Drama and Leader-Follower Symbiosis for Sustainable Development in Africa: Lessons from Paul Ugbede's *Our Son the Minister*

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Abstract

Many African countries, including Nigeria, are underdeveloped in spite of their rich natural and human resources. This is a call for concern given the continent's natural endowments. Regrettably, some of the African countries that are making great strides in development such as Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana and Egypt are finding it difficult to sustain such developmental strides due to political, religious and economic factors. This paper therefore advocates a synergetic relationship between political leaders and followers in order to achieve sustainable development in Africa. The paper holds that the apathy of followers in relation to leadership policies and programmes, as well as their selfish demands, has further facilitated the failure of leadership in Africa. This is predicated on the fact that no matter how good the developmental agenda of a nation is, if the followership fails to take ownership of it, it cannot be sustained, which sadly deepens its underdevelopment. Consequent upon this premise, the paper submits that Africa can only experience sustainable development if there is leader-follower symbiosis in order for all parties to take ownership of developmental projects. Drawing lessons from Paul Ugbede's *Our Son the Minister* (2017), it recommends that the African people should refrain from making too many frivolous personal demands on their leaders in order not to shift focus from the primary responsibility of leadership towards attaining sustainable socio-economic and political development.

Keywords: drama; leader-follower; sustainable development; symbiosis

Introduction

The question of whether Africa is willing to attain a peaceful, politically stable and economically vibrant continent is dependent on the ability of its leaders and followers to work together as stakeholders. The problem of leadership and followership is perhaps the most intractable problem in postcolonial African society. Historians, politicians, sociologists as well as dramatists have continued to use their works to beam a searchlight on this seemingly difficult and malignant problem. For instance, scholars such as Kwame Nkrumah, Franz Fanon, Walter Rodney, and Athol Fugard, among others, have identified the imperativeness of good leadership as well as supportive followership towards enshrining development in Africa. These scholars recognise the fact that both the leaders and followers are to blame for the slow pace of development in Africa. This lack of development, according to a report from the Africa Growth Initiative (AGI) at the Brookings Institute (cited in Strauss 2016, 17), includes the following:

> Low economic growth rate, poverty, hunger, poor education, ill health and violence. Lack of good housing, corruption architectural changes of global trade and stalled industrial development.

The challenges outlined above may be said to exist because of the failure of leadership as well as the wrong attitude of followers. While one can be optimistic about Africa's political stability and economic growth, Africans must make a decisive commitment to develop the right attitude of patriotism towards their nation and support for their leaders in order to set forth developmentally and thereby alleviate poverty, build good infrastructure, enhance the quality of education, and provide good and affordable health care services and transparent electoral systems.

In order to achieve the desired development, Africans must elect and support purposeful, accountable, creditable and visionary leaders who must ensure that the continent moves forward from stagnation amidst numerous human and natural resources. Over the years, the focus has been placed on leaders and leadership failure. This explains why scholars such as Ahmed Yerima, Femi Osofisan, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Emeka Nwabueze, to mention a few, hold that the problem with Africa is bad leadership as the continent is richly blessed. With a closer look at Nigeria, there are two schools of thought on the genesis of this problem. The first school of thought puts the blame at the feet of the colonialists. To buttress this point with examples, Norbert Eze (2004, 2) asserts that "Nkrumah, Fanon and Rodney among others, blame our problems on colonialism." These scholars recognise the fact that the unchecked balkanisation of the African continent by the colonial powers without considering old boundaries, tribal enmities, and differences in language, diverse ethnic groups and customs have made eventual compatibility impossible. To support this view, Nwabueze (2003, 58) submits that "the political officers hardly considered the sociology of a village or their leadership

idiosyncrasies before imposing a warrant chief on it." Offiong (1980, 119) gives a reason for this as he claims that

> European powers did not establish colonial states to carry out programmes of political development or change but to erect efficient and effective administration states for the purpose of economic exploitation. These states in the third world countries have not transcended the structure of colonial state since our political leaders inherited it at independence.

Similarly, Nwankwo (1990, 65–66) argues,

> What I have tried to show so far is that it is an error to dismiss African dictators outside the central matrix of African colonial history, and that, the emergence of modern African dictatorship could be explained mainly in terms of the negotiated withdrawal of discredited colonialism and its resurgence in neo colonial apparatus of the state that strive to fulfil the aborted mission of colonial rule.

To perpetuate the colonial system of indirect rule, a gap was created between the leaders and the led, thus ensuring the leaders absolute detachment from the plight of the led. Osuntokun points out that "postcolonial African states especially the second republic in Nigeria, are generally characterized by a gap between the state and the civil society" (cited in Nnaji 1999, 27). These socio-political gaps in the system Wa Thiong'o identifies as the confusion in values that has resulted from a drastic historical change in the political, economic and cultural ethos, the effect of such conflict on both society and the individual psyche, and the need to retain what is ours and recreate from it a new set of living values (1972, x).

