



Religion and Cultural Dynamism in Ahmed Yerima's *Drugga and Lanpapa*

Oludolapo Ojediran*
Fakayode Abolade†

Abstract

*Religion and culture are like the two faces of a coin that are inseparable. Culture can arguably be said to be the mother of religion, that is, culture birthed religion. Consequently, this paper examined how Ahmed Yerima explores religion and cultural aesthetics through the use of certain performative elements such as ritual, language, music, festivals, spectacles, etc. to showcase the aesthetics of the belief. Through textual analysis of Ahmed Yerima's plat-texts, *Drugga and Lanpapa*, the cultural and religious aesthetics were showcased. From the analysis of the texts, one discovered that the contending issues of religious superiority over culture have alluded to the gradual eroding of the African indigenous religion, which has been tagged as barbaric and questionable in its practice. The paper concluded that, with Yerima's selected play-texts as examined in this paper, culture remains, shared, symbolic and dynamic in nature whereby religion be it Islam and Christianity take the place of morality. However, the dynamism of culture does not affect the deeper level of people's beliefs like ethics, morals, and religious practices. Humanity is imprinted on the face of culture, and anything that is opposed to humanity is not culture; rather, it is anti-culture.*

Keywords: *Culture, Religion, African Play-texts, Aesthetics.*

Introduction

Religion and cultural aesthetics are interwoven in human civilisation throughout history. Religion can be termed as a set of beliefs, values, and practices that are related with a particular deity, supernatural power, or higher being. Cultural aesthetics, on the other hand, refer to the artistic, intellectual, and creative expressions of a particular culture, including its music, literature, visual arts, and fashion. Religion and cultural aesthetics have a deep and intertwined history. Many religious traditions have influenced and been influenced by the aesthetics of the cultures in which they developed. For example, the Islamic tradition has

*University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Email: ojedirano@yahoo.co.uk

†University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

produced some of the most exquisite examples of calligraphy, geometry, and architecture, which are deeply rooted in the cultural aesthetics of the Arab and Persian worlds.

It is imperative to note that every society has its own cultural practises that run through their daily activities and behaviours. However, it will be appropriate to include religion as part of the culture of a particular people or society because it relates to their mode of communication with their creator or a Supreme Being. This is ascertained by Malinowski (7) who observes that “culture is an integral aspect of man.” Culture exists in a tripartite form; partially human, partially spiritual, and partially materialistic. According to the humanistic perspective, culture is made up of concepts, morality, laws, knowledge, values, and so forth. From a spiritual perspective, it includes religious practises and beliefs. In contrast to natural objects, materialistic perspective of artefacts, archaeological ruins, and manufactured items.

It could be deduced that in contrast to natural resources, culture is made up of humanistic concepts, beliefs, values, knowledge, philosophy, laws, morals, and materialistic commodities. Ilesanmi (11) opines that “Culture is presented not only by what we do or make but in a thousand other ways that will include: the various alteration of vegetation, soil, landforms, bedrocks and even underlying formations”. Therefore, the physical environment provides the keys to our style of thoughts and manner of doing things. The manners in which we experience the world provide the explanation for our ways of worshipping, trading, assigning roles, using or misusing power, etc.

Culture is not static; every element of stagnation is ruled out. Culture in its real sense is not irrational or illogical. Rather, it always advances from a condition of relative imperfection to a state of relative perfection. It is important to remember that every country, every level of civilization, and every individual learns about the world and becomes an expert in its laws and principles by virtue of their cultural background. Culture, in the words of Alaph (28), is the opened, read, and comprehended pages of the "book of life," which, when absorbed by the individual, becomes his identity. The survival and progress of humanity depend on culture, without culture, a person cannot be considered a human being. This also mirrors Chiamaka and Nicholas (1) in their definition of culture that:

Culture in its broadest sense, is a way of life fashioned by a people in their collective endeavour to live and come to term with their total environment. It is the sum of their arts, their science and all the social institutions, including their system of beliefs and rituals. . . such values are often expressed through the people’s song, rites, these varieties of artistic activity have come to symbolise the meaning of the word, culture.

Culture is shaped by humanity, and anything that is opposed to humanity is not culture; rather, it is anti-culture. Culture has an impact on and modifies every aspect of human existence. In the real sense, culture is part of who we are. Therefore, religion and culture are like two faces of a coin that is inseparable. Culture can be said to be the mother of religion as

analysed in Ahmed Yerima's *Lanpapa and Drugga* that deal with cultural and religious dynamism.

