

# Nightmares and Burden of Imperialism in Two African Plays

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Doi: 10.19044/elp.v4no2a4 [URL:http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/elp.v4no2a4](http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/elp.v4no2a4)

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## Abstract

The history-drama nexus accounts for the fascination shown by some writers in adopting history as a source for playwriting throughout the ages. Existing studies on historical plays and imperialism have focused on profiling and dignifying the African leaders that are victims of exploitative imperial lords and explicating the predicaments experience by them with little or no consideration for the stylistic techniques employ by the historical plays playwrights. This study, therefore, examines nightmare as a technique for establishing a psychic context for unveiling colonial histories with a view to establishing the link between the conflict of the characters and the predicaments of their societies. The study is based on Carl Jung's model of psychoanalysis which allows for the investigation of characters' unconscious motives which manifest in recurring nightmares. Two of Ahmed Yerima's prominent historical plays are purposively selected: *The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen* and *Ameh Oboni the Great*. The plays are subjected to critical textual analysis in both content and form. The nightmares provide the framework for unveiling the plot, revealing characters' motives and connecting personal and collective histories through patterns of images of the colonizer and colonized. Thus, nightmare is a quintessence of technique for redefining imperial histories.

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**Keywords:** Nightmare, History, Colonialism, Psychic context.

## Introduction

Specifically, this study is bringing to the fore the prevalent device Yerima employs when he connects drama with history in relation with Nigeria's past historical characters, especially the monarchs during the era of colonialism. In highlighting and analysing Yerima's dramaturgy in plays of

colonial history, it is discovered that there is the use of nightmare to portray the historical conflicts in the plays and to celebrate the historical heroes as well. It is imperative to know that through nightmare, Yerima interrogates history and he provides the distinction between the unconscious and conscious minds of the character. As such, he privileges the psychic context or mindset of the character over the historical content. The plays we shall examine are Ahmed Yerima's *The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen* and *Ameh Oboni the Great*. The intention of the playwright to rejuvenate, regenerate and redefine historical characters in these plays is in line with Adesina's (2012:4) view that sees history as the total "embodiment of humanistic studies that piercingly look into the global and contemporary spread of ideas and culture..., interpenetration of values and a host of others". The ideas, culture and value Ahmed Yerima drives home in these plays are manifested in the passionate treatments and presentations of the historical sources and characters in the texts, using the aesthetics of nightmare. The nightmare becomes the veritable aesthetic technique that will make the sources and characters fit into the world of comparative literature.

The literary world contains countless references to the topic of dreams (unconscious states of human minds in general). Subtle differences exist in the treatment of dreams and their patterns in dramatic literature from author to author and society to society. Our analysis of nightmare as a pattern of dream will serve as a useful means to explore nightmare separately. Dreams are successions of images, ideas, emotions and sensations that occur involuntarily in the mind during stages of sleep. (Grunebaum, 2000:146). In the same vein, Adeboye (2010:8) defines dreams as a series of mental images and emotions occurring during sleep that are likely to dictate the dreamer's life. From Grunebaum and Adeboye's views, dreams appear to be caused by external powers of the supernatural since they occur when man is asleep and unconscious. There are various patterns of dream such as trance, daydream, hallucination, nightmare, etc. But the use of nightmare shall be our focus. The exploration of nightmare and Yerima's dramatic talent in this work will be influenced by Psychoanalysis as the theoretical framework.

## **The Aesthetic of Nightmare**

More often than not, dreams were thought to influence the actions of the living or to foreshadow events (Weldhorn, 1988). Nightmares are more aligned to this view than other forms of dream. Also, Herodotus, the fifth century B.C Greek historian, believed that nightmares carry more prophetic messages than other forms of dreams because he believed that nightmares simply reflected and represented the walking thoughts and concerns of the dreamers. Thus, Herodotus' way of understanding nightmares and dreams in general suggests that they can be seen as mirrors of reality (Tiemey, 2010).

According to Veldfelt (1999), a nightmare is an unpleasant or frightening dream that can cause a strong negative emotional response from the mind, typically fear and horror, but also despair, anxiety and great sadness (78). Nightmare may contain situations of danger, discomfort and psychological or physical terror, Sufferers of nightmare usually awaken in a state of distress and may be unable to return to sleep for a prolonged period of time. The usual result of nightmare is creation of emotions in the mind of the dreamers consciously when he or she wakes up from the sleep. These emotions occur as anger, fear, anxiety and so on. These emotions will be examined in the character of Oba Ovonramwen. There are nightmares he has on different occasions where various images, characters and horrible events similar to those of real life surface. The symbolic creations in the nightmare accentuate or propel his reasoning attitudes and the subsequent actions and inactions in real life.

