

**From Post-Performance Discussions to Intervention and Processing:
Theatre-for-Development and Citizenship Issues in Nigeria**

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Abstract

Community Theatre, Theatre for Development or Applied Theatre, irrespective of whatever nomenclatorial description or title by which this theatre practice is known, all point to new ways and uses to which theatre can be put that is opposed to the conventional form we have known theatre to be through the ages. The precursors of this theatre movement owe more to Marx than Aristotle. However, from Brecht through Boal to the various practitioners across Africa, Europe and Latin America, this form of theatre practice is still evolving.

A defining characteristic of this theatre is its unfinished nature. The structures of the plays are more or less ongoing dialogues. The evolving nature of the practice ensures also that practitioners strive to improve from one experiment to the other in the bid to find a more effective and potent method of getting across to the audience and make projects more effective. From routine post performance discussions, many practitioners and projects have moved to processing using Boal's 'joker' technique to intervene more directly in a performance. No longer does the spectator wait till the end of performance to express his views of what he just saw, but is now empowered to intervene even during the course of a performance.

How does this form of theatre fare in a project on citizenship in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and complex society like Nigeria? What is the intrinsic relationship between the fiction of the performance and the reality of the performed issues in a drama based on this technique what is the role of processing and intervention in building new perspectives on the citizenship issues tackled in this project? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies adopted and what is the overall impact of the project "Citizenship, Participation and Accountability" undertaken by the Theatre for Development Centre (TFDC) and the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) from 2001-2002 in Kaduna state, North western Nigeria?

Introduction

Nigeria's recent journey into another process of democratization is raising critical questions of citizenship in view of the country's huge social diversity and deep ethnic, religious and regional divisions. It is in view of this that the Theatre for Development Centre, Ahmadu Bello University and the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance a non-governmental organization based in Zaria sought to draw out the issues of identity, belonging, entitlement, governance and resources which underlie questions of citizenship in Nigeria through an action-research process using Theatre for Development (TFD) and other participatory methodologies. The task this researcher wants to undertake in this essay is to examine the theory/theories behind the methodology adopted in the research, its strengths and weaknesses and the overall impact of one of such project "Citizenship, Participation and Accountability" undertaken by the Theatre for Development Centre (TFDC) and the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) in Kaduna state from 2001 through 2002

Theatre for development as currently practiced in Nigeria, and like in many parts of the third world arguably is very distant from conventional theatre practice of old based on the canons of Aristotle. Its roots can be traced more to Marxism. Unlike the Formalists, the Marxists insist a dialectical relationship exists between theatre and society and that society is structured along class cleavages occasioned by economic forces. Marxism is the codification of the societal analysis of the failings of capitalism and the vision of an alternative, more egalitarian society. The developments of the inner contradictions of capitalism led to the development of alternative system called socialism by Karl Marx, Fredrick Engels and later disciples of this ideology.

Though Marxism never laid down formal theories of artistic production, the general philosophical assumptions that underlie their theory of economic production also govern their art. Moreover, since Marxism as a theory does not only challenge capitalism, but also sought to proffer an alternative society, its view of artistic production and use became inevitably antithetical to that of the capitalists. The main features of Marxist aesthetics are captured by Chidi Amuta in the following words:

- a) A connection between art/literature and the material base, defined in terms of the totality of the relations of production;
- b) The class basis of art and the progressive nature of proletarian art;
- c) The dialectical relationship between content and form;
- d) The recognition of realism as the most appropriate form of artistic representation. (1986:36).

Amuta clearly sort to differentiate between artistic creation/production based on Marxist precepts and that of Aristotle. Marxist art is art that is in the service of humanity which is reflected in its construction and content. It is not surprising that what we can call 'Marxist Poetics' came up with the above, for from the open

declaration in the *Communist Manifesto*, it becomes clear what Marx and Engels wanted their art or Marxist art to reflect. Hear them:

The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles; freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guide-master and journey-man - in a word, oppressor-oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes (Marx & Engels, 1977: 4).

