

TOWARDS AN IDEOLOGY OF THE POST-OSOFISAN GENERATION PLAYWRIGHTS: INDIVIDUALISM AND SURVIVALISM CONSIDERED

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Abstract

*The process of change and further change is heightened in the final years of each decade and/or century. At this period, literature can come in clear movements, tendencies or trends and ideologies while variety and pluralism, multiplicity of experience, and a wide breath of voices are some of the dominant characteristics of new writing, many of which challenge or even extend the themes of previous writing. Thus, we can argue that the “new” takes the “old” up in the process of emerging and entrenching its own dominant voice. The Nigerian literary drama which came out of the dying years of the 1980s therefore, had in common, a revival of forms of the past, while simultaneously experimenting with the often media-based forms of the future. These dramatic pieces are less open than ever, to the clear distinctions between the ‘serious’ and ‘popular’ or the ‘experimental/avant gardist’ and the ‘conventional’ as exemplified in the two generations which came before. The strong, new generation which emerged in the Universities of Ibadan, Ife (now OAU), Benin, Calabar, Jos, Nsukka, Zaria, Port-Harcourt, Ilorin and Maiduguri, came with the purpose of reviving the consciousness of theatre-loving Nigerians to their own art, in the face of the onslaught of the motion pictures. As the **younger** or the ‘third’, ‘fourth’ or ‘fifth’ generation writers I have code-named the post-Osofisan generation, these cultural interpreters have had their dramatic sensibility and thematic thrust shaped and sharpened by the socio-political and aesthetic realities of their immediate environment, in spite of the fact that they have been accused of having no ideology. Hence, their vision was to use the platform of the defunct but **recently-revived** Nigerian Universities Theatre Arts Festival (NUTAF), which threw up a new crop of playwrights and other practitioners. This paper argues that the ideology of the generation is nothing but Individualism and Survivalism, stemming from post-modern sensibilities and concludes that these playwrights now speak in their own tongue, of their angst through the labyrinthine paths of **becoming**.*

Introduction

The term, post-Osofisan generation, used by this writer for the first time in 1999, actually could have originated with him. Although, it is now generally applied to the body of works today that are from recent Nigerian dramatists of the NUTAF 1988 virgin scripts initiative. This phenomenal exploits remain the signpost for the emergence of the ‘new’ generation of Nigerian playwrights, who had been expected to live up to expectations (Ademiju-Bepo,

“Recent Nigerian Dramatists...” 63). It was in connection with, and within the ambits of these revolutionary experiments which were evidently driven by robust creativity, and the promise of a bright future for dramatic literary tradition in the country that the environment is made conducive and clement for their creative impulse.

It is no longer disputable that a new generation has emerged after the second generation of literary dramatists in English. All this had come to pass through the Nigerian Universities Theatre Arts Festival (NUTAF), a platform instituted in 1981 by some members of the ‘next’ generation after the Femi Osofisan-led political theatre exponents of a positive revolutionary alternative (Obafemi 168). The social vision of this category of writers, we want to argue, is more or less similar to that of the pioneer generation of Soyinka and Clark, in its individualism, in the description of J.C. de Graft (17). In the wake of this is the rise of the dialectics on their ideological persuasion and commitment.

Recent revelations of a body of work which has come to be known as post-Osofisan so far has kept cynics and sceptics drooling on the sheer artistic commitment to the purpose of reviving the consciousness of theatre-loving Nigerians to their own art, in the face of the onslaught of the motion pictures. Several scholars including Olu Obafemi have previously described them as the *younger* or the ‘third’, ‘fourth’ or ‘fifth’ generation dramatists. But I have precisely code-named them *the post-Osofisan generation*, being cultural interpreters who have had their dramatic sensibilities and thematic thrusts shaped and sharpened by the socio-political and aesthetic realities of their immediate environment.

