

MULTICULTURAL AESTHETICS IN FELIX EGWUDA'S *THE PILLARS* AND UCHE NWAUZUZU'S *THE CANDLES*

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Abstract

This study is a seminal work on the selected plays. It adopts a close reading of the plays to examine the themes of multiculturalism and cultural diversity as aesthetic platforms used individually by the authors to interrogate the roles of ethnic and cultural sentiments in the underdevelopment of the Nigerian nation and how these sentiments continue to challenge efforts at national integration. This paper takes a close look at the creative ingenuity of the authors in terms of their ability to reveal the core of the problem without sacrificing literary objectivity. It compares the two plays with some other plays with similar themes, recognizing their uniqueness, and concludes by identifying the dramatic form as a veritable medium for multicultural communication and education. This study encourages more dramatic creations on cultural diversity and national integration, especially at the present time when the corporate existence of Nigeria and ethnic agitations for self-determination are in the front burner.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Nigerian Drama, Cultural Diversity, National Integration.

Introduction

Aesthetics is concerned with what is beautiful, and thus can be simply understood in relation to the beauty of an organism. Therefore, in arts, it may be understood in terms of the attainment of correctness to the extent that the recipient can perceive the artistic product as good and enjoy it to the fullest.

The term "multiculturalism" has been used by political theorists and philosophers like William James, George Santayana, and John Dewey to describe a culturally diverse society and also to reflect a kind of policy that aims at protecting cultural diversity. Cultural diversity has existed in societies for a very long time and is still in existence in various societies today. These societies have a

mix of individuals from different tribes, races, linguistic backgrounds, and religious creed. The co-existence of these individuals within a given geographical space and the consequent mix and exchange of cultures define the multicultural nature of the community.

Drama mirrors the society. The society provides the needed materials with which the dramatist expresses thoughts and ideas. The dramatist does not create in a vacuum. The socio political, religious, economic and cultural configurations of a society provide the materials from which he creates. Hence, the thematic preoccupations of most drama are the topical issues of the society in which it is set. In this light, it behoves on dramatists to educate, inform, criticize or appraise events and actions of a group or individuals in the society.

The diverse and multicultural nature of Nigeria, with more than 250 ethnic groups and different languages and settlements, dressing modes, social lifestyles, and religious beliefs, among others, has inspired many Nigerian dramatists.

Extrapolating from the foregoing, it is glaring that multiculturalism could be a uniting or divisive factor, and for Nigeria, it has been more instrumental in the challenge of nationhood, culminating in a civil war, perpetual agitations for more state creation, national conferences, as well as ethnic and sectarian conflicts. Conflicts arising from misunderstanding of diverse cultural configuration, among other problems have led to the establishment of numerous institutions and organizations to encourage peaceful co-existence among the many cultures in Nigeria. Among these institutions is the theatre. Theatre radiates through the religious, political, educational, health and most importantly, recreational dimensions of the society. The theatre celebrates, imitates, reflects, reproduces, educates, engineers, re-engineers, interprets and reinterprets the totality of culture which can be material and immaterial.

Essentially, every culture has aesthetic values. In other words, every culture is attractive to some people. It may be safe to say that acceptable values and approved ways of behaviour in a given community account for a good appreciation and the popularity of its culture. Therefore the theatre must seek to project the multicultural aesthetics of all Nigerian cultures, individually and collectively.

Multicultural communication through drama can be effectively used to promote national unity especially in a federal state like Nigeria. In view of this, there is urgent need for reinstating drama as an embodiment of multicultural aesthetics.

This study, therefore, proposes drama and theatre as a media through which we can "understand our differences" and promote national unity.

The researchers set out to assess the role of Nigerian drama in promoting diversity and multicultural education. Thus, this study promotes the idea of encouraging diverse cultures in Nigeria through drama. It suggests possible solutions to the problem of multiculturalism in Nigeria, and adds to the extant body of discourse on the present topic.

The purview of this study is the examination of *The Candles* by Uche Nwaozuzu and *The Pillars* by Felix Egwuda to determine how they comprehensively bring to the fore the topic under discourse, and how drama can serve as an important tool for unifying the different cultures in Nigeria and bringing out the value of multicultural identity.

Review of Literature

In this segment we shall attempt a review of literature relevant to the focus of this study. Against this background, multiculturalism, and aesthetics will be discussed. We shall also admit critical comments on some other Nigerian plays with the themes of multiculturalism. There are no published works on the selected plays.