About the Playwright, Ahmed Yerima

Ahmed Parker Yerima is one of the 21st Century most prolific playwrights in Nigeria. He hails from Edo State, Nigeria and he is involved in so many theatrical activities combined with his work of lecturing. He served as the Head of Nigerian National Troupe and National Art Theatre respectively. Yerima has the ability to capture and re-enact many Nigerian cultural, religious, social, historical and economic issues to readers. Some of his works include but not limited to this few are: *Tuti, Mojagbe, Little Drop, Mojagbe, No Pennies for Mama, Ajagunmale, Osun, Yemoja, Ajidewe, Erelu Kuti, Aetu, Idemili, Lanpapa, Drugga*.

Synopsis of the Selected Play-texts

Drugga

The play *Drugga* is a masquerade and the name of the main character of the play. The plot centers on the family of the late Drugga and the appointment of the new Drugga. The late Drugga's son, Iviki, rejects the title because he is a devout Christian and his faith forbids him from having a double life. He merely wants to give his late father a proper funeral and burial, which goes against local customs because Drugga's death is never mourned until the new Drugga is installed, but ironically, the corpse disappears. Iviki goes into an agreement with the elders that if he ties the red cloth and dances, he will be left alone to do as he wishes, the elders of the land set a trap to ensure that the right man becomes the new Drugga. Ignorantly, Iviki invites his Christian brothers to mourn the death of his father, but bees invaded the gathering. Through this, Yerima's tragic play exposes old secrets that strained and tested familial bonds whereby there is the clash of faiths that leads to cultural and religious misunderstanding.

Lanpapa

Lanpapa is a satirical play that deals with a masquerade that comes out once in a year, when the land is soiled with atrocities. *Lanpapa* centres on religion and tradition, greed and avarice through the characters of Limomu. Through the narration of Tijani and Semiu, readers get to know that *Lanpapa* enters the mosque with its masked head and kills Baba Jelili which makes Limomu angry and he threatens to take the issue to any length. Despite all efforts and pleas to make Limomu do some rituals in order to avoid any form of calamity, he refuses as he sees it as a taboo in Islam. Calamity starts within the play when Abass, Limomu's cousin dead body is brought for burial. While Limomu buries him in the Islamic way, the traditional worshippers refuse to allow because he belongs to them. While Limomu is refusing, he becomes more confused when the death news of his son, Sule's is brought to him. The traditional worshippers appear again to demand for Abass's body and to get what belongs to them through the ritual rites. He obliges and Limomu is asked to also swallow the power from Abass which makes him lose his religious belief as a Muslim. However, Yerima presents Limomu's family as being engrossed in greed and avarice which eventually leads to different death in the play.

Religion and Cultural Dynamism in Ahmed Yerima's *Lanpapa* and *Drugga*

Ahmed Yerima replicates religion and culture as a resourceful material through which he interrogates and evaluates the society in his plays such as *Igatibi*, *Owiwi*, *Orisa Ibeji*, *Abobaku* amongst others. The sensitivity attached to religion has made it to generate lots of issues and religion intolerance especially amongst the people practicing the religion. However, the playwright is saddled with the responsibility of replicating the societal issues and concern without deviating or making one religion to be superior to the other. Rather, Yerima as a playwright makes the readers and audience to believe that no religion is worth dying for and people should learn how to endure each other when it comes to such issue in the society.

Religion and culture are major themes in the selected plays. While the playwright focuses on the societal issues which imbued their culture as a medium of reflecting contemporary issue within the ambience of the indigenous art form, he also made both as symbolic. Ahmed Yerima can be viewed as one of the writers that uses culture to tease out contemporary issues through traditional aesthetics. While the contending issues of religious superiority have alluded to the gradual eroding of the African indigenous religion, this same religion has also been misconstrued to be barbaric and questionable in its practice. However, in discussing African religion in relation to cultural practices, certain elements such as ritual, language, music, festivals, spectacles etc. are deployed in order to showcase the aesthetics of the belief through the selected Yerima's play-texts as it interweaves creativity with culture and religion.

