

Playwright as a Communicator: An Artist's Intervention in a Socio-Politically Dysfunctional State

YEMI ATANDA*, Ph.D

Abstract

The focus of this study is to examine Olu Obafemi as a playwright with the specific choice of *Scapegoats and Sacred Cows* as paradigmatic enunciations of his interventionist motif in a dysfunctioning state for socio-political change. The objective is to show the extent of the playwright's revolutionary aesthetics in the materialist perception in style, language and content. A combination of analytical and critical methods is adopted to examine the primary source and George Lukacs' Marxist Sociological Theory is used to interrogate Olu Obafemi's revolutionary aesthetics in the play. The root of the dramatist oeuvre of Olu Obafemi is purely ideological which imbues his understanding of the nature and life of his society. The playwright's ideology amplifies social realism with its root in revolutionary aesthetics. The import of this is that man is at the epicentre. It is evident from this study that the playwright relies on history, culture, socio-political and economic situations of his society, Nigeria, in espousing and communicating his ideas and dramaturgy. Creative writers, especially playwrights, should strive to intervene in socio-political and economic situations of their milieu for a just society.

Key Words: Playwright, Intervention, Social Realism, Revolutionary Aesthetics, Socio-Political Dysfunction.

Introduction

This paper examines revolutionary aesthetics of Olu Obafemi as an interventionist in socio-political dysfunction, using his play, *Scapegoats and Sacred Cows*, for a better change in Nigeria. A good writer must be ready to act, not only as an interventionist, but as the Conscience of his people (Osofisan, 1997) as he engages his reader and audience. He/she must speak on behalf of his people. It is obvious that Olu Obafemi, a playwright came on board and was conscious of his role, to willfully play and express his ideological position in the 1970s; when according to Gbilekaa (1997), the concern was to condemn the political dysfunction and decadent socio-economic practices. This was the period Nigeria had just come through the Civil War, and the period of mono-economic oil boom; the military government defocused and corruption was at its peak. This

*Dr. Yemi Atanda, Ph.D., is the Head of Department, Department of Performing Arts, Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State, Nigeria.

period marked the birth of the second generation of Nigerian playwrights with the penchant for their ideological commitment of the materialist perception. Femi Osofisan is said to be the leading light of that era, who observes that, “the mood that colours contemporary theatre is one of commitment and even aggression” (cited in Ogunleye, 2012, p. 28).

In the African experience, many great writers; playwrights, novelists, poets, musicians, have espoused through their works the awakeninng need to engage socio-political situations in their immediate societies. Great names like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Gabriel Okara, Robert Serumaga, Chris Okigbo, Kofi Awoonor, Ola Rotimi, Alex La Guma, Sembene Ousmane, Ngugi wa Thiongo, Femi Osofisan, Tess Onwueme, Zulu Sofola, Fela Anikulapo and host of others, despite their different ideological leanings, have attempted to construct and deconstruct in their creative endeavours the cultural dynamism, socio-economic and political situations in the Continent of Africa. A good example is Wole Soyinka, the first African Nobel Laureate, whose literary works like *The Interpreters*, *A Dance of the Forests*, *The Beatification of Area Boys*, *The Trial of Brother Jero*, *Kong’si Harvest*, *Madmen and Specialist*, *King Babu* and others, and his extra literary activities have earned him the wrath of the state power. A significant bold and daring display of Soyinka’s interventions beyond creative impulse was shown in October 1965 when he, according to Jeyifo (2004, p. 6), on “behalf of free Nigerians” walked into, under a ‘serious disguise’, the building of the Nigerian Broadcasting Service in Ibadan to play on air his own pre-recorded statement, instead of the recorded address of the newly elected government of the Western region. Also, his role as a prominent member of the Third Force, when the battle line had been drawn between the Federal government and the Biafra government, to mediate the hostilities, signifies how a writer can intervene in a socio-political situation and damn the consequences. The graphic accounts of this could be read in his prison memoir, *The Man Died*. He was in gaol for two years in consequence of his roles and attempts to avert the Nigerian Civil War. In the words of Balogun (2012, p.264), we sum-up to evince how a writer can intervene in the affairs of the socio-political climate of his society as thus:

Surely, there is no denying the fact that Wole Soyinka, before the outbreak of the war had been known for his critical positions about the cultural and socio-political situations of Africa and the country. Through his poems, plays and comments at various for a, he celebrated African cultures, attacked racism, condemned Colonialism and punch (sic) holes in policies and actions he considered Obnoxious everywhere.

