

African Deity and Peace Development in Julie Okoh's *We Are Rivers* and the Nigerian Space

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Abstract

Until recent time, African deities, positioned as viable medium of creating sanity and tranquility in the African front have been ironically neglected due to incursion of Christianization, civilization, modernization, and advanced technology. The efficacy of the African deity which is paramount inasmuch that it preserves the culture, tradition, norms, values, artifacts, morals, and way of lives of the people, thus militating against evil forces whose agenda is targeted at the people, by increasing the level of death, sickness, ailment, farming, barrenness, strife, poverty, and every other forms of wickedness as portrayed in Julie Okoh's *We Are Rivers*, is today, neglected and most often abolished. This has unequivocally created fear and pain of the people and underdevelopment to the nation. It has therewith created impetus for creative portraiture in dramatic and argumentative representations by dramatist and critics over the years, yet, the issue is still persisting. The study therefore aims at repositioning African Deity as viable medium of sanity and a mechanism of enhancing peace and development in the Nigerian space. Thus, with content analytical methodology, this study investigates how Julie Okoh attempts to establish the cause and effect of deity negligence and service on the Nigerian space using the instrument of drama. The effect of it will create positive change amongst Nigerians, thus, create change in their society. The study therefore recommends that maximum attention be made towards promoting African deity to the frontier of politicians as that would define the hallmark of peace and development.

Background to the Study

From ancient till present, mostly before the encroachment of Christianization and modernization, African deity had served outside being a means of protection and preservation of life, as a means of creating sanity and sanctity in the African society. This has helped significantly towards shaping the mindset of it people positively in a way that peace and harmony are attainable. This knowledge is attainable, thus passed down from generation to generation through myth. Generally, a myth is a story which is believed to be true and has its origin in the far distant past history of a people. Jones (2012), noted quoting Alagoa (1978), that myths are “historical information transmitted orally by processes peculiar to each community”. Myths are man-made stories that play explanatory functions in the African understanding of reality. This shows that myth is not just a product of human imagination but a direct expression of reality.

Jones clarifies this statement by quoting Anyanwu (1987) observation from Houndtonji's work that “man cannot live without myths”. Jone further noted that “the reason is quite obvious: man is a being that cannot bear to live with certain questions unanswered that is why he sits down to formulate myths to make those questions answerable”. Thus man according to Jones quoting Anyawu (1987) is a myth-making animal. This ideology forms Jaja's (1994) profound opinion that “some thinkers have rightly observed that myths are pre-philosophic in nature; that philosophy started where myths stopped, which presupposes that philosophy has its roots in myths”. Myths are seen as vehicles conveying certain facts or truths about man's experiences in his encounter with the created order and its relation to the super-sensible world (Jones, 2012).

Generally, myths according to Jones (2012) contain three kinds of stories namely, stories of origin, explanatory stories and didactic stories. Each of these stories according to him is meant to explain a particular phenomenon. He further noted that “myth is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery but living chronicles in the minds of Africans”. They contain and express the history, the culture and the inner experience of the African himself. Africans use myths to explain how things came to be through the efforts of a supernatural being. It is concrete and expresses life better than abstract thought can do. By teaching man and by regulating the way of his living in devotional engagement with the whole and by gradually disclosing many layers of its meaning, myth reveals the knowledge of the whole (Jones, 2012).

This makes African traditional religion supreme to other religions and cultures when compared to dedication, practices, and respect to their ancestors and deities. It was in this regard that Awolalu and Dopamu (1981) elaborately stated that “the indigenous religion of the Africans is a religion that has been handed down from generation to generation by the forebears of the present generation of Africans”. Awolalu and Dopamu also write that “it is not a fossil religion (a thing of the past) but a religion that Africans today have made theirs by living it and practicing it. This is a religion that has no written literature, yet it is 'written' everywhere for those who care to see and read. It is largely written in the people's myths and folklores, in their songs and dances, in their liturgies and shrines and in their

proverbs and pith sayings". It is a religion whose historical founder is neither known nor worshipped, it is a religion that has no zeal for membership drive, yet it offers persistent fascination for Africans, young or old.

