Intertextual Relations of War and Women in Greek and Nigerian Drama

By

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Abstract

War and women are recurrent twin motifs that cut across classical and postcolonial drama. They are often deployed by playwrights to question power, trauma, and resistance. Their interaction underscores the principles of intertextuality and calls for a comparative investigation into how these themes are treated in Greek and Yoruba dramatic traditions. While many texts have historically valorized war and its heroes, this study examines three plays that present a counter-perspective: Euripides' *The Trojan Women*, Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu*, and Wole Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialists*. Euripides and Osofisan reject the so-called "logic of war" that justifies the dehumanization of women and children, while Soyinka pushes this critique to a cynical extreme—proposing cannibalism as the grotesque culmination of war's brutality. Through intertextual analysis grounded in Julia Kristeva's concept of the "ideologeme," this paper reveals a fluid network of meanings that traverse race, ideology, culture, language, and history. These texts, though varied in form and context, are ideologically opposed to war in their portrayal of women as central figures in the aftermath of conflict.

Keywords: War, women, intertextuality, Greek drama, Yoruba drama, ideologeme

Introduction

This paper investigates the intertextual relation and ideological response to war and women in *The Trojan Women* by Euripides, *Women of Owu* by Femi Osofisan. and *Madmen and Specialists* by Wole Soyinka. The Trojan Women is a classical Greek drama that has its thematic focus on the devastating effect of war on women. Correspondingly, *Women of Owu*, a most incisive Yoruba adaptation of *The Trojan Women*, also registers some deep concern about war and the post-war trauma of women. Though *Madmen and Specialists* does not share direct intertextual ties with the other plays, their thematic extremity offers a critical lens through which the logic of war is pushed to its nihilistic conclusion.

At once, an evil and a "catalyst" for human development, the phenomenon of war etches haunting memories of pains and gains on human history and civilisation. Consequently, women are perpetually at the receiving end of the ever-lingering pains and sorrows of war. Women, particularly, play the crucial role of waiting for husbands and sons who never come

back. The repeated absorption of, and allusion to, the theme of war and women in various dramatic texts nurtured from identical or similar literary, historical, or cultural sources is suggestive of probable instances of plagiarism. However, the cultural and literary parallels in two of the texts are explained in Osofisan's response to Olasope's tricky question on the proximity of literary adaptations to plagiarism. Olasope explains Osofisan's response thus:

> ... the plenitude of the storied universe is actually seeded from, and nurtured by, a creative recycling of a limited stock of motifs. This reveals some of the underlying political assumptions of his dramatic practice, and it also implies that modern copyright and authorial attributions are functions, or reflections of the capitalist system, which is corrupt, acquisitive, and self-serving. (x)

Osofisan's "creative recycling of limited stock of motifs ..." is, on its own, a creative choice of expression that best validates the similarities in the plot and structure of the two plays without getting accused of plagiarism. The absorption, allusions, and transformations of war/women leitmotifs constitute the thin line between originality and plagiarism.

Writings and other various forms of documentations on war have kept track of the details and horrific impact of war in its various scales and shapes. These writings include novels, biographies, plays, memoirs, histories, films, and other kinds of documentation. Stories, artifacts, and fossils of war and women are equally conserved in oral forms through festivals and ceremonies.

It is apparent that war and women have dominated many texts, and in the process, produced many classics with stories, plots, and literary forms that have quite frequently taken the centrestage in different kinds of documentations. It is therefore very easy to encounter different bits and chunks of other writings within a single writing.

This makes the principles of intertextuality a suitable conceptual framework for this enquiry. The tenets of intertextuality will therefore guide us to determine the interrelations of the texts that have been selected for this enquiry. From such intertextual analysis, the individual character of each of the texts and their authorial perspectives on war and women are highlighted and explored. The nature of this investigation places our enquiry within the purview of intertextuality, which necessitates the need to explore its inner workings.

What is Intertextuality?