Soyinka, no doubt has gone beyond the level of celebration and condemnation, but actually put his life on line for the total emancipation of Nigeria from a droningly state.

This paper briefly describes Olu Obafemi’s biography and situates how his background influences his playwriting as a social realist, who avoids Marxist

cants, yet intervenes in the socio-political situations as a revolutionary playwright. Specifically, the methodology is to critically examine *Scapegoats and Sacred Cows* as a way, a revolutionary writer intervenes in the socio-political situation of his society.

Theoretical Framework

The bedrock of this study is George Lucas' Marxist Sociological Theory (Lukacs, 1963) viewed as a corner stone in modern literature and the Marxists' theory of art where a writer becomes ideologue as the result of the extreme partisanship of literature. He stresses that literary works consist a world-view or ideology, and system values of human typical characters, concrete situations and multi-dimensional reality (Haslett, 2000). In this direction, literature, according to Lukcas (Cited in Udenta, 1993, p.34) portrays that "the course and content; it draws together the threads of narration; it enables the artist to choose between the important and the superficial, the crucial and the episodic....The more lucid the perspective-the more the economic and the striking the selection". Therefore, life under capitalism exacerbates individual's egoistic tendency and isolation.

Lucas' approach emphasises content above the form of literary works, because it is not really concerned with the aesthetic style of a work of art but rather what the writer's intention is about. Fischer (1963) posits that the content of society is on the axial production and reproduction of life, ranging from the fact that human beings fundamentally are concerned with what to eat, drink, and be clothed and housed, to the vast array of modern tools, machines, and productive force. It is important to note here that Lucas' Marxist sociological theory is a fusion of Hegelian concept of dialectics and Karl Marx's and Fredrick Engels' Marxism (historical and dialectical materialism). The theory stresses the relationship between form and content of a work of art. That is form and content cannot exist separately, unlike the bourgeois ideology which raises formalist approach above content. To the Marxist sociological approach, content exists in form and vice-versa. So, content and form exist in unity but also interact with each other with a priority effect in the work of art from time to time. This signifies the reason why in the course of development of an art, a new content may be retained in the old form for some time but ultimately, a change may occur in the old form giving way to the new one- that the past may influence the present to usher in a better future.

We have identified two lapses from the Marxist sociological theory: first, the approach raises critical point on the quality of work for its attempts to indoctrinate the mind in the service of literature and art; its effect is narrow in critical scope. Second, the theory gives way for propaganda. According to Bamidele (2000, p.16), Marxist sociological theory, "the quality of works produced through Marxist's prescription is often seen as overtly propagandistic in tone and texture". Nonetheless, the theory in its dialectical approach posits that elements in a thing or a process exist both in unity and opposition to one another and that the conflicts arisen there from are responsible for changes and development. It recognises that the elements in something or process do co-

operate with one another but it does not uphold the fact that the complementary nature also gives rise to changes and development.

Marxist criticism of African literature, as Olaniyan & Quayson (2007) submit, has been the definition of literature in relation to Marxist philosophy as essentially a vehicle of class struggle. But the notion of 'class' has been conceived in varied ways by African critics and writers, apart from its demerit with regards to social relations within the space and site of a nation. This term has also been interpreted within the larger scope of colonisation, decolonization, post-colonization and cross-cultural contacts. Our adoption, therefore, of George Lucas' Marxist sociological theory in the study of the play *Scapegoat and Sacred Cow* particularly in radical/social realism is based on his materialist perception to see a change towards socio-political development, and by and large, other facets of human endeavours in Nigeria.

A Playwright as an Interventionist Communicator

The extent of the responsibility of a writer is succinctly drawn by Breytenbach (2007), a writer himself who had suffered so much under the apartheid government in South Africa, to have two tasks to perform in his society. First, he was of the opinion that a writer should persistently question and criticize the mores and attitudes, actions and in-actions, myths and realities of his society. Second, a writer, by and large is expected, in Breytenbach's mind, to be exponent of the aspirations, expectations, dreams of his people. However, he did not lose the sight of the fact that the moral rectitude on self, seer and political evaluator may not be criteria for 'good writing, because there are well known 'good' writings that can "come out of profound dishonesty, decadence, treachery. Within the context of this research, a writer whose goal is to ensure positive change must constantly gauge, as Breytenbach posits, "to be exponent of the aspirations of his people" (166).

