

**Interpreting Abiodun's *The Trials of Afonja* as a Metaphor  
for Dramatic Social Change, Hubris and Didacticism:  
Perspectives on Ways of  
Mitigating Painful Impacts of Social Change**

**Emeka Aniago and Ifeanyi Ugwu \***

*Processes of change, whether emergent, transformative or projectable, are already there moving or latent, and must be read and worked with as natural processes inherent to the lives and cultures of people themselves. This kind of orientation applied respectfully and skilfully, may indeed yield the impact and sustainability that is so desperately sought. (Doug Reller)*

**Abstract:** The paper examines the didactic values embedded in *The Trials of Afonja*, a drama created through a combination of history and imaginative resourcefulness, which projects lack of foresight and progressivism as hubris as well as the key variables responsible for the socio-economic down-turn of individuals, empires and nations. Thus, these contexts form the focus of our discussion in relation to Nigeria's subsisting economy and polity restructuring debate paradox and incongruities. Hence, the researchers espouse on how social change as projected in *The Trials of Afonja* can be rationalized as the reason behind the down-turn of the enacted Oyo Empire, as well as the lessons subsumed in the play's conflicts dimensions and tragic paradigms. To elucidate on the suggested thematic purviews, the researchers apply social change theories alluding to nuances of restructuring as plausible methodological, dynamic and progressive response in attempt at accommodating and containing the realities of social change vagaries and phenomena. To discuss these theories and the study trajectories, the researchers employ interpretive analytical approaches. In the end, the study affirms the essence of unavoidable vital force of social change and the crucial importance of embracing the tenets and variables of restructuring as integral reality of life and status sustainability.

**Keywords:** didacticism, dramatic social change, history, hubris, progressivism, restructuring

---

\* Emeka Aniago; Ifeanyi Ugwu (✉)

Department of Theatre & Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria  
e-mail: emekaaniago@gmail.com (corresponding author)

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF FOCUS TEXT

Just as individuals at various periods in their life time were confronted with major or minor status and circumstance altering forces, so also are communities, nations, kingdoms and empires. Metaphorically, these turbulences are projected as ‘trials’ in the focus text, *The Trials of Afonja* authored by Toyin Abiodun<sup>1</sup>. In *The Trials of Afonja*, we are looking at how the inability of the enacted Oyo Empire<sup>2</sup> to restructure and adapt accordingly to emergent social change realities, which were at cross purposes with her constitutional provisions, resulted in major vital force that propelled an implosion which orchestrated its decline in political influence, economy and demography. Thus, the study attempts to understand whether the pivotal factor that propelled a profound social change in the play can be described as ‘dramatic social change’ in line with Roxane de la Sablonnière’s theory.

This play presents a well crafted dramatic portrayal of select highlights of travails of the Old Oyo Empire dating back to 1750’s under the leadership of Alaafin Aole, at the time Afonja, a paternal son of Ilorin, whose mother hails from Oyo was the *Aare-ona-kakanfo* (Generalissimo of Oyo Empire’s army). The play’s defining conflict emanates when Afonja loses a war with Bambara people, and returns to Oyo alive. His return goes against the subsisting Oyo Constitution which stipulates that a Chief of Army must commit suicide if he loses any war he prosecutes on behalf of Oyo Empire. On the presumption that Afonja’s return signifies victory for Oyo Empire, Oyo people

---

<sup>1</sup> Toyin Abiodun, born in 1963, is a Nigerian Playwright and a prince of the Lubokun Ruling Dynasty of Ikale land, Ondo State. He holds Bachelor of Arts (English) and Master of Arts (Literature) degrees of University of Lagos and University of Ibadan, respectively. His major plays are *Thunder in an Ancient Savannah* (1997), *The Marriage of Arike* (2010), and *The Trials of Afonja* (2012), which earned him the second runner-up position in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The Oyo Empire was a Yoruba empire that represents what is currently Western and North central Nigeria. Established in the 15th century, the Oyo Empire grew to become one of the largest West African states. It rose through the outstanding organizational and administrative skills of the Yoruba people, wealth gained from trade and its powerful cavalry. The Oyo Empire was the most politically important state in the region from the mid-17th to the late 18th century, holding sway not only over most of the other kingdoms in Yoruba land, but also over nearby African states, notably the Fon Kingdom of Dahomey in the modern Republic of Benin to the west. (Wikipedia)

