

Job Loss and National Security in Niyi Osundare's Two Plays

SOLIU WALE KILANI

Abstract

Literature is replete with devastating economic effects of job loss on people globally. This social malaise has been addressed in contemporary literature as a result of its lethal consequence on the cultural milieu. Indubitably, job loss remains one of the factors contributing to high rate of penury, which masterminds insecurity in the nation. The whole universe is wrapped with ills as a result of economic stagnation. The foregoing forms the crux of Niyi Osundare's *Two Plays*. This study, therefore, investigates socio-economic realities that have led to ruination of the people's economy. The writer emphasizes cataclysmic consequences of job loss, unemployment, corruption and negative effect of extravagant lifestyle on national security. Furthermore, Osundare depicts how hunger gives birth to anger which leads to suicidal. The dramatic representations of socio-political-cum-economic realities in the play show the writer's commitment to righting the wrongs with which the Nigerian state is fraught.

Introduction

Contemporary Nigerian playwrights expose people to experiences and realities of life in and outside their cosmos. Through this, people are no longer in the dark about good and unsavoury aspects of life throughout the globe. It is often stated that "the world is a stage", while "drama is a mirror of society" (Mineke, 1980:55). This assertion may be as a result of the role that drama performs in the society. Drama is as old as the world itself. This could be seen from the dramatic interaction between God and His angels at the creation of man. The

refusal of Satan to bow for Adam led to his tragic fall and God's ordained approval of Satan's request creates suspense to elongate the story of man's insecurity in the hand of Satan. Lucifer was finally able to dramatically mislead Adam through his wife (Hauwa/Eve)¹. Since then, drama has become the indication of that art which represents a human creation in the presence of a mere audience (angels). This is in line with Ayo Kehinde's (2005:339) position that:

...from the biblical account of Man's fall to the present period of disillusionment, pain has been felt to be an experience that cannot be separated from the human condition. It enters man's life in many forms and from many sources. Whether or not there is a hierarchy of suffering, whether one man suffers more than another in his daily life is the question that underlies the literary search of modern... (writers).

It is also assumed that the origin of drama is ritual as Ademola Dasylva (2004:2) opines in his *Studies in Drama* that "...drama arose from ritual...because in ritual, there is enactment with mystical significance and dramatic elements such as costuming, impersonation, songs and music, dialogue, spectacle, and so on". We are better informed through drama about cultural differences and ways of life, which include occupations, climate, violence, race and language, religions, dressings, family life, system of government, security and many more.

The contemporary society is full of awful incidents that are propelling various incendiary attacks on innocent souls. The issue of security revolves round all sectors, either in private or public, to the extent that no single person can proudly say s/he is safe from being attacked by the present people perpetrating evils in the nation. It is generally believed that some leaders or the rich are behind this hazardous act but they too experience sleepless nights and run helter-skelter for safety.

Security, according to Omoyibo and Akpomera (2013), is a concept that is prior to the state, and the state exists in order to provide that concept. Security is the prime responsibility of the state (Thomas Hobbes, 1996). The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that, "The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government"². However, reverse is the case as government shows lackadaisical attitude towards securing the nation from the obnoxious lawbreakers and 'pain-inflictors'. The failure of the current set of leaders to provide security for the lives, properties and the transaction of business and economic activities leads to the current insecurity in the country. Security is the

¹ Islamic Religion's perspective on the Creation of the World especially Qur'an Chapter 7, Verse 11-25

² The 1999 Constitution of The Federal Republic of Nigeria Revised in 2011

mechanism put in place to avoid or curb conflicts, and threats that originate from other states, non-state actor, or structural socio-political and economic conditions (Stan, 2004). This is in line with Ola Rotimi's (1983:87) postulation that:

...to me (as a playwright) the illusion of reality can't be obtained in that kind of artistic form. I thought a play should strive at realism and should have music not solely for entertainment but to enhance the emotional content of the play itself. It should try to approximate reality, to establish an illusion of what is happening to man at a given point in time.