This explains that Africans place their religions and culture above anything else, but sad to note that most African cultures and religion are presently diminishing or losing its values due to misrepresentation and interpretation due to the incursion of Christianization and modernization (Benson and Igboin, 2011). In a similar vein, Awolalu and Dopamu (1981) was also expressive and explicit in their idea of African Traditional Religion when they noted that "those institutionalized beliefs and practices of indigenous Religion of African which are rooted in the past African religious culture, transmitted to the present by successive African forebears mainly through oral traditions (myths and folklores, songs and dances, liturgies, rituals proverbs pithy sayings and names), sacred specialists and persons, sacred space and objects and religious work of art, a religion which is slowly but constantly updated by each generation in the light of new experiences through the 6 dialectical processes of continuities and discontinuities.

Significant of African Deity

The rate at which African deity worship and ancestral veneration of the primitive Nigerian people is losing its temerity, values, and inclination is increasingly alarming. This is fathomed as a result of acceptance of contradictory religion and practices which conflicts with the traditional religion of the primitive Nigerian people. The acceptance of Christian religion into the fabric of the Nigerian space resulted to near breakdown of law and order. This has unequivocally affected its fronts-economically, politically and socially. This negative nuance has resulted to issues such as matricide, patricide, genocide and other means of social disorderliness, prevalent in the Nigerian society, in the 21st century. This notion is plausible due to its negligence of the primitive ways and activities of the people, guided by rules and regulations propounded by the gods and goddesses, for the interest of their subjects. Painstakingly, the issue emanating from lack of deity worship had unequivocally resulted to a state of anarchy where killings, armed robbery, politically motivated assassinations and its kind, has risen to becoming most challenging to the people and the government.

Notwithstanding, these issues have created fear, pain, suffering and sorrow of the people. It is therefore significant to state categorically that lack of deity worship in the African society has succinctly imposed foreign identity in the daily activities of the Nigerian populace. Thus, African deity practices goes a long way to preserving the culture and tradition of the Nigerian people for generations to come. With it, deity practices and principles which defines its sacredness, can sustain its validity, thus, it's economic, cultural, religious, and developmental values and benefits can be ascertained through holistic and undiluted worship. The issues emanating from deity worship and ancestral veneration, which ridicules and questions the physical and spiritual communication between the people of Nigerian in their separate regions and inclination and their deities and ancestors can be taught from one generation to the other. By this, the

upcoming generations would learn and avoid misinterpreting and modernizing the sacred nature of their ancestral deity. From the above statements, one can agree that deity worship and ancestral veneration can go a long way in checkmating these nuances which beckons on the attention of the deities which they represent.

Factor Militating the Practices of African Deity in Nigeria

Several factors are responsible for the decline in the practices of African traditional deities in Nigeria but are subsumed as westernization. As a way of definition, Westernization is an assimilation of Western culture; the social process of becoming familiar with or converting to the customs and practices of Western civilization. Furthermore, Westernization also Europeanization/Europeization or occidentalization, is entails a process whereby societies come under or adopt Western culture in areas such as industry, technology, politics, economics, lifestyle, law, norms, mores, customs, traditions, values, mentality, perceptions, diet, clothing, language, alphabet, religion, and philosophy. During colonialism it often involved spread of Christianity. Westernization cannot be divorced from globalization. It has been correctly argued, in some quarters, that Western thought gave birth to globalization which in turn propagates Western culture (Chinyere and Madueke, 2010).

Chinyere and Makueke (2010) further avers that “Globalization is perpetuated by the agency of technological revolution, economic liberalization and democratic system of government”. Therefore, to a large extent, Chinyere and Makueke obliged that “one can safely submit that westernization and globalization are related especially as regards their impact on the entire international community and their respective cultures”. For instance, democracy which is the most widely practiced system of governance globally is of Western origin, so also are capitalism, technologies, and customs such as music, clothing, food, and a host of others.

Westernization has been a growing influence across the world in the last few centuries, with some thinkers assuming Westernization to be the equivalent of modernization, a way of thought that is often debated. The overall process of Westernization is often two-sided in that Western influences and interests themselves are joined with parts of the affected society, at minimum, to change towards a more Westernized society, with the putative goal of attaining a Western life or some aspects of it, while Western societies are themselves affected by this process and interaction with non-Western groups. The same is also attributed to the Chinese myth the destiny of modern China is dominated by the geographical West (HUANG, 2020). So, westernization came to be known as a process through which certain changes were made (Sociology Group, 2017).