cheerfully receive him with pomp and pageantry as he enters the gate of the Kingdom. However, as Afonja enters Alaafin's palace, he signals for discontinuation of the festive cheers. Subsequently, in the council chambers, where most of the Empire's elite power brokers are gathered in customary fashion, to welcome as well as hear Afonja's war exploits, Afonja unceremoniously requests that they vacate, so that he can have a closed-door meeting with Alaafin. To all present, Afonja's demand was viewed as impudent and unprecedented, thus shades of grumbling and critical opprobrium pervaded momentarily. Regardless, after Alaafin's tacitly prevailed on them for compliance, they began to leave, one after the other. Thereafter, Afonja reveals to Alaafin that he lost the war. Earnestly stunned, Alaafin gazed at Afonja in shock, whereas Afonja frantically attempts to rationalize and provide reasons why he deserves a second chance to go back to war with the Bambara with re-enforced army to wipe out the blot and blip. Clearly, Alaafin wants none of Afonja's rationalization, reasoning, and negotiation, hence he orders him to do the needful without further delay, to save Oyo Empire the shame and embarrassment as well as uphold Oyo Constitution. To this, Afonja declines. Instinctively Afonja had anticipated the position taken by Alaafin, hence he had before entering the palace, stationed his loyal army at strategic positions around the palace, which he relates to Alaafin, who clearly appears deeply wounded, out-smarted, and vulnerable. Alaafin gives up his demand for Afonja to commit suicide immediately. Afonja leaves the palace unencumbered and heads to Ilorin. The friendship and loyalty subsisting between Alaafin and Afonja now in tatters, Alaafin resorts to devious tactics of appearing reconciliatory while meaning to entrap Afonja by ordering him to destroy a town within Oyo Empire which is prohibited by an existing treaty. Afonja reads the intent of Alaafin clearly and dodges the trap. Thereafter, Alaafin's unsuccessful attempt to take Ilorin forcefully after proclaiming Afonja's actions as affront and treason instigates an insurrection which envelops Oyo Empire. This war results in tragic deaths of Alaafin, Afonja, and some of Oyo elite power brokers, as well as the fragmentation and decline of Oyo Empire's economy, political clout and status. In the end, Afonja's death comes directly from his ill-fated alliance with the migrant Fulani, who betrayed and murdered him to guarantee a complete takeover of his domain Ilorin.

Thus, this paper foregrounds its contextualization of the realities of social change 'trials' which Afonja and Alaafin encounter as vital

forces that drive socio-cultural change with the ‘theory of social change’ as espoused by a number of prominent theorists. To further illuminate our analyses sufficiently, first let us look at major perspectives on ‘social change theories’, and adaptation through restructuring.