The concept of insecurity connotes semantic diversities, such as absence of protection, danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of protection, and lack of safety. Beland (2005) defines insecurity as a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. According to Achumba et al (2013), insecurity is the state of being open or subjected to danger or threats of danger, while danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm and injury. From the foregoing, it can be summed up that insecurity is a breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, civil, social, economic or political. It contributes to recurring conflicts, and leads to wanton devastation of lives and properties.

Issues relating to security in the society have been on the front burner in the development of drama. Several attempts have been made since the time of independence in Nigeria by the various writers and critics on how Nigeria would be secured from wrongdoers. From the time of Duro Ladipo and Hubert Ogunde, drama has been put on a state-centric perspective to a broader view that places premium on individuals in which human security embodies elements of national security. Hubert Ogunde, as a result of his socio-political experience employed his traveling theatre to dramatise the harsh reality in Nigeria with his *Strike and Hunger* (1945), *Bread and Butter* (1951) and later after Nigeria gained her independence and things were not in order, to secure the nation from violent and deadly actions of the Western Nigerian politicians, he staged a play titled: *Yoruba Ronu* (Yoruba: Think). Ogunde was banned for this satirical play that depicts the failure of leadership which brought about insecurity in the region. Wole Soyinka's *Mad Men and Specialists* is used to portray the effect of the Nigerian Civil War on Nigerians. In the same vein, Ola Rotimi's plays, especially *Hopes of the Living Dead*, aim at securing the nation from the hands of the dictatorial leaders who always inflict pains on the masses.

The high rate of unemployment and job loss in the country is responsible for the high wave of crimes in the country. This paper, therefore, examines the issue of job loss and national security and its implications on Nigeria's socio-economic development in Niyi Osundare's Two Plays: *The Man Who Walked Away* and *The Wedding Car*. These plays are abbreviated as TMWWA and TWC.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts postcolonial theory. Homi Bhabha (1992) posits that postcolonial criticism bears witness to the irregular and unequal forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority in the modern world. Lately, however, postcolonial critics' attention shifted from attacking external forces to looking inward. This is because the enemy within proves more hazardous than external forces (colonialists). Frantz Fanon (1963) examines a deep chasm between the people in the country side and the national bourgeoisie.

Sequel to appearance of postcolonial paradigm in organisational context, there commenced a modern approach to understanding the internal environments of the organisation. The theory addresses different oddities that ravage the modern society like insecurity. Thus, the selected plays are subjected to critical textual analysis in order to bring to the fore instances of insecurity.

Portrayal of Job Loss and National Security in Osundare's The Man Who Walked Away and The Wedding Car

This study deals with the contemporary social problems in Nigeria with the aim of raising people's awareness of positive revolutionary alternatives to the present decadence. This is in line with Rotimi's (1985:138) position that:

Contemporary Nigerian drama is concerned with the topicality matters, matters of the moment that affect the general socio-economic well being of the people. And as such, I think it is erroneous to say that the content of contemporary Nigerian drama is unauthentic. My feeling is that it is authentic in the main...the content is authentic to the extent that it concerns itself with the problems and predicaments of present-day Africa or Nigeria.

Osundare's Two Plays: *The Man Who Walked Away* and *The Wedding Car* are committed to addressing national issues and leadership failure. The social commitment of the playwright cannot be doubted because "through art, one offers a political service which we can't quantify" (Rotimi, 1983:132). Pragmatically, Osundare foregrounds methods adopted by the masses to cushion the effect of job loss and joblessness in his cultural milieu.