Ritual

Ritual is a sequence of events carried out in a predetermined order. It is a ceremonial act that connects an individual and community to the sacred. Ibrahim (83) asserts that "rituals are belief, culture and religion put into practice for the purpose of ensuring some control over the ancestors that determined the circumstances that led to the people existence". According to Ibrahim, a ritual is a series of events that include symbolic gestures, chants, words, actions, music, dance, or objects performed in a predetermined order. These activities can be mandated by a community's traditions, including a religious community. Also, ritual in its cultural expression, is a synchronization of many performative genres, and is often ordered by dramatic structure, a plot, frequently involving sacrifice or self-sacrifice. Layiwola (2000, p. 244) affirms that "ritual is a pattern of behaviour associated with religious beliefs and practices which can be sacred. Again, it also forms an integral part of African society to ensure that the society survives for generations to trail behind it".

However, the ritual theatre expresses phenomenon of man's interaction with nature which informs "rituals and festivities for spiritual and mental respite" (Ododo, 31). This theatre form mirrors the life of the community in trading, farming, and social governance and so on, and the role of indigenous worship rituals in these activities; and it is usually articulated in plays. According to Turner (1968, p. 159), ritual is opined as "a prescribed formal behaviour for occasion, having reference to beliefs in mystical or non-imperial beings or power, a corpus of beliefs and practices performed by a specific cult association". Ogunbiyi (183) further clarifies the points by saying that:

In ritual, man attempts to communicate directly with the supernatural, with the world that forces his control. Communication he may make to the priest or the medium is not to that person but through him to the spirit and it is through the medium that the supplicant is addressed by the spirit.

Ritual is therefore a means of communication between the physical and spirit worlds. These are the acts that are part of the sacred side of African festivals, which are typically only displayed to a restricted group of people in accordance with local customs.

Awo: ...and I decided to help him. I took him to my master. We gave him something to hold and he was to return it when the time was up. But he died before he could return it. (p.42).

Awo: Haa...good. Now you remember. Abass gave him up in exchange for stupendous wealth. He was to be rich for twenty years. He only lived for five years. Now he broke his covenant with us. His death is a big blow to our reputation. (pp. 43-44)

From the above excerpt, Yerima is able to bring out the rituals and its relation to the physical world, Hadji Abass in *Lanpapa* killed his father for money ritual, since he dies without living up to the years they agreed on, his spirit is called upon in order to return what he was given when he was alive. There is the ritual rite being performed at the point of getting what the traditional worshippers want from him.

In *Drugga*, it is also impossible for a custodian of custom “Drugga” to die and journey to the world beyond without having a successor, even though Itoe is ignorant, he is being used as the sacrificial lamb for the ritual process to be completed in order to set everything happening right.

Pade: No, our burden is twofold. We also seek an Ibaba, who will carry the Drugga to the land of the ancestors. Do you know of such a person? A young man fit to carry the burden of life? A strong pair of feet who can navigate the narrow path between the living and the dead, and the fill us, the living, with the spirit of steadfastness, unity and hope of a continuous regeneration. Do you know of any? (p.14)

...

Pade: (*In a whisper.*) Shii! Not a word. No one can see them except you and I, go in and welcome them. They have come to take you all. Not a word, son. Not even a grunt or a sigh. Soon you will forget what you have seen. Son, not a word of remembrance is to be uttered. Rise and follow the wind, son. (ITOE *rises slowly and walks into the hut.*) (p.16)

It has been noted that Yerima views ritual in Yoruba culture as a way to resolve disputes and promote communal rejuvenation. The playwright's reflection in the chosen play centres on ritual aesthetics, deification, possession, and socio-religious activities. In *Lanpapa*, Yerima

created and showcased many warnings through offering of sacrifice given to Limomu to avert the impending calamity, but he did not yield. Gbale and Iya's warnings on rituals were supposed to be enough for him:

GBALE: Nothing. Please continue. I must find the fool of a son to shield him from the wrath of the gods.

. . .

GBALE: To offer two chickens in exchange for you and my son, Tijani . . . (p. 26 & 27).

The ritual that was supposed to be carried out either by self or by others was turned down by Limomu, thereby creating a friction between the gods and the living.

Language

Language is an essential aspect of culture. There is a symbiotic relationship between culture and language. The culture of a people has a tremendous influence on their language. Societal norms, customs, beliefs, values, fears, hopes and aspirations are infused into language. In this way, language preserves and perpetuates them, reinforcing their usage by reflecting them in its oral and written forms. Language bears the burden of a people's history because in it, its oral and written forms as well as in its nuances, are buried in the people's past, present and hope for the future as well as their taboos, their attitudes and feelings towards sex, race, gender, religion, politics, etc. According to Jowitt (49), "If a language is something strong and enduring, it is nourished by its roots and its roots are in the people who habitually used it."