#### REVIEW OF RELEVANT PERSPECTIVES ON ‘SOCIAL CHANGE THEORIES’

According to Robert Wuthnow, efforts of scholars to understand the ‘how’ and ‘why’ societies do not remain the same at all times, result in the fact that the study of social and “cultural change enjoys a long and venerable history in sociological theory” (Wuthnow 1992, 257). Thus, Wuthnow observes that “sociologists have been audacious enough to try to formulate vast theoretical panoramas on the basis of deductive logic and comparative inquiry” (Ibid.). Hence, it is Wuthnow’s position that “these panoramas have been based on the historical ‘facts,’ but their purposes have been as much normative as descriptive” (Ibid., 258). In line with Wuthnow’s suppositions, historical events, such as the history utilized in the focus play *The Trials of Afonja*, essentially forms the basis upon which a playwright attempts to provide didactic illumination, whereas scholars analyze history in attempt at providing plausible illumination and explanations of the dynamics of contexts of social change as consistent reality of human existence. To throw more light on the dimensions and trajectories of social change scholarship, we look at the analysis of Roxane de la Sablonnière emanating from her review of major scholarly works by scholars such as Ponsioen, 1962; Smith, 1973; Chirot and Merton, 1986; Zuck, 1997; Sztompka, 1998; Fukuyama, 1999; Weinstein, 2010; Nolan and Lenski, 2011; Greenfield, 2016, and many more, who in many ways agree that “social change is indiscriminately pervasive and global – restricted to neither developing nor western worlds” (de la Sablonnière 2017, 2). Thus, based on her review, de la Sablonnière observes that social change has always been a field of great interest for the social sciences, especially among sociologists, who inquire about what leads to social change. She notes that within the sociological literature, three main theories: ‘Evolutionary Theory’, ‘Conflict Theory’, and ‘Functionalist Theory’ remain the pacesetter attempts by scholars to explain phenomena and realities of social change (Ibid., 3). To illuminate further, the ‘Evolutionary Theory’ which Comte (1853/1929), Spencer (1898) and Pareto (1901/1968) are the major

proponents, contends that society moves in what can be described as a linear direction, that is from a simple to a more complex structure. The notion here is that certain variables consistently propel the sophistication and complexity of societies, however at varying pace and magnitude. On the 'Conflict Theory' ascribable to Marx and Engels (1848), the supposition is that individuals and their groups struggle to maximize their benefits, hence, the effects of such constant oppositional collision of forces, keep the society in a perpetual state of disequilibrium. The third theoretical inclination, the 'Functionalist Theory', ascribable to Durkheim (1893/1967) and Parson (1951), contends that society is in a constant state of equilibrium, thus the society naturally attains a re-aggregation. Hence, when a change takes place in one part of a society, adjustments are made, thus "social change occurs when the equilibrium is compromised due to the rapidity with which events occur" (de la Sablonnière 2017, 3).

As part of her response, subsuming her review findings, de la Sablonnière observes that the typology of social change includes four social contexts, which are 'stability', 'inertia', 'incremental social change' 'ISC' and, 'dramatic social change', 'DSC' (Ibid., 1). She notes that 'stability' represents "a situation where an event, regardless of its pace, does not affect the equilibrium of a society's social and normative structures nor the cultural identity of group members" hence "the event, may however impact an isolated number of individuals" (Ibid., 2). She describes 'inertia' as "a situation where an event, regardless of its pace, does not either reinstate the equilibrium of a society's social and normative structures or clarify the cultural identity of group members" (Ibid.). Incremental social change, she explains as "a situation where a slow event leads to a gradual but profound societal transformation and slowly changes the social and/or the normative structure or changes/threatens the cultural identity of group members" (Ibid.). Dramatic social change, de la Sablonnière notes is "a situation where a rapid event leads to a profound societal transformation and produces a rupture in the equilibrium of the social and normative structures and changes/threatens the cultural identity of group members" (Ibid.). In her explanation, de la Sablonnière observes that "millions of people worldwide are affected by dramatic social change (DSC)" (Ibid., 1). Explaining, de la Sablonnière suggests that DSC can be analyzed through four characteristics, which are:

The pace of change which represents the speed at which an event impacts a collectivity, the rupture in the social structure, which explains a break with the past so that even core aspects of society such as social institutions have to be reconstructed; a society undergoes a complete transformation, rupture in the normative structure, which is a break with the past in terms of the core behaviours of the group members that now have to be modified significantly in order to achieve collective goals, and cultural identity threat which is a serious threat to identification and to the clarity of the shared beliefs, values, attitudes, and behavioural scripts associated with one's group. (2017, 6)

Furthermore, Dramatic Social Change, de la Sablonnière observes, can be witnessed presently across a multitude of contexts from political and economic upheaval, to desperate mass migration, and from natural or human disasters to technological advances (Ibid., 2). This point of view is elaborately espoused in the works of Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005), Berry (2005) and Amiot et al. (2007), on Immigration and Identity Integration. These scholars variously describe immigration as a reality capable of propelling significant social change that requires human adaptation. Thus, in many ways, scholarly works in this field, as proclaimed by de la Sablonnière (2017), indicate that individuals who simultaneously identify with their culture of origin and with the receiving group's culture, which is a form of assimilation and integration, tend to experience the highest levels of well-being through the instrumentality of government methodological restructuring. Here, it is apparent that de la Sablonnière alludes to what we refer to as psychological restructuring, which represents the conceptual description of ideological realignment, attitudinal shift and behavioural re-aggregation aimed at embracing and accommodating emergent realities propelled by social change dynamics.

