

Ideological Dissonance in J.P. Clark's *The Raft* and Femi Osofisan's *Another Raft*: a Postcolonial Perspective

Clement Ajidahun
Adekunle Ajasin University

The paper is a comparative and inter-textual study of J.P. Clark's *The Raft* and Femi Osofisan's *Another Raft*. The paper interrogates the thematic and ideological positions of both literary giants and situates the critical analysis of their plays in their proper historical perspectives. The theoretical framework of the paper is based on the postcolonial theory that addresses the impact of colonialism on the people and the society generally. The paper notes the centrality of both texts as well as the areas of convergence and divergence. It is noted that while the two playwrights address the post-independent challenges confronting Nigeria using the raft as the symbol of the distressed situation in the nation, J.P. Clark addresses the teething problems confronting the newly independent country and his submissions appear pessimistic while Osofisan in his text acknowledges the enormity of the challenges bedeviling the post-independent nation as common developmental challenges. However, in line with his Marxist ideological leaning, he believes that the challenges are surmountable. The paper countenances the various challenges confronting Nigeria as identified in the texts such as corruption, ethnicity, betrayal, slavery, oppression, disillusionment, and neo-colonialism among others as manifestations of the long years of colonialism in the hands of the slave masters and colonialists. It also addresses the inevitability of cooperation, solidarity, and the inculcation of the spirit of nationhood, brotherhood, and Pan-Africanism by Africans and all the Blacks in diaspora to prevent the nation from drifting to a halt as signified in Osofisan's *Another Raft*.

Keywords: Drama, Comparative Literature, *The Raft*, *Another Raft*.

Introduction

Marxist and sociological critics are, understandably, passionate about the impact of art on the society. Literature is viewed as one of the most dynamic tools that artists deploy to create a lasting impact on the society. Literature has become a thermometer, and an indispensable instrument for archiving the societal events and also for gauging the depth of societal malaise with a view to raising the consciousness of the people. The Elizabethan drama and the Apartheid plays, like all other literatures, testify to these roles. That is why the artist must have a good sense of history and also a good sense of judgment. Understandably therefore, some artists who are genuinely concerned about their societies reflect as much as they can a number of historical events in the most

profound dramatic and literary ways to make them different from the works of historians who are chroniclers and raconteurs of historical events.

In other words, artists explore societal burning issues from historical perspectives to give vent to their dramaturgy. This is a common phenomenon in literary works of all ages. For instance, Robert Bolt's *A Man of all Seasons* according to Long (1968) dramatizes "the internal politics of England, diplomatic fencing between England and Spain and the conflicts between corrupt and reformatory factions within the Church", while Peter Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* portrays the face of Catholicism in England. John Osborne's *A Patriot for Me* captures the moral issues of betrayals, military and the pre-1914 Austro-Hungarian Empire, while *Luther* (1961) by Osborne reveals in a most dramatic way Martin Luther and the Monastic authority.

Also in African drama, Abraham Hussein's *Kinjeketile* is a historical description of the various liberation struggles by the Tanzanians under the German imperialism. Gibson Kente's *Too Late* (1981), Shezi's *Shanti* and Workshop '71's *Survival* dramatize the heinous crimes committed by the whites against the non-whites in apartheid South Africa, while John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* and Athol Fugard's *Valley Song* countenance the post-apartheid challenges confronting South Africa. Artists, world over, are usually conversant with the events around them and thus fictionalize them according to their literary orientations and perspectives.

It is against this background that this study is undertaken to relate J.P. Clark's *The Raft* with Femi Osofisan's *Another Raft* who both use Nigeria as their historical background and dramatic settings. While J.P. Clark in *The Raft* captures the early traumatic events that characterized the newly independent Nigeria, Femi Osofisan's *Another Raft* depicts the later events in the post-independent nation, that appear to the playwright as signs of nation building rather than pejorative signals.

Postcolonial Theory

One of the fundamental preoccupations of postcolonial critics is a call for the reexamination and reevaluation of the history of imperialism from the perspective of the colonized with a view to determining the socio-political, economic, and cultural impacts of the long years of colonialism on both the colonized and the imperial powers. The import of this is to create opportunities for liberation struggles that will ultimately lead to the eradication of all forms of imperialism, socio-cultural, economic, and socio-political hegemonies put in place to oppress the people (Young, 2001).