In the first moiety of the plays, Deyi deals with his condition by committing suicide. This is as a result of complete reliance on government job. Writers are described as prophets due to their holistic view of the society. Writers see tomorrow from the present sorrow. Osundare wrote the first play in 1979 when "we're celebrating twenty years of television in Africa and when (he) showed it to them, they said: This is good. And they put it on television and it was well received", (Osundare, 1996:) and published in 2005. Although the play is written during the Second Republic, the events are relevant to the present society where the government retrenches workers anyhow without considering the hardship they would be exposed to. Going through the nook and cranny of the nation, one would see many 'half-men and half-women'. These are the people who have reached the marriageable age and above but refused to marry because there is no job to rely on. This is observed in Deyi's response to his wife, Abake who informs him that she is pregnant but instead of being joyous, Deyi replies:

Yes, in normal times, this would have been a joy, but an expectant wife to a jobless man is the symptom of an imminent failure. Every normal Ojo and Ajayi can sleep with a woman and make a baby, but it takes the real man to raise it. But when did I become that fingerless leper that cannot carry his own baby? TMWWA (5)

Job loss and joblessness have gross effects on the family of the victim as observed in the foregoing. This depicts that many modern men do not value child-bearing and this leads to kidnapping for money rituals in some areas while in other areas the children are being used to perpetrate different evils that lead to the demise of millions of people in the country. An untrained child is a threat to the world and national development.

Furthermore, loss of job leads to loss of hope and appetite. After Deyi loses his job, no food is palatable in his mouth. He eats inattentively and ruminates a lot. He describes his own condition as "*the gross of the wind-valley, bent head-to-ground in whatever direction the wind blows*", TMWWA (24). Thus, his wife, being a good and concerned one, always advises him to be strong because a living soul still has bright future. If he is sacked by his manager, he

does not need to kill himself by not eating but be optimistic that the good time and things await him:

ABEKE: Then, you must find it (hope)! If your company wants to kill you, you will help them by killing yourself? When life's drum sounds pami! Pami! Pami! (kill me, kill me, kill me) should we not devise a softer way of dancing to it?

ABEKE: Why do you talk as if the end of the world has come? Come on, Deyi, Olowo ori mi (my boss, my master) heavier rains have fallen and the ground has sucked up their water. Where is the manhood you often boast of? TMWWA (7)

Osundare paints the good picture of a typical African woman that believes in marital slogan, "for better for worse", and we may conclude that it is because he (Osundare) is a man who enjoyed a lot from his mother and always reflects it in his writing.

It is depicted in *The Man Who Walked Away* that job loss makes man wallow in an abject poverty. A poor man is homeless. Apart from his disillusionment, his children lack access to education even where education is free of charge. This happens to Deyi when he is "fired" by the company manager. Deyi rhetorically describes a man in this circumstance as being gibberish:

DEYI: Do you call him a man who packs his family in this hovel competing hard with rats and cockroaches? Do you call him a man who for several weeks has not produced a single housekeeping kobo* for his family? Do you call him a man that whose daughter tops her class but cannot send her to college? Do you call him a man, that one who plies the labour offices everyday and the only offer he gets is a 'come tomorrow' order? Do you call him a man who cannot provide a single bar of soap for his family? TMWWA (8)

Subsequently, the various insults and assaults from the landlord and the family member for the loss of job, if the person is not strong, can send the victim into early grave. Before Deyi is retrenched, he pays the monthly rent regularly. However, the incident disabled him and the landlord threatens to eject him:

LANDLORD: And if I do and it is not ready, I will throw out all these wretched things you call your property one by one. I mean it! (Bites his silver-plated watch-strap). Ogun gbo!* (the god of iron is my witness). TMWWA (12)

Moreover, Osundare is of the opinion that Nigerians celebrate the dead than the living. They spend huge amount of money for the funerals than caring for the living. Even at the point of sickness, many run away that they are penniless but for the funeral ceremony, they squander

billions of naira. Imagine a mother-in-law cares for nothing than how much she accumulates from her daughter's husband. She complains thus:

IYA AGBA: For several months now, Deyi has not given me a kobo. Next month is the 40th day of the 50th anniversary of Mama Sekungbola's father's funeral and we have selected the aso ebo (communal dress) for this. My friend, Mama Sali, got the money for the aso ebi from her daughter, Mama Anike got hers from her son-in-law who is a big government contractor. But where is the son-in-law to do that kind for me? TMWWA (17)

The social reality Osundare imagines here is that people understand the fertile land but when the dessert is rotten, they desert it. Deyi, according to his wife, gives his mother-in-law much money and many goodies before he is retrenched at work. She argues with her mother that even if the present society is polluted, the blessing (her children) of God in her life should be acknowledged:

ABEKE: Mama, you know that Deyi doesn't deserve this from you. When things were right and he had a job, he performed the duties of a good son-in-law. He...