Intertextuality, according to Julia Kristeva, is premised on the notion that no text exists in isolation and that literary works are influenced by, and respond to, earlier or current texts. Kristeva's idea draws strength from the dialogic theory of Mikhail Bakhtin, which posits that meaning is created through a network of relationships between texts. These thoughts of Julia Kristeva on intertextuality are echoed by M.H. Abrams as he expounds that:

> Intertextuality is a creative means which is used to signify the multiple ways in which any one literary text is in fact made up of other texts, by means of its open or covert citations and allusions, its repetitions and transformations of the formal and substantive features of earlier texts … (Abrams 2005, 325)

Coming from a post-structuralist background, Julia Kristeva emerged to challenge structuralism on the premise that meaning is fluid and shaped by power dynamics rather than fixed structures**.** Allen Graham (2011) observes that, "The term intertextuality was initially employed by post-structuralist theorists and critics in their attempt to disrupt notions of stable meaning and objective interpretation" (3). With scholars like Jacques Derrida**,** Michel Foucault**,** and Julia Kristeva, language and culture have been discovered not to have fixed meanings. The core of post-structuralism, therefore, is deconstruction, power and discourse, and intertextuality.

In intertextuality**,** Kristeva expressed the idea that the meanings of texts are derived from their relationship with other texts. She argues that literary works do not exist in isolation and pushes further that, every text is a mosaic of quotations, shaped by prior cultural, historical, and linguistic structures. According to her, "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 66). This intertextual framework enhances the way themes like war and women repeatedly and strongly assert their presence in dramatic traditions—from *The Trojan Women* of Euripides to Osofisan's *Women of Owu*, and even Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialists*. Beyond intertextual borrowings, we ask to what extent texts can be interconnected across cultures, climes, and time.

Kristeva drew her inspiration from Bakhtin, who, according to her, "was one of the first to replace the static hewing out of texts with a model where literary structure does not simply exist but is generated in relation to another structure"(64-65). It is to be understood that the literary word, an intertext, provides the interface for a stream of meanings to flow into or from another text. But there is the question of what happens to the body of texts while undergoing the process of flowing in different directions, as certain changes are bound to take place.

Kristeva, in her seminal essay, '"Word, Dialogue and Novel", had keenly observed Bakhtin's conception of the "literary word" as an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee (or the character), and the contemporary or earlier cultural context. Bakhtin, she argues, had introduced the status of the word as a minimal structural unit, to situate the text within history and society. These are considered texts read by the writer. The writer then assimilates and rewrites the texts, according to Kristeva. This way, Kristeva avers that diachrony transits into synchrony, thereby allowing linear history to appear as an abstraction. She sums this up by saying that, "The only way a writer can participate in history is by transgressing this abstraction through a process of reading-writing; that is, through the practice of a signifying structure in relation or opposition to another structure." (65)

In this respect, the two main literary words, war and women, are primarily interrogated on the platform of the plays under study as intertexts, which Kristeva labelled as "Ideologeme", that is, the minimum structural unit that the writer has to deploy. "The ideologeme of a text", according to Elmo Raj, "is the centre where the comprehending rationality grapples the alteration of utterances in which the text becomes a totality encompassing the historical and social text" (78).

Kristeva, however, avers that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double" (Kristeva 66). It is this process of absorption and allusion from many interwoven sources that we intend to explore in the theme of war and women in selected Greek and African drama. Relying on the principles of intertextuality, it is believed that a thorough investigation of selected plays might reveal a most complex network of interrelated texts.

This paper is interested in the repetitions, absorptions, transformations, and allusions that characterize, influence, and dominate the textual contents of the selected Greek and African plays. A review of Kristeva's works by Elmo Raj emphatically asserts that authors are not original and do not create anything from original minds. According to Elmo Raj, they merely compile from existing texts (78). While the above might be true, it is also incontrovertible that individual authors are equally influenced by their own imaginations and some other factors that eventually alter their social, cultural or ideological perspectives away from the original texts they may have borrowed from.