It is these ideas that the German dramatist Bertolt Brecht imbibed and propagated in his theatrical writings and practice. While theatre for development may be closer to Marxist ideas in its revolutionary intent, we have to look further or beyond Marx to explain this practice. As the theatre which employs a variety of expressions of the people at the grassroots level to research and analyse development problems and to create critical awareness and potential for action to solve those problems, it is a great advancement over Marx theory by its practical involvement.

Boal's theatrical practice, though essentially Marxian in orientation, is a substantial contribution to an understanding of 'Aristotle's dramatic theory and practice and a serious advancement of Brecht's political theatre and practice. In doing this, Boal has borrowed extensively from the educational philosophy of his compatriot Paulo Freire. The combination of Freire's ideas and Brecht's practice gave birth to Boal's *poetics of the oppressed*. Boal in evolving his techniques went steps ahead of Brecht by working with the common man on the street. For apart from few attempts at taking plays to factory workers, Brecht concentrated and developed his theory in conventional theater. As we will attempt to show shortly, alternative theatre practices do not only encompass Marxian-Brechtian philosophy but serious Boalian tendencies.

Freire, one of the principal influences on Boal, has had profound influence and impact in the field of education and the overall struggle for national development. For as he said:

There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the world (Freire, 1982:8).

Freire's thoughts represent the response of a creative mind to the extraordinary misery and suffering of the oppressed around him. Freire started from the premise of how traditional learning approaches have led to what he calls 'the culture of silence'. Freire believed that the ignorance and inactions of the oppressed was the direct product of the whole situation of economic, social and political domination by the elites - a situation that is reinforced by the paternalistic nature of the educational system.

Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* sought to encourage and equip the masses to know and respond to the concrete realities of their world instead of keeping them 'submerged' in a situation where critical awareness and response 'were practically impossible'. Thus evolved *conscientization* which, in Freire's own words, is:

...Learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and take action against the oppressive elements of reality (1982: 15).

Freire worked from one basic assumption that 'man's ontological vocation' is to be a subject who acts upon and transform his world and in so doing man can move towards new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively. This world is not closed, static and handed down, but that in a dialogic manner, man no matter how 'ignorant' and submerged in the 'culture of silence' is capable of looking critically at his world. Through this dialogue, perceptions of social reality leading to change can emerge and kill the virus of paternalistic teacher - student relationship in formal education.

Boal sought to advance the Freirian dialogue towards genuine emancipation by using theatre. He first located theatre firmly in the realm of politics. This is to debunk the dubious claims by classical philosophers like Aristotle, Plato, Aristophanes etc, who tried to separate theatre from politics? In fact, this very act is itself political. Boal correctly located the fact that in a class society (Greeks), the dramatists, poets, and the intelligentsia belonged to the privileged class. As members of the polis, they were inclined to naturally use their knowledge to protect the interest of their class. And so:

The theatre in particular, is determined by society much more stridently than the other arts because of its immediate contact with the public, and its power to convince.... the state and the wealthy financed the production of tragedies. They therefore would not permit the performance of plays whose content would run counter to state policy or to the interest of the governing class (Boal, 1979: 53-54).

Boal thus did not only mount the most trenchant attack so far on classical dramatists and theorists (Aristotle in particular) but moved for the de-aristocratization of the theatre. To him, theatre must go back to that pre-Aristotelian popular forms of being a feast, with people singing and dancing freely. What this calls for is popular participation. In this instance therefore, the negotiation is not only enhanced but determined by the people. Instead of a pre-determined agenda where people are dragged to see a point of view or invited to take a critical look, the people themselves initiate the action. The fight to free theatre from the strangulating hold of bourgeoisie theorists and stop it from serving narrow interests by becoming once more socially relevant represents a substantial contribution by Boal, especially his own attempt to get directly involved with the people. Obviously, in doing this, he owes more to Brecht and the thinking of Freire in his native Brazil than Aristotle. The following submission could be anything but Aristotelian:

In the beginning, the theatre was the dithyrambic song: free people singing in open air, the carnival, the feast. Later, the ruling classes took possession of the theatre and built their dividing walls. First, they divided the people, separating actors from spectators, people who act and people who watch - secondly, among the actors, they separated the protagonist from the mass. The coercive intimidation began. Now the oppressed people have liberated themselves...the walls must be torn down. The spectator starts acting again: invisible theatre, forum theatre, image theatre etc. Secondly, it is necessary to eliminate the private property of the characters by the individual actor: the joker system (129).