From the summary of the play, we learn that the culture of the Benin people forbids the Oba from receiving strangers during the Ague festivals. It was during this period that Consul Philips and his men proceeded to Benin to discuss business with the king. The Oba's emissaries met them and advised them to come another time since it was glaring that the Oba would not see them because it is a taboo for the king to do so. They, however, ignored the advice and advanced to the city. That led to their misfortune. Benin warriors attacked them and, in the process, Consul Phillips and six other Europeans in the delegation lost their lives. In reprisal, the British government invaded Benin Empire, looted and burned it down. Oba Ovonramwen was dethroned and exiled.

Prior to the sacred celebration of Ague festival that forbids the Oba to receive strangers, he has a nightmare. The message in the dream is for the Oba to take absolute caution when dealing with the whitemen. In his conscious mind, the Oba, through the stories he hears from his grandfather and father has been acquainted with the fact that whitemen are only interested in the booming economy of Benin to study everything the Benin people had, which could yield them both political and economic gains. The Oba is now highly disturbed to realise that it is during his reign that the

whites have come to take what they had eyed and seen during the reign of his ancestors. When he has a dream where his father is heralding a message of caution, he feels bad because he does not know the very area in which to take caution, whether to allow the continuation of the Ague festival by disallowing the whites from entering Benin or to discontinue the festival by allowing the whites to come in. He narrates his dreams:

...if only I had finished the dream. Two nights ago, in my moments of light sleep. I beheld the spirit of my great father before me, three times he called my name and three times did I answer. Idugbowa, he said, no matter how experienced the woman is at peeling onions every new one brings her to tears. Caution, he warned. Caution? About what? I asked him. In his usual unknowing smile, he turned his back and walked away into the mist of the night. (37).

The dream becomes a nightmare because it has created in the mind of the Oba anxiety, anger and fear. As it has been said earlier that nightmare helps the dreamer to interrogate thoughts, Oba Ovonoramwen becomes pensive and he decides to receive the whites. This sudden change and fly in the face of the sacred Ague festival causes consternation to Uwangué and other Benin chiefs because no Oba has ever done such a sacrilegious act during the sacred Ague festival. Yerima employs this machinery of dream to show the distinction between illusion and reality propelled by fierce internal discrepancy and struggle between symbolic creations and messages in dream (unconscious mind) and actual manifestations in consciousness.

To heed his father's message in his nightmare, he must be double-minded by attempting to placate the chief priest and other prominent personages in the celebration of Ague festival and to reason with the exigency orchestrated by the impending visit of the whites. So, he finds himself in a predicament, as this is evident in his words captured below:

My back scratches me and all my friends offer to help me scratch it, they even tell me how to scratch it but no one knows the spot. No one even asks me how the pain goes. No one! Ologbose, no harm must come to the whitemen. I repeat, no harm! Eyebokan shall take you there. Tell them that I will see them but only for some hours. No more. Bring them in the dark through Urho'kperé. (*The Trials*; 38).

With careful perusal of the state of mind of the Oba and the consequent command, it will be seen that there is a great anaphoric reference to the nightmare he has. To a large extent, Yerima privileges the psychic context or the mind's reflection of the Oba over the historical situation in the text, which is the inhuman subjugation and forceful exploitation of Africans by the British colonialists who feigned to be friends with African leaders

whereas they are economic vampires and looters. Another remarkable thing about the above nightmare is that it serves as the meeting point of the supernatural and the natural world. It means a process of receiving a divine message or vision concerning what is about to come. The image he (Oba) sees in the nightmare is his late father and he represents a supernatural being and an ancestor that visits his living son to acquaint him with what will befall his reign in future. This, therefore, plays a central role in the mind of Oba Ovoramwen to meet the pressing socio-political needs of his kingdom during wakefulness. It is, therefore, possible to say that Yerima projects nightmare in the above usage to provide the king with emotional preparation for solving problems that will emerge when he wakes up from the dream. The nightmare encourages him to receive the whites and to discontinue the Ague festival not minding the cultural implication of it. As the Oba hearkens to the advice of caution, he believes that the motive of the visit of the whites is Trade Treaty and he prepares to handle them diplomatically to avoid war. He observes that “whiteman’s ways are different. If we do not want war, then let us treat them with care, giving them no reasons to stay in Bini” (*The Trial*; 38). The message which the Oba receives, “caution”, has precipitated him to welcome the stranger at the expense of his culture. By this action, the seemingly historic entry of the whites is portrayed by Yerima as less historic in the play but the psychological stimulus and responses of the king to the historical situation is prioritised because he has received a premonition message as a nightmare concerning it.