Multiculturalism and culture are two sides of a coin. The term 'multiculturalism' derives from the word 'culture'. Multiculturalism is a multidimensional concept. As a philosophy, it advocates equal cultural and political status. As a policy, it focuses on the inclusion of all cultures and ethnicities in a society. As an ideology, it centres on amalgamating diverse cultures into a mainstream culture.

Multiculturalism, according to Clara Chu, is "the coexistence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviours, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking and communicative styles" (1). In other words, multiculturalism is the cohabitation or 'coming together' of people of diverse cultural, religious and racial inclinations.

Caleb Rosado agrees with the above by defining multiculturalism as:

a system of beliefs and behaviours that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an

inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organisation or society (2).

Rosado sees multiculturalism as concerned with the survival of all cultures within a state or country. Its philosophy and guiding principles are tailored towards the existence, acceptance or promotion of multiple cultural traditions within a single jurisdiction.

Jeffrey Reitz sees multiculturalism as a social philosophy and a policy. As a policy, it suggests that, "in an attempt to shape a cohesive society from diverse ethnic and cultural groups, it is better to recognize and value that diversity and not seek to downplay diversity or to cast all groups within one single cultural mould" (1). Through this definition, he suggests that multiculturalism does not encourage mere tolerance, it calls for attitudinal disposition. It is geared towards recognizing, respecting, acknowledging and encouraging the existence of all cultures within a multicultural society.

Andrew Heywood identifies two forms of multiculturalism; descriptive and normative. In its descriptive form, he says, "it has been taken to refer to cultural diversity", but as a normative term, it has been seen as "a positive endorsement, even celebration of communal diversity, typically based on either the right of different groups to respect and recognition or to the alleged benefits to the larger society of moral and cultural diversity" (313).

One peculiar nature of Nigeria, with a population of about 185 million people and more than 250 ethnic groups, is its diversity. Nigeria's population is equivalent to 2.48% of total world population, making her rank number seven in the list of countries by population and the most populous black nation on earth (*World Meter*, 2016).

The multicultural nature of Nigeria has been recognised by many scholars. Remi Oyeyemi posits that, "Nigeria is a multicultural society. It is a conglomeration of nations with different peoples and cultures. It is a basket of different religions and worldviews..." (32).

Oyazino Aluede and Agnes Malik concur that; "Nigeria is a multicultural nation with over 350 nationalities, with each entity having its own norms, values, beliefs, and languages" (117). The multiplicity of culture in Nigeria has been a thing of joy and pride and at the same time, a constant source of worry and concern. While Nigerians home and abroad have celebrated their diverse

cultures through arts and craft, it has also brought them untold hardship, rivalry, pain, a civil war as well as perennial conflicts.

Ndubuisi Nnanna agrees that Nigeria is a country, "...with over 200 ethnic groups and 500 dialects...and it should no longer be seen as a weakness but strength. The mix of cultures and the richness of the dynamic synergy that comes from intercultural transactions is something that various countries now cherish and encourage" (102) but, according to Stuart A. Notholt, "...such diversity comes at a price. It is a dangerously short jump from 'my group is different' to 'my group is better' or 'my group is threatened'. National or religious chauvinism, racial antagonism, the demonization of other groups, and ultimately, war, deportations, and genocide can then be among the consequences" (vii).

The multicultural nature of the Nigerian state has been a fundamental factor of national leadership from independence.

Overtime, the concept of aesthetics has been viewed from different perspectives. During the medieval period, the medieval Christians used religious concepts as the theoretical basis for aesthetic appreciation. The structure of art was interpreted from the symbolic point of view by such thinkers as St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The concept of aesthetics took on another dimension with the birth of the Renaissance. The criteria for judging art became secular and humanist in outlook. The focus was on the theoretical validation of specific, styles, methods and trends. After the renaissance, came the Enlightenment period with its own criteria for judging art and beauty. In an attempt to mould man's view of the world, there was an effort to contrast the various forms of art. To this end, taste was viewed as a specific psychic mechanism enabling man to perceive and evaluate beauty and the fruits of artistic creativity.

The word aesthetics has its origin from the Greek word *aisthetikos*. Aesthetics is then synonymous with beauty generally and that is why when someone wants to say that something is beautiful, he could say that it is aesthetically pleasing.