The above is in spite of the fact that they have been accused of having no ideology. But then, it could be argued that, the predominant ideology in their plays – for which members of this generation have been accused, is that of dressing old themes in new robes. As a playwright of the post-Osofisan generation, Chukwuma Okoye avers that,

...the issue of dressing old themes can be found everywhere. Even in the Osofisan generation, we still have writers who have not actually been successful because they just get a few things and then go out. Let me say that ideology has nothing to do with themes. Some of them are so ideological, so concretely ideological and have produced works in that ideology but works of little value. I am sure that you must know one or two of them, and if it is a question of ideology, theirs is even more profound than those of their contemporaries, but have not been able to produce works of equal value. So, you don’t accuse the present generation of writers of that. It’s something that’s natural. In a generation of writers, you have the good and the bad. Bad writers would just dress old themes and do whatever they like. But you know, nothing is new. The inspiration is not anything new. What is new is what you make of it, how you go about it and what you have produced in the end. Some people get that inspiration and are unable to withdraw from that inspiration and are thus, unable to give the work of art its own life. This is an abstract statement, though (2003).

The Ideological Conundrum and Thematic Preoccupation

The 'unconscious' ideological commitment of the post-Osofisan generation is a clear departure from the conscious commitment of the dramatists before them, mostly represented by writers such as Femi Osofisan, Kole Omotoso, Bode Sowande, Tunde Fatunde, and Tess Onwueme (Obafemi 168). It can thus be argued that writers of this generation were not conscious of their ideological vision to confront the contemporary social problems which have held them in bondage. Their artistic strength lies in the variety of approaches employed in the thematic preoccupation, interpretation and use of the medium of theatre, and subsequently, the screen to pursue their calling. For instance, that Soyinka has written on the theme of dictatorship did not preclude the new generation from writing on the same dictatorship. It is not enough to suggest that the playwright will be taking an old theme and dressing it, rather it sounds nonsensical. The argument may be taken if this author has taken an old theme and he is not able to make anything out of it. Even at that, it is not peculiar to the present generation, it happens everywhere, as far back as one can remember.

Now, to the subject of thematic preoccupation. Many of these writers no doubt had their initial exposure to the works of most of our writers, like J.P. Clark, Wole Soyinka, and then later, Femi Osofisan. Okoye, for instance, had been captured or fascinated by the art itself and admitted to this writer in an interview that as a person, he had not felt that his individual problem or interest had been attended to:

Now, I use individual or personal as against general, which is human. Those works have, of course, addressed human problems and that is why they are great works. But somehow, the personal problems, as far as I'm concerned, have not been profoundly addressed. Some of these are my personal interest or worries, like transport, fuel scarcity, and such like that... (Personal Interview).

While not sounding blasphemous, he also admitted that he was not disturbed about the problem of dictatorship in Nigeria, for instance. According to him,

It's something I'm scared of saying, but in this context, I do not want to compare. But I do not think that the situation today, because we are under a democracy, is different from our situation about ten years ago. I, in fact, think it is worse. So, I do not think it is a problem of ideology but human (Personal Interview).

However, it could be said that it is the way specific problems are treated and then given an entirely human perspective that makes or mars great themes. It could be quite instructive to look at the works of J.M. Synge. Where one may, as a Nigerian, discover that thematically, these works do not apply to you, but because they have a human context, apart from possibly individual or racial implications, you find them appealing. For me, I find most of those works appealing for their human texture. And this is not a negative criticism. Naturally, my interest became focused on things that are happening around me,

things that I see, and things that worry me. Not going after elevated things, high-sounding themes.

For Okoye, the themes of his plays are essentially contemporary; even in his first play, *We the Beast*. In this play, Okoye examines the beastly aspect of human nature and felt that the greatest exposition of that is a war situation. Insurgency has become the order of the day: people are being slaughtered daily; and it does seem as if the bombs and guns are no longer fashionable. We are now using all kinds of machetes and crude equipment like IEDs to slaughter ourselves, especially in Africa.