Westernization traces its roots back to Ancient Greece. Later, the Roman Empire would take on the first process of Westernization as it was heavily influenced by Greece and created a new culture based on the principles and values of the Ancient Greek society. The Romans emerged with a culture that would lay the new foundations of Europe and grow into a new Western identity based on the Greco-Roman society.

In the nutshell, westernization in Africa and Nigeria came as the form of colonization. Against this backdrop, Dare, (2010) avers that “for a start, I argue that colonialism, slave trade and missionaries are the bastion of Western civilization and culture in Africa”. He exemplified this notion by stating that “this is correct to the extent that colonialism serves as a vehicle of implantation of cultural imperialism in Africa. Colonialism perceived in this context, according to hi, is an imposition of foreign rule over indigenous traditional political setting and foreign dominance and subjugation of African people in all spheres of their social, political, cultural, economic and religious civilizations”.

Furthermore, Dare specified that “Western civilization and culture began to creep into African socio-cultural milieu, first, with the contact of Europeans with Africa, a consequence of Berlin conference in the quest for imperial pilfering of African resources and, later, consolidated by the unstoppable wave of globalization”. It is important to stress that colonialism according to Dare is distorted and retarded the pace and tempo of cultural growth and trend of civilization in Africa. Dare further stated that “One of the most profound consequences of colonization has been how the political and economic rape of the colonies has also led to what sometimes seem to be an unbridgeable cultural gap between the nations that were the beneficiaries of colonization and those that were the victims of the colonial assault”. The era of colonial pillage and plunder led to the relative stagnation and often precipitous decline of traditional cultural pursuits in the colonies.

Narrative Theory

Narrative theory by Vladimir Propp, propounded in the year 1928 is a cradle of which this study is shaped. Narrative theory over the years has become increasingly concerned with historical, political, and ethical questions. At the same time, it has moved from its initial home in literary studies to take in examination of other media (Amiriheobu and Watts, 2018, quoting James and Peter, 2005). More so, narrative theory in this study helps towards explaining the significant effects of deity negligence in the Nigerian society. Extensively, the first issue in assessing existing narrative theories according to Frank and Watts (2018) is that they are intended to support the analysis of existing narrative rather than the generation of new narrative (Sandy and Ruth, 2004). Thus, researchers have tried to adapt them to generative narrative, so that they cannot be excluded as useful guides for this reason alone. Relating this assertion to the benefit of deity worship in Nigeria, it is pertinent to highlight the efficacy and importance of the deity and ancestral veneration to the Nigerian society in the present time.

Methodology

This research work employs the case study and content analysis research approaches of the qualitative research method. It involves explaining the issue, describing, analyzing and interpreting data on the bases of the significance of African Deity towards Sustaining Peace and Development in Julie Okoh's *We are Rivers*. It is qualitative because it deals with the analysis of effect of lack of deity worship as pinpointed by a notable Nigerian playwright and descriptive because it involves the use of ideas by the researcher to

interrogate the effect of deity negligence within the play contexts, which unequivocally summarizes the primary source of its ideological tendency. On the other hand, the secondary source of idea includes materials from the institutional publications, articles, journals, text books, internets, research materials, amongst others.

Synopsis and Plot Structure of *We Are Rivers*

The plot structure of the play *We are Rivers* by Julie Okoh is simple because the actions in the play which is told in narrative is one and continuous. This is possible because the change of fortune in the play is not followed with either reversal (that is, an unexpected turn around of situation) nor recognition.

The play on the other hand has an episodic plot structure because the actions in the play are enumerated in parts which are guided more by variety than unity. Basically, the play has three parts and in these three parts, historical events that took place in those periods are enumerated chronologically. The first part is the pre-colonial period which pictures Rivers State in her primitive form; presenting the efficacy of the African deity towards harkening to the plea of their subjects. The second is the colonial period that also covers the intrusion of the white men, the introduction of their culture, religion and way of life that conflicted with the native culture, religion and way of life of the Rivers State people, which ultimately ridicules the holistic nature of deity worship amongst the primitive Rivers people.