On the other hand, the second school of thought argues that the problem is not colonisation, but the people, and the society itself. Nwabueze is of this opinion and posits that "the current problems in Nigeria have little to do with colonial legacy, instead, they are primarily caused by corruption and mismanagement on the part of the leaders" (2003, 2). His argument is that these leaders, having been wrested from colonialism, should have used the opportunity to develop their countries better. Instead they assume the position vacated by the colonial power and victimise their own people for selfish interests. Takaya (1996), in agreement, states that "at independence no attempt was made to reorient this machinery to fulfil the democratic needs and wishes of the people. Instead, new elites in power did not [only] inherit colonial structure almost in its original form but even sharpened the viciousness of its oppressive attributes as a weapon for frustrating and suppressing the masses" (1996, 73). Evidently, both the colonialists and the African elites are to blame for this state of affairs. For had the colonialists not destroyed the old structure that guided and kept the people in check, thus creating an imbalance in the society where formerly it did not exist, the imbalance seen in Africa today would not have existed.

Unfortunately followers, who are like another side of the same coin, have not been identified as stakeholders in Africa's developmental process. Followers should support leaders and work together with a unity of purpose in order to achieve the required results. In most cases, the attitude of followers suggests lack of patriotism, greed and nepotism, which truncate the efforts of good, purposeful and determined leaders, frustrating their efforts towards sustaining developmental strides. This sometimes involves situations where followers expect monetary and material gifts from political leaders during campaigns as requisites for their choice of candidates. In fact, political leaders are considered the cash cows of their families, cronies, friends and benefactors, which frustrates their efforts towards dispensing quality service for the general good of the people. In consideration of this challenge, African playwrights have constantly championed the need for change through drama.

African dramatists have consistently put leaders and followers in the spotlight to ensure that both parties know and play their roles in order to achieve a habitable society that will accommodate the people within the African geographical clime. Asserting this position, Idogho (2013, 233) confirms that

> drama in this sense implies the dramatic text that is meant to be performed; an incident, or an event that has been put into paragraph. It might be a true story about other people; like Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi*, Ola Rotimi's *If: A Tragedy of the Ruled* or Ahmed Yerima's *The Trial of Oba Ovoranwen*. It might be an autobiographical story, something that happened to the writer or author. It might be a historical event like J. P. Clark's *All for Oil*, Ola Rotimi's *Ovoranwen Nogbaisi* and *Akassa You Mi*. It might be a fantasy, a made-up story with the quality of a dream, like Ojo Bakare's *Once Upon a Tower* or Femi Osofisan's *Restless Run of the Locust*.

In Africa, many writers have been subjected to severe indignity and dehumanisation because of the protest they render against bad leadership and blind followership. Men like Wole Soyinka, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, Ama Ata Aidoo and a host of others have spoken out against oppression by leaders and the need for followers to show commitment towards supporting purposeful leadership. In this light, Simon Umukoro affirms that "drama like other art forms undeniably reflect ways of ordering the society in which it is based" (1994, 11). A leader must coordinate the affairs of his/her domain towards the general good of the people. This position is properly conveyed by Ola Rotimi in his play *Kurunmi* (1999) as the character Kurunmi, the Aare Ona Kankanfo, declares that "a king, a ruler who sees truth and is too weak, too cowardly to uphold the truth, that ruler has fallen low, lower than the most depraved slave in the bush land" (1999, 18). Unlike the usual trend of holistic concentration and blame on leaders, this work looks at the reciprocal nature of the leader-follower relationship in relation to attaining development. This paper therefore is set to critically analyse a dramatic work on the need for symbiosis between leadership and followership in order to achieve sustainable development. In doing this, a conceptual framework of leadership and followership will be drawn.

Conceptual Framework

Leadership

Leadership is a universal phenomenon. This means that leadership permeates every corner of society. It is a major characteristic of human relationships which cannot be done without because for there to be progress, there must be someone at the helm navigating the affairs of the nation. Michael Hughes, Carolyn J. Kroehler and James W Vander Zanden (1990, 109) opine that "without overall direction, people typically have difficulty coordinating their activities. Consequently, in group setting, some members exert more influence than others. We call these individual leaders." According to Ogbeidi (2012, 12), leadership is "the body of people who lead and direct the activities of a group towards a shared goal." Leadership can also be looked at as mentoring and motivating the followers towards the right course. Agreeing with this notion, Anagwo (2012, 21) asserts that "for one thing leadership entails taking risk to accelerate development and conversely, to exacerbate underdevelopment of the society." Hence, leadership should be geared towards growth, progress, continuity and development. It is the vehicle through which the followers' minds, attitudes, psyches and general potentials are mobilised for the purpose of the general good of an institution, organisation, nation or country. Leadership is a process of social influence by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective. By implication, good leadership emanates from having genuine concern for other people who are the followers. It is in this light that Ogbeidi (2012, 4) opines that "a leader therefore is expected to demonstrate qualities, which embrace, but [are] not limited to good character, vision, tact, prudence and the ability to lead by example." A good leader, therefore, must strive to be an ambassador for development. Buttressing this further, Winston and Patterson (2006, 3) submit that

> the leader throughout each leader-follower interaction should demonstrate his/her commitment to the values of (a) humanity, (b) concern for others, (c) controlled discipline, (d) seeking what is right and good for the organization (e) focusing on the purpose of the organization and on the well-being of the follower(s) and (f) creating and sustaining peace in the organization.