IYA AGBA: Yes, he bought the car which I now ride, didn't he? He gave me fifty thousand naira to help my trade, didn't he?

ABEKE: That is not all there is to life, Mama. Mama, I know we live in a society which measures people's worth by the length of their cars and the cost of their apparels. Deyi may not have big cars and costly clothes, he has us. TMWWA (18)

The success of the modern society is measured by the numbers of mansions, fleet of cars and how much money one gives to the family. Deyi's wife, Abeke, supports her husband's worth wholeheartedly. Osundare, through Abeke, encourages the readers and whoever finds him/herself in this worldly mess to always remember his children. Life might not be enjoyable or good for the person, children should be his pride.

Hunger is also portrayed in the play as the reason behind every anger and suicide in the contemporary society. Many are said to commit suicide as a result of inability to feed their family. This is a serious implication of joblessness as foregrounded in the play. Sola, the younger son of Deyi, peeps through the curtain and informs his mother that he is "hungry". Hearing this, Iya Agba concludes that "... *Deyi has hungry children and a wife who worships a thirty-year old sewing machine. Before I go I have something to tell you. Deyi's curse has not profited you: why not change your route. You are still young and beautiful and many men*

will like to marry you”, TMWWA (18). She admonishes her to divorce Deyi because he has lost his job and is now roaming the streets and looking for another one.

IYA AGBA: I would have preferred to have a different son-in-law. And you had all the chances in this world to give me one. You were beautiful and mannerful, and many men were after you. Many men including Alhaji Robo, a government contractor who now rolls in money. He would have made you an Alhaja, selling lace, damask (pronounced ‘Damaas’) and jaburedi at Gbagi. What about Jeremiah, the one who sells oyinbo fine, fine medicine, who owns six houses along Jakute Road? You rejected them and chose Deyi. Like a stubborn leech, you stuck to Deyi’s leg. You saw a boat that was sure to sink and you decided to thrust your fate upon it. TMWWA (17-18).

The above shows that the step taken by Deyi is wrong. He disappoints his family especially his wife who trusts and vehemently stands by him. She is decisively put in mourning and everlasting suffering. Abeke is strongly hopeful that today may not be good, success awaits her family in future. She is not myopic as her mother. She foresees better tomorrow out of the present hungry circumstance.

ABEKE: And my two children, and the one I carry in my womb? What shall I tell them? That I change husbands because Deyi is too poor to be their father? No, Mama. I don’t know what these children could become tomorrow. I have seen bright stars emerge from a dark sky, small forests have bred elephants. TMWWA (19)

Poverty as a great disease is measured based on three dimensions: education, health and living standards and these are what the victims of job loss face in the society. More than half of the Nigerian populations live below the national poverty line. This is underscored by the Vice President of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo that up to 110 million Nigerians live in abject poverty. Although he said this, what has the government done to alleviate it? Instead of eradicating or reducing poverty, the price of commodities is now frequently inflated. In the play, Deyi’s wife, Abeke, solely laments that:

...last week I asked my friend at Dugbe (a big and popular market in Ibadan) to mend a little hole in Toyin’s gown and she asked me to pay fifty naira. ‘Fifty naira’, I exclaimed. ‘E e’, she replied. ‘Since the government people brought Udoji the small money we have has melted in our hands. The elephant’s greed has made the forest a starving region for rodents... I bought this gown (spreading it out to the audience) for twenty naira from the bosikona people, now I am being asked to mend it for fifty naira. If I were that rich, I would not be living in this rat hole. (Surveying the room). I would have been living at Bodija, Kogi, UI (pronounced Yu Hai) with servants tending my

flower beds, washing my dog in the evenings, rocking my little ones to sleep.
TMWWA (2)