Similarly, Wuthnow points out that some theorists have variously described certain variables such as "institutional differentiation, growing societal complexity, or in terms of more specific, tendencies such as urbanization and industrialization" as social conditions which propel conflicts, problems and re-aggregations that lead to new patterns of culture (1992, 259). Therefore, as societies undergo culture evolution orchestrated by social change variables, theorists such as Durkheim theorized on adaptation as the possible means of embracing social change in his theory of cultural adaptation entitled 'The Division of Labour in Society' (1893). To buttress further on the centrality of

adaptation as proclaimed in the work of Durkheim, we turn to Doug Reeler, who observes that:

Emergent change describes the day-to-day unfolding of life, adaptive and uneven processes of unconscious and conscious learning from experience and the change that results from that. This applies to individuals, families, communities, organisations and societies adjusting to shifting realities, of trying to improve and enhance what they know and do, of building on what is there, step-by-step, uncertainly, but still learning and adapting, however well or badly. This is likely the most prevalent and enduring form of change existing in any living system. (Reeler 2007, 9)

In the above contribution, Reeler's perspective in many ways explains the nuances and concept of restructuring. Thus restructuring can be defined as a voluntary process of rearranging a subsisting framework in a bid to accommodate the reasons that prompted such need to rearrange. Hence, we refer to restructuring as a progressive tool of sustainable adaptation. Elucidating on the centrality of adaptation as an unavoidable means of embracing social change, Goodwin (2006) in the Adjustment to Change Theory (ACT) identifies how individuals adjust to social change, and contends that crucial factors such as social support and the nature of the social change propelling variable determine "the way individuals and groups evaluate social change" (de la Sablonnière 2017, 4). Other relevant theories on the subject of social change include Social Identity Theory (SIT) by Tajfel and Turner (1986) which contextualizes on perceptions of legitimacy, stability, and permeability, and it extrapolates on identity management strategies; Identity Process Theory (IPT), by Breakwell (1986) which explores the structure of an individual's identity and the coping strategies used when facing an identity threat or change that results from social change; Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) by Sidanius and Pratto (1999), which contends that social change can be interpreted as the opposition of hierarchy-enhancing attitudes in individuals with high SDO and hierarchy-attenuating ones in individuals with low SDO; Identity Threat Theory (ITT), by Steele et al. (2002) which explains that circumstances where threat to identity occurs as a result of social change, usually individuals will regulate the structure of their identity by restoring the imbalance by modifying their identity through different processes that include integrating the new elements into their identity and assigning a positive or negative valence to them; and

Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT) by Runciman (1966); and de la Sablonnière et al. (2009a, 2010), which contends that collective relative deprivation occurs when people compare their group to other groups and feel that their group is worse off which will motivate them to improve their status by means of collective action. Here, it is apparent that social change by means of restructuring can be propelled by the need to attain certain goal and not just the need to sustain attained heights.

### LESSONS FROM *THE TRIALS OF AFONJA* AS A DRAMATIC SOCIAL CHANGE METAPHOR

We singled out the following dialogue as that which subsumes the core essence of the conflict and social change instigator that propelled and plunged the enacted Oyo Empire to witness a profound dramatic social change. The following dialogue takes place in Alaafin's council chamber when Afonja told Alaafin that he lost the war with the Bambara after all the Oyo elite power brokers had grudgingly acceded to Alaafin's request that they leave the council chamber as earlier requested by Afonja.

Alaafin: Then, what... what... what are you doing here in Oyo? Why have you returned to disgrace us?