Roger Fowler maintains that aesthetic perception is, "normally a blend of aesthetic pleasure and appreciation" (4). He goes on to categorize the processes of aesthetic delight: composition, complementarily and condensation.

Immanuel Kant posits that; "other people ought to feel as we do. Just as human beings should never be treated as merely a means to an end, so aesthetic pleasure comes from the sheer use of deploying our imagination; not for reasons of

morality or utility or any purpose at all" (4). Although beauty is not mere feelings, the sense of beauty is grounded in feelings of pleasure; this pleasure should be universally valid and necessary. Kant goes on to say that beauty is, "objective and universal, thus certain things are beautiful to everyone" (4). Aesthetic judgements are made by checking sufficient conditions. Uniformity in variety always makes an object beautiful, this makes up aesthetic value.

According to Emeka Nwabueze:

... the Kantian concept which is the widely accepted definition of aesthetics sees the term as 'the result of perceiving something, not as a means but as an end itself, not as useful but as achievement'. Such perception is guaranteed to yield whatsoever beauty the material possesses, especially with regard to the qualities and pleasures that arise from one's contact with it (136).

In practice, aesthetic judgement refers to the sensory contemplation or appreciation of an object (not necessarily an art object).

Welsh Wolfgang states that, "aesthetics is considered as artistic as an explication of art with particular attention to beauty. The discipline tradition name aesthetics seem to be wrong because in fact it does not have, as the name suggests, aesthetics as a point of reference, but arts; so the name artistic would be much appropriate" (19).

Dickie George divides aesthetics into three fields, "Theory of Aesthetics, Philosophy of Arts, and Philosophy of Criticism" (52). He also asserts that;

all theories of art up to the eighteenth century AD were variations of the 'Imitation Theory of Art' which was first formulated by Plato (428-348 BC) in the symposium and which basically saw artistic activity as an imitation of the form of beauty in nature. Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through and that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them (39-40)

Aesthetics is an integral part of the human experience, at least as a perception of beauty and art. Whether or not one develops a thorough understanding of aesthetics as a philosophy, we encounter objects of beauty and perceive them as such. Contemporary aesthetics defies a universal rule. There is no singular

definition of beauty or art, rather both can be found and experienced in the moment, by the observer.

There are various published plays that capture the challenge(s) of multiculturalism in Nigeria. The most notable, *Langbodo*, by Wale Ogunyemi, was performed during the Second World African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) hosted by Nigeria in 1977. It was Nigeria's award winning play for FESTAC '77. Wale Ogunyemi experimented with various Nigerian dances and songs that cut across the nation. *Langbodo* has been appraised by so many notable Nigerian scholars and playwrights. It is a play which Segun Oyesoro describes as one of the "productions that featured in different theatre programs representative of the major theatre forms predominant in Nigeria's cultural diplomacy" (33). O. Ejue praises the play as making a very strong statement on the various challenges of Nigeria. "...everything about Nigeria is in the play... it also speaks to the entire Nigerian society which is currently challenged by insecurity and disunity" (1). Similarly Segun Oyewo, sees the play as "the most effective in making a profound statement about world peace and understanding out of all Nigeria's theatre export" (109). *Langbodo*, in content and form, is a good example of a multicultural drama. Wale Ogunyemi makes use of numerous theatre idioms, and many dances and ethnic songs peculiar to the generality of the Nigerian society. The play is adapted from D. O Fagunwa's *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale*.

Apart from Wale Ogunyemi's *Langbodo*, Ola Rotimi's *If... A Tragedy of the Ruled* (1983), *Hopes of the Living Dead* (2001), and Segun Oyekunle's *Katakata for Sofahead* (1983) also critically examine the theme of multiculturalism.

Thematically Ola Rotimi's *if...* and *Hopes of the Living Dead* are replete, as Effiok Uwatt observes, with "themes of nationalism, communalism, multi ethnic characters and multi-lingualism." (40-46). In *Hopes of the Living Dead* and *If...* Ola Rotimi experiments with the philosophy of multiculturalism by bringing together people from diverse cultures and different backgrounds, plagued with the same problem who tend to de-emphasize their individual backgrounds and cultural affiliations to fight for the common good of the people. It is interesting to note that Rotimi grew up in an ethnically heterogeneous family, with his father from Yoruba land and mother from the Ijaw extraction in Rivers State of Nigeria. In *If...*, Ola Rotimi employs a variety of dramatic techniques that make the play unique in its aptness at capturing the Nigerian essence. Similarly, Ola Rotimi replicates in *Hopes of the Living Dead* the co-existence of characters from different cultural backgrounds. The play is Ola Rotimi's miniature representation of

Nigeria as a multicultural nation bound together by suffering, frustration and a communal resolve to push through social, political and health challenges.

