

# Insecurity and Human Rights Abuse in Contemporary Africa: An Appraisal of Ahmed Yerima's *Pari and Hendu*

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## Abstract

This paper explains aspects of Africa's insecurity and human rights abuse through a close reading of Ahmed Yerima's plays titled *Pari* and *Hendu*. In the recent past, African nations have been bedeviled by insecurity challenges that negatively impact their populace with untold hardship that results in economic, political, social, psychological and humanitarian concerns. Countries such as Liberia, Somalia, The Sudan, Kenya, and Nigeria encounter internal insecurity problems such as kidnapping, rustling, armed banditry, and Boko Haram in the case of Nigeria. There are ethnic and religious conflicts that have resulted in the killing and destruction of innocent lives and properties across the continent. Available data on the level and dimensions of insecurity and abuse of human rights in Africa show an increase over time, which results in serious threats to lives and properties and hinders economic growth, and discourages both local and foreign investors, all of which restrain and retard Africa's socioeconomic development. These insecurity challenges and abuses are hinged on factors such as bad governance, ethnic marginalization, and many more. This paper is informed by a psychoanalytic approach to examining literature which explores characters' physical and mental behavior to uncover the emotional strife and the traumatic events that cloud the characters' psyche and the determination to suppress the anxiety. This is because trauma, according to both psychoanalysts and psychiatrists, always recollects in the aftermath of the event and sometimes hunts the individual consciously or unconsciously through dreams or even nightmares. The paper then concludes that the play texts analyzed are a study in psychoanalysis as Yerima's condemnation of the penchant for unjust killings and molestations in many African states, especially Nigeria, is a means of externalizing his innermost feelings. This supports the psychoanalytical belief that creative work is the author's dream while the author is the main character.

Keywords: Insecurity, Human Rights Abuse, Contemporary Africa, *Pari*, *Hendu*

## Introduction

The African continent has been marred by a complex web of challenges in recent decades, ranging from political instability and economic disparities to health crises and environmental concerns

(UNDP, 2001; Copson, 1994; Obi, 1997). Among these multifaceted issues, insecurity and human rights abuses stand out as persistent and deeply troubling problems that continue to afflict many African nations. While the causes and manifestations of insecurity and human rights abuses are multifarious and context-dependent, they demand close examination and critical analysis to understand their underlying dynamics and implications (see, Cilliers, 2004, among others. This appraisal focuses on the renowned Nigerian playwright Ahmed Yerima's thought-provoking works, *Pari and Hendu*, to explore how they illuminate the intricate relationship between insecurity and human rights abuses in contemporary Africa.

Yerima, a prolific Nigerian playwright and director, has made significant contributions to African theater, using his works as a platform to address pressing social issues. His plays often delve into themes such as cultural identity, political corruption, and societal injustices, offering valuable insights into the African experience. "Pari" and "Hendu," two of Yerima's most celebrated plays, have received critical acclaim for their poignant portrayal of the multifaceted challenges faced by African societies, including the pervasive issues of insecurity and human rights abuses. Insecurity in contemporary Africa is a multifaceted problem with diverse underlying causes such as political instability, economic inequalities, ethnic tensions, and religious conflicts. These factors contribute to various security challenges, including terrorism, armed conflicts, organized crime, and civil unrest. Furthermore, these insecurities are often accompanied by human rights abuses, as governments, rebel groups, and other actors violate the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals and communities in the pursuit of their objectives.

Human rights abuses in Africa are a direct consequence of insecurity, as governments and non-state actors often resort to repressive measures to maintain control or advance their agendas (El-Obaid and Kwadwo, 1996). These abuses manifest in various forms, including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detention, restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly, and discrimination against marginalized groups (Mamdani, 1996). The consequences of these violations are profound, affecting the physical, psychological and social wellbeing of countless Africans and undermining the foundations of democratic governance and social justice. This study examines how Yerima's plays, *Pari and Hendu*, provide a lens through which to analyze the interconnectedness of insecurity and human rights abuses in contemporary Africa. Through his compelling narratives, vivid characters, and thought-provoking dialogues, Yerima's works offer a platform to explore these issues' root causes, manifestations, and consequences. Furthermore, the play texts encourage audiences to engage critically with the complex realities facing African societies and inspire discussions on potential solutions and paths toward a more just and secure future.

Previous studies that have examined Yerima's *Pari* and *Hendu* include the ethnographic communication theory of Adebola and Daniel (2020) in the investigation of language and society in the text, Buzan's conceptualization of the state and individual security theory of Abiola (2021) in the examination of insecurity and Boko Haram insurgency in *Pari*, one-on-one interviews analysis and focused group discussion of Ohenhen (2019) in counter-terrorism and socio-political acculturation in Yerima's *Heart of Stone* and *Pari*, and a pragmatic analysis of researchClue.com (2023) in Heye Abiona's *Even Kins are Guilty* and Yerima's *Hendu*. Other existing works on Yerima's *Pari* are those of Aniago, Abada and Nwaozuzu (2022); Oloruntoba (2022); and Eben (2020), while there exists little or none on the second text: i.e. *Hendu*.