Chinua Achebe, in his popular essay entitled as "The Novelist as Teacher", (1965) which was reprinted in Tejumola Olaniyan & Ato Quayson's *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* (2007), posits that what society expects of a writer is to make his arts functional to that society. That is what society expects of its writer. To him, a writer is not just to indulge in self-satisfaction, but to educate. A writer is simply a teacher to his society. And Kermode (1967) expects a writer's imagination to lead him to "instructive route" by the way of deconstructing society. We say from here that a writer is not only expected to tread the 'instructive route', but, however, must be ready to 'pay the price'. And to ensure, as Soyinka (2001) posits that "no matter under any disguise of suppression, oppression, censorship; or by the imposition of a secular and theocratic ideologies; a writer's voice must not be silenced". In this case, a creative writer in general, and a playwright in particular, is expected, Soyinka (2007) says further, to "bear witness from within his own society, from within his own milieu and in defence of his assailed humanity" (cited, Olaniyan & Quayson, 2007, p.143). A writer is a visionary. Through this he projects ideals for his society. And by doing this he may serve as a prophet according to

waThiongo (1988) by correctly reflecting the events and conditions of realities to come in his society.

From the foregrounds, Olu Obafemi as a social realist writer, there is the need to really consider his brief biography. This is imperative because, a writer does not really write out of a vacuum, a writer is steeped in his/her social custom, culture, education, religion and his environment. Olu Obafemi was born on 4th April, 1950, at Odo-Afin Quarters, Kabba, but a native of Akutupa-Kiri in Kogi State, Nigeria. Maiye (2000, p. 10), in his words says that Obafemi's "mental power, his wrestling prowess despite his slight frame, an intrepid predilection to say the truth whatever the consequence, and a gregarious tendency, which betrayed elements of leadership"; foretells Obafemi's futuristic actions and in-actions in the socio-political events of his country, Nigeria. As a good and dexterous wrestler, Obafemi was bold, determined, daring and calculative. These attributes made a man out of him in his later years as a leader, a unionist, a social critic, a playwright and a teacher of men and women. He was well cultured, and as a child, he was always avoiding, "any childhood ethical misdemeanour" (12), a trait that always ignites him to fight against any social injustice in all his creative works, and by and large his encounter with realities of his environment. His role as the Chairman of ASUU, University of Ilorin Chapter, and other leadership positions make Obafemi an outstanding and remarkable as Abraham (2000, p.38) depicts him that, "he stood by and fought for the truth". As a socialist whose penchant for Marxist ideology makes him to abhor injustice, he was always striving for the welfare of his academic colleagues and students; in doing this he had experienced bitter encounter with the authority and the State Security Agents. To sum it up, it is compelling to quote the apt attributes given by Adegbija (2000) to elucidate the man in Obafemi and his mien for social justice:

Olu has the reputation of being a responsible and a solid Social critic who finds injustice and inequity intolerable, distasteful and unacceptable wherever and whenever they occur or manifest themselves. Against all manners of oppression and unfairness, Olu's public lectures, writing in the papers, or interacting at an interpersonal level. Some have dubbed him a socialist Marxist because of his love for the masses and frequent anti-oppressions stance (44).

Olu Obafemi is a 'visionary' and 'revolutionary' playwright according to Bamikunle (2000). His visionary ideology taking cue from the perception through which he gauges the state affairs of the socio-political and economic systems as they affect the citizens. This is has imbibed from childhood background and training. This vision becomes revolutionary, when it is not just a reactionary perception of despair, as natural and unchangeable; but a radical one. This means his revolutionary vision makes his theatrical idioms for the purpose of changing his society for better. The revolutionary aesthetics of Obafemi's drama is ingrained on the matrix of the Marxist principle of literary theory. This

theory of aesthetics is centred on discourse (Atanda, 2012). In the analysis of this theory in the body of works of the second generation of Nigerian playwrights, both the residual (folk theatre) and the emergent (of the radical ideology) create oppositional constituents to produce counter aesthetic mode against the dominant (European theatre or its apologists), tradition. This emergent tradition reflects conscious materialist ideological commitment, “with a markedly revolutionary approach to class ‘struggle’, feminist concerns and the social ‘incoherence’ which emanates from capitalism” (Bodunde, 2000, p.77). Obafemi’s plays are constructs based on social and democratic contents in their aesthetic components to satisfy the demands of revolutionary changes in a social order. His drama is greatly influenced by Bertolt Brecht, due to its centralisation on people oriented plays with collective bargaining to wrench the true ‘beings’ from oppressive clutches of the dominant class. His plays manifest the “unity of themes, consistent working-class and progressive peasants’ perspective, observation of the laws of dialectics in ideo-aesthetic pursuits; revolutionary optimism... (Udenta, 1993, p.119).