It also features the conflicts that sprung amongst the natives as a result of the changes and abolition of culture, religion and way of life of the people. The last part captures the events such as the discovery of crude oil in the region, its negative effects on the people, and the agitation for self-determination and resource control. These events are unified aesthetically by the use of a narrator who is part of the actions in the play. The play has 8 major characters and many minor characters. All the actions in the play occur in more than one place. The play precedes 24hours and did not revolve around a central character, though the narrator serves as a frontier. To this, the play did not obey the law of unity of place, time and action. It obeys the law of decorum because the actions are brought either by necessity or probable, such as it is prevalent in our immediate society.

The play begins when some dancers comes in, dancing and singing proclaiming the creation and importance of African deity to the Rivers State people. The narrator enters to give more incite on the history of rivers state, the regions, occupation, lifestyle, their means of transportation, and their relationship with their gods and goddesses, the gods and goddesses favors to those who do good and their curse on those who does evil, which unequivocally defines the tranquility of peace, love, favour of the people and development to the state before the incursion of the white men into its shore.

On this note, he tells a brief story of a woman in Kalabari community who lost her wallet during their festival in the playground, how she pleaded for the return of the wallet, all to no avail and the exposure of the thief by Owuaya, the mother spirit. He also tells a story of

the cleansing ritual performed by the Okirika maidens that is agog with fabulous pageantry, exquisite music, gorgeous costume, masquerading and traditional dance steps that aims at promoting the worship of their gods and goddesses. It is believed that all maidens due for this cleansing are all virgin, thus any one, who is not, will be disgraced and the family will share in the shame. The qualified ones after swearing an oath will be given a certificate of authorization to proceed to the next stage which is the fattening room, escorted by an entourage of supporters.

The narrator also highlighted the intrusion of the first white man into the shore of Rivers State, his beckoning on his companions to precede forward, the slave trade experience championed by the native chiefs and the white men, and the pains encountered by the native slaves in the hand of their slave drivers. He also tells a story of Grand Father who decides to enumerate the effect of the treaty of protection signed by the Chief and Council that stopped slave trading, but enslaved the people to the colonial masters. The royal war between the lineage of Fubara Manilla Pepple and the royal family headed by Opubo Anne Pepple, all in Ibanni community is also enumerated by grandfather to his grandson who narrated how they taught them in school to forfeit dancing masquerade dance for Oyibo dance.

Grand Father explained how the Christianity introduced by the white men was used to confuse the people into burning and destroying shrines and artifacts of their gods and goddesses, thereby destroying the culture, tradition, norms, values and way of life of the primitive Rivers people. Grandfather end up disappointed when he discovered that his grandson have already been bought by the new religion that has crippled their culture, which he refused to accept.

The narrator went on to tell about the discovery of crude oil in 1956 in Oloibiri, its effects on the fauna and flora of the environment due to oil exploration and exploitation. He mentioned how these have affected the livelihood and has brought death, pain and suffering to the people in the state. The narrator narrates the painful story of Ibinabo, who lost his wife Eneni due to reckless driving of sea boat by an oil company worker, his first son due to hazardous flood, and his only surviving son due to water pollution. This according to him generated discourse by Ibinabo and his neighbors regarding similar problems prevalence in the region and how the government refuses to harkens to their cry.

They decide to join the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in order to fight for justice and self-determination. They vowed to fight against oil production facilities, oil companies' workers, Nigerian security service force, economic saboteurs, oppressors, exploiters, marginalization, inhumanity, and injustice. The narrator also explains the activities of the splinter militant groups ranging from kidnapping, vandalism of oil installations, incessant killings, rape, lethal car bombing and other acts of violence. He also explains the confrontation between the militants and government agencies that led to lots of lives and properties. He also narrator explains the

intervention of Governor Rotimi Amaechi, the former governor of Rivers State, and the Federal Government by creating the Joint Task Force that helped to subsidize the tension in the state. The narrator finally explains the provision of amnesty program by late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua that helped to calm the nerves of the angry youths led by Asari Dokubo in 2009.