Language is a fundamental component of civilisation. Cultural identity, values, beliefs, norms, customs, and practices are transmitted from one generation to the next through the use of language. Humans mostly connect with one another through language. It enables people to communicate their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and experiences. People may express their opinions and explain complicated ideas through language, which helps to advance and diversify cultural knowledge. Language is a fundamental component of culture, shaping and reflecting the way people interact, understand the world, and express their unique cultural identities. It serves as a conduit for passing down traditions, values, and knowledge, making it an indispensable aspect of human societies. Balogun, (70) asserts that language is regarded as 'the hallmark of people and their culture' as it 'encompasses their worldview, custom, way of life and history in general'. It is pertinent to note that people who share a common language often share a sense of belonging, fostering a strong cultural bond. Language is essential for preserving a culture's historical narratives, myths, stories, and traditions. Through oral and written communication, communities pass down their collective wisdom, experiences, and knowledge from one generation to the next.

Yerima's assumed intention in the two plays is to expose the effects of abandoning one's traditional religion. For example in *Lanpapa*,

Limomu: Yes. Kabiru, son of Ajibike Elenpe, my own flesh and blood, defiled my mosque in his stupid shredded attire! The village buffon, who calls himself a sacred being. I shall deal with him.

Gbale: Ssh! Limomu... not even in whisper will you mention his name that way ewo!

Limomu: But why?

Gbale: No man born on earth must claim to know the sacred carrier of Lanpapa. It is forbidden. That knowledge belongs only to the initiates. Not even the carrier is supposed to mention it to a soul... or else... (pp. 26-27)

Also, in *Drugga*,

Iviki: Nonsense. Father. Nothing can stop the coffin from getting here.

Tomorrow, I shall bury my father the way the great men are buried in the city, and he will be at the right hand of God tomorrow night in heaven.

Pade: Heaven? Where is that? Even now as we speak, your father dines with Jimga, his late father, with all the Drugga welcoming him to his final resting home. Heaven? (chuckles again.) They watch you with pride as you prepare to sit on the revered throne of the Drugga.

Iviki: Never! I shall not be a part of darkness. All things of the past are behind me. Gone. Forgotten. I am the new, my life is given to Christ!

Pade: We shall see.

Iviki: Yes. Either way, I shall not see or embrace any evil which undermines the creator. No!

Pade: The main difference is that you live by faith and we live by fate. But whatever you call him, he watches over us all. In our case he lives by our names. In yours, you live by his name. (p.17)

In transmitting the message, Yerima relies heavily on the culture, tradition and religion of the people whose life experiences are mirrored.

Limomu: How about Baba Jelili? He killed him. You told me.

Gbale: Did I? No one can prove that. It can be said that Jelili's evil actions killed him. Lanpapa's task is to cleanse the land. And that is exactly what he is doing. (pp.56-57).

The use of these three "culture, tradition and religion" by Yerima has implication on the language as this unfolds old secrets, faiths clash among others.

Iviki: We shall see. But touch not the anointed of God.

Pade: Despise not your people, those who gave you life. (pp.16-17)

According to the interpretation of the plays *Drugga* and *Lanpapa*, there is a synergy between culture and people in every community. An important part of understanding the impact of a

significant social issue in typical Yoruba community is understanding language's function as a tool for cultural projection. This shows that language is a crucial tool for enabling individuals to fully exercise their rights (to inquire about societal concerns) and engage in democratic society. While the story of *Drugga* and *Lanpapa* is for continuity of culture and the lamentation of a dying tradition, the cultural dynamism is used as a deliberate attempt to reject the negativity associated with traditional culture via the language use, theme and symbolic happenings in the texts. However, language in traditional African drama is expressed in the traditional speech convention of proverbs and idioms which celebrates the Yoruba culture and to know more of each character. For example, the dialogue between Limomu and Gbale presents him as a stubborn, arrogant and unyielding man:

...

GBALE: To offer two chickens in exchange for you and my son, Tijani. I hope it is not too late. I need some money

LIMOMU: talk to me before you hurry out. What if a man claims he knows? What will happen to him?

GBALE: He will lose something very dear to him

LIMOMU: No devil has that power to touch me. I am the Limomu . . . the faithful messenger of Allah. And Tijani is my faithful follower. Nothing can touch him too.

GBALE: (*Rises*) I must go. I need money for the chickens.

LIMOMU: Not a kobo of mine will be spent on appeasing the devil (p. 27)

.....