Scapegoats and Sacred Cows.

The play, *Scapegoats And Sacred Cows*, has compressionist setting, prison. The characters do not answer to their real names, but in numbers with image of prisoners. Characters like 221, a practising journalist, 222, is otherwise known as Gafa or Tortoise, a well known Social and Human Rights crusader, and others like 218, 220, 219 and 210 are inmates suffering under the yoke of the military government in a society that is known as Nigeria. The montage of the play depicts a cell where pandemonium, chaos and torture become the daily experience of the prisoners. While suffering under the hands of ‘khaki boys’, who derive satisfaction in dealing with ‘animals’, the inmates, in return, greet them with groans and curses.

The presence of Gafa, 222, imbues hope and joy in other inmates. They know him as their ‘saviour’, or the hope of the masses, seeing him then, brings light into the darkness of their hearts and hope that the end of their incarceration is at hand. True to their expectations, Gafa engages ITS- who is otherwise called Inside-of-the-stomach, a representative of the authority and its harvests of torture, corruption and depression, in dialogue. Gradually, using a form of Socratic dialogue, he makes ITS to see himself as a brute with modicum of intelligence and brutes like himself in the corridor of power, who are the sacred cows. The scapegoats are the masses, ordinary citizens, who bear the debacle as they must protect the lives of their leaders. ITS realises that the irony is that the masses cannot protect the so called leaders, but people like Gafa are protected. This comes to fore when ITS aims gun at Gafa’s head, there are deafening shouts, frightening trepidations, and the shouts that call “Free Gafa, Free Gafa... We want him” (p. 34).... Truly, they want their hero, a man of the people.

The last episode as the “ prison doors open on to the stage, and transform into a courtroom” – stage direction (p.36), depicts the legal procedure in anecdote. Hare, Antelope, Ave, Fox, *Obọ* (monkey), *Ekun* (tiger), and *Esin* (horse), are all officers of the law. This adjudication is taken by the prisoners

themselves, in a role-playing technique by actors, as they assume new roles as lawyer and judges. Prisoner 220 is Ekun, the judge, character 219 stands in as *Esin*, the prosecutor, 218 leads the defence Counsels for Gafa, and the court proceeds to try Gafa, for 'mockery offences' of defecation, after overfeeding in a feast he is never invited to. At the end, Ekun, the judge pronounces Gafa free, and that he should be bailed in his own personal recognition. He adjourns the case indefinitely. The entire Animal Kingdom bursts into joy and happiness as everybody sings the song of "Kurubete", a folkloric song, narrating the story of a society.

Ironically, the power that he feels that Gafa, the Tortoise should not be released, they take him back to the prison. But all the inmates, in their militant postures, ferocious looks, waiting defiantly for the prison officers, form a barricade at the entrance to the cell, and Gafa is left the hook of the authority. Their hero is eventually saved, the hope is that Gafa will continue to fight on their behalf in the real world.

In the *Scapegoats and Sacred Cows*, the playwright depicts the culture of oppression "on the current realities of individualized and collectivized struggle and resistance to forces of dictatorship" (Obafemi, 2003, p.v). This picture reminds us of the culture of organized killings in the streets of Lagos. Or, silent elimination through scientific methods in the draconian era of General Sani Abacha in Nigeria.