According to Habib (2011), postcolonial studies also address all forms of "internal colonization" as attended to by scholars focusing on minority studies like the African-American, Caribbean, and women's studies (272). This view is also supported by Abrams and Harpham (2012) when they say that postcolonial discourse is not essentially concerned with Western imperialism, it also studies "the domination of some southern-hemisphere groups or nations by other southern-hemisphere groups or nations" (307-308). This is why according to Abrams and Harpham (2012), the critical analysis of the literature and the socio-cultural history of the former colonies of England like Nigeria is important to enable us to access the impact of colonialism on the socio-political development on the colonized nations vis a vis the imperialistic tendencies in the colonized to continue to oppress and dominate one another. It is the belief of

postcolonial critics that colonialism has entrenched the spirit of imperialism in the colonized, and that is why even after independence, internal colonialism continues to be almost a permanent idiosyncratic feature of postcolonial nations. Part of the agenda of postcolonial scholarship, apart from calling for the disestablishment of Eurocentric literary canons, is to examine the causes of instability, insurrection, and other post-independence challenges that are threatening the existence of nationhood with a view to tackling them headlong. It is against this background that this paper is foregrounded on the postcolonial theory to enable us to analyze the postcolonial subject of drifting that both Clark and Osofisan address in their texts as a postcolonial phenomenon.

Textual Analysis

Both texts are compared and analyzed under the plot structure, structural pattern, stagecraft/theatricality, thematic thrust, and other relevant dramatic elements.

Plot Structure

Clark's *The Raft* begins with four disillusioned lumbermen sitting on the raft on a creek in the Niger Delta. The four lumbermen—Olotu, Kengide, Ogro, and Ibobo—are set to bring logs to be sold to one rich man downstream in Warri. They are all asleep. In fact, Ogro is already snoring heavily. Their despair arises because they have lost their boat, and are now using the raft instead. They also discover that the moorings are now totally loose. They are now adrift. They attribute their drifting to a river god called Osikoboro. Now, they cannot tell which direction to follow.

As they are about to set the raft on course again, it breaks into two. One part of the raft takes Olotu away, the other three lumbermen, Kengide, Ibobo, and Ogro, remain in the second part of the broken raft. All attempts to save Olotu prove abortive. Eventually, only Kengide and Ibobo survive the ordeals. Even as the two are getting close to safety, they are also caught in a fog. Finally, they are drifted away.

Osofisan's *Another Raft* begins, as we find in *The Raft*, with the discovery made by Oge and Waje that their raft has been cut adrift. They attribute this to the anger of the river goddess. Meanwhile, before they set out on the journey, there has been a great flooding of the land like we find in *No More the Wasted Breed*. An attempt to offer a virgin as a carrier to placate the Yemosa fails. This is because they soon discover that the girl is in actual fact a man, a soldier and brother to the girl who has now been cut off the moorings. This sets the raft adrift.

Even though Clark's play is set in the Niger Delta, and Osofisan's version is set in Aiyedade in Yorubaland, south west of Nigeria, both texts share the same plot. For instance, both plays begin with boatmen whose raft is drifting and both Ogro in *The Raft* and Oge in *Another Raft* are snoring to support the position of both playwrights on the frustrations and the despair that the boatmen have found themselves. The difference between Ogro and Oge in meaning is r. This is to show how imitative Osofisan is in his version. This is apart from the fact that both plays take place at the riverine areas to further establish the justification for a comparative analysis of both texts.

In addition, both texts begin in the night to depict the adversity that is set to befall the boatmen. While Clark in *The Raft* attributes the lumbermen's predicament and the drifting of their raft to Osikoboro, the river goddess, in Osofisan's *Another Raft*,

Yemosa, the water goddess of Osa River is also accused as the cause of the flood in Aiyedade. Both playwrights attribute the predicaments of the boatmen to river goddesses. The deliberate deployment of the river goddess in Osofisan's text as a causative agent just as Clark does in his text is a foreshadow of Osofisan's ideological position in the text which shall be revealed later on in this paper. Osofisan wants us to know that both Osikoboro and Yemosa are equal in their supernatural endowments to interrupt human activities; Osofisan is of the view that there is nothing new in the drifting of man. The causes of the man's drifting are common, and they are also surmountable or else Osofisan would have attributed the predicament of the people of Aiyedade either to a lesser or a higher cause to justify his ideological position. After all, logical deductions can only be based on rational premises. It is the view of postcolonial critics, therefore, that neocolonialism is conquerable.