Character and Characterization of *We Are Rivers*

Characters in the play are delineated such as it explains their age, plight, ambition, pain, anger, and propensities. The actions of most of the characters were explained by the playwright and the narrator in most occasions. To this, the play has eight (8) main characters and other minor characters. As loose characters, there is no central character that the story revolves around. On this note, it is plausible to state symbolically that Rivers State as an entity is the protagonist, while the colonial administrators that intrudes into her shore and destroyed the culture, tradition, norms, values, mores, artifacts, and way of life of the Rivers people are the antagonist.

The characters and their delineations are listed according to their importance such as:

Narrator: He is an intelligent, outspoken, sincere, polite, gentle, considerate, and peaceful man in his early seventies. He took upon himself to painstakingly narrate the historical development of Rivers State from the pre-colonial period, to the present time. In the cause of this, he analyses the activities that took place during these periods. To achieve this aim, he divided the periods into three segments or parts. The first according to the playwright presents the picture of rivers state during the pre-colonial period. This period captures events like dance sequences and pantomimes which explains the traditional ways of life in the region before the first white man stepped into its shore. It also explains other activities ranging from festivals, rituals, masquerading and so on. The second segment is based on the colonial era which presents the events like the signing of the treaty, the rivalry and war between the ruling houses and the Christianization process that occurred in the region. The last focuses on oil exploration in the region, its effects on the lives of the people, which led to youth's militancy. It also presents rivers state as a melting pot.

The reason for this historical analysis by the narrator is for comparison which would make the people to have a rethink and a re-direction on the part which was neglected. The narrator represents the class of people in the Nigeria society who believes that development and peace can be attaining only if the culture and tradition of the people is exploited and respected. He concludes by saying that peace and attention can only be achieved not by the use of violence but by continuous dialoguing.

Grand Father: Just like the narrator, grandfather craves for change regarding the destruction of traditional culture, religion and way of life of the primitive people. He is a wise, archaic, polite, headstrong, jovial, hospitable and loving man in his late sixties. Because of these traits, he can easily be seen as the narrator. He decided to tell his grandson the history of their people and the efficacy of the religion, culture, and artifacts of their primitive people which was abandoned for a religion which is not in any way

favorable to the people. He took offence when he observed that the new religion and their way of life are taught in the land while the religion, culture and tradition which is their identity is seen as sin and abomination. Despite the changes in the society, Grand Father, still stick to his traditional believe.

Boy: He is a young boy of about eleven. He is obedient, full of life, playful, humble, gentle, considerate, convincing, and wise. He craves for the right religion which will pave him eternal life. He accepted the teaching in his school that any activities associated with traditional culture such as masquerade is evil. He believed that the “Oyibo” dance, taught in his school is holy, so he put in more strength and energy to perfecting it.

Ibinabo: He is poor, heartbroken, pitiful, courageous, strong, and polite man in his early forties. He lost his wife, Eneni, in the hand of a Shell (SPDC) worker that crushed her with a speedboat in the river where she went to fetch water. He also lost his first son, Seigha due to flood. While he was still mourning his wife and son, his only remaining son died due to the polluted water he drank from their river. It is as a result of these deaths, suffering, and pain that made the youths in the community to take to the street demanding for self-determination in order to better their impoverish lives.

Pastor: He is polite, religious, patient, kind, truthful, persistent, loving, handsome, and teachable. He is a white man who assisted in convincing the people of Rivers State in the play to forfeit their tradition, religion, culture, for that of the white man. He also brainwashed them into destroying and burning the shrine of the gods and goddesses, and making them see activities related to their gods and goddesses as sin. His statements below justify these assertions. **Pastor:** Repent! Repent! Brethren repent! Burn your entire idol! (p. 29). Just like his kind, they see our traditional artifacts as an idol. He also stated that “They should burn their shrines”.

Interpreter: He is cunning, selfish, cheat, corrupt, lazy, arrogant, and greedy. He represents the corrupt leaders in the society who mislead their people just to enrich themselves. He used his position as the interpreter to the white pastor into misleading the converts to accepting the new religion.

King: He is ambitious, illiterate, fearful, meticulous, zealous, and ignorant man, who may be in his late sixties. He decided to sign the treaty which brought about the enslaving of Rivers State by the British colonies. He represents the kings, chiefs, political leaders in the Nigeria society who take decisions without consultation. He was hoping that by signing the treaty, Rivers State and her people will forever remain protected from slave trade and hoping for a new form of trade agreement between the state and the white men.