Afonja: Disgrace us?

Alaafin: Yes. You disgrace us. Disgrace us! I was your General, Afonja. I trained you. If I did so well enough, your head should be here in a calabash, fresh and dripping in your own blood. But no... no! You must come yourself – alive! Make rags of our royal lineage. Drag us about the ground of Oyo – in human excreta! You must come and cause trouble for all of us – for me! What? I gave you my daughter to give us that eternal bond in friendship... to win your loyalty. You occupy the pride of place amongst my chiefs and eat the fattest meat I care to let anyone have in my plate ... in my Empire... in Oyo. Why? ... Why? ... Why must you return? Why couldn't you just have done us honour by doing what is right?

Afonja: Perhaps, Kabiyesi<sup>3</sup> should seek to know the reason for my return.

Alaafin: Reason.

Afonja: Yes. Reason!

Alaafin: Reason? Reason? Oh, you gods of my fathers! Sango<sup>4</sup> o! Ogun!<sup>5</sup> Hear him! ... Hear him gods of my fathers! He talks of reason!

---

<sup>3</sup> Kabiyesi is Yoruba word, a chiefly appellation meaning (him or her) whose words are beyond question.



I did not make the constitution of Oyo for the Oyomesi<sup>6</sup>. That is how I found it. That is how the Oyomesi themselves found it. That is how we all found it. And now you stand here and talk of reason?

Afonja: Yes, Kabiyesi. I stand here in your palace and talk of reason. Laws are made for men. It is not the other way round. You need to hear my reason! (Abiodun 2012, 18)

Evidently, Alaafin's becomes deeply surprised on hearing from Afonja that Oyo lost the war. Meanwhile, Afonja's disposition to Alaafin projects petulance which subsumes the deeply disturbing scenario. The dialogue exhibits the trepidation and ominous atmosphere emanating from the unpreparedness of the Empire and the leaders in tackling a circumstance like this. We can deduce from the dialogue above that Alaafin rigidly stands by laws of the land, whereas Afonja thinks otherwise. Thus, he fervently attempts to convince Alaafin to reason with him, by narrating how the Oyo army stealthily invaded the Bambara and achieved immediate victory, taking spoils of war as well as taking their king captive. He also narrates how the Oyo Generals (Akilapa, Otun Balogun, and Ekerin) who went to war with him demanded and insisted that the spoils of war be shared and not to be brought back to Oyo, with the argument that bringing the spoils to Oyo would mean giving them only the crumbs. Here, Afonja's story projects that the constitutional provisions which make the Oyo Generals feel that they do not usually get a fair share of the war spoils is an unpopular law which ought to have been amended to avoid disharmony and diminishing allegiance to the throne and Empire. Furthermore, as Afonja suggests that he needs more time to go back to war with the Bambara, Alaafin declines, suggesting that the Oyo Constitution clearly requires that he dies because he has failed once. The play *The Trials of Afonja* literally as well as metaphorically projects multiple suppositions and attributions; hence the deductions

---

<sup>4</sup> In Yoruba mythology, Sango also known as Jakuta is god of thunder and lightning.

<sup>5</sup> In Yoruba mythology, *Ogun* is the *god* of war and iron of the *Yoruba* people of West Africa.

<sup>6</sup> The Oyo Mesi includes seven principal councilors of the state. They constituted the Electoral Council and possessed legislative powers, similar to today's United States Congress. Led by the Bashorun, acting as prime minister, and ran by the Agbaakin, Samu, Alapini, Laguna, Akiniku and Ashipa. They represented the voice of the nation and had the chief responsibility of protecting the interests of the empire. The Alaafin was required to take counsel with them whenever any important matter affecting the state occurs (Afolayan 2000, 173).