Even though some of these works have examined insecurity and human rights abuse (Adebola and Daniel, 2020; Abiola, 2021; Ohenhen, 2019) by offering profound insights into the social, political and cultural dynamics that contribute to these problems, they avoid remaining sensitive and critical to the complexities of the subject matter. Although this study may share similarities with insecurity and human rights abuse, it stands out for its strength. The previous works

on insecurity and human rights abuses addressed only an aspect of what the current study sets to examine. By adopting the psychoanalytic approach of Henk De Berge (2003), this study focuses on the three tenets of the model: (1) id, (2) ego, and (3) superego. Thus, some of the questions this study aims to address are the following: (1) How do Yerima's *Pari* and *Hendu* illuminate the various forms of insecurity and human rights abuses experienced by individuals and communities in contemporary Africa? (2) To what extent do character development and plot structure in Yerima's *Pari* and *Hendu* reflect the complex interplay between insecurity and human rights abuses in contemporary Africa? (3) What critical perspectives and social commentary do Yerima's *Pari* and *Hendu* offer on the role of government institutions, cultural norms, and international influences in addressing or perpetuating insecurity and human rights abuses in contemporary Africa? In the following pages, this study will delve into the key themes and messages conveyed in *Pari* and *Hendu*, highlighting how they shed light on the intricate relationship between insecurity and human rights abuses in contemporary Africa. Drawing upon academic research and critical analysis, this study will assess the relevance and impact of Yerima's works in the context of the African continent's ongoing struggle for peace, stability, and respect for human rights. By examining these plays in-depth, this study hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by African societies and stimulate discussions on the role of art and culture in addressing these critical issues. Before discussing these aspects, however, I will first discuss the Psychoanalytical Literary Theory that is used to ground this study.

### Psychoanalytical Literary Theory

Psychoanalysis as a literary theory provides a conceptual framework that aids critics in discovering and interpreting things in literary texts that the writer has consciously or unconsciously put there. It helps critics to discover and interpret things in literary texts that the writer himself/herself does not know are in there (Auwal, 2015). This implies that critics talk about literary texts as an embodiment of a writer's conscious motivations. This is because a writer's mind, like that of any other human being, is a combination of conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mental courses, and whatever s/he does, says, or writes develops out of the interaction of these courses.

Psychoanalysis started as a psychiatric investigation into cases of hysteria, but it has now extended into the literary domain to provide an insight into a writer's mind and his/her creative process in general. From the literary vantage point, we are made to believe that the human mind is mainly divided into two dimensions: (1) the conscious and (2) the unconscious. The conscious mind signifies reality while the unconscious mind comprises imaginations and daydreaming in what Sigmund Freud perceives as wishes for pleasure. The conscious mind is highly controlled by reality principles and constantly at war with the unconscious. The result of the war is the manifest contents that are consistently transferred to different types other than the types they were conveyed in the unconscious. This method does not only aim at interpreting characters' utterances and actions in a text, it also investigates the writer's mind through jokes, dreams, fantasies, hallucinations, or a slip of the tongue. This implies that whatever people do depends largely on their mental states which include their conscious deliberation, conflicts, and decisions, and their mental courses that can be viewed in psychoanalytic positions. Due to the aforementioned aspects, De Berg suggests the following:

Indeed, the creative process is among the psychanalyst's favorite objects of research because the unconscious element in it is particularly strong. Like dreams, the creative process provides value to the pressure of the unconscious. The creation of literary

fiction allows the writer to work his repressed desires out of his system by expression in a cloaked socially acceptable form (without being aware that this is what he is doing) (2003, 84).

Taking us further in this argument, Freud expresses three mental processes that filled the vacuum earlier created in his dualistic template. These mental processes, as mentioned earlier, are (1) the id, (2) the ego, and (3) the superego. The id portrays the lustful, aggressive and sexual part of our personality. It includes the pleasure-seeking desires with which we are born, the wishes, obsessions and other effects gotten from or associated with them. The id is not a region of the mind but a process that is made up of drives that are always operative and constantly pushing for satisfaction and also being repressed and sublimated through a cultural activity (Auwal, 2015, 175). The ego is beyond the conscious and preconscious personality. It does not only think, feel, worry, know, learn, and remember, it also represses, resists, and projects. These processes are regarded as unconscious since we are not aware that we are exhibiting such and we cannot regulate them. The superego consists of the norms, values, and ideals that upbringing and education inculcated in us. In the exact words of De Berg, "It is not equivalent to our conscience, however, as it does not simply coincide with our conscious and preconscious ethics. Having its origin in childhood, it contains many elements that we are no longer aware of and that are not relevant or appropriate to our current lives" (2003, 50). The ego is beyond the conscious and preconscious personality. It also represses, resists, projects, and so on. These operations are regarded as unconscious, as we are not aware that we are performing them, and we have no control over them. These three abstract mechanisms, agreeing with De Berge, operate as follows:

Whereas the id and the superego strive for immediate satisfaction without regard for the wellbeing of the person as a whole, the ego seeks to achieve compromises. The id represents an unconscious pressure on us to live in complete accord with our innermost wishes; the superego represents an unconscious pressure on us to live in complete accord with the wishes that other people (first and foremost our parents and teachers) have instilled in us, and the ego tries to find a healthy balance between our wishes and those of others. Additionally, the ego is engaged in the interaction with the outside world (2003, 50).