British Administrator: He is the British Colonial administrator to Rivers during the slave trade era. He equally presented the treaty of enslavement to the king which later brought disagreement, chaos, and war to the people of Rivers State. He is cunning, fearful, convincing, and self-centred. He represents those first world countries that exploits the third world countries and leave them handicapped.

We are Rivers and the theme of Deity Negligence in Nigeria

The play *We Are Rivers* succinctly interrogates the efficacy of deity worship and ancestral veneration in the play society such as it is a microcosm to the Nigerian society. It heightens the oblivion situation that ridicules the efficacy of true deity worship and ancestral veneration, thus, presenting christianisation as clandestine causes which unequivocally pave room for modernization, technology and industrialization that lured the primitive River State people into discarding the holistic worshipping of their deities. The forfeiture of traditional deity worship and ancestral veneration which was passed down from time immemorial till recent pragmatically resulted to an increase in the level of crime, manifesting through corruption, nepotism, ritual killings, armed robbery and other heinous acts which unequivocally affects the people and ridicules the national identity.

Evidence of this is fathomed in the play when the Narrator explains how Grand Father painstakingly admitted that the issue of terrorism, manifesting through youth restiveness, lethal car bombing, politically motivated assassinations, incessant killings, kidnapping, armed robbery and other malicious issues are sprung due to the fact that the Rivers State people have decided to forfeit worshipping the deity, thereby accepting the white man's religion which contradicts and ridicules the African traditional culture, norms, values, folklores, and way of life of the primitive African people. He stresses that the Western culture such as Christianization, Modernization, technology, and Civilization lured into the primitive society of the primitive Rivers people that was extremely difficult to comprehend and practiced resulted to miss application. The misapplication resulted to lack of trust and greed which later led to inter and intra-community rivalry, that later metamorphosed to national chaos.

These nuances are prevalent in the Nigerian society in this 21st century as the issue of corruption, nepotism, divide and rule system, misappropriation of public fund through embezzlement, looting, and defrauding are in its highest peak. These malicious menaces are meticulously envisaged through the heinous activities of the Nigerian corrupt politicians in the federal, state and the local strata of government. In the federal strata, they are the head of the executive, members of the Federal House of Representatives (Senators and House of Representative members), ministers, ambassadors, military heads, and justices of the federal high court. The corrupt politicians in the state level include the state governors, house of assembly members, and commissioners. In the local level, they are the local government chairmen and their local government councilors.

These corrupt politicians repress and oppress the mandates of their people through embezzling of public funds meant for federal, state, and local development. Then development which would have served as an avenue for job creation for the unemployed skill and unskilled citizens, provision of social amenities (e.g. accessible road, good pipe bourn water, and hospitals), etc, is today tampered with as the country is today rated as poverty capital of the world. This notion is visible as poverty, pain, suffering and hunger visited the society of the play due to lack of job opportunity which led to the death of Ibinabo's three children. It is due to the suffering, death, hunger, pain and anguish that made the youths in the society of the play to take to the street for self determination.

On a general note, the reason for the consistent corruption, nepotism, favouritism, divide and rule system, greed, embezzlement, looting, war, terrorism, and other forms of social vices is as a result of the abandonment of the worship of the African deities and ancestors which from time immemorial has been a means of creating and sustaining sanctity and sanity amongst the people. Example of this is seen in the play when a woman in the Kalabari community lost her wallet during the festival celebration and how all plead for the return of the wallet was flawless, then Owuaya, the mother spirit was summoned to reveal the thief, and the spiritual dances performed by Owuaya unequivocally revealed the real thief and a heinous fine which is that the thief, a woman, was to serve in Owuaya's shrine all her life. This defines the unique nature of the African traditional culture due to its involvement to spiritism. It is this because the African deity are unique, straightforward, deadly and hoaxed, while the God of the Christian, is referred to as "the all merciful, all loving God", who tampers justice with mercy.