Obafemi, in order to create an oppressive atmosphere in the action of the play, uses prison as the setting to generate a metaphor of depression. The prison suggests, at a microscopic level- a compressionist setting, oppressive tendencies suffered by some individuals in Nigeria. Although, the playwright uses episodic technique which does not give sense of unity of action within the concept of conventional dramaturgy. This method, however, places some of his plays like *Naira Has No Gender*, *Pestle on the Mortar*, *Dark Times Are Over*, *Suicide Syndrome* in the tradition of agit-prop. In this regard, Obafemi's plays become polemics and agitative propaganda to satirize socio-political and economic situation that his audience and reader can readily identify with. Banham (2000, p.27), his former teacher at the University of Leeds, says that:

Agit-prop- is the use of theatre for purposes of broadcasting a political message- has always depended on utilizing genuinely popular performance forms. It is not an elitist, literary theatre. It often fails to be, or resists being, permanently recorded or published, being essentially a thing of the moment. It is flexible in its staging, improvisatory, accommodates and indeed invites the intervention of the audience, entertains, and quite straightforward, states its message.

We may not say his theatre just entertain, show and simply narrate the message without complexity of the plot to depict the dramatic actions. Perhaps, the radical approach assists his social realism to create a subversive image and espouse the subtlety of his dramatic elements- the linear plot, language, characterization, character, action, songs, music, and so on. In the exposition of 'Goat and Cow', the dialogue between the prisoners, 221 and 222, gives us the onerous image of not just their depressive immediate environment, but depicts

the suppressive general political atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, of the military dictatorship, “which turns the whole country into a huge gulag” (Obafemi, 2003, p. V). The atmosphere creates psychological effects of depression as the results of the incarceration, torture, killings, arson, under phantom and trumped-up reasons, that any dissenting voice is hounded into prison, if he is not eliminated by a marksman, he may be killed by injecting poison into his blood stream, or dies after a cup of tea; or he may be freed to die gradually in his home. This pervading atmosphere of fear makes the prisoners to perceive that the high sound of fart may be termed a bomb blast as prisoner 222 says “a treasonable action. Surely, they’ll trace it to treason. A bomb explosion” (p.4).

In episode 11, the playwright uses history by reference to reality of our post-colonial state to generate some specific identities in term of events, personalities and sites. We find in number 222 a real human being, a Lagos based popular lawyer, fiery, irrepressible and indefatigable lawyer in the character of Gafa. The repressible situation in the play almost turns him to an individual hero, but in the manner of a social realist, Gafa becomes the authorial mouth as he says:

Friends, Comrades, I do not underplay your appreciation. Yet, I must not lead you on to treat me like anybody special, because I am not... (Really embarrassed): Thank you all, but you miss the point. I find myself in a moment in history; I obey the dictates of my heart. Injustice, Greed, Corruption. They clothe our earth with embroidered garment. All I do simply is to call for justice. I asked those who sew garments of thorns for the rest of us to show us how to wear them. Obey their own laws. They accuse me of all sorts of crime. (p.14)

Gafa is the semblance of the playwright, a unionist and a social critic and a dodged fighter. The playwright condensed in the character of Gafa his social vision which is the reflection of his social and cultural being. The quality of wrestling with social injustice in his play is a reflection of Olu Obafemi as dexterous wrestler, bold, determined, daring and calculative; always confront perversion and retrogression ingrains in polity and corrupt practices in Nigeria.

Taking history as a parameter to measure advancement and development—both human and inhuman materials, in the face of reality, Obafemi re-creates history as Gafa and his fellow prisoners reminisce Cuba and South-Africa:

Gafa: In Cuba, Fidel Castro pitched battle against the dictatorship of Batista. He was tried. His reply?

All: Yes, what did he say?

Gafa: “History will vindicate me”, Where is Batista today?

All: Where is Cuba today?

Gafa: Ninety-nine percent of the population of Cuba can read and write. Nelson Mandela was in jail for twenty-seven years. Today, he is a myth alive. He will be a myth at death. Remember the Rivania trial?

218: When was Mandela convicted?

Gafa: Twenty-five years behind the gates of prison. Now he is at the Threshold of fully liberating his people. How many shall we count in adepele’s (sic) teeth?

- All:* (in turns) so what about us? Where do these histories leave us? In five-and-half by one and a half?
- Gafa:* Knowledge. Vision. Commitment. Anger. Passion. Action. In that Order. That is the way to victory. (p.14).