The preceding excerpt proposes that the relevance of psychoanalysis to the study of literature is far beyond the analysis of the feelings and actions of literary characters. It also entails the analysis of the writer's mental state. Every literary text is the product of its author's conscious, preconscious and unconscious mental states, which means that psychoanalysis can talk more about the literary text itself, its structure, and its meaning. Freud wrote several important essays on literature which he used to explore the psyche of authors and characters, explain narrative mysteries, and develop new concepts in psychoanalysis. This paper uses the concepts, forms and techniques of psychoanalysis to interpret *Pari* and *Hendu* written by Yerima. Although he has written many plays, his plays *Pari* and *Hendu* are being analyzed in this paper to stress the idea of insecurity and human rights abuses as they confront the id, ego, and superego of characters portrayed in these play texts.

### **Plot Summary of the Texts of *Pari* and *Hendu***

The story of *Pari* centers on the escape of Hyelapari, one of the Chibok School girls who was kidnapped. In the camp of the Boko Haram insurgents, she finds assistance from her forced or

adopted husband who also manages to escape with her. At the beginning of the play, Pari's mother deeply mourns the loss of her daughter and becomes willing to do anything, even abandon her strict adherence to the Christian faith, to have her daughter back alive. She hopes that by switching to the Islamic faith, the religion of her daughter's captors, she might receive more understanding and sympathy from their God. However, the plot takes an unexpected turn when Hyelapari suddenly appears at her parents' home, brought by a government representative. She is emotionally damaged and has become a mother. This outcome falls far short of her mother and father's long-held dreams and hopes. In an even more peculiar twist, Pari's estranged husband, Ibrahim, also arrives. Pari is adamant that she and Ibrahim cannot be separated despite her wrecked state. Despite the family's effort to separate them, Pari insists on leaving with Ibrahim and their child, leaving her parents and other family members devastated and hopeless.

Likewise, the play *Hendu* is about Wabiti, a widow of about fifty years old who has three children (Chafe, Ngariwa, and Kingi) and has been pitied and taken in by her late husband's friend, Garga. Garga's real intention for Wabiti is to pay her evil for the wrongs her late husband (Hamajam) had done to him before his death. Garga has a friend and accomplice by the name Gambo. Two of them work for politicians to disrupt elections, kidnap, and carry out robbery attacks. They also rustle cattle. Kingi, the only girl of Wabiti, wants to get married to a non-Fulani man, while the boys (Chafe and Ngariwa) want to continue helping with the cattle. They want to leave Garga's house as they are not comfortable with the idea of living with him, but their mother objects. Meanwhile, Garga goes to see Shagu, the native doctor, asking for more power. Shagu says that getting such power will require three souls, and the three souls are available in his (Garga's) house, which are Wabiti's children. Shagu promises Garga that the three children will die on their path and no one will accuse him of killing them.

Kingi is to spend two days with her husband's people when she goes; and while she is there, the Fulani herdsmen attack the village of Kuru Karma where Kingi is and she is killed there. Chafe travels to Adamawa where things are moving well for him; he is slaughtered there too. Garga who has to have the third soul for him to have power wonders why Ngariwa has refused to die at the same time as the rest according to the instruction of the native doctor and the delay in Ngariwa's death will lead to Garga losing his own life. While Garga is asking Wabiti the whereabouts of Ngariwa, he dies. Wabiti overhears Gambo saying that Ngariwa is still alive. He asks her to go to him in Nimbo and to check if he is still alive because Fulani herdsmen have attacked the place also. But, she tells him that he is not in Nimbo but with his cousin in Jingidi. That's why Garga could not find him, but Gambo did not disclose to her that it was Garga that killed her children.

## Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research method as the study aims to look at in-depth case studies and provide a platform for exploring the inner thoughts, feelings, and experiences of individuals. The qualitative research method is chosen for this study because it allows for the collection of rich, detailed data in the form of narratives and personal accounts. This provides insights into the unconscious processes, emotions, and symbolic meanings that are central to this study. As mentioned earlier, two play texts were selected from Yerima's broad literary oeuvre. The texts are *Pari* (2016) and *Hendu* (2019). These plays were selected because their content is compatible with the explorative and interpretative nature of insecurity and human rights abuses.

This study identifies recurring themes, symbols, and metaphors in the data, and sheds light on the unconscious dynamics in them. A thorough reading technique is employed by the study to tease out important data about insecurity and human rights abuses in the two selected texts. The

psychoanalysis notion of De Berg (2003) is employed to assist the study in the debate, analysis, and understanding of the delineated data. After the completion of interpretations, the study proceeds with the key findings of the research. Following the narrative techniques, the study identifies the central characters by connecting them to the story and scrutinizing the plot's elements that eventually shape the study's findings. These characters help the plot to unfold while focalization aids in comprehending a character's function in disclosing insecurity and human rights abuses themes in the texts.