The above is a blueprint according to which every leader must operate. This is because leadership comes with power and authority. As such, the leader must be humble in order to deal with the excesses of power. It is humility that can allow the leader to operate within the provisions of the law, believing that he/she is bound by the law.

To be a good leader, one must learn to effectively direct the activities of his/her followers. Many scholars have advanced different qualities which a good leader should possess. These are necessary attitudes for effective leadership. According to Myles, (2005, 280), good leaders must possess "vision, wisdom, courage and bravery, [a] positive attitude, humility, integrity and be responsible." Vision is the capacity and ability to see beyond what can be seen with natural eyes. The picture of a growth module of an institution, organisation, community, society, and the likes. The second quality is

wisdom; it is the application of knowledge in an effective manner—to put to use the knowledge, experiences and understanding from one's repertoire. A good leader must be courageous and brave. This is the ability not to be controlled or easily influenced by people with personal or selfish agendas. The ability not to be paralysed by fear, and to study consequences in order to make sound and tough decisions without fear. Also, courage and bravery can be seen as the effective management of certainty. A positive attitude is the ability to see people, situations and actions in a positive way, and not avoid responsibility. In maintaining a positive attitude, a good leader must be humble so as not to be influenced by power and authority. One must be accepting of oneself, and also open to advice and suggestions. Above all, subordinates and followers should be given a chance to be part of decision making. Most importantly, a leader must be a man or woman of integrity by being consistent in his/her words and actions, and must strive towards trustworthiness, and avoid deception. A leader must be responsible and must not give excuses to defend inactivity. A leader must have a clear track record of previous experiences, failures and successes. Again, good leadership entails the ability to be self-disciplined, and creative. Tom Bottomore and Robert Nisbet, in agreement with the above, submit that "no leadership succeeds unless it speaks to the needs and conditions of the people" (1978, 472). Pennock and Smith (1960, 47), commenting on good leaders, assert the following:

> At all levels, but especially at higher levels, good leaders analyse problems into their basic elements, so that they can be understood by people who cannot perform the analysis for themselves … By definition, leaders influence more than they are influenced.

These, among many others, are the basic qualities and attributes of good leadership or a true leader, as the case may be.

Followership

Followership is considered to be the flip side of leadership. It is the act of diligently, obediently, but cautiously, accepting the superiority and authority of leadership. It refers to submitting to authority and the powers that be while supporting such towards growth and development. Therefore, if leadership is important to performance and change, followership must also have parity with the functionality of leadership. Quite the contrary, however, is the case; like the game of football where the searchlight is on the players rather than the coach or in a theatrical performance where applause goes to the performers rather than the director, followership gets only a fraction of the recognition which leadership enjoys. Consequently, McCallum (2013) asserts that

> followership is a straightforward concept. It is the ability to surrender in order to take direction, to get in line behind a program, to be part of a team and to deliver on what is expected of you.

The above assertion presents followership as having a crucial role in achieving the set goals and expectations of leadership. Thus, how well the follower follows is as important as how well the leader leads. Hence, the need for leaders and followers to establish a symbiotic relationship in a bid to enhance unity of purpose towards development and change is crucial.

Qualities of Good Followership

The act of followership as established in this paper is a task which must not be taken for granted. It demands the right attitude towards the state and nation in order to be able to actualise the aspirations of the visionary leader towards attaining development and change. Therefore, according to McCallum (2013), followers must possess the following qualities: "Good judgment, ethical sense, honesty, loyalty, courage, support, detribalized and rational." These are the attributes which followers must possess and maintain in order to drive the needed change and development that Africa craves.

Consequently, the need for leaders and followers to relate as stakeholders in a bid to stimulate change can never be overemphasised. Thus, this is a conscious two-way relationship in which leaders agree to deliver their mandate to the people while the people on the other hand eschew greed and nepotism which typically truncate the efforts of good leaders towards development. The foregoing situation clearly reveals the helpless state of nations in Africa which are in urgent need of leader-follower symbiosis. Suffice to say that the primary responsibility of addressing these challenges rests with Africans.

Political Leadership and the Nigerian Situation

Etymologically, the word politics originates from the Greek word *politikos*, which means "of, for, or relating to Citizens" (Asen 2013, 78). According to Jowett (in Aristotle 1999, 5), "Politics can be looked at as the process by which a group of people make collective decisions in the interest of the majority of the people." Asen further observes that politics often apply to the art and science of running government or state affairs alongside the behaviour within civil governments. He (Asen 2013, 78) further re-iterates that

> politics consists of social relations involving authority or power and entails the parameter of public affairs within a political unit as well as the methods and tactics used to formulate and apply the policies that have been advanced.