Thus, Boal, like Brecht, believes that theatre must engender a different form of negotiation from that conceived by Aristotle. He makes a radical break and advancement over Brecht by not just encouraging critical thinking but immediate action and involvement or intervention by the 'spect-actors'. This is significant. Boal's does not just encourage critical thinking for later action, but demands immediate reconstruction of reality. The emphasis in Boal's theatre is on action. No more is power delegated to the actor/character, but instead the audience should 'assume the protagonic role'. In the process true discourses may emerge leading to events that make greater meaning to the spectator.

This paper is not in any way suggesting that the method that will discuss shortly is peculiar to this project or Nigeria. As the most interactive art form, drama and in particular theatre for development has been used for a long time in liberating the voice of the people. In Asia and Latin America, popular theatre forms were used for national liberation movements to confront forces that subject them to poverty and misery. Boal's theory grew out of his extensive practice in his native Brazil and other parts of Latin America like Peru. In the Philippines, community theatre movement made theatre an agent for community organization. In Nicaragua, Nidia Bustos (1982, 1984) said that revolution is also made by writing poetry and by organizing popular education. In so doing, the cultural arm of the movement moved among peasants ensuring the growth of a dynamic people's culture.

Its entry into Africa came about as a result of people's awareness of exploitation from an oppressive minority who undermine the people's welfare. Its formal in-road into Africa came via Botswana, from where it has spread rapidly covering Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania etc. The practice has had a profound impact in a number of places. Ngugi's experiments in Kenya with the Kamriithu peasants which used the event in 1977 to make definitive statements about the exploitative relations in modern Kenya easily come to mind. The LEARN- (Local Educational Activities of Rural Network) - in Sierra Leone were conducted between 1979 and 1983. Successful popular theatre or theatre for development experiments have happened in Nigeria since its entry as part of the academic curriculum at Ahmadu Bello University. Practiced since 1975, it has established itself firmly as an academic discipline not in abstraction but as an instrument for instigating people-centered development in the field outside of the academia (Abah, 2005: xiv). It has not only spread to other Nigerian universities, but has now been used

in addressing development issues from Katsina Ala in the North to Mushin in the South West.

A defining characteristic of this theatre is that it is unfinished (Etherton, 1988). The structure of the plays made sure that the performance and the post-performance discussions are really on going dialogues. Emphasis is laid on the process. No attempt is made to 'end' the performance. There are no quick fix solutions in the performances. A disturbing trend however in some of the experiments is that the people become mere "depositories"- "empty pots" especially in instances where project initiators had pre-determined agenda (Freire) and as such those projects are faulted and the outcomes less than satisfactory. The reality is that post-performance discussions were/are more or less a tag on where spectators are made to wait till the end and their views are sort as mere ritual which do not necessarily affect the outcome of the drama that has just been watched. The catch is intervention and processing in which the spectators do not necessarily wait until the play ends (simultaneous staging or processing (Forum). This technique according to (Mda, 1993; Abah, 1997 & 2003; Harding, 1999) enables the clarification of issues and presentation of different arguments. Our interest therefore is in defining the intrinsic relationship between the fiction of the performance and the reality of the performed issues, and in a drama based on this technique what is the role of processing and intervention in building new perspectives on the citizenship issues tackled in this project. Can these new ways of seeing lead to action, both within the fiction and in reality?

TFDC, NPTA and the Citizenship Project

Theatre for Development Centre is a research centre located in Ahmadu Bello University, while the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance was formed in March 1989 in Zaria after a workshop which brought together popular theatre animators. Its headquarters has remained in Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria while it operates in the six geo-political zones of the country. Its mission statement is:

To facilitate ways of using popular theatre for development purposes. To seek the collaboration and support of national and international organizations in the collaboration and execution of projects in the search for solutions to rural and urban development problems in conjunction with their community development strategies (Oga S. Abah 1994:19).