from the story depend majorly on the inclinations guiding one's analysis. First, 'trials' in the drama represents crucial circumstances that confronted the protagonist Afonja and the antagonist Alaafin, which led to their inability to survive the conflict that engulfed them. Essentially, Afonja's 'trials' revolve around his choice of action in the face of the Constitutional stipulation that requires that he must end his life without an appeal. He wants to remain alive, and his choice instigates serious consequences. His decision to appeal this Constitutional stipulation, to refuse to abide by this Constitutional stipulation is not in itself the social change, rather it is a vital force that propelled the social change, and in this case we describe the resultant social change as dramatic social change in line with de la Sablonnière's concept. We contend that the consequence of the conflict that occurred because of Afonja's refusal to take his life and Alaafin's insistence that he must obey the subsisting Oyo Constitutional stipulation is an example of a profound dramatic social change because the four characteristics outlined by de la Sablonnière's are all exhibited. The first characteristic is the pace of change that results from the event, which is the conflict between the Alaafin and Afonja, which comes to everyone as a surprise and goes ahead to instigate a war that impacts the entire society in a very profound manner. The second characteristic is that this conflict results in a major rupture in the social structure, thereby instigating a telling break with the past ways of doing things in Oyo Empire particularly in the economic and political dimensions. This turn of event propels the review and reconfiguration of Oyo Empire both demographically, militarily and economically. The third characteristic is that the conflicts propels the Empire to undergo a complete transformation, rupture in the normative structure, which is a break with the past in terms of the core behaviours of the group members that now have to be modified significantly in order to achieve collective goals. Lastly, the fourth characteristic is that conflict propels a cultural identity threat which is a serious threat to identification and to the clarity of the shared beliefs, values, attitudes, and behavioural scripts associated with one's group.

Another instance portrayed in the play which indicates the failing of the Empire's decision makers in not appreciating the need to forestall catastrophic dramatic social change by embarking on methodological polity and economy restructuring is when Alaafin quotes a clause in the constitution which stipulates that:

Alaafin: Oyo's king cannot have a father or mother because he is not allowed to bow or be soft on account of anyone. No one is allowed to have control over the king of Oyo or his passion! No one is allowed to have authority over this crown.... There was this little episode concerning my mother after the *Oyomesi* and the Kingmakers rose from a meet and decided that I be king.

Afonja: What episode?

Alaafin: My mother was asked to go to sleep. (Abiodun 2012, 29)

Alaafin explains that when his mother could not muster enough courage to take the poison which will put her to eternal sleep, the *Oyomesi* mandated him to do it anyway, which he did through strangulation. Alaafin narrates this story, to drive home to Afonja why the law as it is in his view should be obeyed regardless, because that is the way it is, and no other way.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, social change is viewed as the inevitable outcome of social and natural forces and factors that propel evolution in social, cultural and political realities of a society. In our attempt at appreciating the realities that propelled the depicted Oyo Empire to crumble the way and manner it did, we identified the conflict between the Alaafin and Afonja as the primal vital force. The effect of this conflict we attempted to describe as a form of dramatic social change in line with de la Sablonnière's theory. Thus, this study validates that certain human actions can propel a dramatic social change. However, we intend to observe that some dramatic social changes are within the powers of the society to forestall or mitigate, through methodological restructuring process. To buttress, let us look at instances as portrayed in the focus play. As depicted in the play, Alaafin is a hereditary title, and Alaafin Aole is depicted as a maximum ruler, who it is accepted in his time as one who "holds the key to life and death" (Abiodun 2012, 14). Essentially, Alaafin's persona projects overwhelming intimidation and ruthlessness as part of his instrument of ruler-ship, consequently his people live in a climate of fear. Though the Alaafin, rules with governmental institutions such as the *Oyomesi* and the Empire Army which technically is commanded by the Chief of Army Staff, he is at total liberty to order the deployment of the Army at will. His words to his people both the ruling class and others are mostly authoritarian, hence as depicted in the play the Alaafin is viewed as a demigod. Thus, he is feared more than he is respected because his proclamations have