Structural Pattern

Clark's *The Raft* is structured into four parts namely Tide-Wash, Wind-Lash, Iron-Fire and Call of Land. Clark employs an episodic structural pattern where we have a series of loosely related events tied together by the same characters and subject matter. Clark appears to be concerned majorly with exploration of the existence of his characters rather than with the depth of characterization that is common in most dramatic works. Izevbaye (1975) describes Clark's *The Raft* as "a series of anecdotes and local gossip strung together" (30). Also, Smith (2017) supports the position of Izevbaye when he says that "the play seems episodic, a common thread runs through the apparently unconnected anecdotes in the play to form the synthesizing element piecing all the bits together" (5). The episodic nature of Clark's play further underscores the play's absurdist tradition which makes it comparable with the structural patterns of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Harold Pinter's *Birthday Party*. Clark is essentially concerned with the futility of life and not with the blown episodes to support the spirit of imperialism and its consequences on man.

On the other hand, Osofisan structures *Another Raft* into seven scenes and uses the conventional presentational dramatic mode. Right from the beginning of the play, we are told that it is all make-believe. There is no disguise of any sort as we find in Clark's *The Raft* as Yemosa One tells us: "Nothing you see will be real, or pretend to be. Nothing you hear will be true. All is fiction, the story is false, the characters do not exist. We are in a theatre, as you well know, and we see no need to hide it" (3).

Stagecraft/Theatricality

The beauty of a written drama text is its ability to be staged for the audience in a theatre. Femi Osofisan in an interview with Tunde Awosanmi (2013) says that "I will normally prefer to direct the premiere of my plays, but this is because, for me, a play is not really finished until it has been put on the stage" (57). Corroborating this view, Emasealu (2010) says that "plays should be subjected to performance" (13). Clark's *The Raft* does not appear to have been written for the theatrical performance unlike Osofisan's *Another Raft*. In *The Raft*, dialogues are terse and mind-numbing, conflicts are tangential unexciting and dreary; they are devoid of the usual tension and strain that the audience goes through in classical and contemporary dramatic works. For instance, the disagreement between Olotu and Kengide in One: Tide-Wash is not as dramatic and intense as the conflict between Lanusen and Ekuroola in *Another Raft* in scene three of the play.

Besides, in *Another Raft*, the Yemosas act as the narrators as they introduce the audience to the theatre, unlike in *The Raft*. The narrators expose the play and introduce the audience to the ensuing conflict that is centered on the consequences of the rampaging flood in Aiyedade. *Another Raft* begins with an opening song to introduce the play

We have come tonight
With an entertaining tale
Let all eyes watch, all ears listen
Everyone stop and hear our tale
Wagging tongues for once be still
When the moonlight glows like this
To tell a story
Sing along! (9)

The play is interspersed with a lot of songs and dirges accompanied with gong and *sekere* (castanet) in Yoruba and translated in English to entertain the audience and also to enhance the beauty of the play. The play also ends with a song:

Oge: “1-2-3: push!
 1-2-3: push!
 Again and again: push!

 “1-2-3: push!
 Bend to it: push!
 Again and again: push!

 “1-2-3: push!
 Fight the waves: push!
 Again and again: push!

 “1-2-3: push!
 1-2-3: push!
 Strive to win: push!
 Again and again push! (101)

While the opening song serves as the prologue, the closing song serves as the epilogue. The repetition of the words “push” and “again” in the last song is to rekindle the fire of courage, resilience, and hope in the masses and urge them not to give up in their struggles against the oppressors. The action words like “bend,” “fight,” and “strive” in the song are rhetorical devices to arouse the radical consciousness in the masses. The introduction of songs intermittently is a reflection of the spirit of epic theatre of Bertolt Brecht which is to bring theatre to the doorstep of the masses. In line with the spirit of postcolonial criticism, the theatre of Osofisan will provoke the desired revolutionary consciousness in the people that will enable them to revolt against neocolonialism. Clark’s *The Raft* begins with the sleeping and snoring of the lumbermen, while the play ends with the shout of “We are adrift, adrift and lost! Ee-ee-eee” (133) by Ibobo and

Kengide. Although there are occasional songs in *The Raft* like the songs rendered by Ogro, such songs are tantamount to lamentations.