Using theatre and other participatory methodologies to address mainly health and other rural development related issues ranging from 'women's health, 'Agriculture', 'environment' to HIV/Aids awareness campaigns in its first ten years of existence, the organization has gradually shifted to politics, governance, conflict resolution and transformation as evidenced from recent workshops from 1999 which has covered "Democracy and Governance", "citizenship, participation and accountability", "Building Bridges" and "For Tomorrow"-using theatre to address adolescent sexuality issues.

This project, executed with a grant and in collaboration with the Institute of Development Research, University of Sussex, United Kingdom, aims at exploring different people's understanding of citizenship and the different ways in which citizenship may determine rights and privileges in Nigeria in the light of factors such as location /space, ethnicity, gender and religion, the legal/ formal context and the historical processes which led to the unification of Nigeria's different nationalities into one country. The project used a variety of participatory methodologies like transect work, oral testimony, Venn diagrams, activity profiles, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interviews (KII), Evaluation Wheel, Force Field Analysis among other Participatory Learning and Action tools. These tools, however, were forerunners to the citizenship drama. The materials derived from the research flowed into the drama which instigated the discussion in the field. This shall form the subject of the discussion.

Citizenship Drama: The Agaba Scenario

The following is the storyline and the account of the drama built out of the research carried out in the project where Agaba, an Idoma from Benue state in the Middle belt region of Nigeria but a settler in Kargi, Kaduna State Northwestern Nigeria, encounters citizenship in the classic Nigerian sense as he is told that in spite of spending all his years in his new host community and marrying a lady from the area, his children were not entitled to scholarship. Members of the research team were the actors with a fluent Hausa language speaker doubling as narrator and joker during processing

The story line of the drama for the project runs thus:

Chairman's Office-council meeting

Councilors are already seated, general discussions on issues arising from their various wards. There is the unofficial news that the allocation has arrived from the headquarters. The Chairman walks in with a serious air of arrogance. All stand to welcome him with various forms of greeting. Some bow, genuflect, *rankadede* (salutation for long live the Chair in Hausa), etc. Chairman sits and motions them to do same. He introduces the agenda for the day and goes straight into presenting the projects at hand, all of which are for selfish ends.

Councilors grumble, a few support him. He shuts them up and warns against any act of protest. "After all, I bought both the electorates and you counselors, how do I recover my money?" The councilors shrink, some apologize for daring to ask questions, some speechless, one of the most vocal tries to find his tongue to comment on the nature of the treatment they receive from the Chairman but.... As this confusion is happening, a Contractor walks in. This character is the sponsor and godfather of the Chairman. Everybody, including the Chairman stands up. The Chairman symbolically offers him his seat and orders everybody to go on break. The Chairman discusses the allocation with the Contractor after taking the lion share; they now discuss the sharing formula among the councilors based on allegiance. The 'dividends of democracy' are neatly packaged on each councilor's seat as the bell summons them back from the emergency break. There is protest from some on the disproportionate sharing while a few protest the

inappropriateness of sharing the allocation at all.

While this argument is going on, Agaba storms in brandishing a cutlass, and closely followed by his wife and children. The Councilor from his ward attempts to calm him down and asks to know what the problem is. Agaba narrates his problem demanding to know why his children would be denied scholarship on the basis of their being labeled non-indigenes leading to reactions:

1st reaction: Go back to your place and claim citizenship

2ⁿ reaction: A sympathetic reaction stressing that Agaba has a case and should be heard

Agaba reacts at this point to say that he has made so many contributions towards the development of the community and has in the same manner made several investments in the community.

3rd reaction: The Chairman remarks that the same money he used for all his claims was made in the community. 'So what is the noise about? After all a street/ wild cat can never be like the house cat'.

Agaba, deflated, finally asks this question: 'If I don't belong here, where do these children belong?'