Furthermore, in the play, it is established that loss of job amounts to loss of life as Deyi's body, the hero of the play decisively "*...has just been found hanging from an isin tree at Mile Twenty near the Oribo Bridge. The man is described as middle-aged and has fairly large scar on his left arm. The identification found on him shown him as a former worker of Pantibury Overseas Limited*", TMWWA (29).

To this end, Deyi is dehumanized and subjected to hardship as he is said to be retrenched and he searches endlessly for another job without securing any. He is therefore a carrier, who carries the responsibilities of the family before the unexpected sack. The incident is tragic in nature, for him and ends up lose his life. It is because of injustice and inequality that Deyi kills himself to find ending solution to his poor condition. He believes that death is the end of everything including penury and affluence.

The actions and speeches of the characters are revolutionary in nature. Osundare portrays the oppressive nature of the people who are only determined to collect but not to be humane to humanity. Thus, in response to this oppression, the character that lives in deplorable conditions foresees a just and free society where all acts of injustice, humiliation and oppression should be eradicated. Deyi gazes to the sky with the feeling that he does "not belong here". Instead of consoling him, his hopeless friends ask if he is "sure it is better over there (inside the grave)? TMWWA (24)

AKIN: Nobody who went there has ever come back to tell us his experience.

GOKE: My father used to say that the battle we know is better than the one we do not know

AKIN: Yes, the battle is here. And when we run out of ammunition, we ask for bottle. He! Sisi (calls bar around). More beer! TMWWA (24)

The Wedding Car (TWC) is a progressive explanation of the incongruity, class fissure, and the pains of joblessness, job loss and conflicts that pervade the first play, *A Man Who Walked Away*. The key factor that is responsible for this job loss and joblessness is corrupt leadership. At present, a minister who hardly has a personal car can boast of numerous private jets in less than a year in office. Greed is another notable reason behind job loss in Nigeria. It is sheer greed that makes a man has billions of Naira through fraudulent practices, buy expensive car

just for his daughter while many live with hunger and turns dividends of democracy (fifty bags of rice) that belong to the masses to his own. Chief Chamberlain is a typical example:

MADAM OGUNPADE: But this rice was imported from America to feed the people.

CHIEF CHAMBERLAIN: Am I not the people... eh...eh...eh, one of the people?

ALAGBA OGUNPADE: No, the poor people.

CHIEF CHAMBERLAIN: Oh that again! I thought you people were too old to be socialists!

MADAM OGUNPADE: But the truth is that those who need this rice never get it.

CHIEF CHAMBERLAIN: Truth is bitter and when truth is mixed with rice, it is difficult to swallow. You see, let those poor people you talk about eat what they get. Our country has not reached that stage where everyone can have enough.

ALAGBA OGUNPADE: Indeed! If we don't have enough food to go round now, we may have enough trouble to go round later. A country in which a few feed while the majority merely watches is in a state of undeclared war. TWC (47)

Writer's role as a chronicler of the society comes to the fore here that any society which jettisons her people would certainly confront an "undeclared war" that will ravage not only the poor but also the rich who refused to reach out to the masses. The playwright frowns at the frivolity of party or celebration that is germane in the present society and sees it "...as a bourgeoisie-induced misuse of wealth and resources, and total waste of time and energy. One of his writerly habits, therefore, was to avoid participating in such events as much as he could" (Egya, 2017:17). Chief Chamberlain, as the complete embodiment of this artificiality and vanity, is consistent in smuggling cars into the country but because of the innumerable crimes he has perpetrated against the dispossessed of the earth, he believes that law has evaded the country. Even, when Alagba Ogunpade informs him that smuggling is no longer tolerated in the country, Chief Chamberlain conditionally agrees that: *"...to those who don't know their way around. You see, nobody bans anything in this country unless he has already secured channel for his personal supply"* TWC {39}.