Politics confers power and authority on the political class of the society, empowered to formulate and apply policies which may or may not be favourable to the common good of the people. It is fundamental to note that politics in every society is for the political class. Confirming this, Nkrumaha (1970, 17) asserts the following:

> In every non-socialist society there are two main categories of class, the ruling class or classes, and the subject class or classes. The ruling class possesses the major instruments of economic production and distribution, and the means of establishing its political dominance, while the subject class serves the interest of the ruling class, and is politically, economically and socially dominated by it.

Politics, thus, is championed by particular groups within the society. They constitute the machinery for the politics in the society. Political leadership is therefore that form of leadership mainly adopted by the government of a country in order to lead through policy implementation within the confines of the law (constitution). Thus, political leadership is the act of coordinating the government apparatus in terms of human and material resource management on behalf of a nation or a country. This stretches to individuals occupying decision-making positions in government as well as those seeking to be there as a result of having perceived or witnessed loopholes or bad leadership. The Nigerian leadership problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility and the challenge of true and purposeful leadership, which is the hallmark of leadership. It is in this light that we must reflect on the words of Achebe (1983, 1):

> The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which is the hallmark of true leadership.

Followership, in contrast with leadership, is a concept that has not been explored in-depth compared to leadership. This view has been well summarised by Rost (1994, 2), who, while rejecting the term followership in favour of collaborators, notes the following:

> The common wisdom is that followers are to do followership, which means that they are to do the leader's wishes. The responsibility is to follow the leader, who shows them the right thing to do. Followers are basically passive, subordinate, submissive, more or less unintelligent, not in control of their lives, and unproductive. They need leaders to show them the way, to lead them down the right path, to direct them in various situations, to guide them in making decisions, and to articulate a vision for them. Followers are not capable of doing leadership, so they are left with doing followership.

Given this perspective, it is not surprising that followership has received scant attention when compared to leadership. However, this situation is changing. Since the 1990s, not only has more of the leadership literature stressed followers, but also more writing has focused solely on followership and related areas. Wortman (1982) noted that leader-follower roles were changing and suggested that corporate America would only benefit from this change. Lippitt (1982) is even more direct about the negative side of traditional followership. He (Lippitt 1982, 400) states,

> Our major unused human resource is the very large proportion of followers who use the group and organization as a way to hide from actively taking responsibility and who use their alienation and apathy as a basis for functioning at a low level of energy and initiative.

Good followership therefore is necessary for the optimal productivity of leaders. Leaders and followers must relate in a cordial symbiotic manner to drive development in Africa. Nigeria and other African nations are in urgent need of leader-follower symbiosis in order to pave the way for growth and development.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted in this paper is based on Louis Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). Louis Althusser (1971, 343), analysing the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), submits that "man is an ideological animal by nature." Althusser further explains that "ideology always exists in an apparatus and its practice or practices" (1971, 342). Contrary to the Marxist superstructure or State Apparatus (SA), which includes the Government, the Courts, the Army, the Police, Prison etc. and which are seen by Althusser as "repressive" because they function through violence, the Ideological State Apparatuses are a certain number of realities that present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialised institutions (1971, 336). These Ideological State Apparatuses include the following:

- The educational ISA (the system of different public and private schools)
- The family ISA
- The legal ISA
- The political ISA (the political system, including different parties)
- The trade union ISA
- The communication ISA (press, radio, television, etc.)
- The cultural ISA (literature, arts, sports, etc.)
- The religious ISA (the system of different churches)

The major difference between the Repressive State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatuses, according to Althusser (1971, 337), is that "the repressive functions by violence while the ideological functions by ideology." Ideology is further divided into two: the imaginary form of ideology and the materiality of ideology. The imaginary is the conception of an illusory idea which is made concrete through an illusion. For example, the belief in God and religion. The materiality of ideology refers to when such ideology is imbibed and expressed consciously in action. Thus, drama is singled out as part of the materiality of ideology, which can be utilised to enhance attitudinal change

by creating a leader-follower relationship geared towards achieving unity of purpose in order to implement sustainable development in Africa.

The commitment to drive this project to accomplishment lies with the dramatist in his/her art of dramaturgy. The dramatist must be committed to influencing his/her society for the better. Agitations with guns may only destroy and create more challenges, but a writer's ink touches the conscious and subconscious. As such, a writer must accept the responsibility that comes with writing for the general good of the people. It is in this light that Gbilekaa (1997, 51), quoting Achebe on the need for genuine commitment from the writer, submits that

> when we speak of a writer's commitment, we mean his attachment to particular social aims and the use of his writings to advance those social aims. This of course implies a belief that drama can be and should be used as a force for social change and a writer has a responsibility to do so.