A simple way of wrapping up Kristeva's concept of intertextuality is to understand that meanings are not static. They flow from one text to another, and in the process, they help to define the relationships between texts. What this reiterates is that texts do not exist in isolation. In essence, each single text owes its existence to other texts. At every textual instance, there will always be a current text that connects with at least a precursor text. In each of these texts, the literary word stands out as the intertext that provides the interface for a stream of meanings to flow into or from another text. While this process goes on, the myth of originality is broken, hence the general claim that no text is original.

I am using this essay to posit that *The Trojan Women, Women of Owu,* and *Madmen and Specialists* have engaged intertextual and ideological strategies to query the logic of war, foregrounding the post-war trauma of women, societal guilt, and the cruel abuse of humanity across classical, postcolonial, and absurdist contexts.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative method, framed within Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality, which posits that no text exists in isolation but is instead constituted through the absorption and transformation of other texts. Intertextuality, as conceptualized by Kristeva under the influence of Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism, provides a lens through which literary texts are understood as dynamic sites of cultural and ideological exchange.

The analysis focuses on Euripides' *The Trojan Women* as the precursor text and Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu* as its African adaptation, commissioned by Theatre Chipping Norton. This choice of *Women of Owu* is intentional, being a direct rewriting of *The Trojan Women, a* Greek tragedy, transposed into the historical and cultural context of the early 19th-century Owu war. The adaptation enables a dialogic engagement with themes of war, gender, and resistance, making it an ideal case for intertextual analysis.

The study identifies narrative parallels (plot structure, characterisation, leitmotifs) and situates the texts within their respective historical, cultural, and political milieu—Ancient Greece and postcolonial Nigeria. This is followed by a comparative exploration of how each play treats the issues of war, women, communal trauma, and moral accountability.

On a general note, primary texts are examined through close reading and are supported by relevant secondary literature in classical studies, African drama, postcolonial theory, and feminist criticism. This methodological framework allows for a nuanced understanding of how intertextuality facilitates cross-cultural literary and political engagement.

Historical and Cultural Contexts of *The Trojan Women* and *Women of Owu*

The Trojan Women: The War, the Women, and Patriarchy

Produced along with *Alexandros, Palamedes,* and *Sisyphos (the satyr play), The Trojan Women* was the third of the Euripidean tetralogy produced for the City Dionysia in the Spring of 415 BC in Athens, and it won the second prize (Vaughan 2019). The notion that texts do not exist in isolation proves valid in the historical background of Euripides' *The Trojan Women*. While it is the source text for *Women of Owu*, it is also a successive text to Homer's *Iliad,* which itself had sourced its textual content and form from the oral tradition of ancient Greece, centuries before Euripides came to the scene. Euripides's drama begins to unfold immediately after the crushing defeat of the city of Troy at the hands of the Achaeans, represented by the allied armies of Sparta, Athens, Ithaca, and Mycenae under the command of Agamemnon. With Troy smoldering and already in ruins, what remains of it are its grief stricken women: Hecuba (the widowed Trojan queen), Cassandra (Hecuba's daughter and the possessed priestess of Athena), Andromache (Hector's widow), Helen (the Spartan queen of lust who eloped with Paris to Troy) and the Chorus of Trojan women dominate the drama in successive sessions of mourning, lamentation and an exposition of the tragic details of the war. These sessions are punctuated by the interruptions of Talthybius and Menelaus, who intermittently deal the final blows of defeat. The climax is the brutal killing of young Astyanax, the son of Hector and Andromache. Euripides used the play to condemn in totality the inhuman treatment visited upon the women of Troy as prisoners of war.