The consequences of the expensive wedding program are inimical to the interest of our nation. It brings about armed robbery in the country as Alagba Ogunpade says: "...life is already poorer because of them. People embezzle public funds to finance weddings. Not long ago, a young man committed armed robbery to raise money for his wedding" TWC (40). The major targets of this armed robbery are the financial institutions like banks. Deremi, the groom, takes a loan of "...five hundred thousand naira for this wedding...Yes, half a million.

Well, minus the bank manager's ten percent" TWC (63). Prof. Jim-East reveals a factor that leads to rise assassination in *The Wedding Car*:

PROF JIM-EAST: As professor and social philosopher, I know what weddings do to the social fabric. Look at Britain. She forgot all those headaches...all those unrests...the demonstrations, the arsons, lootings etc. and gave her Prince a worthy wedding. For once the country felt like a nation. Oh! Those jubilant crowds, those banners, those anthems...oh Rule Britannia!

ALAGBA OGUNPADE: Come back home, professor (general laughter). I am sure you know there are people who smashed their television sets when the pictures of the royal wedding came up on the screen. With due respect, Professor, wedding have not been known to eradicate poverty and hunger and disease. In fact, such ostentatious weddings increase the anger of the poor, the real victims of the extravagance. (41).

A society wedding stands as the most central leitmotif in *The Wedding Car*. The wedding price, the attire put on by the participants, the manner of entertainment presented, as well as the actual rituals of wedding, are all fusions of traditional heritage and "modern" practices. And Osundare's position is very clear on this through a man who complains thus: "...must I starve because my brother's son is getting married?" TWC (54) when he is asked to make a contribution at the engagement ceremony and only ten naira remains in his pocket. The man is one with Osundare's, expressing his angriness against the people who "live in an ocean of wealth" even as majority of the people wallow in abject poverty.

Job loss has given rise to the growth of 419³ and yahoo-yahoo⁴ phenomena in Nigerian society. Young boys and girls now specialize in the art of defrauding people through false pretence to acquire wealth at all cost. This leads to falling standard of education as most students now have lukewarm attitude to anything academics but the short cut to billionaire. Lasun lambastes Deremi for involving himself in the illicit acts they always kick against from their institution of learning:

LASUN: ...must we not displease on principle? If we all lie with our necks to the same side because we are all afraid of displeasing, or being different, it will take only one knife to slit all our throats. We criticize our society but frequently take part in those ills we

³ 419 – A modern fraudulent slang derived from the Nigerian Criminal Code Section 4, Sub-section 1, Paragraph 9

⁴ Yahoo-yahoo- An electronic or internet method of duping the foreigners

so tirelessly chastise. We lambast emergency millionaires but frantically run after their daughters so that we can share in their wealth, the wealth which we know creates poverty for the majority of our people.

DEREMI: But one thing...

LASUN: No but, but folks. I think it is time to stop chasing with the hounds and running with the hares-all at the same time (pause, in a very pensive mood). What happened to the dreams we had, the dreams we nursed together as students at the university? I remember that we looked all around our society and what we saw were the monsters of greed and graft, of inefficiency, of lack of consideration for others, of the deification of money and property. We decided to be different. It was a solemn pledge to let the world know there is a healthy alternative, that ours was not a society irredeemably bound to ruin. What happened? Are these bow ties and tail-coats part of those dreams? Is this desperate bid to be son-in-law to a filthy millionaire part of that dream? TWC (67-68)