Dramatists in Africa owe their people a debt of commitment to write on issues troubling the continent in order to bring about a change that is capable of attracting peace, political stability, and economic recovery towards sustainable development. What, then, is drama?

Drama

Drama, simply put, is an imitation of action. Okoh (2007, 21) defines drama as "an imitative action in the sense that it is a re-enactment of human actions." She further explains that the concept of mimesis or imitation is crucial to the core meaning of drama. The African literary tradition started with the first generation writers. Their plays were constructed based on the Western or Aristotelian principles. In fact, some of these plays are an adaptation of Greek classical tragedies. Other writers adopted history, mythology, folklores and contemporary socio-political issues prevalent at that time as their sources. According to Gbilekaa, "the first notable playwright in Nigeria to write in English is Ene Henshaw" (1997, 19). Ene Henshaw's plays are said to be the first body of dramatic literature that did not merely serve an economic purpose or to entertain but bears in its content the socio-political, traditional, religious and moral relevance of that milieu. In terms of the production of Henshaw's plays, Gbilekaa posits that "his plays are less cumbersome to mount; they were very popular with secondary school students" (1997, 2).

It is pertinent to note that Henshaw's plays, therefore, were written for amateur students so as to inculcate the necessary moral etiquettes, discipline and decorum. Some of his plays include *This is Our Chance* (1956), *A Man of Character* (1956), *Children of the Goddess* (1964), *Dinner for Promotion* (1965), *Magic in the Blood* (1964), and *Jewels of the Shrine* (1956), among others (Gbilekaa 1997, 20).

Progressively, it is observed that more serious dramatic productions did not begin with Soyinka's 1960 Masks company in 1960, but in 1957, with the pioneering attempts of the University College Ibadan's Department of English under Professor Molly Mashood, with support from Geoffrey Axworthy and Martin Banham (Gbilekaa 1997, 20). However, the University College Ibadan, having formed some dramatic societies such as the Arts Theatre Production Group (ATPG), and the University College Ibadan Dramatic Society (UCIDS), among other musical groups, concentrated on producing foreign plays such as Audrey Obey's *Noah* (1957), Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1957), Gogol's *The Government Inspector* (1958), Sophocles' *Antigone* (1959), and so on (Gbilekaa 1997, 20–21).

With Wole Soyinka's 1960 Masks company, indigenous plays were produced such as his *A Dance of the Forest*. This is the focus of this research, with regard to the African literary tradition. The 1960 Masks is said to have metamorphosed into the Orisun Theatre. This led to the production of indigenous plays such as J. P. Clark's *Song of a Goat*, Soyinka's *Camwood on the Leaves*, Sarif Easmon's *Dear Parent and Ogre*, including several television sketches (Gbilekaa 1997, 21). Furthermore, the UCIDS shifted the focus of their theatre movement in the university halls from foreign plays to indigenous plays under the leadership of Geoffrey Axworthy along with other members such as Yetunde Esan, Dapo Adelugba, Frank Aig-Imoukhuede and Ernest Ekom (1997, 22). These plays were relevant to the Nigerian situation. Some of the plays include Soyinka's *The Swamp Dwellers*, *The Lion and the Jewel* directed by Geoffrey Axworthy and Ken Post in February 1959, and Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* in 1961, which was said to have been written at the instance of Dapo Adelugba, the then president of UCIDS, 1960–61 (1997, 22–23).

The establishment of the School of Drama in 1962 at the University of Ibadan further spurred the emergence of more dramatists in the literary theatre arena. These produced professionals in Nigeria. Notable among the writers (novelists), poets and playwrights trained by the School of Drama are the following: Chinua Achebe, Nkem Nwankwo, Christopher Okigbo, J. P. Clark, Femi Osofisan, Kole Omotoso, Samson Amali, Sonny Oti and several others (Gbilekaa 1997, 24). Notable Nigerian playwrights and their works include Wole Soyinka's *The Swamp Dwellers*, *A Dance of the Forest*, and *The Trials of Brother Jero*, among others, Ola Rotimi's *Kurunmi*, *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi*, and *Hopes of the Living Dead*, among others, J. P. Clark's *Song of a Goat*, *The Raft*, and *Ozidi*, Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods*, Bode Sowande's *Farewell to Babylon* and so on. These playwrights are referred to as the first generation writers (1997, 24–25).

Drama recreates the social world of man's relations with his family, political, economic, cultural and religious constructs. Drama and society can be said to have a symbiotic relationship. The source of the material for drama is from the society and it is meant to impact and reshape society for the better. The environment plays a vital role in inspiring

dramatic content. It is based on this that Bantock (cited in Bamidele 2000, 2) states the following:

> Plays and a fair amount of dramatic or narrative poetry may not be understood without their environing context, because they focus their attention on characters and incidents that bear close parallels to imitation of an action with the highest consciousness of the age in which they are written.

Drama is a reflection of the reality of the environment where it is produced. It is written for the society and thus should communicate effectively to the society in which it is anchored. Drama therefore should be utilised by the society as a proven tool for social change and development. This is because drama has been used as a pedagogue to spur development.