Clark's *The Raft* will be challenging for play directors as a live performance because it is stripped of its theatrical ornaments and made bare while Osofisan's *Another Raft* is adequately adorned with dramatic ornaments and directing aesthetics such as stage directions, lighting, props, prologue, play-within-a-play, flashback, music, songs, suspense, rhythm, planes, levels, spectacles, sound, pantomimic blocking, choreographic directing, and mime, among others, which Fasoranti (2018) and Fasoranti (2019) describe as indisputable tools that play directors need to bring vivacity and vibrancy to a live performance. There are no dirges and incantations in Clark's *The Raft*, whereas in *Another Raft*, there are incantations, flashbacks, and chants to reflect the local color and make the text accessible to a wider audience. In addition, Osofisan provides stage instructions for the director, unlike Clark. For instance, Osofisan in *Another Raft* says, "It is suggested that, in production, the reading should stop here" (10), "The song should appear, all the same, to come from all directions to the men on the raft" (28), "Lights should begin to change, softly and unobtrusively, to create an appropriate context for the flashback, as the song snaps off" (64), "The first flash of lightning comes, followed by a peal of thunder," "The lightning is more intermittent now" (76). The only justification for the lack of stage craft in Clark's text may be his deliberate attempt to write a play that countenances the spirit of absurdity. This view is also in tandem with the position of Smith (2017) on Clark's *The Raft* when he says that

There are no conflicts, no intrigues and no twists in fortune – just one straight course. The characters have too little action and the raft too much. In addition, there are the technical difficulties of staging involved: one is how the drifting raft with its crew will be represented and how its movement and statism could be suggested. Not surprisingly then, it has remained for long unstaged.

Besides, according to the *The Raft Encyclopedia.com* (2020), "*The Raft* is often regarded by critics as the least solid of the plays in the trilogy... It is not often performed because of the difficulties in staging it. One of the more prominent reasons is that much of the action takes place at night in the dark on a river." Izevbaye in *The Raft Encyclopedia.com* (2020) expresses a similar view when he says that "Clark's problems as a dramatist arises mainly from his lack of interest in, or experience of, the stage." Also, Banham in *The Raft Encyclopedia.com* (2020) says that:

As a playwright, Clark has seemed to suffer from a lack of familiarity with the demands of the theatre, and his plays have never fitted as comfortably on to the stage as have Soyinka's. The latter's craftsmanship stems from a close practical knowledge of the theatre as a director and actor, whereas Clark has no comparable experience. One result is that Clark's characters tend to talk where they might act, to recite where they should converse, and to remain static where they should move.

Thematic Thrust

Clark, in *The Raft*, demonstrates the helplessness of man's existence. He compares man with a reed in the tide which has no direction and whose fate is determined by the uncontrollable wind. Clark thus dramatizes the absurdity of man's existence. Man, according to Clark, is at the mercy of gods. He can be easily manipulated by them for their ulterior motives.

Osofisan in *Another Raft* responds in a most revolutionary way to J.P. Clark's *The Raft* (1964). In the Programme Notes of the Playwright, Osofisan, through Yemosa One, tells us the need for the play:

In 1964, the Nigerian playwright, J.P. Clark, now known as Clark-Bekederemo, wrote the play, *The Raft*, which came to symbolize the troubled situation of our newly-independent country. So many events have occurred since then to take the nation many times just on the brink of sinking, but miraculously, we have kept afloat. Nevertheless, even as the decades drifted past, the storms have not ceased, nor have we been able to steer ourselves out of the fog of those initial errors. More and more obvious, as the '80s roll to a close, the need seems to have become truly desperate for –
ANOTHER RAFT. (5)

Osofisan employs myth in *Another Raft* to comment on the post-independence historical curses that have been plaguing Nigeria since its independence in October 1960. One of these is the oppression of the poor, owing to bad leadership and the colonial legacies. Ekuroola, a corrupt business tycoon, has no qualms in giving and taking of bribes. Money is everything to him. He represents the class of exploiters. He is the direct reaper of the blossoming farmlands in Aiyedade.