Honesty is no longer a virtue but an act of foolishness. Nigerians now sell their bodies for money. The effects are great as it brings psychosomatic disorders. Only a radical revolution can reduce it as it is portrayed in the dialogue above. Osundare, in his commitment to reflect the present state of our society, is acutely conscious of the fact that everyone has his own trying period and in such a situation, life can be imagined as a holocaust. Lasun believes that everybody has two choices of coming out of these conflagrations, either dead or alive and to come out of this worldly mess, one has to be patient for God affects everything. Deremi says that if he marries poor person as he is, poverty will remain forever in his family:

DEREMI: But there are crucial problems in adulthood which frustrate the dream of adolescence. You know I would have married Toyin. I loved her. She was brilliant and charming, and so on. But I sat down and thought about the whole matter. like me, Toyin is the daughter of very poor parents with a train of brothers and sisters to support and educate. Add her six brothers and sisters to my own eight and imagine what problems we would have had in our hands. So I thought, to break the poverty cycle, it would be better to marry somebody with greater means, and whom I also love. (69)

Considering the general atmosphere of despair, of dashed hopes and frustration, it is understandable that certain ideologically committed intellectuals would begin to experience a slide. Deremi epitomizes this in the play. His desperation to break the jinx of poverty explains why he has to cross over to seek a wife from the Chamberlain. The end proves him

wrong that duping or engaging in illicit acts cannot save one from the penury. Lasun reminds Deremi what it takes to be different in this present society:

LASUN: We said this time without number when we were students- that you can't choose to be different in our present society without a cost, without suffering in many, many ways. The life of a non-conformist is one of harrowing loneliness even in the midst of a chorusing crowd. It is a life exposed to blackmail, to prosecution, to calumny of all sorts. You are always being watched, your every slip magnified into a huge blunder to discredit you and justify the status quo. It has always been like that. But you must take care not to stumble, especially when you know there is none to help you stand, only those too ready to suppress you still your voice. I know how easy it is to get frustrated. I too have had my own bouts of frustration. But I am irrevocably resolved not to despair. The system will not rejoice over the demise of my dream. (69-70)

His in-law, Chief Chamberlain, is arrested on his daughter's wedding day and many of them run away in order not to be seen and arrested together with the criminal. Deremi has a girl friend who he eventually abandons in preference for another whose father is richer and able to offer him economic security. This depicts a post independence reality where people are pushed to anti social and extreme forms of behaviour. Deremi should not have abandoned Toyin for Tokunbo if not because he looks for the means of escaping joblessness he refers to as "poverty cycle". Joblessness brings disintegration of families which supposed to be an essential unit of relationship in the society.

Osundare insists however that to compromise is to lose one's cherished freedom. It is to embark on a course of self destruction. Lasun is that character in the play who takes Deremi on a journey down the memory lane:

LASUN: What happened to the dream we had, he asked Deremi at the long last? The dreams we nursed together as students at the university? I could remember we looked all round our society and what we saw were monsters of greed and graft, of inefficiency, of lack of consideration for others, of the deification of money and property. We decided to be different. It was a solemn pledge to let the world know there is a healthy alternative, that ours was not a society irredeemably bound to ruin. What happened? Are these how ties and tail-coats part of the dreams? Is this desperate bid to be son-in-law to a filthy millionaire part of that dream? TWC (68)

The man thought that “he shouldn’t die and allow enemy to triumph. The incident in *The Wedding Car* is symbolic. For somebody like Deremi to marry Chief Chamberlain’s daughter will be better to suicide ideology and is an event over which the enemies will rejoice.

Another societal ill thematised in the play is bribery and corruption. The habit of deliberately using one’s power to commit crime in return for money or to get advantage is a common phenomenon in the play. Most individuals in Nigerian society are culprits in this anomaly. Due to lack of orderliness, justice and accountability, things are not done the way it should be done and “the ports have no evidence of importation”, TWC, (73). Chief Chamberlain first resists the arrest claiming that he has already settled the highest security officers, the warrant officer should go and “*tell (his) masters I will see them again after the wedding...Ok...and you...you need something to make that lean waistline a little rounder...What do you want? How much? TWC (75)*

The corrupt nature of some senior security officers accounts for the poor and untrustworthy dispensation of justice and insecurity. The writer believes that the custom officers are so corrupt and that is why smugglers are able to perpetrate illegal acts. The act of bribery and corruption place the country in this imminence of loss, injury and death. Thus, Osundare shows that a writer has a viable means of correcting the perverted notion of the Africans past. The arrest of Chief Chamberlain signals a threat to corrupt members of the ruling class who have taken advantage of their post to carry out felonious acts. Even, Chief Chamberlain laments that his political enemies are behind his arrest.