The works of scholars such as Ewetan (2013), Ewetan and Urhie (2014), Enebe (2008), and Charas (2015) prove useful here. In diagnosing these complexities and differing epistemologies/ontologies, this study examines a body of critical works on insecurity and human rights abuses reviews by writers such as El-Obaid and Kwado (1996), Mamdani (1996), and Paris (2001), to name a few.

Finally, the literature identifies Psychoanalytical Theory as a discursive method to identify insecurity and human rights abuses. In the ensuing section, these methods will be applied thoughtfully and rigorously to enhance the understanding of unconscious processes, the human psyche, and the dynamics of human behavior and experience in the texts.

### **Insecurity Challenges and Human Rights Abuse in *Pari* and *Hendu***

Yerima's *Pari* and *Hendu* deal with Northern Nigerians' insecurity challenges and human rights abuses from the point of view of two families thrown into desolation by the loss of their children. In his prefatory note, Yerima confesses that what spurred him into writing the plays is that he has spent most of his time thinking he could distance himself from the fear and pain of their helplessness. As he puts it, "I was too far away from their story; I kept reassuring myself...but I felt a deep compulsion to write these" (Yerima, 2019, 6). To him, *Pari* and *Hendu* are stories that produce social and family dislocation and population displacement. They reflect social tensions and a new pattern of settlements which encourage mistrust, fear, anxiety, and frenzy. The stories go further to heighten the citizenship question which encourages hostility between "indigenes and settlers" (Ewetan & Urhie 2014, 58). They also highlight the dehumanization of women, children, and men, particularly vis-à-vis rape, child abuse, killings, and deep hunger and poverty. The African continent has been chock-full of different cases of insecurity challenges and human rights abuses that have resulted in the killing and destruction of innocent lives and properties across the continent. Yerima brings this reality to the fore through experimentation with his theater of the absurd. Absurdism is the opinion that a person's life is hopeless, anguished, and weird. Referring to this theater, Dasylyva opines that "it is the theater of disillusionment. It is inspired by the post-world wars' philosophy of existentialism, which is foregrounded by despair, cruelty, and preposterousness" (1997, 45).

Yerima's *Pari* and *Hendu* are made up of characters that are forced into fears, helplessness, despair, and trauma by the complicity of religion, government, and certain groups. The play texts are segmented into four parts, and Yerima weaves the major conflicts in these plays around the desperate families of Ama and Wabiti. The main plots of the texts revolve around the stories, experiences, and trials of the major characters and the protagonists of the plays: i.e. Ama and Wabiti. They highlight the predicaments of these committed wives and mothers. We first met Ama and Wabiti on their praying mat saying their prayers. Ama's husband Tada walks in and expresses surprise to find her in such an unchristian attitude and says the following: "None has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, who has no partner, He is the worship, He is the praise and he can do all things" (Yerima, 2016, 7). Tada enters, stops by the door, and watches Ama his wife pray. She is not aware of his presence as she continues her prayer: "Jesus! Agnes, what is this? (Ama does not

answer she continues to murmur prayers). There must be madness here tonight! (Ama does not turn her head to look at him. In a whisper she replies), “This is morning, not night. You can see that I am praying to Almighty Allah! Almighty who? We are Christians, remember?” (Yerima, 2016, 7). In the same vein, Garga comes in and meets Wabiti praying and he frowns at it “Umm, burning incense. This smell will invite the sacred spirit of the Jangare, I fear. Now you invite them into our home?” Wabiti replies: “Yes...I was thanking and begging Inna for her protection over this house”. “Inna? I am a devout Muslim. Only Allah protects us here. The rules of this house are those stated in the Holy Qur’an” (Yerima, 2019, 7-8).

### ***Pari and Hendu as a Study in Psychoanalysis***

The opening scenes of the play texts reveal a lot of faulty actions from the protagonists and their husbands. Desperate actions betray underlying information in the unconscious. De Berg properly describes Freud’s instrument of psychoanalysis based on faulty actions in this manner:

Faulty actions then point to hidden motives, impulses, drives, and desires that we are not conscious of or that we do not want to acknowledge to ourselves or others. Some of these motives...may be fairly innocent. Others, however, may not. Here Freud’s idea acquires a critical edge. The attention to slips and instances of forgetting can help us to penetrate the innocuous surface of our actions and lay bare their other, darker dimensions (2003, 35).

From the preceding quote, When Ama confronts Tada for coming home late after collecting the displacement money from the local government office, he lies that he has been at the local government office where he has been drinking *buruku* (locally brewed beer) all the while. When she asks him about the money, he returns 64,000 naira instead of 72,000 naira and spends 8,000 naira as narrated in the following extracts:

Ama: Wayo Allah! Eight thousand naira? What for?

Tada: Stop shouting, ....

Ama: Let me shout! What did you do with eight thousand naira?

