Relationship Among the Gospels: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, 33-91. San Antonio: Trinity University Press.
- Mabogunje, A.L. and Cooper, J.D. (1971) *Owu in Yoruba History*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Malumfashi, I. (2000) 'Jana'izar adabin kasuwar Kano', *Garkuwa* 1 (January): 23; 2 (April): 31.
- McDonald, M. and Walton J. M. (ed.) (2002) *Amid Our Troubles: Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy*. London: Methuen.

- McGlynn, D. (1997) "Atlas Martyrs," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 32 (1997).
- Mora, A. (ed.) (1989). *The Abubakar Imam Memoirs*. Zaria: NNPC.
- Muhlenberg, E. (1997) "The Martyr's Death and its Literary Presentation," *Studia Patristica* 29: 85-93.
- Ogundeji, P.A. (2003) *Forms of Traditional Theatre Practice in Nigeria (Introduction)*. Dapo Adelugba on Theatre Practice in Nigeria. ed. A. Dasylva. Ibadan: Ibadan Cultural Studies Group. 3-33.
- Ogundele, W. (2002) *Devices of Evasion: The Mythic versus the Historical Imagination in the Postcolonial African Novel*. *Research in African Literatures* 33(3): 125-139
- Ogude, S. E. (1991) "African Literature and the Burden of History: Some Reflections." In *African Literature and African Historical Experiences*. Ed. Chidi Ikonne, Emelia Oko, and Peter Onwudinjo. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Ogude, S. (1983) *Genius in Bondage A Study of the Origin of African Literature*. Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press, Ltd.
- Ohaeto, E. (1982) *The Nature of Tragedy in Modern African Drama*. *Literary Half Yearly*.
- Okonjo-Ogunyemi, C. (1988) *Women and Nigerian Literature*. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 60-67.
- Okpewho, I. (1980) "Rethinking Myth." *African Literature Today* 11.
- Omotoso, K. (1975) *The Form of the African Novel*. Akure: Fagbamigbe Publishers.
- Olaniyi, Tejumola (1995) *Scars of Conquest/Masks of Resistance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Osofisan, F. (1997) *Playing Dangerously: Drama at the Frontier of Terror in a Post Colonial State*, Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.
- Osofisan, F. (2001) *Insidious Treasons: Drama in a Post Colonial State (essays)* Ibadan: Opon Ifa Readers.
- Osundare, N. (2002) *Singer of the New Dawn: Modern Nigerian Writers of the Second Generation*. Unpublished paper.
- Pieterse, C. and Duerden, D.(ed.) (1972) *African Writers Talking London*. London: Heinemann.
- Roscoe, A. (1971) *Mother Is Gold*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP
- Richard, M. (2001) "The Saints: An Ecclesiological Reflection," *Theology Digest* 48 (Winter, 303-17).

- Richards, S. (1996) *Ancient Songs set Ablaze: The Theatre of Femi Osofisan*. Washington: Howard University Press.
- Robert, R. (2000) *The Catholic Martyrs of the Twentieth Century* New York: Crossroad.
- Rubin, D. (1997) *African Theatre in a Global Context*. In *The World Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Theatre Vol. 3*. London & New York Routledge.
- Sekoni, R. (1988) *Oral Literature and the Development of Nigerian Literature*. ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 46-52.
- Skinner, A. N. (1970). "NORLA: an experiment in the production of vernacular literature 1954-1959." *Revue des Langues Vivantes* 36(2): 166-75.
- Sobrino, J. (2001) *Christ the Liberator: A View from the Victims* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis).
- Soyinka, W. (1976). *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Soyinka, W. and Dennis, B. (1974) "Declaration of African Writers." Issue 4.4 (1974): 8.
- Spidlik, T. (1986) *The Spirituality of the Christian East* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1986) 138-39 .
- Thomas S. (2001) "Salvadoran Martyrs: A Love that Does Justice," *Horizons* 28 (Spring, 2001) 7-21.
- Tutler, A. (1998) *Play Composition*. In Grey B. ed. *Theatre and Drama: A Practical Approach* Ibadan: Hopes Publications
- Uka, K. (1980) *Drama and Conscientisation. Readings in African Humanities African Cultural Development*. (Ed.) O.U.Kalu. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers. 185-204.
- Umar, B. A. (2000). `Shugabannin kungiyoyin marubuta sun zama dodanni!', *Garkuwa* 1 (January): 27.
- Ut unum sint no. 84; text in *Origins* 25 (June 8, 1995) 67.
- Uwatt, E.B. (2007) "Yerima's Theatre and Nigerian History: The Trial Of Oba Ovoramwen and Attahiru" in Gbemisola A.(ed.), *Muse and Mimesis: critical Perspective on Ahmed Yerima's Drama*, Ibadan Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Uzochukwu, S. (2001). *Traditional Funeral Poetry of the Igbo*. Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
- Wa-Thiongo, N. (1986) *Decolonising the Mind The Problems of Language in African Literature*. London & Nairobi: James Currey/Heinemann.

Wetmore, K.J. (2002) *The Athenian sun in an African Sky: Modern African Adaptations of Classical Greek Tragedy* Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Yahaya, I. Y. (1988) *The Development of Hausa Literature*. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. 10-21.

Yakubu, A. M. (1999). *Sa'adu Zungur: An Anthology of the Social and Political Writings of a Nigerian Nationalist*. Kaduna, Nigerian Defence Academy Press.