In trying to apprehend the source material of Euripides, we need to first explore the historicity of Homer's Iliad. If, as it clearly is, Euripides sourced the content of his drama from Homer's *Iliad*, then where was Homer's source text? Is the *Iliad* fiction or history? Did Troy ever exist? Was there a Trojan war that fits into the description of Euripides? Were the characters real or imagined? Going by the accounts of David Tew and other scholars, it appears Homer's *Iliad* benefited from both mythology and history. Homer, a blind bard and a poet, was assumed to have lived on the coast of Asia Minor, where the Homer must have picked the bardic traditions around 850 and 950BC. Around 1300 BC, bardic traditions were common in Mycenaean culture, where poets accompanied warriors to preserve oral histories.

Further to this, Homer's dialect and poems identify him as an Ionian Greek, hence his presumed knowledge of the geography, history, and culture of Mycenaean Greece (Tew 7). Considering the linguistic, archaeological, and documented evidence gathered by Tew, he was able to conclude that, "… the Trojan War did actually occur; however, certain characters, such as Achilles, Hector, and Helen, have no archaeological backing to support their existence

(23). What we are able to deduce from this is that Homer himself must have got materials from oral history, mythology, and the nature around him.

On a different level, the history, frequency, and intensity of military expeditions in ancient Greece give the valid impression that the military is a noble profession in Greece. So, a perpetual state of war is an opportunity for men to prove their military skills/valour and acquire slaves for economic reasons. From this perspective, it is understandable that a distinguished dramatist like Aeschylus wanted to be remembered first and foremost as a soldier and a loyal citizen (Hamilton 9, Robinson Jr., np).

War is therefore perceived in a positive light and as a catalyst for social and economic development. So, retelling the war story of Greece before the emergence of Euripides and Aristophanes had always upheld the vocation of war as a dignified civic responsibility. Earlier accounts of the Trojan war have largely been in honour of heroes like Achilles, Agamemnon, Odysseus, and others. Even in defeat, a hero like Hector is still equally commended. The Greeks celebrate war victories and heroes without necessarily reflecting on the debilitating effect of war on women. The reason for this is not far fetched if we consider the marginalized status of women in the ancient Greek society.

In general terms, women have limited rights in Greece as they are confined to managing domestic affairs. The Greek estimation of a woman is that of an inferior being. (Aristotle 20). In echoing Aristotle's verdict on women, Worthen opines that Greek drama has repeatedly inquired into the nature of gendered behaviour and used female characters to pose some of its most challenging questions. He avers further that, in spite of the marginal status of women in the theatre and in the state, many of the plays raise critical moral, ethical, and political problems through the actions of women (Worthen 16).

Coming from such a background as described above, it is obvious that ancient Greek women are victims of patriarchal domination. The incessant wars have merely exposed the evil of patriarchal domination. However, Euripides' *The Trojan Women*, in dramatizing the annihilation of Troy, does not follow the traditional trend of applauding the heroic exploits of the soldiers/statesmen either in victory or in defeat. All the female characters in *The Trojan Women* are portrayed as victims of patriarchal oppression, including Helen. As hinted earlier, the status of women in *Women of Owu* is not any better than that of the female characters in *The Trojan Women*.

War and Women in *The Trojan Women* and *Women of Owu*

At a glance, the title of Euripides' drama suggests that women are at the epicentre of the play, but it is also apparent that the same women are submerged in the quagmire of war. "Similarly, Osofisan's title foregrounds the centrality of war and women." The intertextual resonance in *Women of Owu* is actually not only in the character of Helen, but it also extends to the scenario that sparked the Trojan war, which is identical to the war that Iyunade fanned its embers. Although Osofisan has prior knowledge of the story of Troy, *Women of Owu* relies more on the history of the Owu war, which is independent of the Greek mythology.