Tada: (Pause) I gave five thousand naira to Jiga for her upkeep... and two thousand naira for the antenatal visit to the hospital, she is to make. And finally, I bought a bottle of *Padua* and dried bush meat, which I shared with your cousin, Ezekiel and Joshua (Yerima, 2016..10).

All of these fidgety actions betray Tada and Ama. Thus, both have some hidden motives, impulses, and desires that do not want to be acknowledged or shared with others, but are identified through this faulty action of desperation. From the psychoanalytical point of view, these faulty utterances are repressed desires from the conscious. As such, Yerima himself must have repressed his desires to embark on any such action which are now getting their way out from his unconscious mind through his mouthpieces. Beyond this is the sense of guilt that always seizes people who are driven by their superego. Thus, whenever these people sin or commit any mistake, the superego quickly punishes them by making them feel bad, guilty, weak, or inadequate. This is evident in Ama and Tada’s immediate reactions when they betrayed each other and their Christian faith as a result of desperation. Tada impregnates their house help Jiga to have a replacement child for their lost daughter while Ama becomes a Muslim since the Christian God has failed her as presented as

follows:

Tada: It was the devil. I never knew I was walking into a trap when Jiga was brought to me to stay and help us with house chores. I never knew that it was by my family. I feel so stupid now. All I was told was that she was to be a shoulder for us to lean on. I am deeply sorry. A bush shoulder has become a fish bone I cannot swallow (Yerima, 2016, 12).

Ama: My faith? (Chuckles.) It melted...like the morning dew...it melted with the early scorching rays of the rising morning sun. Gone! My faith shook. I want my child back. I will do anything to have her back. And if Jesus is going to allow this to happen to me, then I am done with him. I shall remain with the prophet until I find my poor lost child. He must understand. (Yerima, 2016, 14).

Moreover, Ama accuses Ibrahim of kidnapping Pari, violating her against her will until she becomes a mother of twins and he still has the guts to come to Askirau-Uba village in search of Pari after she has been rescued by the soldiers. Ibrahim feels some guilt expressed as follows:

Ibrahim: Pity. I am sorry. A thread of sacred faith lies in which I believed would save me on judgment day derailed my senses and unwittingly, I became the harbinger of death (Pause). But with each passing day, it slowly dawned on me that I was the fool. A wild murderous joker...stupid fool (Yerima, 2016, 51).

The preceding situation is similar to that of Garga in *Hendu* when Gambo visited him in the morning to inquire whether Garga's visitors arrived safely. From their conversation (in Yerima, 2019, 12-14), one can observe that Garga lies that he has no evil intentions toward his visitors (i.e. Wabiti and her children). His conscience pricks him and he feels that his friend Gambo has the right to know the truth. When Gambo asks Garga about "the name of the politician who needs their services to upset the polling booth, the kidnapping plans and robbery plans" (Yerima, 2019, 14), Garga promises to tell him in good time: "All in good time, my trusted friend. But for now, let us pretend that the sun rose well today" (Yerima, 2019, 14). The preceding excerpt is a fidgety action that betrays Garga. Another incidence is in the scenario where Wabiti is hallucinating in her sleep over the murder of her three children and Gambo's presence at such an hour, and the attempt by Gambo to misinterpret the entire dream and claims that his "cloud of reasoning remains blurred" (Yerima, 2019, 25). Eventually, Gambo's conscience pricks him and he tells Wabiti to be strong as follows: "Your strength is all you have...it will save you. And you must save your children from the impending danger. I must leave. Tell Garga that we must talk", (Yerima, 2019, 27). Thus, Gambo has some hidden motives, impulses, and desires that he does not want to acknowledge or share with Wabiti, but are identified through this faulty action of a lie. Another incidence is the whereabouts of the third child of Wabiti (i.e. Ngariwa). Everybody believes that he is in Nimbo except Wabiti who knows that he is in Jingidi. That is the reason why Garga's charm and plot could not catch up with Ngariwa rather Garga has to take his place in death. It is through the interaction between Gambo and Wabiti that this was revealed as follows:

Gambo: What will you do now that your Ngariwa is lost in Nimbo?

Wabiti: Nimbo? The gods forbid. My Ngariwa is in Jingidi...With his cousins. The job is good he says.

Gambo: Alhamdulillah! (*A whisper.*) That is why Garga could not find him. .... let



him stay somewhere there. But you must go to him. Get out of this madness...go somewhere safe (Yerima, 2019, 56).

From a psychoanalytical perspective, the preceding faulty utterances are repressed desires from the conscious. As such, Yerima himself must have repressed his desires to embark on any of such actions which are now getting their way out from his unconscious mind through his mouthpieces. Beyond this is the sense of guilt that always seizes people who are driven by their superego. Thus, whenever these people sin or commit a mistake, the superego quickly punishes them by making them feel bad, guilty, weak, or inadequate. This is evident in Garga and Gambo's immediate reactions when they lie. This sense of guilt and desperation results from a strong superego as observed by De Berg as follows:

People driven predominantly by their superego are faced with three problems. Their superego always demands more than they can deliver, it forces them to evaluate the result of their actions in too critical a way and it produces a strong sense of guilt every time they do not live up to its inflated demands. Such people constantly suffer from the feeling that they are bad. They become disgusted with themselves and often fall into depression (2003, 54).