Intellect becomes a centre for mental reflections and is used to engage in re-creating history for the collective struggle to resist the dominant class that holds the dominated by the throat by the playwright, no doubt himself as a teacher of teachers and a communicator, this pedagogical approach comes to fore in his works that make more polemical. This method as employed by Gafa, places knowledge above any other human exploit. He is the incarnate of the irrepressible Lagos Lawyer, Chief Gani Fawehinmi. It is little wonder that Gafa becomes a man of the people. He is special: a hero, idolized or God to his admirers. We may recall in the truth of reality, those years before Chief Gani Fawehinmi was honoured with Silk as a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), the students of Obafemi Awolowo University had honoured him with (SAM), Senior Advocate of Masses. A man of history and honor will always find himself “in a moment of history” (p.10). So, Gafa is his character incarnate in the play, who is equally a lawyer, believes that reason, commitment, vision, passion and progressive action are the products of knowledge.

The same intellectual approach is used in episode III to episode V, where a kind of ‘cross-examination’ by Gafa, using his legal experience to draw out ITS, the security officer from his inner-self. ITS, meaning- Inside-of-The-Stomach- is the representative of the power and its misuse in all ramifications. ITS as literal meaning surmises the dirty entrails in the belly of a nation where intricate power becomes a venom that delude the leaders and their lackeys. Corruption, suppression and elimination of opponents, injustice, greed wear national colours, and anybody who does not partake in the malady is being perceived a fool, or a trouble maker (p.21). But, in the moment of truth, such ‘predators’ like ITS, become timid and confounded, when facing knowledge. In their timidity, they begin to confess and shiver as ITS does:

- ITS:* (Still shivering): No o. You are the only one under a spell. Go on sleeping (sweating and petrified). What magic? What drug did you give me to drink? Twenty years without a single query. What have you done to me? I now see why they all fear you. I see why they all consult Babalawos, Aafas and Aladuas before coming to you. (More alarmed, turns to the audience) what... bad omen is this end; tell me, all of you.... (p.21)

From then on, we begin to watch as the language leads on the action of the drama to reveal the atrocities perpetrated by the military juntas and their civilian cohorts in the national polity, local and international economy as we find many other “crumb-pickers along the corridors of damage” as Alabi (2000, p.41) observes, collaborating in decadence. As we are being transited on, more stark revelations come through confessions and conversations between Gafa and ITS. In their

characters, we are able to know individual “and their relationship in specific situations that may be symptomatic of social reality at large”, as Cook (2005, pp. v-vi) says. Gafa is the spokesperson for the masses, the ‘preys’ who could not afford the good things of life, no decent abode, no good food. But, those who dare talk or offer a way out are shown the sinuous way to the prison, a place rotten, stench plank with space narrow enough for one side of each person to lay, any shift creates commotion, and hell is let loosed in the dudgeon hell of a place; a “verminous maggoty dump” as prisoner 221 (2003, p.3), the journalist says. Episode V is the dramatization in anecdote to depict animal kingdom in the allegorical court of law.

We examine proverbs in *Scapegoats and Sacred Cows* to show how Obafemi uses them to embellish the aesthetics of his dramaturgy. For effective communication, proverbs bring brevity and wisdom without creating sense of drudgery to the listener, in this case to the reader or the audience. Just as Chinua Achebe says that proverbs are like palm oil with which we eat yam in Africa. It gives good taste to the ears. He does this by bringing out the wisdom in the culture of his people to indicate the social action to revolutionarize his society in his drama. Proverbs are not many in *Scapegoats and Sacred Cows* compare to a play like *Nights of a Mystical Beast* that its dramatic action is rooted in history. The meeting of characters 221 and 222, both are journalist and barrister in real world, indicates

the compressionist and restricted, dirty prison environment. While the two gentlemen are struggling to have a place to sleep on a plank, and 222 becomes uncomfortable, he complains that his mate 221 should adjust; the reaction of 221 provokes the proverb that “no touch me, ha. Toni toni. You soon sabi say Ewure (goat) no be pig” (p.2). This proverb is rendered in pidgin english, a variety of Nigerian English, to suggest and depict the environment and the ‘music’ of horror they have to dance to in the prison . The images of ‘goat’, and ‘pig’ suggest the difference in nature and instinct of the two animals. Pig is well known to relish rubbish and revels in stinking environment, but goat is not. The wisdom in this proverb is driven into character 222 that he should understand that they are in a “tense tendril atmosphere” (p.vii) Another, proverb is a typical Yoruba proverb that says “omo to ni iya oun ko ni sun, oun ko ni fi oju ba orun”- “infant siblings who keep their mothers awake will not sleep” (p.35) . This proverb is a call for caution on the part of the ruling class to change from its draconian posture; unless it is consumed by people’s judgment. Gafa, the same character we know as 222, a fiery people’s lawyer adds another Yoruba proverb that “the hen mounts the rope. Both the hen and the rope shall swing all night long which can be rendered in Yoruba that “adire ba le okun ara ro okun, ara o ro adire”.