From another angle, however, the story of the decimation of Troy has its roots in the oral tradition and history of Greece and has been rehashed in various literary accounts. This therefore, presupposes its inter-textual relationship with the Euripidean version of *The Trojan Women*. Once again, the play is dominated by the impactful influence of war and women. Going by its structure and presentation, *The Trojan Women* is generally adjudged to be sufficiently undramatic. However, its thematic concern about war, women, and humanity cannot be ignored. The ambiguity of this claim is best represented in Richmond Lattimore's statement that, "One can hardly call *The Trojan Women* a good piece of work, but it seems nevertheless to be a great tragedy" (157). The contradiction in Lattimore's assertion can be easily spotted in his pronouncing The Trojan Women a bad piece of work and a great tragedy at once. If it is a great tragedy, then that should be enough to make it a good piece of work, which it is.

The story of Troy told by Euripides does not contradict the original as told in many versions of Greek mythology, but it condemns the inhuman treatment meted out to captives. The play was written around 415 B.C., a few weeks before the Sicilian expedition, shortly after the Athenian encounter with the Spartans that had lasted ten years and ended on a stalemate. Euripides was certainly not ignorant of the never-ending war and the tradition of killing all grown-up men and keeping/selling off the remaining captive women and children as slaves. However, the ideological perspective of Euripides denounces this nihilistic tradition of exterminating all male adults and leaving women and children destitute, and as slaves. To drive home his argument about war, Hecuba, Cassandra, Andromache, and the remnants of Trojan women are recruited by Euripides as examples of such hopeless prisoners of war. This aligns with Olakunbi Olasope's assertion that,

> Ancient Greeks promoted a warrior lifestyle that encouraged plundering and taking women as slaves, maids, and concubines. A patriarchal society where men had all the rights and women had little, and where women were subjected to the whims and caprices of men (5)

While the perspectives of earlier dramatists like Aeschylus and Sophocles might have been that of using war to celebrate valour, chivalry, and the conquest of other city-states, Euripides champions the cause of women, alongside children, who are usually the victims of any war. Through the orchestration of the rhetorical debates involving Hecuba and others, human emotion is aroused, and man's inhumanity to man is exposed and thus queried.

Greek mythology's overbearing presence is undeniable in the drama of Euripides, but the ideologically defiant stance of Euripides is unmistakable as he condemns war as a repulsive negation and debasement of humanity. The same position is adopted by Osofisan in *Women of Owu.*

Women of Owu: the Historical Background

Even though the entire story of Troy and Helen has been completely transposed from Greek soil to the Yoruba soil of the Owus, the experience is different. Osofisan came from the background of an equally devastating war in Yorubaland.

Despite being an adaptation of *The Trojan Women*, *Women of Owu* is a drama steeped in Yoruba history, culture, and tradition. Incidentally, a historic war presented itself in the early 19th century, which shared many characteristics with the Trojan War. Just like what Euripides presented based on Greek mythology and oral history, whereby the city states of Greece, like Athens, Sparta, Ithaca, and Mynecae formed a military alliance against Troy, a similar historical event occurred with the Ijebu in military alliance with Ife and the Oyo war refugees laying a seven-year siege on the city state of Owu. Although the motivation for the Trojan war is activated by Zeus, Athena, Hera, Aphrodite, and Eris, the evil goddess of discord from the Olympian heights, the Owu war was ignited purely based on human foibles and commercial exigency.

From Samuel Johnson's account, interest in the control of the commercial town of Apomu sparked off the war. Johnson reports that,"Express orders were sent from Oyo to O(w)oni of Ife and the Olowu to prevent Oyos being kidnapped and sold at Apomu, the great market town where the interior and the coast people met for trade" (243-244). Johnson's account further reports that, in carrying out a similar order from Onikoyi and Soun, Owu soldiers attacked the vassal territories of Ife and wrested full control of Apomu market from Ife. Subsequently, incensed by Owu's audacity, Ife launched an audacious attack on Owu in order to regain its control of the market town of Apomu, but was humiliated by Owu, which had superior military power and skills.