Segun Oyekunle's *Katakata for Sofahead* is perhaps the first play to be published entirely in Pidgin and from character portrayal and developments in the play one can see that the three major languages in Nigeria: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are used. Apart from the problems faced by prisoners in the play, the central motif of the play is a comment on the wider Nigerian society.

It is also important to note, as a matter of fact, that some plays by Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Olu Obafemi, J. P. Clark, Bode Sowande and others interpret and re-interpret national themes with the intention of creating national unity. However, most of the plays by these playwrights cannot be placed totally under multicultural drama because they have one ethnic setting or the other, ethnic songs, ethnic characters and so on. Of course, a play can lend itself to a universal interpretation in terms of content but multicultural drama often lends itself to a special assemblage of multicultural elements to project national issues.

Textual Analyses

This segment will examine the portrayal of multicultural aesthetics in *The Pillars* by Felix Egwuda and *The Candles* by Uche Nwaozuzu, giving a detailed synopsis of each play.

The Pillars opens with four groups of people that form the Ohimini community gathered for a parley. They discuss issues that centre on the people's corporate existence. They reason together on the possible factors that may hamper their existence as one and an indivisible unit. The four groups are represented by Arbiter, Akechi, Ebo and Iyaji and the meeting is without a convener. Arbiter appoints himself chairman but the idea is frowned at by the other groups and a decision is reached that the chairmanship be rotated among the four groups at each meeting. They decide the leadership by voting and Arbiter assumes the leadership of the meeting. Arbiter opens the floor by addressing the need for and importance of the meeting, prompting Iyaji to see reasons for a captivating name to address the forum and the name 'The Pillars' is agreed on. Arbiter goes on to highlight each group's strengths and weaknesses and admonishes that they all amend their ways and learn to live together. The meeting is adjourned.

At the next meeting, Arbiter tells each group to render an account of the resources God has deposited at their disposal and suggest how such resources can be harnessed for the growth of the community. Each group does this and the

meeting is adjourned once again. Akechi goes home to find things wrong; an infidel of a daughter, who is hell bent on acquiring western education, a rebellious wife who supports her daughter's dream and a son who just recently developed a flair for going out with Christian friends, thereby going against the Muslim faith.

In the last meeting, a major decision is taken about the corporate existence of 'The Pillars' in Ohimini community, with every group making honest and sincere contributions. They all come to terms with the fact that each group is guilty for the mishap of Ohimini community and that each one of them has a peculiar role to play in the development of the land. They forgive one other and celebrate the rebirth of their community.

Egwuda's *The Pillars* successfully explores, symbolically, the emergence of a new Nigeria that is built upon the pillars of cultural understanding and tolerance. The playwright reveals the issues relating to the making of a new Nigeria, above the barriers of ethnicity and selfish regional interests, to a clarion call for cultural tolerance and understanding. This is suggested by Arbiter:

ARBITER: Gentlemen. I welcome us to this August parley. None of us knows the convener of this meeting. Perhaps, it is a divine arrangement that we should meet today. If our being together should be meaningful, we would have to reason together. After forty years of self-assurance, we are still unsure of our destiny. The foundation looks weak. The future is bleak. Corruption, tribalism, nepotism, bribery, sectionalism, etc take precedence in our collective lives... Ethnic and religious crisis has become the order. There is crevasse in our wall... We crib our life style from the white culture because we have no focus. While the larger world is coming together...we are drifting apart. Do you remember the axiom of 'united we stand, divided we fall'? There is more to be said. Welcome. (p. 15)

Egwuda brings his creative ingenuity to bear by unveiling the play with Arbiter, Akechi, Ebo, and Iyaji being summoned to a parley without a convener. These four groups of people form the Nigerian community which Egwuda calls Ohimini. He singles out the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria leaving Arbiter to represent the other over two hundred and fifty minority groups. These facts are well established in the following:

ARBITER: As our seniority has not been well established. I wish to start from the North to the South.

AKECHI: Don't create unnecessary complexity

ARBITER: What I mean is that I shall start with Akechi, then Ebo and finally, Iyaji. (p. 19)

ARBITER: ...Well, thank you for your patience. I know by now Ebo is craving for his 'akpu', Iyaji for his amala and Akechi, for his 'tuwo dawa' (p. 27).