Osundare makes use of music much more to reflect his dramatic-poetic sense. Music is used to give the plays a rich African background and “...a great tradition which must keep alive”, TWC (44). The song at Chief Chamberlain’s daughter’s wedding ceremony is done by the professionals who are traditionally associated with the culture. The musical interludes frequently are used to satirise the contemporary environment where few people squander money on musicians and many wallow in abject poverty. The two plays validate Osundare’s acknowledgement of Yoruba oral tradition specifically the oriki genre with its emphasis on word-play and neologisms, a heritage which he strikingly shares with Wole Soyinka.

In Africa, language is the powerful weapons for conveying emotions and passing messages across. Proverbs are the form of language use “for expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology” (Finnegan, 1976: 390). Osundare uses proverbs effectively to depict his thematic preoccupation effectively. For instance, Goke

warns Deyi that “the battle we know is better than one we do not know”, that is, Deyi should desist from his deadly mission. Also, “koju maa ribi, ese loogun e” (if the eyes are not to see evil, the legs must be alert). There is the mixture of local words with English to bring the language nearer home to the African audience. This is done through the use of code missing and switching. For instance in the plays: “E ku’le mama” (Good day, mama), “O o, e kaabo” (welcome) (3), “The Oyinbo and his representative” (15)

Also, Osundare uses parallelism to give his play a poetic sense thus: “I do not want the tree to fall so that I may pluck its fruit without climbing. I do not want my neighbour’s wall to fall on his goats so that I may have meat for my evening meal”. This is also achieved by the occasional use of the verse forms which have some poetic touches.

There is the use of dramatic irony in the plays. This is observed at a wedding program where Deremi tries to escape poverty by marrying a daughter of rich man but lavishly spends huge amount of money on that marriage: “Haba! I come here for a bride not for a debt to last a life time. Just imagine how much these people have squeezed out of us! What do they think we are? Businessmen? Contractors or what?” TWC (53). It is ironical because Deremi ends up being a debtor. The plays are full of images of rust, decadence and wasteful efforts.

Conclusion

This paper has been able to establish the relationship between the contemporary playwright and the national security. Niyi Osundare stands firmly with his revolutionary style he adopts in his poetry here in these two plays: *The Man Who Walked Away* and *The Wedding Car*. Art reflects and refracts the social order and humane existence by opposing the forces of tyranny, oppression and starvation that threaten the people. It is not new that Nigerians are now indecent, chaotic with conscience due to the stress of lack and loss of job. Nigerians are desperate to do and undo anything that yields money. Osundare’s characters run away from their responsibilities because of financial constraints. Yet, they do not experience any kind of happiness. Victims of Job loss and joblessness

...resort to violence, including armed militancy, assassination, kidnapping et cetera, have somewhat suddenly become attractive to certain individuals in seeking to resolve issues that could have ordinarily been settled through the process. The end products of such misadventures have often been catastrophic. They include the decimation of

innocent lives, disruption of economic activities, and destruction of properties among others. (Onyemaizu, 2006:10).

Therefore, this paper foregrounds that social unrest is due to the lack and loss of job as it is believed that devil find job for an idle hand. In a bid to bring the insecurity to barest minimum, there must be work for the unemployed, there must be no retrenchment for either political or religious reasons and it is advisable for the government workers to think of other positive ways of living after retirement or retrenchment from the government service, and the present insecurity will definitely be the thing of the past.

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