From Intervention to Processing

Let us locate the landscapes that produce the scenario of this drama. A foremost Nigerian nationalist, Chief Obafemi Awolowo (1947:47) asserted that Nigeria as presently constituted is "a mere geographical expression" to give vent to the fact that "in terms of social relationships and national identification, one could not speak of Nigeria in the same sense as one could speak of its components as Kano Emirate, or Kingdom of Ife or Benin" (Otite, 1976: 3). No wonder Okwori could boldly declare and we agree with him that:

Nigeria is no more than a patchwork of colonial creation. That Nigeria is such a patchwork underscores the crisis of citizenship, participation and accountability that bedevils the republic (2003:1).

Thus the crisis that has continued to plague the Nigerian state as played out in this citizenship drama is what one might refer to as the limits of political engineering. As a deliberate colonial contraption, the agenda of Sir Goldie and his Royal Niger Company and the British colonial authorities brought various ethnic groups and Kingdoms together from the old arrangements of protectorates and colonies. However, forgotten by the authors of amalgamation, whether by default or design, in fact, available evidence tend towards the later, is the fact that each of the protectorates "was a sprawling territory of separate ethno-linguistic groups, each with its own distinctive history, language, social custom, and beliefs? Nigeria therefore is a veritable mosaic of nationalities; it has within its borders several hundred ethnic groups with distinct languages and culture (Okechie-Offoha *et al*, 1996:1).

The colonial powers did not only promote the divisions but actively encouraged it as long as it was suitable. Thus, at independence, the British colonial powers handed over power to a fragmented country. The regions became rallying points of identity only as far as it is suitable to angle for the national cake. The North for instance which was the largest of the regions rallied its middle belt and minority populations as a counter weight to the East and South who obviously were more advanced in western education. However, the blanket point of being called northerners collapses flat on its face once it comes to sharing something within the ethnic nationalities in the region. Once the situation arises, religion quickly becomes a yardstick for measuring who a true northerner is. In extreme cases, even professing the Islamic religion by middle belt converts would not just do. The East and West also had their own battles between the Igbos and Yorubas and other minority ethnic groups in their areas. Thus, Nigeria has been a landscape of citizens at war with each other. The seeds sown earlier by the colonial master, now watered by the politicians at independence and the generations after them have continued to ensure that the concept of foreigner versus indigene is continually active among citizens of the same country.

Nigeria must rank among one of the few countries of the world where whether you are born in a state or have lived and worked there all your life, as long as it is not classified as your state of origin, you are deemed a foreigner. You would be discriminated against in the provision of employment, access to scholarship, basic entitlement etc. In some places, when offered employment at all, it will be on contract, the same status with an applicant from Iceland or wherever! Nnoli, quoting the northernisation policy defined in 1957 by the public service commission of the Northern Region, provides useful insight:

If a qualified northerner is available, he is given priority in Recruitment; if no qualified northerner is available, an Expatriate may be recruited or a no-northerner on contract terms (1978:191).

Note that in some cases the definition can be hazy. A certified Moslem from Niger Republic may be preferred to a Christian or an animist from the middle belt. This was the world or society that gave birth to the Agaba scenario described above.

Kargi is a small town about five kilometers to the north of Anchau the headquarters of Kubau Local Government Council in Kaduna State. It is a predominantly Islamic community though there are Christians and adherents of other religions, especially strangers/settlers like Agaba. This is where the citizenship drama described above was performed. Being a Friday we decided to work with the rhythm of the community by fixing the performance immediately after the prayers. Leaving our encampment at the Women Development Centre to the Hakimi's Palace, we found them just leaving the mosque. Our guide, Abdullahi Kargi, accosts the Imam to invite him for the performance, including the Hakimi and his entourage. Accepting the invitation, they quickly formed a

half-moon in front of the mosque which became defined as our stage and performance area.