The play explores the cultural, political and economic frictions that plague the corporate existence of the people of Ohimini. Through the ensuing confrontation between the three ethnic groups arising from issues of religion, tribe and culture, Arbiter who is one considered to be an authority on what is right, good or proper, or a person who has the power to settle an argument between people, is seen arbitrating between Akechi, Ebo and Iyaji, never taking sides with any and always appreciating the singular input of all towards the development of Ohimini. We see Arbiter admonishing the others on the need for peace:

ARBITER: Peace. We are here to resolve conflict in our community. We are not here to enhance it. As brothers, we should learn to live in peace with one another. (p. 7)

This admonition is intended to placate the trio who are bent on playing the politics of tribe and religion on who should be the chairman of the meeting. The argument on who should lead based on tribal construction is one crucial area that has hindered the development of Nigeria. Along this line, the multicultural crisis in Nigeria, from Egwuda's point of view, can be traced to tribal jingoism and religious chauvinism:

AKECHI: We cannot accept Christian prayer in this forum; Christians are referred to as Kaffir. It is Islam that is the true religion as it came directly from Allah.

EBO: Which religion does not come from God?

AKECHI: I will pray. An infidel cannot pray in this forum.

EBO: Who are infidels? You should not be silly. (p. 12)

Arbiter is able to convince the three about the importance of unity. Through his unwavering loyalty to the cause, he is able to change the divisive views of Iyaji, Ebo, and Akechi.

The multicultural aesthetics of Egwuda's *The Pillars* is anchored on the play's attempt to reveal most of the problems influencing the existence of a symbolic Nigeria, arising from its multicultural nature while adequately advocating cultural understanding through the character 'Arbiter'. The playwright makes it glaring that for Nigeria to forge ahead and make any headway, it must learn to accept everyone irrespective of religious or cultural affiliations. It is also significant to note the importance of the individual strength of the different ethnic groups, and thus their utility in the development of the community.

Through the interaction of these ethnic groups, a new resolve is formed at the end of the play. It is geared towards the coexistence of all, for the greater good of the community.

The Candles opens with the Minister of Information, Chief Koko, talking to the religious leaders about their roles in the safety of the president and the nation as a whole. The government has just received hint about a coup planned by an unknown group of persons and the duty of the religious leaders is to unmask the persons behind the plot. As they discuss, the power is interrupted and the Minister of Information goes out to seek for a solution to the power failure. As he leaves, the Secretary to the Government comes in to meet darkness. Just as he speaks, the minister comes in with candles. He explains to the secretary that the standby generator could not come on because of the adulterated fuel supplied for it. Now left with the assignment of revealing the coup plotters, the religious leaders fight among themselves and finally decide to work according to religious divides. The African traditional religious leaders Ogun, Usman and Amadioha decide to work first. But even among themselves, they still have disputes on which god to call upon first and they decide to call upon their individual gods at the same time. They begin to say what they claim to see. After their various incantations and chants which does nothing to redeem the situation, the secretary replaces them with the spiritual leaders; Arch Bishop, Imam and Great Mother. They do the same thing the traditional leaders did, praying in different ways without proffering a solution. The secretary, now angry, also replaces them with the mystics; Lama, Legion and Tibet. They perform their entire magic, quote all their laws and use all their mystic arts, yet without result. The secretary, who is now extremely angry, brings all the religious leaders to work together and call

upon their different gods to redeem the situation. A notice comes to them, through the secretary, that the president is on his way to their hideout, and unfortunately for them the candles are dying out and the coup plotters have stormed the state house. The fear that the coup plotters would follow the president's trail and find their hideout engulfs them all, causing commotion and finally, the last of the candles is crushed in their frenzy, introducing total darkness.

Nwaozuzu's *The Candles* exploits different dramatic techniques to explain certain societal ills which affect the Nigerian state. The playwright indirectly mocks the Nigerian society and the 'despots' and 'psychopaths' therein. The play exposes the disunity of the religious institutions in Nigeria. The three traditional religious leaders represent the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. They antagonize each other and each person claims to be superior to the other:

OGUN: ...Pray my fellow lords, everyone to his spot, do not move. My Igba lies on the floor, if human feet break it, a greater darkness shall descend on this assembly.