After the Ife-Owu skirmish, another clash of interests erupted between the Ijebus and Owu soldiers at the same Apomu market, whereby some Ijebu traders were killed. This was the genesis of the military alliance of Ife and Ijebu against Owu. The large number of Oyo war refugees fleeing southwards from Fulani Jihadists merely joined the alliance to get themselves engaged and sustained. In Dare Oguntomisin's account, the Oyo war refugees "... were homeless and jobless foragers and pillagers... The Owu war merely offered them a means of livelihood" (Oguntomisin 101). The Owu war and the events leading to it happened between 1810 and 1821. The war itself lasted seven years. Johnson, however, claims that the siege actually lasted five years, although it is usually reckoned as seven. Osofisan must have aligned with the seven-year version of the war in *Women of Owu, probably* because it is closer to the ten-year siege of the Trojan war as contained in Greek mythology and *The Trojan Women.*

Women of Owu, therefore, functions as an adaptation of a precursor literary text (*The Trojan Women*) and absorption of the Owu war history. The facts and casus belli of the war were completely lifted from the Owu war history. This precludes the story of Iyunade, which is an imaginative transposition of the story of Helen. However, the plots, characterisation, and flow of dialogue are a direct adaptation of Euripides' tragedy rendered in the beauty of a language rich in Yoruba dirges, idioms, lore, and mores.

So, while *The Trojan Women* is a precursor text of *Women of Owu*, it is also true that Osofisan's drama is deeply rooted in Yoruba war history. In essence, *Women of Owu* owes its originality to both *The Trojan Women and* the historical text of the Owu war. Undeniably, Osofisan owes the dramatic form, structure, and characterisation of his play to *The Trojan Women. Women of Owu* tells a familiar story of African women ensnared in a war they do not have any control over in a way that exudes their resilience and evokes sympathy. The sympathy is evoked

through an embodied deployment of soul-stirring dirges that help to describe the immense trauma the people have been thrown into. In plain terms, Osofisan subtly, but unequivocally condemns the so-called "logic of war" through a spirited rendering of the dirges rooted in the folklore of the Yoruba people of Owu.

In addition, and unlike one would find in the Euripidean version of the drama, Osofisan did not deploy the gods as an excuse to allow the destruction to be visited on Owu. In the first place, the ancestral god of Owu – Anlugbua is demystified in Osofisan's invectives for failing to protect Owu at the most crucial moment. Lawumi, his mother, is equally portrayed as a brutal and vengeful goddess not worthy of veneration. The exchange between Woman and Anlugbua (god) is as damning as it is humiliating for the god:

Woman: Seven years without rain ... of failed harvests ...
Where were you, Anlugbua?
Anlugbua: You did not send for me! ...
Woman: ... And the streets stank of disease and death.
But we never ceased
To worship you, or pour libation at your shrine!
Where were you Anlugbua? ...
Against these terrifying guns, Anlugbua,
Your people had only their blades and incantations.
Where were you Anlugbua?
Anlugbua: I ask you – without a shrine, without worshippers,
What is a god? Who now will venerate us?
Who (will) sing our praises among these ruins?
Woman: Go back to your heaven, Anlugbua,
And learn also how to cope with pain. ...
Goodbye, ancestor, we cannot help you. (7-9)

In *The Trojan Women*, the opening scene is between Poseidon and Athene, two powerful Greek god and goddess, whereby Athene plots with Poseidon yet another destruction, this time, of the Achaeans whom she had helped against the Trojans. Osofisan's opening scene between Anlugbua and Woman is original to Osofisan as he deploys the scene to throw jibes at the gods. That notwithstanding, Osofisan still does not spare the people for failing to learn from history. Owu receives her own lashes as Anlugbua speaks through Erelu in a trance that eventually, and most auspiciously, claims Erelu's life. Meanwhile, Erelu's Euripidean precursor, Hecuba, continues to live as the slave of Odysseus. Erelu, in trance, engages the chorus of Owu women:

Erelu: I cannot help you –
Chorus: Please, help us! You are our father, you cannot desert us –
Erelu: A father can only chew for a child; he cannot swallow for her.
If only you had read your history right, the lessons
Left behind by the ancestors! Each of us, how else did we go
Except by the wrath of war? Each of us,