As astute as his reaction to this cultural conflict looks like, it is doused with the repulsive feeling of his chiefs who betrayed the Oba by killing the white delegates as result of cultural nationalism by some of the chiefs, like Ologbose, Ugiagbe and Obaradesegbon; and intrigues by some chiefs, like Uso and Obakhavbaye.

It is highly interesting that while the king is waiting for the arrival of the white delegates he begins to have a strong misgiving about the safe arrival of the whites. At this juncture, he narrates the burden in his heart, which is the recalling of the nightmares he has been having:

For seven days now have I continued to have the same nightmare. What is it that can disturb my father, Adolo so? He sleeps little these days.

Tonight, same time as the past six days, he came into my sleep, with all my great fathers before me. All Obas before me, all in their royal funeral robes. In one single file they stood. In one single. Heads bent. As I walked past them trying to catch the eyes of each one, they turned away. Adolo, my father turned last. Not one word. And then came the little slave boys with a calabash handed them by my chiefs. It was

too dark to see their faces as the chiefs stood in the shadow behind my ancestors (pause). The boys came close to me, and as I turned to ask them what they carried, they threw the content of the bowl at me. Behold (Agitated) it was blood! What evil thoughts do the chiefs have for me? Some of them plotted the death of my chief adviser ....But this worrisome dream, this bowl of blood. Whose blood? (*The Trials*; 42-43)

This recurring nightmare, as it is narrated, has depicted the poignant and turbulent nature of the Oba's mind. It has heralded a strong message of an impending crisis and uproar that may not abate. In view of the message in the nightmare, its symbolic creation of bloodbath and the intrigues and self centredness of some of his chiefs, the historical situation and predicament have been unveiled. Yerima has used the nightmare to redefine history. He (Yerima) has successfully presented dream as part of the history to unfold the events of colonialism. This is so because the reoccurrence of this nightmare for seven consecutive days is a sign of its inevitable fulfilment. Yerima portrays this nightmare to serve as technique of foreshadowing and flashback to the physical and psychological conflicts in the play. As Jung posits (1969:41), recurring dreams show up repeatedly to demand attention suggests that the dreamer is neglecting an issue related to the dream. Jung here is of the opinion that many of the symbols or images like the procession of Oba Ovonramwen fore-fathers in their funeral robes, their silence and the bloodbath from nightmare return with each reoccurrence to demand serious and critical attention. So, when the king wakes up from sleep, he becomes agitated. He wants to know more about the bowl of blood and whose blood. The agitation, either physical or psychological to know more about the likely interpretation of the symbolic creation in the nightmare brings integration of thoughts to the king.

However, Yerima artistically also employs nightmare from another dreamer, a character called Uzazkpo, the court jester, as a technique of flashback to awake the memory of the Oba concerning the internal conflicts and intrigue in the land. This simultaneously acts as a solace or answer to the king's agitation about the bloodbath in his nightmare. The technique of nightmare needs to be appreciated artistically because the playwright uses it to clear the coast of historical time, space and conflict by dwelling intensively on the mind of an African king during the period of culture contact. After the nightmare of Oba Ovonramwen, in his wakefulness, he hysterically asks, "but this worrisome dream, this bowl of blood. Whose blood? (43). Uzazakpo answers unconsciously from sleep, "Mine! (*The Trials*, 43). This is somewhat funny. Nightmare counters nightmare! Yerima portrays nightmare here as a revelation that can uncover and help to resolve emotional, physical and socio-political problems and fears. Uzazakpo's

nightmare brings back to the Oba's mind an event of the past that is so vital to the present prevailing situation in the text. Uzazakpo narrates his nightmare:

As I was about to eat the food, you gave me in my dream, some chiefs came in and ordered me out. You them asked one of them to go and ask that I be given more soup since the eunuchs have banned me from the kitchen. But instead he took me out to where three slave boys had been waiting with a calabash bowl of red milk for you and ordered them to take me to the pit and cut off my head. As they tied my legs and feet, I saw the face of the ghost of Thompson laughing (44-45).