I thought the problem was an African problem, but that is something I have felt personally, though, most people in Nigeria did not really experience the civil war to that degree; probably some people never heard a bomb explode all through the war. For some people, it was an everyday occurrence; some people cannot identify somebody that they knew, that died during the war, some can. Some people did not experience starvation, which incidentally was devised as a weapon of war, some people did. Some people did not die from physical warfare as it were, they died of starvation, disease, malnutrition, etcetera, etcetera, which is even more dehumanising to perceive. So, it was for me, something that I could identify with. There is also the theme of insanity; now who is insane? That is why I decided that the person who is actually sane is the person that is insane. The society; it was the society fighting a war and it was justified by those words: keeping one thing one; keeping this one, one; fighting for your nation, and whatever (Personal Interview).

Break-away or Adventure: Influence, Form and Style Perspective

Has it actually been impossible to break away from the influence of the older generation; or the new generation is actually afraid to? I think it all has to do with the degree of comfort. The emergent generation was becoming too comfortable with the *status quo*; and if this was the case, none can become adventurous. Besides, the older generation no longer needs the kind of encouragement being given by the younger in the production of their works. I would rather put my own money in the new generation of Nigerian writers. Left to most of us, we would prefer to publish under normal circumstances, and produce plays, our own plays.

It is interesting to note, talking about contemporary playwriting, that one can say so much about form and style, structure and technique of the post-Osofisan generation today. It may equally be argued, some ten years or so ago that the reference to this generation was an absolutely elusive or difficult thing to capture by way of definition, or by way of form, style, structure, and so on. From my point of view, I did not even concretely see the existence of that generic class of playwrights like the modern or post-Osofisan era or something like that, until I began my research leading to my doctorate degree. That was when I started to make such distinction. Consequently, I can speak of these playwrights, thematically or stylistically today because the problem of not having enough playwrights or rather published playwrights of this generation, to read or interpret

due to several and other related problems that go with publishing in Nigeria is fast disappearing.

However, there are a lot of influences, which are both internal and external, for most of these writers have been responsible for this. I believe the circumstance, environment, or reality, both physical and psychological, and then in the physical, the most prominent is economic, which I believe, is rigorous, or in a minor term, uncomfortable, for contemporary writers, in Nigeria. I will not say for everybody; but for writers, it is absolutely peculiar. When we compare the manner in which their predecessors were prolific, it tends to imply either paucity of writers or a paucity of seriousness, or whatever. This category of playwrights is more prolific than their predecessors, in a sense, because of their survival instinct.

The perspective of their remaining largely unsung has contributed to their creative response to the movement of the social pendulum as a predictive analysis of the social system and contemporary reality. In spite of the lack of critical attention on and production of their output on the one hand, and the dearth of publishing opportunities some decade and a half ago, on the other, these cultural interpreters have continued to write and create within the ambience of social phenomena which literature invariably is. Their social vision is to expand the frontiers of drama and theatre in Nigeria. This they have done by taking up the gauntlet not to be docile and had gone into the home video terrain, beside the self-publication option, not minding the economic stress or distress.

NUTAF as their platform of expression and ultimately, emergence, through the virgin script initiative, ensured their style and perspective were sharpened and shaped by the often classroom theory-based, but *amateurish* viva voce after each production back in school. This emboldened their exploits until the emergence of a body of work which deals with the contradictions of their social existence at a highly concentrated, more intense level than their forerunners in the dramatic venture. Away from the cultural renaissance of Negritude; the post-independence disillusionment; the political and ideological commitment of the post-civil war; they embraced the twin-perspective of spiritual experimentation and re-definition of ideology and the spiritual and ideological alternatives. This dual personality of their consciousness dictated by the individual talents and the mushrooming tendency of the playwrights to survive through the examination of the spirit of their society in its different epochs gave birth to the postulation of *Individualism* and *Survivalism*, as the ideology of their generation.