Another important method in psychoanalysis that leads to the unconscious is that of "Resistance and Transfer" (Auwal, 2015, 182). Different people adopt different methods to resist any attempt to penetrate their unconscious. These include supplying indefinite answers in the event of any direct question, equivocations, denials, the avoidance of topics, and vagueness among many other forms of resistance. To divert people's attention from the reality of what they feel, these people pretend to be honest and helpful. This type of resistance springs from the unconscious. It makes them consider some topics irrelevant and not necessary, for example, the former local government chairman, Mr. Pious, and his wife who hide their actual motives and desires behind their struggle in search of the missing girls. The following statement from Ama can attest to that:

Ama: The last local government chairman was useless to our cause. He played with our matter until he was removed disgracefully from the office. His wife was a bigger clown. She invited all of us including the teachers, to share blood money with us. We hear that they arrange even some, who do not know how we feel, who have never stepped one foot here, afraid of being kidnapped, to go all over the world, taking photographs and begging for money in the name of our daughters (close to tears). I swear by...the goddess of womanhood...they will not live to enjoy the blood money that they have made through the false search for our children (Yerima, 2019, 30).

Resistance is the result of the struggle between the conscious and the unconscious wishes of a human. It is a deliberate attempt to prevent any access to the unconscious mind. Thus, Mr. Pious and his wife's resistance that they are fighting for their people, not themselves, is a deliberate attempt to prevent access to their unconscious minds. This resistance could help in identifying the true motives of the former local government chairman and his wife. As subsequently revealed in the play, Mr. Pious and his wife are using their people's predicament to achieve their selfish desires. This is the case for most African leaders who use their countries' areas of need as a means of enriching themselves from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Furthermore, in *Hendu*, for instance, Garga hides his actual motives and desires behind his struggle to accommodate

Wabiti and her children as a husband and a father. He does this through different means, one of which is by resisting any discussion on the topic, especially when Wabiti tries to show appreciation for accepting them into his house as follows:

Wabiti: I want to thank you with all my heart and body. I am too elderly to be a wife to you. But as you said, I shall endeavor to be a good companion. Haa ...to accept my three children and me...only Allah will reward you with a thousand blessings (She kneels).

Garga: please get up. You offend me (Yerima, 2019, 9).

Based on the foregoing analysis, it is pertinent to note that the mistakes, slips, or faulty actions of the play lead not only to the characters' unconscious minds but also to that of the dramatist. Tada for lying and betraying his wife, Ama's denial of her faith, Ibrahim's kidnapping and rape issue, Mr. and Mrs. Pious's deceptive actions, Garga's phony attitude, Gambo's pretentious behaviors, Ngariwa and Wabiti's lying act and many more incidents in the plays are not mere coincidences but real pointers to the dramatist's unconscious. These constitute the ideals that Yerima is advocating for his society.

One important point that is worthy of note here is the fact that although we always repress our wishes and our desires recede into the unconscious, it does not mean that these wishes or desires go away; they always struggle for a way out. These unconscious wishes and desires consequently have outlets through these parapraxes as De Berg points out as follows:

However, when we repress the drives of the unconscious, we can never make them go away, and the unconscious always keeps pushing back. Hence, all the drives that constitute the child's polymorphous perversity are to be found in adults too: in perverts, in neurotics, in hysterics, and in normal people. Normal people are simple people who have repressed their drives to a greater extent than other people; but, again, repressed does not mean eliminated. The unconscious is always on the lookout for an outlet, in all of us (2003, 13-14).

The preceding observation is important in understanding Ama's attempt to eliminate Ibrahim with rope and knife after accepting him as a son-in-law. Garga intends to wipe Wabiti and her children completely after accepting them as his own family. Another significant incident in the texts is that of Reverend John. He is honest, sincere, and a committed pastor; as such, he is not satisfied with the killing and burning of churches and their members. His desire to fight back and defend his faith and congregation leads to his tragic end in the play. Despite attempts by the dreaded boys to force him to recite *Al Fatihah* (the first chapter of the Holy Qur'an meaning in English "The Opening"), he refuses; instead, he recites the Lord's Prayer. And because it is the return of the repressed, he cannot control it as it is coming from his unconscious mind as a defense against an attack on the ego. The same is the case of Chafe Wabiti's first son who is not satisfied with them leaving Garga. He prefers going to Taraba where he can find a good job helping with cattle as a true Fulani man, and that leads to his untimely death.

Ama and Wabiti in the texts have a strong superego that consistently demands from them a lot that they cannot practically bear. Their lofty ideas about an ideal society are constantly repressed. They live in isolation from their society. They behave differently from most members of their society, especially toward the people with whom they come in contact. Nevertheless, Ama and Wabiti are later frustrated by the conscious forces of society. Before the end of the plays, we see

them act like every other member of the society and, thus, lament the incessant killings of innocent citizens, particularly Christians and herdsmen, and God and the government's muteness towards that as follows:

Hanna: God is our strength.