Demystification is employed by Obafemi as a dramatic technique. A style that has become Obafemi’s identity of creating a mass resistance against the oppressive tendencies in the society. His artistic creativity wears such stamp of identity by using some individual characters persuading others (including his audience) rhetorically to join them in their attempt to fight against injustice

through mass mobilization. Ekun is the judge, Esin is the prosecutor, Obo is the counsel to the accused. The disposition before the court is that Gafa the Tortoise is accused of “defecation, after overfeeding”.

The power wishes to manipulate the judiciary as usual to accentuate their political debauchery, in order to perpetrate further social dysfunction and injustice. This act, an enactment of the rhetoric between Gafa and ITS, is a demonstration of how political leaders, either in uniform or flowing gown pervert justice. True to Obafemi’s art, like a social realist, it is the nature of his drama to enliven reality as it were, “but it is also art’s peculiar quality, to sift and signify on that reality, in order to secrete a picture to its prospective realization”, as Osofisan (2008, p.6) surmises. Ekun, the judge does save the day, by ensuring that justice prevails. Gafa the Tortoise is granted the bails as he says:

Ekun: I pronounced this animal free. Bailed in his own personal recognition. And this case is adjourned indefinitely. The court Rises.... (p.44)

It is not yet uhuru- no freedom yet, is a common parlance. This freedom is short lived. With heavy sledge hammer of injustice, Gafa the Tortoise is forcefully taken back to the prison. The impervious use of power reminds one of the traumatic days of the military, when social critics, journalists, human right activists, pro-democracy activists were hounded into various prisons across the country, indefinitely. While some were assassinated on the streets, some died through letter bomb, some were poisoned and died in the prison, few were able to be smuggled through the porous borders to Europe and America, and the masses suffered some form of indignation, especially during the struggles for the realization of the June 12 mandate of the late M.K.O Abiola. The playwright describes the scenario in this stage direction:

(The atmosphere is rent with jubilation. Victory songs. Triumphant march. G the T is lifted on the backs of the animals. Suddenly, hefty animals of the Buffalo’s specie move on the crowd pounce on them. Seize G and T, clamp on his fores. Anger replaces jubilation. Free for all fight. Protest songs and G and T are taken away. (p.44)'

At the end, peoples’ will however triumphs. The ‘army’ of Inmates ensures that Gafa is not detained in the prison again, after the court scene. What people like Gafa are fighting against is the “culture of settlement” (p.47) which only favours the cabal, the sacred cows in the corridors of power. Those in their megalomaniac syndrome like Alhaji, Minister and Professor in *Suicide Syndrome* and Chief Awadanu and the likes like the brutish, draconian and power drunk soldiers, represented by ITS, in *Scapegoat and Sacred Cows*, are still walking the streets so tall. Really, this has become symptomatic essence of the lived reality in the post-colonial experience. The ‘culture of settlement’, is an identity of corruption, ‘sit-tight’ syndrome whether the leadership is military leader or civilian, visionless and myopic, who watch the hapless ‘subjects’,

dying in abject poverty. The recent happenings in the North Africa, from Egypt to Libya, are good demonstrations of people's revolt against the sit-tight and draconian governments. Those existent personalities who are "mammon-possessed predaceous class are unjust and corrupt. They stash away the wealth of the society in local and foreign accounts. They are really "thus responsible for people miseries" (Alabi, 2000, p. 140). Gafa does not fail to remind us that people will always win, truth will always triumph over lies, light will always chase away darkness into oblivion, and history will become a master over those who created it. It will prevail over time and space and the actors involved. It will either condemn or vindicate them. Gafa says:

History, our master, created after the events prove us right. The scapegoats, the people, whose causes are just and righteous, always win the battle against sacred cows (p.47)

Conclusion.