As nightmares are used to integrate the thought of the dreamer (Hartmann, 1995:215) this Uzazakpo's nightmare propels the Oba to ask for the identity of Thompson who laughs in Uzazakpo's dream. Surprisingly, this reveals a past remarkable killing in the land before the advent of the whites and the consequent prediction of the victim of the killing shortly before his death. Thompson, says, "the whitemen were coming to fight and conquer Bini and the rest of the empire (45). The literary significance of these nightmares is that the playwright uses dream motif to develop his fictional characters and their characterisation. He (the playwright) uses nightmare to expose the pangs of colonialism and present the distinctions between the conscious and unconscious mind to reveal and tackle the problems and fears of human existence. Apart from the revelation of the past through Thompson's laughter, Uzazakpo's further narration of his nightmare reveals shocking message about the present and imminent situation in the land:

As Thompson Oyibodudu laughed, seven other white ghosts smiled nodding like red-necked lizards, giving approval that they behead me. All this trouble, all for a bowl of food. (*The Trials*, 45).

The seven white ghosts who smiled and approved the killing of Uzazkpo in the nightmare are the seven white delegates that the chiefs murdered and the colonial Lord is angry about it. Hence, he is seeking reprisal. The revenge from the white colonialists leads to the great massacre in Benin, which is symbolised by the bowl of blood in Oba Ovonramwen's nightmare.

Yerima has successfully used nightmare with crystal message of caution to redefine the history of Benin kingdom under the kingship of Oba Ovonramwen. It is through nightmare that he breaks the tradition of the sacred Ague festival in an attempt to be cautious in alignment with the message in the dream; Yerima does this to privilege reason and personal

psychological reflections above communal interest. This heroic deed by the king is worthy of emulation by the present democratic leaders in the contemporary society like Nigeria. In Nigeria, there is a lot of over-reliance on bureaucratic policies in the public service, delay of justice as a result of over devotion on frivolous judicial processes. Laudable projects cannot be implemented because of one bureaucratic rule or the other while workers and the masses are denied promotions and progress as a result of red tapism. To press forward and progress with these unchecked dragons, the leaders must be daring like Oba Ovonramwen in this context.

It is a pity that in spite of the seemingly lucid and eventful actions of the king, he psychologically and physically suffers set back as a result of clash of interests, self-centredness and intrigues displayed by some of his chiefs. But the tragedy that befalls his personality and the entire community is no longer a shocking one because it has been revealed to him covertly in his nightmare in the above analysis. Thus, Yerima artistically adopts nightmare to develop the plot structure of the play, the hero (protagonist) psychologically and physically and to annex other dramatic elements that emerged in the play such as flashback and foreshadowing. Another great influence of the nightmare is that it subsumes and highlights the extent of human acrimony and intrigue on one another.

In *Ameh Oboni*, Attah Ameh Oboni has a nightmare continuously for seven good days. In the nightmare, his life is in danger as he escapes from one predicament to another. He stumbles on a “white pebble” that further heightens his predicament. The “white pebble” symbolically refers to a white stranger which means colonial power. This suggests that a super domineering force is imminent to take away or weaken his domain and kingdom if appropriate caution is not applied. The recurring nature of the nightmare demands attention as Jung (2002:14) opines that recurring dreams are suggesting that the dreamer is neglecting an issue related to the dream. The nightmare shows a poignant encounter of Attah Ameh Oboni who stumbles on a “white pebble” and he finds it difficult to rise up (*Ameh Oboni*, 16). He becomes anxious, fearful and sad when he wakes up from the sleep. He, thereafter, resolves in his mind to embark on practical issues that will ensure the non-fulfilment of the nightmare. He acts quickly and cautiously. He consults the oracle, “My heart is full of worry...I ... ask the gods (*Ameh Oboni*, 17).