Reore, who is adjudged the best farmer of the year, reaps nothing from the farm. The gains of the farm go to oppressors like Ekuroola. Reore laments this situation when he cries out:

We toil and toil, nursing Eledumare's precious earth tenderly. And then one man we never see, who wines, and dines in the soft fairly land of that Lagos city we hear so much about, he just sends his agents down to collect our harvest, leaving us the chaff... They said I was the best farmer of the season. I had the biggest yams, even though they were going into his stores, I had raised the fattest yams, and they clapped for me, and sent me along to placate a goddess I had never offended. Oh God. I could die! (He cries, freely) (27-28).

With people like the corrupt Ekuroola in power, the poor have no hope. Agunrin, a member of the oppressed class, confronts Ekuroola and accuses him of being responsible for the predicaments of the poor in the society due to his excessive and

uncontrollable craze for money and unnecessary imposition of unjust taxes:

The poor people are dirty, isn't it? Their bodies stink, their feet are eaten by jiggers', perhaps if they earned more money for their labour, perhaps they would have the leisure to pause and take care of themselves? Perhaps they would be able to look up from their drudgery, to question those who control their lives? No, they continue to smell, because people like you are in charge. (Lightning and thunder). Because you'll never have enough, however much you steal! So go on, have a taste! Go and lick it, and find out what their feet smell like! (61)

In spite of all these, the religious leaders like Orousi, the Chief Priest of Ifa, and Omitogun, a priest of Yemosa who are supposed to raise and protect the moral standards of the society collaborate with the oppressors to perpetrate evils and oppress the people. For instance, Lanusen accuses Orousi of betrayal and of double standard:

Only a year ago? When you and I, when we set the police and the army against the farmers? Were you not there, on television, on radio, in the newspapers even! Divining for them, telling them Ifa was against their struggle? Asking them to surrender, encouraging the government troops to shoot them! So what are you saying! (47)

Both Clark and Osofisan address corruption and exploitation as post-independence challenges confronting Nigeria. The parable of five fingers in Clark's *The Raft* is a metaphor for the prevalence and extensiveness of corruption in the young independent Nigeria. While the four fingers are corrupt, only the thumb has the temerity and audacity to speak out against corruption. According to Kengide, "the thumb says 'Count me out!' And that's why even now you see him standing apart from the group." This is indicative of the fact that only a few in the newly independent nation are bold to stand up in defense of truth. Besides, Clark shows us here that majority of Nigerians are not socially and politically committed to the wellbeing of the nation but in its looting. We recall also the capitalistic, oppressive, and materialistic nature of the timber merchant in the play who the four lumbermen want to satisfy at their peril. This is a reflection of the imperialistic nature of African leaders who use their wealth to oppress the proletariat.

Besides, Clark depicts Nigerian leaders as oppressive, insensitive, and irresponsible. In the play, Kengide yields to family pressures and joins the workers' strike as a protest against government exploitation and oppression. The long years of service with a foreign firm do not improve the lot of Kengide and his family. The people expect government to take sides with the masses and better their lots. Unfortunately, the aftermath of the strike is an increase in taxes and the prices of goods and service go up. The masses, in the play, are pawns in the hands of the politicians. After they have been used for electioneering purposes, they are soon discarded. Hence, they resort to vandalization and destruction of oil pipes. Clark, obviously, captures the postcolonial concerns in his text.

Similarly, Osofisan in *Another Raft* indicts the military leadership in the play of exploitation, corruption, and extravagant spending. This is revealed in the accusation made by Gbebe against Agunrin. Agunrin in the play represents the military ruling leadership.

GBEBE You're a soldier. You accuse the politicians and the chiefs of exploiting the people, and leading us to damnation. But what of you, sir? What else do you do except milk the land?

AGUNRIN: I see! I see now! You envy our lives in the barracks. But you don't talk of our putting our lives at stake. And all of you!