The Post-Osofisan Playwrights: Between Lack of Ideology and Non-Publication

Even though the accusation was rife once upon a time that these playwrights lack(ed) ideological slant, I think, I would say, that basically, the accusation was unfair, as well as untrue. May be we should first answer the question, does ideology make a better writer? What's the relationship between ideology and creative writing? If a writer produces a work that seems to tow a particular ideology, and tomorrow, he produces another work that seems to tow a different ideology, and again another one that is in an entirely different ideological disposition, would that then mean that, it is impossible for those works to be great works, because they are not ideologically consistent? I do not think there is any kind of relationship between ideology and creativity. Some of our predecessors had particular

ideologies, which to say the least, are in contrast to their present ideologies. Some were Marxists when the going was rough, now obviously even, if they do not want to admit it, most of them are capitalists, in terms of ideology. But how does that relate to their works? Are we going to say that the work Mr. 'A' produced as a capitalist is better than the work 'he' produced as a Marxist?

In Okoye's contention, that kind of comparison is not worthwhile.

...For me, a work of art is usually perceived as sufficient. When you perceive a work of art, its appeal to you should be total. Going out to find out what the ideology of the writer is or was, is an aberration; that is not the way works of art are considered. When you then say that a particular generation does not have any definite ideology, I mean, not having an ideology, for me is actually an ideology! If I do not believe in anything, by way of ideology, it should not hamper my creative energy. I do not think there is such a relationship between ideology and creative writing. Secondly, even if there is, I do not believe that there is a paucity of ideologies in contemporary Nigerian writers. So, I do not subscribe to that accusation that they lack ideology. I think it is all a matter of the period. If we look at our contemporary society, when almost every kind of ideology is being put to question, you will find out that what we have is not a lack of ideology but probably a plethora of ideologies ((Personal Interview).

For instance, you can now see somebody who will tell you that he is a Christian, as well as a Muslim and he is also a traditionalist, a *tradochislamist* (just like this writer's intellectual quest and claim). There are others who speak like that, and they will tell you that what they are doing is processing the three religions and their ambition is actually to arrive at something. For such a person, his would be some kind of a new ideology, which means that it has not been in existence. I believe it is a part of the environment, several ideologies clashing and aiming to create a new ideology. Maybe with the period gone, critics would begin to find an ideology, when you can now look with the advantage of hindsight, you get all their works together, and then you can begin the search for their ideology. We, members of this generation, are still writing, so what kind of ideology are we expecting at this very point, this very early stage of our becoming published? Now the works are here, the search should begin for the ideology. Unless, of course, these so-called critics are looking at the persons, the human beings rather than the works. But that is a wrong attitude, what they should aim for is to find out why the work of this man or that woman lacks an ideological position.

With the emergence of a body of writing, we may now be having a body of literature, these writings, that the critics can read. They are able to identify several titles published by this generation of playwrights and will discover that these people have talent; they have an ideology and the energy to sit down and write. And they have written a lot; in spite of the environment in which they write, and the reasonable degree of (dis)comfort. In fact, I believe that even with these extenuating circumstances, these writers would soon emerge, if they have not done so already. There will be some kind of a renaissance which

I believe will come, may be in the next five to ten years. I mean, this situation cannot continue to exist. I know, from within, and from the fact that I am also in contact with some of these writers, I know that we write even under the most inhuman circumstances.

Several of them have manuscripts; to evaluate the quality of these manuscripts, that is something else. I know that they are writing even in this absolutely inhibitive environment. So, I believe when there is an economic change, or someone begins to show interest in our work, we are going to have the kind of output that, I believe, is even greater than our predecessors have recorded. And I tend to get the hope that I do not think that kind of situation would arise, or is going to be influenced by some kind of action taken by people in Nigeria, not even by our predecessors. Some of them who have made a lot of money, went into publication, somehow, half-heartedly and are not even interested in publishing new writers, they are more interested in publishing the established writers. Maybe they are not to blame because they are after money. That also speaks about ideology, what is the ideology of the publishers? Their ideology is simply money. I believe such an interest will come from outside Nigeria. Even the few writers who write from Nigeria, you will see that the encouragement that they get is from outside (Okoye, Personal Interview).