no judicial appeal in the Empire. His powerful Army is applied to crush any form of opposition. However, his inability to foresee the need to propel the progressive amendment of the constitution of the Empire to accommodate the realities of social change, supposedly created the major conflict in the play; that is Afonja's refusal to commit suicide after losing a war as enshrined in the subsisting Oyo constitution. The notion we are projecting here is that Alaaḡin did not appreciate that the aura and climate of fear alone are not supremely sufficient to sustain obedience perpetually. Again the failure of Alaaḡin to foresee the day a Chief of Army Staff will realize that he is actually in total control of the Army and that the Emperor is merely a ceremonial Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces is a major hubris. The demand by Afonja that all the cabinet chiefs must vacate the council chambers clearly typifies a major evidence of the climate of change. In Alaaḡin's response, on hearing from Afonja that Oyo lost the war, it is apparent that he never foresaw a day like that, when it would be said that Oyo lost a war and the Chief of Army is physically relating the news. In line with the Empire's constitution, the understanding is that Afonja is losing a war for the very first time, but he is not inclined to commit suicide as demanded by the constitution.

As this drama clearly demonstrates, trials propelled by social change realities can totally bring down or diminish people, kingdoms, or empires at deferring speed and magnitudes. Thus, we learn from history that superior strategies, encapsulated in terms such as 'reforms', and 'restructuring', are needed at all times to enhance the ability to survive social change trials, in a bid to ensure significant status sustainability and longevity.

Looking at the trajectory of didacticism, simply put, this study indicates the importance of history based drama such as *The Trials of Afonja*, which affords people the opportunity to learn from past events. Thus the essence of this play majorly is to help in the process of orientation and ideological retooling by projecting the lesions appreciable from the tragedy of Old Oyo Empire under Alaaḡin Aole. Thus, this study indicates that polity restructuring or psycho-ideological restructuring should be a continuum in life of individuals and societies. Hence, the researchers believe that there is the need to imbibe 'adaptation' and 'progressivism' by individuals and communities as viable methodological mechanisms which can enable status sustainability and longevity. Therefore, the researchers conclude that the rigidity and inability to restructure and evolve substantially in

a bid to properly align and accommodate emergent realities of time, are tantamount to actions and inactions that typify the hubris metaphor in the focused play. Again, this hubris propels societies to dwindle, or disintegrate, or die economically, militarily, politically and demographically.

In the contributions of the theories reviewed, a unifying common we identified is the notion that there are approaches of deepening understanding of the influencing variables and specifics of social change, cultural developments and social differentiation. Taking a cue from the explanation above, the response to a subsisting circumstance or projected future circumstance which propels people or society to decide how best to amend their social and governance architecture, institutional framework, the constitutional provisions and ideological inclinations to achieve progressive results is what we refer to as adaptation, which can be attained through restructuring. This paper aligns the portrayed experience of the enacted Oyo Empire with 'Nigeria' as a nation, which naturally is undergoing its social change 'trials', and how her inability to restructure to satisfy the aspirations of the citizenry through progressive, fair, and encompassing constitutional amendments, which represents adaptation and progressivism, is keeping her on her knees and in throes. Lastly to avoid the attendant hubris resulting from parochial, ignorance laden and mischievous actions and inactions of political leaders – nations must attempt to assemble their best minds to articulate ways of forestalling and mitigating the catastrophic realities of dramatic social change. Again nations, regional and continental unions such as Nigeria, ECOWAS and AU (African Union), must sincerely understudy and emulate the mercurial approaches of EU (European Union), which has managed through progressive treaties and rule of law to enhance tremendously harmony among member nations post second world war. Lastly, it is noteworthy to add that the bold restructuring that brought about the EU's security protocol has no doubt strengthened the defence strategy of the bloc, thereby serving as a massive deterrent to would-be aggressive nations within the bloc and those not in the Union.

#### **REFERENCES:**

- Abiodun, T. 2012. *The Trials of Afonja*. Lagos: Blockhouse Worldwide Publishers.
- Afolayan, F. 2000. Kingdoms of West Africa: Benin, Oyo and Asante. *Africa: African History Before 1855*, Vol. 1, T. Falola (ed). North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 161 – 190.