However, readers see the conversation between Limomu and Gbale who is afraid for his son, Tijani after the encounter with the Lanpapa masquerade as a display of cultural understanding which makes it evident that some cultural norms and tradition cannot be abandoned. While Limomu is been adamant on not appeasing the masquerade, Gbale's understanding and believe in culture is presented. Despite the warnings given to Limomu, his believe in Islam makes him see the sacrifice as a waste and having two different beliefs.

Music/Songs

In our culture, music is an unavoidable product. Idolor (10) states that "music is a concept, design, and product of and for mankind." It is a sign of its important roles and functions in their overall way of life because it is found in African communities. This implies that music has a function in any community, but that African societies value music above all others. Music is one of the most essential aspects of civilization.

Okafor (45) defines traditional music as "the indigenous music of a people. It is a music which is of course and integral part of all important states of a person's life, especially at puberty, marriage and death." This can be limited to how far people can enjoy the traditional music through watching, participating, interacting and observing the performance of such music. Yerima uses songs to project his artistic ingenuity in words. He uses songs in different ways; as a dirge, warning, and chants amongst others. From the beginning of the play,

Lanpapa is introduced to the reader as a fearful and cleansing masquerade through the songlike chants. Yerima eulogises Lanpapa that:

Lanpapa o!
E wawo Egunbami!
Egunbami do de!
BalogunEgun do de o!
Jagunlabi de
Ololu de
Lanpapayo
Ololuyo!
Egunbami de!
E fesefe!
E ya, eya go fun Iku
E ya, e ya go fun Arun (p.9)

Lanpapa!
Come and see my Father's Masquerade
My Father's masquerade arrives
BalogunEgun awaits you
Jagunlabi has arrives
Ololu has arrives
Lanpapa appears
Ololu appears
My Father's masquerade arrives
Are you amused
Depart, Depart for death
Depart, Depart for sickness

Warning song

Eni to bafoju di Lanpapa
Awowo a wo!
Enibafoju di oro,
power
Oro Agbe!
Lanpapa de!
Iku de!
Lanpapa de!
Balogun de!
Lanpapa de!
Jagunlabiyo!

Anyone who underestimate Lanpapa
shall be consumed
anyone who underestimates occultic
Shall be consumed
Lanpapa arrives
Death arrives
Lanpapa arrives
Balogun arrives
Lampapa arrives
Jagunlabi arrives

Dirge

Ogundele O!
Omoogunmodede!
Idile re ndaro e
Eni re lo
Ode're lo (p. 34)

Ogundele o
Ogunmodede's child
your family mourns you
a good person is gone
a good hunter is gone

Yerima induces in the listener's state of mind the reality of music through words.

For example:

When peace like a river, attendeth my soul,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.
Refrain: it is well with my soul,
It is well; it is well, with my soul (p.40)

Traditional Festival

There exist different kinds of festivals all over the world. This is done in order to salvage the depreciation of our culture and tradition. According to Ogunba and Irele (1978) cited in Adaku, (3) observe that:

Traditional festival is an indigenous cultural institution, a form of art nurtured on the African soil over the century and which has therefore, developed distinctive features and whose techniques are sometimes totally different from the borrowed form now practiced by many of our contemporary artists.

One of the essences of cultural festivals is that, different people converge, relates and learn about each other through cultural events. Nigeria is a home of rich and diverse cultures which observes one of the highest numbers of festivals across the world. Some of these festivals include: Osun- osogbo festival, Argungun fishing festival and of course Masquerade Festival. In Nigeria, masquerade performance is a cultural and religious event amongst the Igbo, Yoruba and many other tribes. As Damisa (1) identifies that “Masquerade art is not new to the Africans, it is prominent in most cultures as an aspect of their festivals and a means of communication, information, education and entertainment.” Dosumu (37) reveals that:

The masquerade serves as a representative of a personality and medium between the dead and the living. The masqueraders are religiously humanized because they are ancestors that came from the world of the dead to minister to the living and treated with relevance.