The use of nightmare here as a stylistic technique to develop the plot structure of the play tallies with Kennedy and Gioia’s (1995) view of dream as a story or thing whose actions implicitly symbolise some profound truths about human or natural existence (808). This nightmare symbolically enacts some deep truths about the nature of Ameh Oboni’s kingdom, his desires and wishes. The dream occurs at the time the white colonialists and local



Islamists were making attempt to creep into the socio-political and religious existence of Igala people. Subsequently, the king becomes troubled in his dream until he stumbles on a white pebble and it becomes difficult for him to rise. The deep truth about his desire is to have absolute control on his subjects and kingdom, which was paramount before this frightening dream. His wishes now are how to prevent the fulfilment of what appears or surfaces in his dream. When this is observed psychologically and literarily, the playwright has portrayed the inner mind of the protagonist to unfold the plot development of the play. He (Playwright) works on the mind of the character more than the historical situation in the text. Attah Ameh Oboni becomes restless, fearful, sad and inquisitive. He wants to know about his destiny and what to do to lessen his psychological turbulence.

As part of practical actions to maintain his domineering prowess, he summons series of meetings with the palace chiefs and priests. Thus, the nightmare becomes an action-determinant to the protagonist as this is seen as Attah Ameh Oboni narrates his ordeal:

A dream, Ohiaga, One that drives fear into my soul. A dream repeated for seven days at the same time and same place is no longer a dream but a message. Speak to the gods, Ohiaga... Speak (17).

From this excerpt, Ameh Oboni sees the nightmare as a mirror of reality. The frightening images he (Ameh Oboni) encounters in his sleep have metamorphosed crystally and metaphorically to patterns of emotional expectation. An urgency of action is required to avert the possibility or similitude of the fulfilment of the nightmare. The emotional expectations have overtly brought out the development of both inner or mental and physical struggles of the protagonist in order to maintain his kingdom. It is then clear that Yerima employs nightmare as a literary technique to develop the plot structure of the play.

When consulting the Ifa priest, Ohiaga, Ameh Oboni pours out all the detail of the nightmare:

First, it starts with the twinkle of a star, it shines and then it dims into total darkness, as if one blows out the oil lantern. (Pause thoughtfully). The stench of the person's breath reminds me of someone... His lips are curved as ours are, when we curve it to blow sometimes, he murmurs in our language in deep breath. He says "out with your life, out! And then chuckles as his face blends with the darkness... Out of the darkness come three images drenched in blood running. Ami, Onede and mine Ami... that was the name I called my mother who gave me life as man. Onede.... My mother who

gave me life as a king... Onede. She reversed the role, with a sharp knife she chased me (*Ameh Oboni*, 17-18).

In actuality, according to the tradition of Ameh Oboni Kingdom, Ami and Onede are to be his spiritual and physical guardians. Their appearance and actions of attempting to murder him in the dream make him to be more worried and heighten his mental aloofness to other happenings in his society. Nothing matters to him again except anything that can allay his fear concerning the dream. He continues the narration of the nightmare:

That is what frightens me. There she was calling my name. (As if in trance) "Ameh, come... come here and die," she screamed. My mother, Ami, also screamed... "run, son... run" . as all three of us ran Ami fell. For one second I looked back and saw her trampled upon by the royal horse. I kept on running. At this time my tongue struck out dry, my tongue stuck out dry, my eyes bulging and from a distance I could hear the chiefs cry out..... grab him .... Kill him.....strangle him.

I ran until I got to the gates of Ojaina.....

With one force, I yanked the gates open and ran in.

There... there was a bright light shining. I ran towards the light, not knowing how Onede had come. I ran until I stopped with a jolt, as the bright light shining shone, it became a white masquerade, with a broken hand. The other hand held a piece of cloth from my Okogbo... as I stood rooted in shock in front of the white masquerade, I felt the cold tip of Onede's knife behind my back. In one swift movement, the white masquerade gave the piece of cloth to Onede who tied it round my neck. As I died slowly, I heard my mother's voice...."call your people.....call your people....." she spoke softly.....with my last breath I did...but no one answered. (18-19)

From the symbolic creations in the nightmare, African characters like Ami and Onede represent the Igala people who once adored, respected and worshipped their monarch, Attah Ameh Oboni, but surprisingly in the dream they become hostile to the king because of the presence of the demi-god, the white masquerade. The nightmare has already preached the message of colonialism, disintegration and disharmony. The nightmare also reveals the instrument the colonialists used to have easy access into the hearts of the African, which is betrayal or disloyalty. This nightmare, indeed, has been used to unfold both the thematic message and the development of the plot structure. The playwright has artistically invented nightmare to provide avenue for insights to the arrangement of events in the play and the

development of the protagonist's character. The frightening images in the dreams make both the audience and the protagonist to have the premonition of the likely disintegration and conquest of Igala land by the British imperialist.