Drama is not produced in a vacuum; it consists of both conscious and historical information about a people, culture or individual and is significantly relevant to their being. This explains why many drama texts, though written a long time ago, remain relevant many years after their production. According to Krama (2007, 32), "Drama must be a reminder of experience that induces conformity." This clearly shows that drama seeks the stability of the political, economic and social order. Hence, dramatists are gatekeepers, ensuring that excesses of all sorts are curtailed. Playwrights, therefore, ought to be committed to the immediate needs of their society. This is because the playwright has the potential to use his/her writing as a vehicle for change or the transformation of the society.

It is pertinent to note that committed dramatists welcome the agitation for social change and development. These dramatists ensure that their works encapsulate the necessary materials for enhancing stability in all facets of life, from the individual level, to groups and institutions. Drama is thus the product of the social reality of the society in which it is produced. The dramatist is a member of the society and is aware of the socio-political situation of his/her society. Drama recreates the social world of humans' relations with their familial, political, economic, cultural and religious constructs. Drama and society can be said to have a symbiotic relationship. The source of the material for drama is from the society and it is meant to impact and reshape society for the better. Drama reflects the reality of the environment in which it is produced. It is written for the society and thus should communicate effectively with that society. For instance, Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* (1973) is a good example of dramatic representation which confronts the apartheid regime in South Africa in a non-violent manner. It shows how Sizwe Banzi, though a citizen of South Africa, must assume another man's (Robert Zwelinzima's) identity in order to survive. It criticises the apartheid system and advocates an equal, fair and just society where blacks and white settlers can exist in a humane clime. Also, the play *Fate of a Cockroach* (1980) by Tewfik Al-Hakim presents the disunity of the Arab world, which is likened to that of cockroaches. Though the cockroaches are big in size, they operate individually. The

West, on the other hand, cooperates like ants: not minding their insignificant size, they are able to mobilise in unity to fight a common cause such that with the right leadership and followership—like ants—the deadliest, great and dreaded enemy can be subdued. In *Morountodun* (1982) by Femi Osofisan, leader-follower symbiosis played out in the characters of Titubi and Marshal, who are leaders in their various ways that were given support by the prisoners and the farmers alike, thereby creating the needed change for the benefit of the people. In Ola Rotimi's *Hopes of the Living Dead* (1985), Harcourt White, the leader of the lepers, struggles to ensure that his people are attended to. In the course of the struggle, he demands the cooperation of his followers, which is difficult to attain, but with discipline, the needed change, growth and development of the lepers is achieved. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to establish the potency of drama in enhancing a leader-follower symbiosis in order to enhance sustainable development as presented by Paul Ugbede in the play *Our Son the Minister*.

Synopsis of Paul Ugbede's *Our Son the Minister*

The play is set in the present-day Nigerian political clime and it highlights how families, friends and associates mount pressure on leaders to do their bidding of siphoning government resources and other privileges to satisfy these selfish few at the expense of national development. The plot revolves around Dr Makoji Ejembi, a promising medical doctor, who bags a ministerial appointment. When the news gets to Ejembi's mother (Mama), she organises a party upon which she spends ₦250,000. Also, Ejembi's uncle (Doga), who wants to have his own bite of the expected largesse, awards a contract for the building of a new family house on behalf of Ejembi, to his own son. Makoji's aunty equally comes up with a request for her son to be employed in the ministry Makoji is to oversee, and Ejembi's friend hires four Hummers and a Mercedes-Benz limousine to take their entourage, including a rented crowd, to the state house for the swearing-in ceremony.

In the face of the not inconsiderable demands of family members, friends and associates, the unpretentious Ejembi rejects the appointment, saying he is not sure he would be able to fulfil the demands of his allies and still have the time and money to carry out what he is officially appointed to do, which is to serve his country judiciously and selflessly. Makoji declines the offer and decides to move on with his medical practice instead of dancing to the tunes of his praise singers who want to use his position to satisfy their selfish interests and egos. His decision provokes a backlash as the various groups believe he is bewitched. Because of this belief, they seek spiritual help in a bid to deliver him.

Our Son the Minister, by Paul Ugbede, mirrors the unpatriotic attitude of followers as represented by family, friends, and religious organisations in cajoling leaders towards diverting government resources meant for the good of the people to satisfy their selfish interests and egos, thereby truncating good governance and development. In Africa, the focus of the people has been the need to elect a good leader who will drive

development—a leader who is selfless, upright and ready to serve the people. Dr Makoji as presented by Ugbede in this play is a prototype of such a leader. This can be clearly seen when Makoji, having sensed distraction, utters the following lamentation (Ugbede 2017, 48):

> MAKOJI: Can you see that as long as I have such distractions around me, I won't be able to perform my national duties as a minister.