GBEBE For what war, tell me? Is it the war for which we have waited for so long that our best generals grow bored and retire in their prime, to live lavishly on maize farms? (63)

The same issues of corruption and bad leadership that Clark addresses are also tackled by Osofisan in this play and also in plays like *The Inspector and the Hero*, *Fires Burn and Die Hard*, *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*, *Many Colours Make the Thunder-King*, and others. For instance, Osofisan exposes the corruption of leaders like Alhaja Olowoseun in *Fires Burn and Die Hard*, the corruption and the squandermania of the local government officials in *Who's Afraid of Solarin*, the exploitation and the oppression of the masses by Lawal in *The Atine's Wrath*, the licentiousness of Prof. Juokwu, a Professor of Medicine in *The Album of the Midnight Blackout*, etc.

The play is also reminiscent of the pessimism, hopelessness and despair that we find in *The Raft* although not in the sense that Clark projects them. Osofisan indicts the black race of wickedness and cannibalism. He gives us a bizarre picture of the stark reality of the personality of the black race with an insatiable delight in oppressing one another.

As long as this continues, there is no hope at all for the entire continent. As the carrier is thrown into a trance, Gbebe shouts:

But I... I can tell you why, yes!... It's because we must eat one another. Can't you see?... Men have always eaten other men of course. Look at history, so many cannibal suppers. And the screams of humanity, out of the throats of victims and revelers, bind the rafts on which our corpses float... We are the only race of animals with an insatiable appetite for the children of our own flesh. Black men killing black, feeding on black. Forever and ever, black men always slaughtering other black men... I ask you, isn't that the meaning of our journey to a faded goddess? What else is our continent, but the black man's graveyard?... Let us prepare all to die, without fear... Well, there's nothing left for me to do on the raft. My duty is ended, which was to lead you through the hidden channel in

the waves of history to the turning edge of knowledge... Each of you is a nation of Africa, each of you is the black race, each is the son of a Shark, to be eaten by other sharks. Our future is... death. Go on, wait no longer, embrace one another, say your adieus (54, 69).

We also find the theme of man's inhumanity to man in Clark's *The Raft* when the captain of a ship fails to rescue the lumbermen when their raft is adrift. When Ogro tries to link up with the ship for assistance, he is stoned with coals, and his hands are beaten off with bars of iron. Eventually, Ogro slumps back into the deep where he, according to Kengide, "is caught in the mortal arms of the stern-wheeling engine." According to Smith (2017)

This seems a far cry from the communal spirit of the traditional world. Thus the direction the modern world has taken is towards doom or nemesis as even within the raft itself the lumbermen are all cut in various forms of differences including those of opinion and ethnic origin.

However, Osofisan does not want to end the play on a pessimistic note. He uses the story of the king and his three favorite sons to drive at unity as the only weapon men have to wipe out oppression. In this story, the king wants to abdicate the throne and he also wants one of his three sons to succeed him. He has a problem in determining which of the sons deserves the crown. The first son is called "See Far," the second son is called "Fly Fast," and the third is "Heal-At-Once."

The three sons possess different but indispensable supernatural abilities which are meant to complement one another's. Each of the sons needs each other to succeed. This is similar to the story of Song, Drum, and Dance in *Yungba-Yungba and the Dance Contest*. Reore provides an answer to the riddle of the Yemosas and says, "All of us is the answer" (82). Each of the three sons represents each of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. All of them should have equal access to the leadership of the country. Therefore, they must work together in unity; only then can the problem of drifting end. In this play, the problem of drifting is overcome only when the boatmen resolve to work together.

Osofisan in this play portrays man as the architect of his fate. As long as man is willing to struggle and liberate himself, there is no goddess that can stop him. What is needful is simply this, "There is no goddess but our muscles! The strength of our forces combined! Rowing together, working together!" (85). That is more powerful than the power of the oppressors. Even the goddesses acknowledge this when they say:

YEMOSA THREE: But all such powers as we have are made
 only by your will. Our force is your fear for
 like hyacinths, we are capable of endless
 benefits for the use of man, but only as
 long as you yourselves give the command!