It is to the incomparable love of the God of the Christians towards His subjects that made most Nigerians, most especially the corrupt politicians to engage in heinous and malicious activities this causes death, pain, suffering and sickness to their subjects. They believed that their sins shall be forgiven anytime they turn for restitution. This is the major reason they left worshipping their ancestral deities that strikes when offended for the Christian God. Evidence of this is seen in the play when after the encroachment of the first white men into the shore of Rivers State and the introduction of glaring phenomenon such as technology, modernization which the Rivers people finds palatable. The glaring frivolities of these glorified tendencies which they were unable to fathom and decipher brought about dispute amongst clans and diverse religious and ethnic groups in the regional strata of the Nigerian society. Evidence of this is seen in the play when two families which serve as microcosm of the macrocosm of other communities in the Rivers state space engaged in war as a result of power tussle.

More so, lack of deity worship also brought about poverty, pain, suffering, sickness, and pain of the people and underdevelopment to the society. It also led to an increase in the level of terrorism that is prevalent in all regions in the Nigerian space in the 21st century. The painful problem fathomed in the Northern-East region such as the Boko Haram agitation, and the Fulani/ farmers clashes in most of the states, are exemplar. Further, the self-determination agitation by the Indigenous People of Biafra and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra is a note to be reckoned. The persistent resource control agitation by the militants and the militia groups in the South-South is another issue that has weakened the strength of the Nigerian space in the 21st century. Next is the persistent restiveness in the West and the secret cults activities in most of the Nigerian tertiary institutions defines the magnitude of hostilities due to lack of deity worship and ancestral veneration.

Conclusively, these menaces are ironically interrogated in the play, thus presenting lack of deity worship, lack of ancestral veneration, and abolition and destruction of traditional artifacts that defines the tradition, culture, norms, values, function, folklore, and

primitive way of life of the people that was passed down from ancient past. Due to this fact, the traditional identity of the people in the Nigerian society is ridiculed and the society is visibly noted as an experimental laboratory where heinous activities are practiced and crimes committed without adequate requisite punishment.

Conclusion Recommendations

From the study, it is observed that the issues emanating from lack of deity worship, lack of ancestral veneration, destruction of traditional artifacts and shrine of the African deities due to the acceptance of Christianization are increasingly alarming and heinous. This is as a result of some flamboyant introduction of orphic, vociferous, and vociferous phenomenons such as technology, modernity, globalization and civilization. The viniferous nature of these phenomenon's engineered the forfeiture of the worshipping of the deities, which they regard as vicious, thus an opposite of the Christian God, who loves, preserves both sinner and saints, kind, and forgiving. The acceptance of the Christian God whose methods they are unable to decipher, unequivocally increased in the level of corruption, and other heinous activities that has threatens the unity, peace, and development of the Nigerian space.

From the study also, it was discussed that the heinous activities indulged by Nigerians due to the forfeiture of deity worship and ancestral veneration, championed by some corrupt politicians pragmatically increased in the level of poverty, suffering, hunger, pain, death, sickness, and unemployment of the people and lack of development to the country. This has equally increased in the level of terrorism, masterminded through suicide bombing, politically motivated assassination, kidnapping, armed robbery, prostitution, incessant killing, lethal car bombing, vandalism of pipeline installations, and other social vices. It is also plausible to state that the rate of ritual killings in also on the increased.

On a general note, the issue of lack of cultural worship and ancestral veneration in the Nigerian society has paved way for divers' misconducts in the Nigerian space in the 21st century. Today gay practices are introduced I the society. Young ladies are given birth at the age of 12 and 13 without knowing the owners. Men are sleeping and impregnating their own daughters, internal fraud and scam are becoming rampant among youths. Even in the church, pastors are sleeping with church members and are promising heaven for them while they are living like hell. People are touching prophets manhood to get healing, some are eating green grass just for a miracle to take place in their lives; some are drinking olive oil and anointing water for healing and fruit of the womb. Others are kissing idols and bowing down at the image of pastors as a god. Many are seeing their general overseers as their god.

The study concludes by stating that these issues which have ridiculed the Nigerian space in the 21st century can be curbed and sanctity and sanity restored to the society, if a divine restitution is made by Nigerians in their strata regions, societies, culture, religion, and nomenclature. This can be achieved by tracing back to history, identifying the traditional

artifacts of the primitive people as it concerns their ancestors and deities. Once this is achieved, there is equally need for wholehearted, holy, and unadulterated worship to the deities. Furthermore, it is important that maximum attention be made towards promoting African deity to the frontier of modernization as that would define the hallmark of peace and development.

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