Having sensed the gluttonous and selfish attitude of his family, friends and associates, Dr Makoji fears that he will be distracted. Therefore, he becomes adamant about the swearing-in ceremony. Blinded by the unpatriotic tendency beclouding his rationality, Imaji, Makoji's friend, rebukes him (49):

> IMAJI: No, you are sounding childish my guy. You are sounding stupid. Open your eyes my man. Who says you are a minister of this country? Mr. patriotic you are a minister because of such distractions! When your community clamored for your nomination, it was for you to "work" for them.

For Imaji, patriotism is ridiculous. Thus, the essence of nominating a son of the community is to champion the selfish interests of the people. Imaji, Mama, Uncle (Doga), Abutu, Aunty and the various medical and spiritual healers symbolise the followers, while Makoji represents leaders whose readiness towards delivering the needed services for the general good is a matter of principal priority. In fact, Makoji, in his determination to work sincerely admits (139–44) that

> MAKOJI: … well, it is no longer news that I have been nominated for a ministerial appointment (pause). It is a lofty position, a highly covetous one I tell you … I know the sacrifices I am going to make, the history … And I am afraid … afraid that I might be subsumed in the murky waters of it all. You see, back in my room I was doing some thinking.
>
> I asked myself "Makoji," how best can you serve your people without destroying all you stand for? I thought and thought. Then the answer came in a flash—and that is what I am about to share with you. I have decided to turn down the ministerial appointment.

The above decision of the protagonist is the source of the conflict in the plot. How can a ministerial nominee reject an offer which is like a cash cow, a privilege, and an opportunity to have a share in the national largesse? The decision is contrary to the expectations of the people who, as a result of their various selfish interests, have started the process of swearing-in their own way. For instance, Mama, Makoji's mother, feels that a lavish party is necessary not only to celebrate the appointment but to show her relevance and social standing (17–23):

MAMA: Your Excellency, have you forgotten so soon? These are your extended family members.

MAKOJI: What are they doing here?

MAMA: (Angry now) What kind of question is that? They have come to celebrate with you on your swearing in as a minister of the federal republic.

MAKOJI: Did you send for them?

MAMA: It's just a little family get together …

MAKOJI: Little? It's a market out there! And they are consuming all the food in the house. There will be no money until the end of the month.

MAMA: ... what's wrong with you this morning? It is a big day for everybody … Why do you want to ruin it?

MAKOJI: It's a waste of money and you know how I hate extravagant spending ...

MAMA: Yes shout for the whole world to hear! Tell even the graves that your mother is extravagant because I spent your miserable money entertaining your family … How many times does a widow have the opportunity to host her extended family? … And how much did I spend anyway? Only two hundred and fifty thousand.

Mama uses 250,000 naira to organise a lavish party for family members in preparation for the swearing-in of their son "the Minister" who is meant to refund the money spent on the party even before assuming the office. Mama's extravagance is presented as an act of self-publicity aimed at satisfying her ego, which she admits (27–28):

MAMA: … do you think I am entertaining them for nothing? Among them are those who thought your father's death was the end of the family. Don't you want me to see the envy in their eyes and smile? Don't you want me to flaunt my new status in their faces …?

Next on the list of selfish and greedy family and friends is Imaji, Makoji's close friend. He is surprised that Mokoji is not fully dressed and set for the ceremony. He comes back with a rented crowd. Mokoji, having heard the noise outside, enquires (51–53):

MAKOJI: Do you hear that? Do you hear the crowd outside? My uncle brought them!

IMAJI: Actually, I came with them.

MAKOJI: You? Who are they?

IMAJI:　　　Crowd, Rented crowd (sic).

We need a crowd there. Guy, dancers, clappers … people who will scream when your name is called … we need to show the other ministers that you are the most popular. Already, five thousand people are outside, call it the five-thousand-man match. And they are all waiting to be paid. The bill is on the high side, but I told everyone not to worry. The minister is up to the task.

Imaji rents a crowd of 5000 people at the expense of the minister in order to show off. Furthermore, when Mokoji's maternal aunt presents the case of her son for employment, Mama immediately assures her on behalf of the minister that it is done. Uncle (Doga), having exhausted his patience, relates his problem (125–26):

UNCLE:　　　If you insist, then I'll tell you. It is the building plan.

MAKOJI:　　Building plan?

UNCLE:　　　Oh yes, for a new family house. I've discussed it with your mother.

MAKOJI:　　Mama, you know about this?

MAMA:　　　Well, yes, Makoji. I agreed to a new family house. As a minister, the family needs to stay in a house that befits your new status.

These are some of the troubles brought to bear by family, friends and associates who constitute the followership in many political climes. Consequently, having been disillusioned by these troubles in the guise of demands and counter-demands, Makoji rejects the ministerial appointment to the surprise of all. Makoji retires to his bedroom and searches for his tennis racket aggressively. It is as a result of this rejection that the family and friends unite to declare Dr Makoji insane (157–58):

UNCLE:　　　What is he doing?

IMAJI:　　　He is throwing things.