YEMOSA ONE: But if you abandon yourselves recklessly to our caprice as most of you insist on doing we have no power anymore except to drift with the current of your cowardly surrendering and choke up the fresh springs, and the waterways of your lives. (83)

Man is his own god. His god is his arms. His strength is his muscles. His destiny is his own making. Postcolonial critics also frown at all forms of man's inhumanity to man which is seen as a form of internal colonization. To overcome this, the unity of the masses and good governance are indispensable.

Commenting on Clark's *The Raft*, Ashaolu (1978) is of the view that the play

Dramatizes the helplessness of men, drifting on a ship of destiny, floundering under known and inexplicable forces. It is man's ignorance of these forces, and his incapability to effectively solve those problems that beset him on his journey throughout life that make his world miserable. He merely drifts along helplessly. He has been destined to end that way (193).

But man in *Another Raft* is his god and the determiner of his fate. You are oppressed if you choose to be oppressed. You are drifted if you choose to be drifted. The oppressions, the exploitations, the injustice, and the inequalities in the society can be overcome if the people will be united to resist them to the end. Only then can sanity and justice return to the nation. This is *Another Raft* of hope, presented in an allegorical manner and imbued with music, songs, and incantations for theatrical and revolutionary purposes in line with the Marxist ideology.

Conclusion

Both texts address the challenges confronting Nigeria as a post-independent nation. Clark's text tackles the problems faced by the newly independent nation and submits that we are fated for calamity without any message of hope. The play ends with an engulfing fog and the wailing of Ibobo and Kengide with a lot of regret and lamentation and thus adding credence to the tragic essence of the play which is symbolic of the tragic end of Nigeria. Clark attributes the cause of the drifting to some supernatural forces. That is why Ibobo answers Ogro when they are stuck that "We are in the hands of Osikoboro" (109), the river goddess. Osofisan does not believe in the inviolability of the gods. In Awodiya (1993), Osofisan says "all these gods and their pretended inviolability... one is tired of them" (20). That is why Osofisan says that man is the sole determiner of his fate. Osofisan rules out the interference of the gods in the post-independence challenges confronting Nigeria and attributes such challenges as manmade which can be challenged and overcome, but Clark surrenders to fate.

However, both playwrights agree that the nation is drifting but they disagree on the cause of the drifting, although the country symbolized by Osofisan's raft is more rickety than Clark's raft. We must not forget that Olotu's drifting and loss may suggest secession which some ethnic groups and individuals in Nigeria are championing now in the face of

recurrent marginalization, nepotism, human trafficking, kidnapping, involuntary servitude, forced labour, imposition of cattle colonies, migration through the Mediterranean for greener pastures, religious, ethnic, ritual, and political killings, and violence which are clear evidence of bad leadership, internal colonization and neocolonialism. Clark's text cannot, therefore, be dismissed on the grounds of irrelevance to the present-day societal realities, as insinuated by Osofisan's version.

Since the nation is still battling with the issue of drifting that Clark raises in his text fifty-eight years after independence, whether our problems are manmade as indicated by Osofisan or demon made as suggested by Clark, the ends therefore justifies the means. A Yoruba adage says, "*Bi a ba fogun odun pile were, igba wo lo maa to bugije*" (If it takes two decades to go crackers, how long would it take to be at the maddest?). Another adage says, "*Bi a ba fogun odun jija kan, ojo wo la fe jija miran*" (If we fight a battle for twenty years, when are we going to fight another one?). Clark has spoken prophetically through *The Raft*, and Osofisan has judged the prophecy and dismissed it with *Another Raft* that he considers intellectually more edifying. Both playwrights must be commended for their brilliant diagnosis of the nation's problems, and their human efforts at tackling them. As long as the nation exists, we should certainly expect more rafts that will be more dramatic, revolutionary, and insightful.

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Clement Olujide Ajidahun is a Professor of Comparative Literature and Dramatic Literature at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. He teaches in the Department of English Studies of the same institution. He was formerly, Head of Department of Performing Arts, Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria. He is a poet and also a playwright. He is the current Editor of the Literary Scholars Association of Nigeria's journal; Member of the English Scholars' Association of Nigeria (ESAN); Member, West African Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (WAACLALS) and a member of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) among others. He is also an alumnus of the Galilee International Management Institute, Israel.
jideajidahun@gmail.com