Towards an Ideology: Popular Themes versus Popularity

Is it not time to look for the critical minds to look at new works and styles from these playwrights of the post-Osofisan order? The ready answer is 'YES'. Going by the popularity of the themes that have been treated by these playwrights, the time is now ripe for critics from amongst their generation to shift the critical torch on their creativity in order to ascertain the validity of my claim in this postulation. The Osofisan and the post-Osofisan generations have one thing in common: both generations agreed that the appeal in their drama is that, whilst being in different 'realms' in numerous concerns, they are free to push in the direction of its individual beliefs. In the works of the ideologically committed dramatists, as we have the self-conscious materialists, so do we have the spiritual nationalists (Obafemi 168-169). Obafemi contends further:

This variation in conviction naturally affects the playwright's approach to his art their individual efforts to employ both the traditional theatre heritage and modern stage techniques to deal with immediately relevant social problems as well as make emphatic political statements (169).

Perhaps more than any other generation, the post-Soyinka dramatists neither wasted time nor left anyone in doubt as to their intention to employ the theatre to effect social change. They were more interested in using drama as an instrument of social change, away from the Soyinka generation which believed in aesthetics and entertainment (Obafemi 169). The post-Osofisan generation, however, has been able to combine the

preceding two perspectives with their own spiritual search for a way to change the *status quo*. Brecht and his theatrical aesthetics was a fascination to them as he was to Soyinka, Osofisan, Omotosho and Sowande. I therefore agree with Fiebach's invitation to African playwrights to utilise not only the 'metaphoric and poetic structure' of traditional African theatre, which is similar to what Brecht extols in his 'epic theatre' (qtd. in Obafemi 170), as I have upheld elsewhere, juxtaposing the African storytelling theatre with the Brechtian Epic theatre. The thematic pre-occupation of these playwrights has opened up new vistas of engagement for them to explore and examine the circumstances of their social existence through their plays. Though weaned on Marxism, these playwrights confronted contemporary realities with the torch of spiritual rebirth and transformation. Such themes as corruption, leadership crises, military dictatorship and misadventure, national unity, political rivalry, oppression of the masses by the State, economic deprivation, human rights abuses and the scourge of campus cults, among others, have featured in their plays.

Examples of such plays are Tunde Ajayi's *Streaks of Blood* (1989 University of Ibadan's entry to NUTAF in Jos); *Rhythm of the Wind* and *No More the Taming Hawks* both by this writer, which were entries of the University of Ibadan at NUTAF 1990 (Nsukka) and 1996 (Ile-Ife), respectively; Alex Asigbo's *War of the Tin Gods* and *The Reign of Pascal Amusu*; Bakare Ojo Rasaki's *Rogbodiyan* and *This Land Must Sacrifice*; Esiaba Irobi's *Nwokedi*, *Froned Circle* and *Cemetery Road*; and Tracie Chima Utoh's *Who Owns This Coffin* and *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*, among many others. These plays bring to the fore, the contemporaneity of their attitudes in approaching the re-awakening of the society through moral re-armament and interrogation of the ideological aesthetics of the previous generations on which scholars like Barclays Ayakoroma, Alex Asigbo and Ameh Akoh have written copiously, in their attempts to arrive at the ideology that drives the post-Osofisan generation playwrights. While not denouncing the traditional resources of the theatre such as ritual, they have given these elements new, revolutionary significance, well-appropriated to conform with their own zeal about the harmony of the society in which they live and which has given life to their art. For instance, the campus secret cult forms the theme of Ademiju-Bepo's *Farewell to a Virus of Anomie*, "Fruits in the Wind" and others. The variety of dramaturgy in their drama notwithstanding, their stories provide a remarkable narrative with the freshness in style, technique and temperament. They became the voice and mirror of our prevailing anguish and angst, and

...they go further still, in the manner of the radical tradition, than the mere presentation of our contemporary society, to suggesting solutions, to pointing out where an outlet exists from our present enclosing cells. Catharsis is obviously out of fashion here; the call is for a violent upturning of the existing order (Osofisan 46).