TIBET: Your Igba you speak of Ogun? No, think you instead of my sphere, my fragile crystal ball. So delicate that only a breath shall trip it.

GREATMOTHER: Crystal balls and Igba, the worldly have had their say. As for me, all that I testify is that light has no communion with darkness... we are light. (p. 8)

Nine spiritual leaders are invited and they are further divided into three; Usman, Amadioha and Ogun- serving as the traditional leaders, Legion, Tibet and Lama, as the Mystics and Archbishop, Great mother and Imam as the Divines. They all struggle for recognition as the most powerful and superior. As earlier stated, Usman, Amadioha and Ogun represent the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria; Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba respectively. The nine spiritual leaders are all expected to work together to forestall the impending doom but are all at loggerheads as to which group is the superior and therefore, should be the first to perform:

USMAN: Which group goes first?

IMAM: Since it was the inspired idea of the holy woman in our midst, i suggest the religious take the first slot.

AMADIOHA: No. As the ancestors, we own the land and according to tradition, the first part always belongs to us.

IMAM: No we have...

ARCH/B: They can go first Imam. Darkness first reigned before light overcame it. Let the herbalists take the first slot and after them we go, then after us, the Mystics will follow... that is if there will still be something left for them to do by the time we are through.

TIBET: Don't worry with us, the arrangement offers us the privilege of a befitting end to the night's summit... Lama?

LAMA: Well-spoken friend. (p. 18)

Even after the traditionalists are allowed to perform their magic first, they still have disagreements about which god to call first, thus, bringing in the issues of superiority, disintegration and disharmony, even among their closed group. The playwright uses this example to make a bold statement about the situation of the Nigerian state and the problem of segregation along religious lines:

USMAN: Which god shall we call upon first?

OGUN: Ogun it shall be, the ancient benevolent god of regeneration.

AMADIOHA: Unacceptable. Amadioha is more potent and awesome, fierce and moves on the tail of the heavenly fire.

OGUN: Iro... Ogun just as I have proclaimed. Who has not benefitted from his ageless godhead? The firmament and heart of Ife, Egbado, Remo, Ayieforo...

AMADIOHA: Nonsense. That is localized. We need a national deity.

OGUN: Sango then is our bet

AMADIOHA: Sango... the deity of National Electronic Cooperation? Far be it from us friends. Is he not the principality that has condemned us to use candle light in this most important tryst?

OGUN: Then which shall it be?

USMAN: Let everyone call upon his own god, let every herbalist invoke his own deity.

AMADIOHA: A wiser decision (p. 19-20)

The playwright sees the need to maintain peace in the country and among the different sects; political, religious and social:

GREATMOTHER: To keep this candle one, united, indivisible and indissoluble entity is a task that must be accomplished... I beg your pardon, did I say candles? Eh, I actually mean the nation... (p. 27)

The multicultural aesthetics of Nwaozuzu's *The Candles* is expressed in his attempt to unveil the difficulties hindering the achievement of a united country.

We see the importance of the religious leaders and the work they have done which prompts them to see themselves as superior but at the climax of the crises, they are all forced to drop their pride and work together to achieve a common goal; the safety of the president and the nation. Though, when they eventually decide to drop their pride and work together, the die is already cast and it is too late to achieve a positive result.

Conclusion

Drama can be a powerful tool for multicultural education. This research demonstrates the importance of multiculturalism by suggesting that the right of every nationality to practice its culture should be respected. The stability of Nigeria depends on fashioning an ethos of mutual respect among the nationalities that make up Nigeria. The literary artist has not relented in recreating the contemporary cultural issues bothering his time; hence Egwuda's *The Pillars* and Nwaozuzu's *The Candles* and a host of other plays are seen to be promoting the idea of multiculturalism. These plays are artistic successes because with the simplicity of their styles, the playwrights are able to convey their messages to the reader with ease. They have both told us an unavoidable truth about ourselves and about our social, political, and cultural problems as a country.

A multicultural society like Nigeria can reconcile unity and diversity provided it does not confuse unity with uniformity. Nigeria should evolve its unity out of its

diversity by encouraging its cultural communities to evolve a plural national culture that both reflects and transcends them. More Nigerian playwrights should become interested in multiculturalism and preach unity in diversity, since they are among the final hope of the masses towards achieving a better Nigeria, especially at the present time when the corporate existence of Nigeria and ethnic agitations for self-determination are in the front burner.

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