A crucial difference between theatre for development and conventional theatre is the locale for the dramatic event. For:

The movement towards the opening up and loosening the proxemic relations in performance, in order to escape from the tyranny of architectonic grandeur and its aesthetic and ideological implications, looks back to the earlier and non-institutional forms of performance where fixed feature space was either non-existent...(Elam, 1979: 64-65)

So we took the drama to the heart of the people, but does that affect perception? At the 'end' of the drama when Agaba asked "If I don't belong here what of these children, where do they belong", the audience was divided. Some said "Kargi" while others said "Your State". This is the reality of citizenship in Nigeria. Agaba is an Idoma defined by the constitution and ancestry as coming from Benue State and so no matter how long he has lived in Kargi in Kaduna State he can never claim to be an indigene of the place. There are times when the performance space can either aid positive communication or reinforce existing values. Here, the mosque is a central symbol for the denial or conferment of citizenship. Obviously, Agaba has lost out both in the fictive world of the play and in reality. The courtier gathered in front of the mosque will not include an Agaba so what case does he have? True, the constitution does not specify where one should or should not live, but an Agaba on a Friday not following other predominant members of the community to the mosque has a bad case if he runs to the Sarki with the complaint of his children being denied scholarship. That is the brutal reality in Nigeria of today.

But this is just a small part of the matter. What about his children, born and bred in the environment where he has lived, married and contributed to in the last thirty years or more? The reality in Nigeria today is that migration due to labour and the need to eke out a living take people from their ancestral lands. They live in these new communities and procreate and in most cases the children may not even know the road to their ancestral villages, but as soon as they demand for anything from the host community, they are quickly reminded that they are strangers. In the citizenship equation in Nigeria, the woman bears most of the brunt. While in reality discrimination and denial of citizenship is everywhere, the woman's burden is double. Advances in the areas of western education and other factors have not removed the inferior status conferred on women. The woman is regarded as a second class citizen. The moment the woman marries, she loses her identity. That is why the mother of Agaba's children could neither save him nor confer citizenship on their children.

One man argued that woman was not an issue, she can go with any man, that in fact when she has a daughter, he does not consider her as a child just like the useless girl that married Agaba and is now deluding him into wanting to claim to be an indigene. We should note again the conspiracy between the fictive world and reality. The audience made up of men from the Friday prayers obviously

already excludes women. Women do not go to pray in the same mosque on Friday like the men, so how can a woman come to matter enough as to confer citizenship on Agaba's children? What is more, even the real audience composition for the drama now does not include women; they can only peep over the walls of their secluded houses where they have been condemned to by who else but the men. So when you raise the issue of the eligibility of Agaba's children for citizenship by virtue of their mother, there is even no woman to add a voice to their own case. In predominantly Islamic settings the woman is to be at best seen and never heard but in extreme cases neither to be seen nor heard. The situation in Nigeria is harsher in the north. Awolowo's observation is pertinent here:

A deep religious gulf runs between the northern (Hausa-Fulani) and Southern (Igbo and Yoruba) portions of the country. The people of the south approach religion with remarkable moderation and nonchalance. Christians, Mohammedans and the so-called pagans mix in society without restraint. The people of the north are extremely fanatical about Islamism. They have open contempt for those who do not share their religious beliefs (1947: 49).

So the lot of Agaba is the lot of the wife in spite of coming from that geographical area only that in her own case, the only crime she committed is that she was born a woman.

Some members of the audience however were ready to concede that at least the children are indigenes but were vehemently opposed to any attempt to confer on Agaba the status of an indigene and even if they reluctantly accept him he can not contest elections. All those who offered to re-enact the drama brought their own perception to bear. One young man and, in fact, the majority of the younger generation were of the opinion that by right of the constitution, Agaba was qualified to be an indigene with all the rights and privileges. True they said so, but the reality is what is staring everybody in the face. The young men did not stop there, they proceeded to build a play the following day where a non-indigene like an Agaba who had lived in the community, contributed to its development did not only contest for an election but won!. Can this fiction translate into reality? Very unlikely.

While the debate lasted and from the point the joker transformed the drama into court, the Hakimi and his acolytes, those who really control the community and determine what goes on, simply looked on. Agaba moved from the fiction of the drama and took his case to the Hakimi. What response did he get? Hear Abah and Okwori's telling observations:

It was a citizenship court of *Sarakuna* (royalty). The *Murya* (voice) that we heard from now on was no longer of dialogue in fiction; it was a pronouncement of verdict from the bowels of authority and conviction. The *Hakimi* maintained a stolid silence; the *Imam* stayed placid; but the *Sarki* talked except in monosyllables and crisp phrases. The identity issue and the question of entitlements, who could claim citizenship in this place and whether or not Agaba could claim rights, were being enunciated. When the *Hakimi* said nothing it was not lack of interest, when the *Imam* remained inscrutable it was not shortage of opinion or lack of

knowledge of the issues (2003:135).