Demolished through violence and contention! Not so?
But you chose to glorify the story with lies! Lies!
Our apotheosis as you sing it is a fraud! ...
Anlugbua: Poor human beings! War is what will destroy you! ...
I hope you will learn. Farewell. (65-67)

Granted that *Women of Owu* is an adaptation of *The Trojan Women*, a main bulk of Osofisan's borrowings is, however, from Yoruba cultural and historical texts as explained earlier. Aside from that, there is the ideological stance of Osofisan in *Women of Owu*, just like that in *The Trojan Women*, that unequivocally condemns war among humans. *Women of Owu* goes a step further to hold the people accountable for repeatedly failing to learn from history.

Still on the devastating effect of war, this enquiry moves further, but with a tilt towards Wole Soyinka, whose take on war is very cynical, both in technique and ideological perspective. His cynicism is in his cryptic *Madmen and Specialists*, a post-Civil War drama that was first published in 1971. I must quickly admit at this juncture that Soyinka's Madmen and Specialist does not have an intertextual relationship with the two plays under study; however, considering the common theme of war and its outright condemnation by Euripides and Osofisan, Soyinka takes their argument against war to the next level, an extreme one. Soyinka deployed the drama to address the thematic concern with power, corruption, violence, and military dictatorship.

In Obi Maduakor's words: "The coups and counter-coups entrenched military dictatorship in Nigeria after the country had endured a civil war ... the period of military dictatorship and the civil war will always remain Nigeria's darkest moments" (220).

In *Madmen and Specialists*, Soyinka presents Dr. Bero, a medical practitioner during the war, in his nihilistic worldview, having joined the military intelligence service and lost his humanity to his wartime experience. The major challenge he faces is the Old Man, his father, who confronts his nihilism. Old Man is a rehabilitation officer in one of the convalescent clinics managed by his son, Dr. Bero. Old Man is, however, discovered to have been indoctrinating the war casualties in his charge with subversive ideas. He tells the mendicants they are victims of a senseless war. Old Man further suggests that cannibalism be legalized since the war has caused too much massacre and is a senseless waste of human life.

Priest: It can't be, he shouted. And then, he leapt up and said – right out of
the blue – We've got to legalize cannibalism. (Soyinka 239)

The underlying cynical message of Soyinka is that if humans could so wantonly and mindlessly kill fellow humans in the name of war, they might as well eat the flesh of their war victims. "This", according to Maduakor, "is the beginning of the Old Man's philosophy of 'As', with one precept that human flesh should be eaten. According to "As", war brutalises the human soul (222). Retrospectively, Old Man's cynical recommendation of cannibalism is an abstraction of the actualization of that brutality in *The Trojan Women*, when the fragile frame of young Astyanax is "dashed without pity from the walls, and borne by Danaans, who murdered him" (207). Also, in Osofisan's *Women of Owu*, the head of young Aderogun is

smashed against an araba tree under the guise of "the logic of war". Old Man's proposition of cannibalism, therefore, provides the missing link in the so-called logic of war. Cannibalism, as cynically suggested by Soyinka, connects the brutal dots of the logic of war that has for so long traumatised humanity. Cannibalism completes the cycle of man's inhumanity to man.

Conclusion

To be deduced from the texts cited above is a steady fluidity of meanings meandering through texts to produce a complex of meanings, varied but unified. Each of the texts has been found to interconnect with one, two or more texts, thereby evolving into a huge cluster or network of interrelated texts crossing the boundaries of race, ideology, cultures, language, time and history.

There is hardly any text in the cluster that is not interrelated with one, two or more texts outside the cluster. The intertextuality of the network of texts as explained above is organic because of its capacity to grow and become enormously bigger with other war plays like *Lysistrata*, *Aikin Mata*, *Kurunmi*, *Ijaye*, *Morountodun*, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, *Kinjeketile*, Macbeth and others.

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