This paper established the fact that a playwright is a communicator who intervenes in course of justice for his society. Also, a playwright like Olu Obafemi is a conscience of his society. In this regard, writers are expected to be in tune with time and the concerns of their people; hence people become the fulcrum of their creative import. Olu Obafemi, a radical realist, whose materialist perception, makes his dramaturgy a people-oriented concern is an interventionist communicator. From the point of view of dramatic character and characterization, style, content and language, I have argued that Obafemi's plays, especially *Scapegoats and Sacred Cows*, as a social realist, emphasizes group protagonist and collective heroism by insisting that society must change for better. We have also argued that his revolutionary aesthetics is greatly influenced by the philosophy of Karl Marx, which is based on the materialist ideology. In this similar vein, we have discovered that in structure and style, the revolutionary aesthetics of Obafemi's drama is highly influenced by Bertolt Brecht.

References.

- Abraham, A.T. J. (1978) Olu Obafemi's many colours. Cited. Adegbija Efurosibina (2000) Olu at 50; Reminiscence from the department of modern European Languages. In: D. Oni & S. Ododo (Eds.) *Larger Than His Frame: Critical Studies & Reflections on Olu Obafemi*. Lagos: CBAAC.
- Achebe, C. (19650). "The novelist as teacher". Reprinted in T. Olaniyan& A. Quayson (Eds.) *African Literature: An Anthology of criticism and theory*. Australia: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Adegbija, E. (2000). "Olu at 50: reminiscences from the Department of Modern European Languages". In: D. Oni & S.E Ododo (Eds). *Larger Than His Frame: Critical Studies & Reflections on Olu Obafemi*. Lagos: CBAAC.
- Atanda, Y. (2012). Postcoloniality and dialectics of revolution in selected plays of OluObafemi and Ahmed Yerima. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis of the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

- Balogun, Y. (2012). "Wole Soyinka, the third force, and the Nigerian Civil War". In: O. Adesina, O. O. and N. E. Attach (Eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Peace, Conflict and Warfare In Africa*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Bamidele, L.O (2000). *Literature and sociology*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig.) Ltd.
- Bamikunle, A. (2000). "The revolutionary vision of Olu Obafemi's Theatre". In: D. Oni & S.E. Ododo (Eds.). *Larger Than His Frame: Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi*. Lagos: CBAAC.
- Banham, M. (2000). "The Leeds-Ilorin connections". In: D. Oni & S.E. Ododo (Eds.). *Larger Than His Frame: Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi*. Lagos: CBAAC.
- Bodunde, C. (2000). "Olu Obafemi as a literary theorist: the transposition of cultural materialism" In D. Oni & S.E. Ododo.(Eds.). *Larger Than his frame. Critical studies and reflections on Olu Obafemi*. Lagos: CBAAC.
- Breytenbach, B. (2007). "The writer and responsibility". In: T. Olaniyan & A. Quayson (Eds.) *African Literature. An anthology of criticism and theory*. Australia: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Fisher, E. (1963). *The necessity of art*. Moscow. Mosco Publisher.
- Gbilekaa, S. (1997). *Radical theatre in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Caltop Publications (Nigeria) Limited.
- Haslett, M. (2000). "Introduction: The politics of literature". In: M. Haslett (Ed.) *Literary Theories; A reader and guide*. Washinton square. New York: New York University Press.
- Jeyifo, B. (2004). *Wole Soyinka: Politics, poetics and postcoloniality*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kermode, F. (1967). *The sense offending*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lukacs, G. (1963) *The meaning of contemporary realism*. London, Merlin Press.
- Maiye, O. 2000. "View from the homefront". In: D. Oni & S.E. Ododo (Eds.) *Larger Than his frame: Critical studies and reflections on Olu Obafemi* . Lagos: CBAAC.
- Obafemi, O. (2003). *Scapegoats and sacred Cows*. Ilorin. Haytee Press and Publishing C. Nig. Ltd.
- Olaniyan, T. and Quayson, A. (2007). *African literature: An anthology of criticism and theory*. Australia: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Osofisan, F. O (1997). *Playing dangerously: Drama at the frontiers of terror in a " post-Colonial" state*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.
- Soyinka, W. (2001). "Forward to T. Djaout, the last summer of reason", trans. M. De jager, pp. Iv-xvi. St Paul, MN: Ruminator Books.
- Soyinka, W. (2007). "A voice that would not be silenced". In: T. Olaniyan and A. Quayson (Eds.) *African literature: An anthology of criticism and theory*. Australia: Blackwell Publishing.
- Udenta, O. U. (1993). *Revolutionary aesthetics and the African literary process*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.