While it can be said that the Hakimi was obeying cultural injunctions which forbid him from speaking with commoners during public petitions such as this, when he chose to speak through the Sarki in this instance, it can be taken that whatever the Sarki said had his blessings, right or wrong. You can derive your own interpretation when Agaba in defeat turns to the Hakimi "The LG Chairperson has declared me a wild cat that is not like the real home cat even after living here for this long and contributing to this society", and the Hakimi through the Sarki said he has heard. This kind of response characterized citizenship dilemma in Nigeria. Kargi is only the test case if an Abdullahi from Kargi had gone to a village in Idoma land he would get the same treatment, ditto for a Yoruba in Igbo land and vice versa. When those who should speak out like the Hakimi, Oba, Obi or any member of the royalty by whatever definition choose to acquiescence with their spokesmen, then the journey is still far.

Conclusion

Clearly what has emerged is that the answers to the questions raised in the drama lie outside the drama. This is where Boal's Forum theatre comes in. By providing for the role of a Joker to process the drama where the bystander and spectator switch roles with the actor and now tries out his own suggested actions with all the limitations of such suggestions exposed. This is certainly beyond conventional dramatic practice and even beyond Brecht's analysis for later action or even the post- performance discussion of the earliest practitioners of this brand of theatre

The wider context of the drama which was overshadowed by injustice done to Agaba and his storming the council meeting is what the councilors were doing before Agaba stormed in. When you have Chairmen and Councilors behaving like we saw in the drama openly sharing the resources that should be used to better the lives of the masses, then there is always going to be underdevelopment. As one agitated spectator said, why are we wasting time on Agaba who refused to go back to his village when we have seen in the drama that every member of the community is a potential Agaba capable of being cheated of the resources of the state by political looters? While the man may have a point, the citizenship issue will not go away and it manifests itself with different faces. The guide who took us round and facilitated our work in the village, Alhaji Abdullahi Kargi, hails from Bornu State as evident by his facial marks, but he is accepted as an indigene of Kargi and given a chieftaincy title to booth. Here citizenship is by religious affiliation and royalty.

The crucial thing is that this mode of building drama has generated enough discussion and perhaps glimpses of action to come even if it is in infancy. This is significant for the mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist of eloquence alone, which is an exterior and momentary move of feelings and passions, but in an active participation in practical use, as constructors, organizers

'permanent persuaders' (Daniel, 1999:46). The strength of this project is that the research phase provided adequate information to feed the drama which the people easily identified with and were able to discuss freely. Theatre for development may not have provided all the answers and may have in fact merely instigated the discussion of the Nigerian citizenship question, but if the people are listening especially to the voice of the youths in Kargi then we may be nearer the solution than before.

A critical gap in the project is that the choice of performance location automatically disenfranchises the women. Traditionally, women do not go to the mosque for Friday prayers, and even if they did, the Islamic religion forbids mixing of male and female audiences. Thus, while Agaba lost his citizenship because of where he is from, and by implication the denial of his citizenship was extended to his children, the wife who is an indigene of the area who may have made the difference or at least provided an opportunity to question the community is excluded from the debate. In fact, all the women were excluded from the debate, a few of the Hakimi's household and neighbours could only peep over the walls but not join in the debate. The project unwittingly agreed with the community by not at least organizing a separate performance for the women to at least ensure that their voices were heard even if it could not instigate an open debate.

Also by the very structure of the story, critical issues like corruption of the council Chair and the councilors, the Chairman's dictatorial tendencies, the issue of godfathers in politics and a whole lot of other issues were discarded and the last bit of action which was less than twenty percent of the entire story became the only focus. These are obvious areas of lapse in the project but overall, issues of citizenship were thrown up for extensive debate.

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