The search for a definition of the scope of both artist and the people in Nigerian drama of the new age, and the quest for a marriage of aesthetic ideology of the old and new according to Ameh Akoh, bring us to the question of the ideology of this much talked-about generation (264-272). The proposed ideology being *individualism* sustained on

survivalism, has been argued for and against. While some critics like Okoye, for instance, will not want to disagree with that, he enthused:

I believe it is, and the situation is responsible for that. Let us extend our analysis of the environment to the Staff Club, for instance... Even if I belong, I remember that I hardly even go there... because I do not expect to see my contemporaries sitting down to discuss their problem in the environment, etcetera, etcetera. But when you go to the Staff Club, you see our predecessors, sitting down comfortably over whatever it is that they drink, to discuss and thereby inevitably propound ideologies, so to say. What I'm actually trying to say is that, these people had a lot of opportunities to come together and talk and discuss, because friends know each other. I believe there is no dramatist of that generation that does not know his colleague closely or that has not met his colleague in numerous social and artistic occasions. But when you bring that to the contemporary writers, you find out this boy has no time to go there and sit and talk about ideology and stuff like that. There's no time for camaraderie, this man has to survive. So, when you see that kind of a fraternity, it's nothing but the environment, because they go to meet (Personal Interview).

Asigbo's contention readily aligns with this writer's position, when he describes this generation of playwrights as one

that never went to school on government scholarships; the generation that has had to fight for every little right that accrues to it; the generation that must now ask all those that went to school in the 40s, 50s, 60s and perhaps early 70s what they have done with our common wealth which was entrusted into their care? (28).

He goes ahead to say these playwrights, these restless souls have continued to challenge and vilify the *status quo*, criticise and prick the conscience of the generations before their own in their plays. Akoh is convinced that these playwrights in their search for aesthetic ideology attempt to reach new goals or build on or re/deconstruct old dramatic canons within ideo-aesthetic boundaries in both language and theme (264-272). Asigbo again submits that:

It is this search for a new aesthetics, a new ideology and a new approach to issues different from the dogmatism that characterised the previous generations before the third that has preoccupied my generation to the point of an obsession (30).

It could readily be argued that there used to be some journals, intellectual get-togethers or meeting points in the past that helped to make the older generation. Today, hardly do we see such any longer. Are we to blame or they are to blame? As far as I am

concerned, I know what the environment is and I know that I, for example, I am blameless. I am not responsible. I have had an idea for a journal for some time now. The present generation is not to blame at all. As a matter of fact, some of them have tried to put one or two journals together but it has proven impossible to continue because of the financial implication and the lack of patronage. If you were unemployed, and then you begin to think of publishing a journal, no employer will want to touch you. In fact, they will say that this man is insane. It is not that I cannot publish a journal, but if I have to die, ignore my family, ignore myself, and choose to publish a journal and not make money out of that journal, then that's suicide, isn't it? This brings to the fore the question of survival. For Solomon Iguanre,

I would not say there is a specific ideology... we can equally say that the present crop of writers have an ideology. But if the plays are published, you have a much wider audience that could subject the works to thorough literary criticism. That is when you can say, this or that is the ideology of the new writers (364).