- Amiot, C., R. de la Sablonnière, D. Terry & J. Smith. 2007. Integration of Social Identities in the Self: Toward a Cognitive-Developmental Model. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Rev.*, 11: 364 – 388.
- Benet-Martínez, V. & J. Haritatos. 2005. Bicultural Identity Integration (BII): Components and Psychosocial Antecedents. *J. Pers.*, 73: 1015 – 1050.
- Berry, J. W. 2005. Acculturation: Living Successfully in Two Cultures. *Int. J. Intercult. Relat.* 29: 697 –712.
- Breakwell, G. M. 1986. *Coping with Threatened Identities*. London: Methuen.
- Chirof, D. and R.M. Merton. 1986. *Social Change in the Modern Era*. CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Comte, A. I. [1853] 1929. *Système de Politique Positive [System of Positive Polity]*, Vol. 3. Paris: Carilian-Goeury et Dalmont.
- de la Sablonnière, R., E. Auger, N. Sadykova & D.M. Taylor. 2010. When the ‘we’ impacts how ‘I’ Feel about Myself: Effect of Temporal Collective Relative Deprivation on Personal Well-being in the Context of Dramatic Social Change in Kyrgyzstan. *Eur. Psychol.*, 15: 271 – 282.
- de la Sablonnière, R., D.M. Taylor, C. Perozzo & N. Sadykova. 2009. Reconceptualising Relative Deprivation in the Context of Dramatic Social Change: The Challenge Confronting the People of Kyrgyzstan. *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.*, 39: 325 – 345.
- de la Sablonnière, R. 2017. Toward a Psychology of Social Change: A Typology of Social Change. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8: 1-20.
- Durkheim, É. [1893] 1933. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: Free Press.
- Fukuyama, F. 1999. *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order*. New York: Free Press.
- Goodwin, R. 2006. Age and Social Support Perception in Eastern Europe: Social Change and Support in Four Rapidly Changing Countries. *Br. J. Soc. Psychol.*, 45: 799 – 815.
- Greenfield, P. M. 2016. Social Change, Cultural Evolution, and Human Development. *Curr. Opin. Psychol.*, 8: 84 – 92.
- Marx, K., & F. Engels. 1848. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Vol. 1. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Nolan, P., & G.E. Lenski. 2011. *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology*. 11th edition. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Pareto, V. [1901] 1968. *The Rise and Fall of Elites: An Application of Theoretical Sociology*. New Jersey: Bedminster Press.
- Parson, T. 1951. *The Social Structure of Social Action*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Ponsioen, J. A. 1962. *The Analysis of Social Change Reconsidered: A Sociological Study*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Reeler, D. 2007. *A Theory of Social Change and Implication for Peace, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation*. From CDRA Annual Report 2004/2005. www.Cdra.org.za
- Runciman, W. G. 1966. *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: A Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth-Century England*. California: University of California Press.
- Sidanius, J. & F. Pratto. 1999. *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Smith, A. D. 1973. *The Concept of Social Change: A Critique of the Functionalist Theory of Social Change*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Spencer, H. 1898. *The Principles of Sociology*. Vol. 1. New York: Appleton and Company.
- Steele, C. M., S.J. Spencer & J. Aronson. 2002. Contending with Group Image: The Psychology of Stereotype and Social Identity Threat. *Adv. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* 34: 379 – 440.
- Sztompka, P. 1998. Devenir social, néo-modernisation et importance de la culture: quelques implications de la révolution anticommuniste pour la théorie du changement social [To become social, neo-modernization and importance of culture: a few implications of the anticommunist revolution for social change theory]. *Sociol. Soc.*, 30: 85 – 94.
- Tajfel, H. & J.C. Turner. 1986. “The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour”. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (eds). *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, Chicago: Nelson-Hall, pp. 7 – 24.
- Weinstein, J. 2010. *Social Change*. 3rd edition. Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield.
- Wuthnow, R. 1992. “Cultural Change and Sociological Theory”. In H. Haferkamp and N. J. Smelser (eds). *Social Change and Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 256 – 277.
- Zuck, A. M. 1997. Introduction. *Am. Behav. Sci.*, 40: 257 – 258.