Tada: Like Agnes always asks these days, which one?

The one that allows people to kill? Or the one that smites the meek with a muteness to die? Which one? (Yerima, 2016, 19-20).

The same applies to *Hendu*, as Wabiti laments the premature death of her children; she feels that there should not be a reward for living together as one family. She senses unseen hands behind all these killings. She puts it this way in her below conversation with Gambo:

Wabiti: Tell your people in power, when you see them that they must try and settle the matter of the herdsmen and farmers, or many people will die. I have been through this, and it is not a matter of cattle ranch or route to graze. I see the Fulani herdsmen as puppets...strung together and controlled by inviable hands...They must know that it is the angered wild foliage of leaves that often fuels a burning bush the most (Yerima, 2019, 56).

People with a strong superego like Ama and Wabiti are likely to have problems in life. They may be frustrated or suffer disappointments in life as De Berg affirms as follows:

... This explains what the psychological badness of moral goodness consists of if we try to be too good, we shall be punished by our superego and become unhappy. For none of us is perfect, we are all 'sinners. Only saints can live like saints (and usually they do not manage either). From a psychoanalytic perspective, therefore, moral goodness is good only up to a point; the demands of the superego always need to be counterbalanced by those of the id and relativized by the ego's acceptance of man's imperfection (2003, 53).

The preceding citation is not saying that people should not attempt to act morally but since we all have these urges within us to be morally good, it is of utmost importance that this is done as realistically as possible so that we do not fall victim to our strong superego. For example, Ama and Wabiti cannot strike a balance between their urge and the demands of society and, as such, they end up becoming frustrated with their various faiths. The conscious forces of society require Reverend John to be submissive and loyal; but, his inability to strike a balance between his inner urges and the demand of his faith costs him his life. Wabiti's inability to find a middle ground between marriage and her children's needs ultimately resulted in the tragic loss of their lives as well.

Mr. and Mrs. Pious are a metaphor for the numerous corrupt government officials who are benefitting from these insecurity challenges and human rights abuses while the poor masses are suffering for their greed. Ama and Wabiti are like every other mother in Chibok, Ede, Benue, and Dapchi in the Southern and Northern parts of Nigeria whose daughters and sons were killed and abducted from schools, churches, mosques, markets, and streets and the government is doing little or nothing toward their recovery. Pari and Kingi are like every girl-child in Nigeria and Africa as a whole who is being maimed and raped and are also going through trauma and psychological depression as a result of the violation and abuses of human rights. Ibrahim, Garga, Fulani herdsmen,

and the dreaded boys who attacked, kidnapped, raped, burnt, and killed thousands of people including worshippers and their religious leaders in Mubi, Birom, Maiduguri, and Uba villages in the texts are also similar to the deliberate destruction of worship centers (churches and mosques) in Madalla, Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, Yobe, Taraba, Jos, and Maiduguri by Boko Haram extremists in Nigeria. Every text is a product of the dramatist's creative imagination. It encapsulates his/her general philosophy about life, his/her worldview, and his/her personal experiences in life. A dramatist uses his/her characters to speak his/her mind. It is therefore always necessary for the playwright to establish true-to-life characters that are suitable to the premeditated message.

Another thing that is deployed by Yerima in these plays and it is crucial in understanding not only the characters, but the playwright's philosophical dispositions, is the omniscient style. In this type of style, the narrator is not identifiable but only his/her voice is present. The voice remains with the characters in their public and private, narrating their activities, utterances, and even meditations to the reader. It is vital to make free, unbiased comments on the actions, motives, and thoughts of the characters objectively. This style is important to the psychoanalyst because it opens to him/her the psychological personality of the characters which s/he interprets and analyzes.

Furthermore, stream of consciousness is another style adopted by Yerima in the plays to reveal his characters' inner thoughts and reflections of his characters. Characters' mental agitations, psychological dilemmas, and moral confusion are all explicated by this technique. It gives the audience a comprehensive picture of the psychological makeup of a character, his/her internal strengths and weaknesses, and his/her state of mind. It also aids in identifying and analyzing the characters and, by extension, the dramatist's psyche. As a result of the aforementioned device, there is palpable evidence of authorial intrusion in the plays. For instance, when Reverend John dies as a result of his encounter with the dreaded boys (Boko Haram), the playwright describes Tada who feels grief-stricken by the sudden death of John. The deceased was not only his cousin but also was newly posted to Uba as a Junior Reverend narrated as follows: "Mubi! Wayo Allah! How about my little cousin? He was just posted to Uba as Junior Reverend" (Yerima, 2016, 19). Again, when Chafe died as a result of a Herdsmen attack in Taraba, Yerima describes Wabiti's feelings in the following manner: "Am I still fit to be a mother? I should have listened to their pleas not to stay here. But, no...I allowed my head to rule our destinies" (Yerima, 2029, 26).