Going further, he contends that may be when our own generation also go into publishing, then we could have young publishers taking up the works of their contemporaries. Then there could rise a new era (366). Rasaki Ojo Bakare believes:

We have been greatly hindered for reasons that are naturally human, social, and economical. Talking of basic instincts, every human being is naturally endowed for survival.... Whereas a Jeyifo will tear apart an Ogunbiyi work and then, he will invite them for beer in the evening. They tolerated criticism and the critics of their age were able to say the truth.... How many members of our generation are interested in criticism? The responsibility of individuals too, sycophancy and corruption have taken over. Because you want to survive, you may not want to say the truth ... because people are poor, all they want to do is survive. We are afraid of tearing ourselves apart to build. These are the factors that have conspired against our critical attention (374-6).

Charles Novia also posits:

Factors were right for the older generations when they sort of embraced Marxism or what have you and neglected same in their works. Today, the depression in our economy must be responsible for the two *isms* which you mentioned. Yes, I think we are too individualistic with our creativity. Talking about survival, more people are going into experimental theatre on stage, like monologues and one-man theatre (411).

Presently, true to Novia's contention, the genre of stand-up comedy has gained so much attention and acceptance by the society.

If not for the emergence of the home video industry, which is an absolutely positive development in Nigeria, we may not be talking about the present generation today. We may be talking about the seriousness of art, in which case we are talking about high art, and the fact that theatre is unique, we use such profound words to glorify the theatre, the performance; we speak of the live audience, of contact, interaction between this and that. Okoye enthused:

I have written several scripts for the home video but I have only succeeded in selling one and it's because I am presently in the university that I can afford to be hesitant. If I were not, I would pursue that industry until I become a part of it. That would guarantee my livelihood, my survival. If one looks at these writers, they are contemporary writers; they belong to the post-Osofisan generation. I do not think that Osofisan would write for the home video, at least not yet, and I do not think that Soyinka would do same for the home video (354-6).

The media outlet has undergone a process of evolution and is relatively no longer new. But as long as the interest of practitioners is economic, this situation will continue like this. That is one point in favour of the ideology of survivalism. But I know that even, with that, the situation is still going to improve. I believe that it is good that writers in this generation are writing; at least without the home video industry, they will not be writing. Even if the guy is a mechanic, and then this thing comes up, and he discovers that he can actually tell a story that is going to be acceptable, that is very good. We have produced one more writer and then it might turn out too that some of these writers who are getting recognition in the home video industry might later discover that they actually have what it takes to write for the live theatre and the movement would be an absolutely welcome development and I know that it is possible.

When you actually ask some of the Theatre Arts graduates in the home video industry, they keep telling you that they would have preferred acting, producing or at least, being a part of the collaborative team in the theatre, but they have to survive, and survival is natural. I believe that, if it turns out that these people now become rich and have enough money, they would, I am sure, be able to produce plays or encourage dramatists from the theatre. So, I do not see any problem with the growth of the home video industry in Nigeria.

Conclusion

For some members of the post-Osofisan generation, their emergence had been conditioned by the factors highlighted above. However, they seem to have risen above some of the identified challenges as at the time of their emergence. Adepetu opined that,

Art for the individual must have growth. We cannot look at a particular set of people forever. As students, the older generation gave us the foundation.

Now, you must be willing to tap from and build on that foundation. As far as creative writing is concerned, they did understand the power to help each other, but with our generation, it is a different story entirely.... Yes, everyone is living for survival. Perhaps that can represent the ideology of our age, but I will quickly add that it was forced on us by the present predicament of our situation. Although one must acknowledge and bemoan the fact that we were never empowered by the older compatriots, but.... You must be strong in your survival before you can be creative.... It is this ideology that is forcing our generation to branch out into all media (415-6).

From every indication, these playwrights of the new order now speak in their own voice, as exemplified by the works of the members mentioned here and many more which space could not permit. The technology of the home video has greatly assisted them out of the dark alleys, as Adepetu prophetically foretold, influencing their outlook, on life and by extension, their artistic form. Their angst can be seen from the interviews this writer had with some of them and the thematic foci of their plays which are now coming together as a body of literary corpus in search of critics to facilitate their ultimate becoming through the labyrinthine paths like Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Actor* to make a generational statement.

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