UNCLE:　　　What is happening?

ABUTU:　　　Doga, open your eyes. I have seen this before. This is a pure case of madness.

MAMA:　　　 (Jumps up) No, no, no, don't say that … It can't be …

ABUTU:　　　Can't you see? Boy wants to be great. Enemies said "No" and cast a spell on him.

He said he is no longer going to be a minister! Who in his right mind will
reject a ministerial appointment?

In this comic satire, Paul Ugbede reveals followers' absurd psyche where refusal to loot
and perpetrate nepotism is perceived as a clear indication of insanity. Ironically, in a
country where patriotism is merely recited and not adhered to and its practicality is
viewed as only a figment of the imagination, sanity in the circumstance of the play is
considered insanity and insanity as sanity. Dr Makoji, who is now chained by his people
as they perceived that rejecting a government appointment equals insanity, in his refusal
to follow the status quo laments as follows (210):

> MAKOJI: So this is how it is. To be or not to be. I am now a mad man. Mad to the
> world, mad to kith and kin … Because I rejected a ministerial appointment
> … Because I refuse to be part of a corrupt system … I shout out my sanity
> but no one will believe me.

To disqualify Makoji's claim, one of the selfish medical personnel hired to cure Makoji
of "madness" declares the following (247):

> DOCTOR: No Doctor Makoji Ejembi … There is a militating factor … Ministerial
> appointment rejection? It is madness of another degree.

All who come to Makoji's "rescue," even the police officers, accept the view of the
coveting masses who consider the refusal to tread the path of corruption an incurable
case of insanity.

The problem of followership can only be resolved when the followers cultivate the right
attitude towards achieving a unity of purpose that will enhance their support for
leaders—not for self-aggrandisement but for sustainable development which informs
the crave for leader-follower symbiosis. The leaders demand the support and help of
their followers while the followers demand the implementation of developmental
policies and projects to realise the needed development. This can be seen in the play
when Makoji, having realised that he cannot abandon the system to rot in the grip of
such followership, becomes determined to stand his ground at the cost of his family and
friends. This firm determination after the swearing-in is captured in the following scene
(323–26):

> MAKOJI: Today, I stand here as a Minister of the Federal Republic, and I stand here
> in shame. Not because I am not worthy, but because your greed and selfish
> interest continues to reach far beyond me and it is choking me in the
> process … it is because of this reason I wanted to decline in the first place
> … while under incarceration, I thought and thought. I asked *myself,*
> "Makoji, how best can you serve your people?" then the answer came in a
> flash …

UNCLE: Please, not a flash again!

MAKOJI: No … not that … in this flash, I saw the big picture, the picture of a nation waiting for a leader with the right attitude, a leader willing to serve the people selflessly, a leader willing to put personal interest aside and damn the consequences … in the spirit of "this" change, I order you all to leave now!

The foregoing presents Makoji's leadership quality and his ideology about leadership. This is why the people around him who are blinded by materialism, greed and selfishness could not see from the perspective of good leadership but from covetousness. It is perceived in Africa and Nigeria particularly as insanity to be a political leader and not divert public funds to service oneself, one's family and friends, and to make large donations to churches. Leaders have to be determined to see that followers understand the need for genuine commitment towards a leader-follower relationship. Paul Ugbede in this comic satire uses the Cultural Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) to bring about change. The Cultural ISA focuses on literature (drama) as a potent medium of pedagogy. By creating a good, principled, accountable leader in the character of Dr Makoji Ejembi, readers and audiences can clearly grasp the proposition of the playwright about the need for good followership in order to support good leadership. Louis Althusser (1971, 343), analysing the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), submits that "man is an ideological animal by nature." This ideology is reflected in the character of Dr Makoji and his resolve to accept the offer of ministerial appointment and to strive towards having the right followership.

Conclusion

Arising from the complications of followers' personal demands on African political leaders, it is pertinent to conclude that leaders who are committed to the course of development must totally disregard greedy and corrupt followers who make governance difficult for them. As presented in the play *Our Son the Minister* by Paul Ugbede, the protagonist, Dr Makoji, is an ideal leader nominated for the position of a minster who becomes frustrated due to his helpless situation as his intention for purposeful leadership conflicts with the expectations of the people around him. While his family, friends and associates expect to enjoy the largesse of the public fund, Makoji would rather reject the offer of becoming a minister as there would not be a chance for him to perform as a responsible leader. This is an indication that without the support of followers, leaders are bound to fail. It is therefore evident that this paper utilised this play to fully engage Cultural ISA, which focuses on the use of literature (drama) to enhance change.

Leaders should therefore be committed to sensitising people on the need for leader-follower symbiosis for enhanced development. Most importantly, if the followers realise that the leader cannot be cajoled into accepting their bidding, there will definitely be a change of attitude. This paper therefore posits that there must be harmony and

understanding tilting towards unity of purpose in a give and take manner of symbiosis between leaders and followers for Africa to advance in her development agenda.

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