Earlier on in this study, we see nightmare as thought integrator in *The Trials*. Similarly, in *Ameh Oboni*, it helps the protagonist to integrate his thoughts. He becomes reflective on how to avoid the message and symbols of the nightmare. Then, he resolves to assert himself and this artistically results in the complication of the plot. The self-assertion comes in his firm refusal to accept British or foreign culture in his kingdom. He makes sure that the indirect rule system of J.D Muffet meets with little or no success in Igala land. The use of nightmare in *Ameh Oboni* shows the depth of artistic creation in the characterisation of the dramatis personae through the use of fears and anxieties from the conscious and unconscious human activities. It also shows how Yerima's fictional characters are developed artistically from the past historical world to view human action within the purview of fate and reality. Human beings are always anxious about the future, especially when there is a premonition about the future either through dreams like *Ameh Oboni's*, prophecy or any other unconscious revelations.

The memory of his nightmare provokes him to dare the order of the white man and it strengthens him to maintain his pride and dignity as Attah (king) of Igala people. The colonial administrator, J.D. Muffet, sends a message to him, which forbids Attah from entering Igala land. He replies the message thus:

I am Ogwu Kumaja lagba ki lubi wa jene. Tell your master: Ameh Oboni the Attah of Igala does not cower before the enemy. I am the expected war of the east who surprises his enemies by appearing in the west. I am the big masquerade who dances in step with the gods. He is the white man, but the Attah is the god of his people. Whether I am there or not, the Attah is the Attah. There is no need to concentrate on fighting the smoke, when the big fire rages. Tell your master that tomorrow I shall be in Idah greater than I left. Tell him that I am the Attah, and my people know that too. Go! (54)

This brave and courageous reply emanates from the memory of his nightmare. In the nightmare he dies helplessly, slowly and cowardly. And when actual event in his wakefulness tends to move closely towards the manifestation or fulfilment of the dream, that is, it becomes a certainty that his kingdom is about to be taken away from him, he braces up to rise to the occasion. He needs to behave gallantly to arouse his god-like nature. To him, even if the end is coming, he must be courageous and valiant. The present imbroglio and power tussle between him and J.D. Muffet and the

nightmare make him to be more conscious of his status as an Attah and the accolades and praises attached to the position, as his people usually praise him in the following words:

Ameh Oboni is a god... blessed by Odoba....

Ameh Oboni is a spirit; he flies both day and night

The greatest Attah of them all

Ameh O. Oboni... the great messiah of Igala land (33).

However, when it appears that the British encroachment is inevitable, he commits suicide as the only option left to ensure the non-fulfilment of his nightmare and to avoid humiliation from foreigners and disloyal members of his kingdom. Nightmare is used by the playwright as psychotherapy. All the emotions and desires to resist the white men in order to have full or absolute control of his kingdom fail in the end. And this is the exact picture and message in the dream.

The nightmare as a stylistic device in *Ameh Oboni* becomes a pervasive and essential component of the collective memories of the society. The dream becomes part of the history of the society which shrouded the remarkable realities of the past historical characters like Attah Ameh Oboni. His nightmare is ultimately an expression that reflects the norms and ideals of the time and location in which it is created. In this sense, nightmare becomes a stylistic evolution of history in drama. This is logical because the essence of history is to integrate thoughts and propel good ideas and ideals into the contemporary world. The essence of dream is the same in this context, as this can be overtly seen in Attah Ameh Oboni whose nightmare becomes a compass to all his directions in the play. When the revelations signified in Attah Ameh Oboni's dream are eventually fulfilled, his subsequent action of suicide becomes historic. Therefore, nightmare has become part of the societal history, which re-enacts and rejuvenates past realities. It is therefore suffice to say that Yerima employs nightmare to redefine history and for the development of characters in Ameh Oboni.

## Conclusion

This paper submits that Ahmed Yerima handles nightmare artistically in the two historical plays to produce a form of psycho-historical drama in African dramatic literature as a new sub-genre. It can be seen that a psychic context is identified in the plays at the expense of social and historical contexts. The psycho-historical plays in this study show the hybrid or marriage between psychology, history and drama.

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