The culture of ancestral worship cannot be over-emphasized. In Africa, Nigeria in particular, masquerade festival is prominently embraced as part of custom, heritage and cultural ingredient. Masquerade is called different names, the Hausa reference it as Doodo, Igbo, egwugwu while the Yoruba call it Eegun or Egungun. Akande (4) also reiterates that masquerade (egungun) is being referred to as “Ara-orun-kin-kin (Heaven dweller) by proper and typical Yoruba people. Folarin (234-235) states that Egungun masquerades play the role of handling down tradition and upholding moral canons by putting society into contact with the ancestors Yerima pictures Lanpapa as a masquerade that appears once in a year when the community has gathered new dirty, filthy, smelly vestures for him to wash...again (p. 69). Yerima (6) says:

In my masquerade plays, *Igatibi*, *Odenigbo*, *drugga* and now *Lanpapa*, I seek the knowledge of how the masquerade makes meaning to each of our tribal cultures... while trying to find a space within the socio-cultural, ritual consciousness of a man’s inmate ambition to dominate his immediate environment. And each time, I embark on such exploration, it is shrouded meaning of the unknown- because man continues to hide the true meanings of the masquerade to himself- that emerges to me. A magical unknown... an unexplainable covered up unknown mingling always in the sacred scary folds of the contradiction of existence and the reality of performance. A

performative reality propelled by the activity of a vibrant performance of fast rhythmic music, wild dance steps and loud praise chant against the sacred sensibility of overgrowing religion, ever changing beliefs and of old and new humanity.

In the selected plays, Yerima discusses tradition and festival in line with religion. For example, one of the themes that readers see in *Lanpapa* is the that of religion and tradition that are interwoven whereby the Islamic religion is presented in the character of Limomu who so much believes in the religion that he negates the warnings given to him by the traditional worshippers who saw the calamity that would befall him. While Limomu is supposed to perform some rights, he chooses to disagree with the tradition which is seen as an important part of an average African.

Religion

Musa (1999, p. 29) sees religion as that which is often pathetically seen as a subjective, emotional, psychological and spiritual link between man and the elements in the cycle of life. Musa further buttresses that religion as a phenomenon of man's existence is also the bedrock of man's numerous phenomena. It is man's culture as well as his moral ethics of generation and regeneration. Religion is a social phenomenon as it is a complete process of social habitation, mutual understanding, peaceful co-existence and critical reflection on the 'here' and the 'hereafter.' A remarkable component of the human intellect and existence is religion. Religion is defined as the faith in and adoration of a supernatural being, usually one or many personal gods. It can also be understood as a lifetime commitment made by an individual or group of people. Adesina (283) opines that “religion is a moral and spiritual core that must bind and hold together everything that we embark on...” As a result, religion occupies a significant space in a person's life.

Drugga is a perfect example of people's intense fixation with culture and religion. Iviki is a devout Christian who dedicates his time, energy, and actions to his faith. Religion guides all of his decisions and deeds. Watanabe (17) posits that, “religion shows men that do not live by reason, men that cannot calculate and act rationally in pursuit of self-interest and common goal, to these people religion provides compelling answers”. In the instance of Limomu, this is precisely true. Yerima purposefully presents religion as one of the essential condiments to expose Limomu's inner makeup. Examining the influences and manifestations of religiosity in Limomu's personality will be very practical. According to the premise of the play, Limomu has the choice to adhere to Islam or the traditional religion, but his avarice prevents him from doing so.

Drugga's passing paved the way for a new Drugga. As far as custom is concern, his son Iviki was to succeed his father; however, as a devout Christian, he had little connection to his people's customs. The elders refused to accept Iviki's request to bury his father in a Christian manner, claiming that since his father had served them, the corpse belonged to them and they stole the corpse. Yerima used Christian, Islamic, and traditional cultures to highlight the conflicts that exist between these religions and cultures in our society.

Conclusion

In the plays, *Lanpapa* and *Drugga*, Yerima exemplifies religion and culture as an inextricable related term. In the case of traditional Yoruba society, their cultural practices emanated from their cosmos. The way they consider the order in the universe is based on their environmental and experiential interactions with the world around them. They believed that, society needs organization, from the lowest level (family) to the highest (national) level. That culture is shares, dynamic and symbolic explained the multi-cultural nature of African culture does not affect it at all as a particular culture can exist in another culture and still maintain its originality. The dynamic essence of culture makes it prone to changes, thereby creating room for varieties. Through the languages, themes, plot structure, setting, characterisation and interpretations, religion and cultural dynamism are explored whereby the African societal belief is seen. However, no matter the dynamic occurrence in our indigenous culture, it does not affect the deeper level of their beliefs like ethics, morals, and religious practices. As readers view ritual and performance in the exploration of religion and culture in Yerima's plays, it is imperative to note that an average African man view ritual from a religious perspective as this stems from a repetitive and stylised ways of doing things. Therefore, it is appropriate to define culture as the entire way that a human society reacts to its surroundings, which includes the social norms and values that define a community, as well as the customs that define a social group and their interactions.

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