The dramatist skillfully goes into the inner recesses of his characters' minds and tells us about their reservations and wishful desires. Another example of this intrusion is when Ama decides to kill Ibrahim for inflicting pain and sorrow on the whole community and for violating their daughter. The playwright describes her like this:

Ama: First, in my dream, I saw you in a blaze of flames... burning by the fire I lit. In my pain, I want you to roast by the fire you have lit...fried...cut into little pieces...and when your spirit has left you, your heart will be gouged out. You turned our once peaceful land into a fireball from hell. Like a cursed maddened wild bull, you stormed, raged, raped, burnt, and wasted. In your false moment of self-glory, you forgot that if one throws a stone into the murky water, it splatters mud all over him. See how drenched in stench your damned soiled soul is. Coated in your tomfoolery, get ready to burn. See how well you fail bound by Scramouuvu. The gods of Askirau-Uba guide me with this blood I am about to shed. (She hurries in and comes out with a rope, and a knife.) Now I shall cure the world of a harbinger of nightmares. Ibrahim! Haa, the fool is asleep. (She begins to tie his feet. She cuts some rope and ties his hands together. She turns his face up.) I shall cut your body into little pieces as your people did to Vero's husband. I shall slit your throat like a

ram fit for Sallah (as she bends down to cut his throat, Tada appears) (Yerima, 2016, 56).

Additionally, due to the actions of Wabiti's late husband, Hamajam, who betrayed Garga by disclosing his cattle rustling scheme to the *HISBA* Police in Smaila, resulting in Garga's capture and the loss of his foot, Garga makes the fateful choice to take the lives of both Wabiti and her children narrated as follows: "I walk with a stick today because Hamajam rattled. I, a once beautiful Wadaabe man, with one foot. By Allah, his family will pay" (Yerima, 2019, 14). By intruding into the characters' discourse to explain a situation, more information on what is received or why a character behaves or thinks the way s/he does is clarified.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

In my exploration of the themes of insecurity and human rights abuses in contemporary Africa through the lens of Yerima's plays titled *Pari* and *Hendu*, the paper has delved into the complexities of the African human experience. This examination has brought to light various dimensions of the issue, underscoring the urgency for concrete action. The plays vividly depict the multifaceted nature of insecurity in Africa, ranging from political instability, religious conflicts, and ethnic tensions to economic hardship. Insecurity not only threatens the lives and properties of the African people but also undermines the social fabric and stability of nations.

The characters in the plays experience various forms of human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, gender-based violence, and discrimination. These violations reflect the harsh realities many Africans face, particularly women and minority groups. The root causes of insecurity and human rights abuses in Africa are multifaceted, including corrupt governance, lack of economic opportunities, historical injustices, and external factors such as neocolonialism. These systemic issues need to be addressed holistically in order to bring about lasting change. Yerima's plays emphasize the importance of considering the cultural and social contexts when addressing these issues. African societies are diverse and unique, and solutions should be tailored to the specific needs of each region.

The implications of the points discussed in this paper are profound and have far-reaching consequences for the African continent. Insecurity and human rights abuses threaten not only the wellbeing of the population, but also the prospects for sustainable development, economic growth, and political stability. The lack of social cohesion resulting from insecurity and human rights abuses can hinder community development, as people are forced to prioritize survival over social progress. Pervasive insecurity discourages foreign investments, which are crucial for economic development. Human rights abuses, especially against women and marginal groups, limit the full participation of the population in the workforce, thereby affecting overall productivity. Political instability can lead to power struggles, coups, and a breakdown of law and order, further exacerbating insecurity and human rights abuses.

The paper contributes by gripping narratives that reflect the complex web of insecurity and human rights abuses in Africa. The plays highlight the experiences of two women, Ama and Wabiti, as they navigate the turbulent waters of a society rife with corruption, violence, and abuse of power. Yerima's work contributes to the discourse on these issues by humanizing the victims and providing a platform for their voices to be heard. The play serves as a mirror to contemporary African society, forcing audiences to confront the harsh realities faced by many. Furthermore, the plays underscore the importance of artistic expression in advocating for human rights. Through the vivid characters and compelling storytelling, the plays demonstrate how literature can be a catalyst for social change.

It challenges stereotypes and fosters empathy, making it a valuable tool for raising awareness about human rights issues in Africa.

This paper recommends that African nations must prioritize good governance, transparency, and accountability. This includes strengthening democratic institutions, combating corruption, and ensuring the rule of law. African governments should also invest in conflict resolution mechanisms and peacebuilding initiatives. The paper also recommends that regional organizations and the African Union should play a more active role in preventing and mediating conflicts. Initiatives that promote economic development such as infrastructure projects, job creation, and poverty alleviation programs are essential for addressing the root causes of insecurity. African nations should engage in international partnerships to address issues such as neocolonialism and external interference, thereby promoting a more balanced and equitable global order.

The paper therefore also concludes by emphasizing the importance of addressing the critical issues plaguing the African continent. Concomitantly, Yerima's plays contribute significantly to the discourse by humanizing the victims and providing a platform for their voices. They underscore the urgency of the challenges and the need for holistic, context-specific, and collaborative solutions. By implementing the recommended policies, African nations can take significant steps toward a more secure, prosperous and rights-respecting future.

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