

**WAR MEMORY AND NATIONAL TRAUMA IN WALE OGUNYEMI'S *THE FLOOD*
AND AHMED YERIMA'S *ECHOES OF WAR***

BY

Emerald Osarenoma SAMUEL (Miss)

ART2100341

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE,
FACULTY OF ARTS,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY.**

NOVEMBER, 2025

**WAR MEMORY AND NATIONAL TRAUMA IN WALE OGUNYEMI'S *THE FLOOD*
AND AHMED YERIMA'S *ECHOES OF WAR***

BY

Emerald Osarenoma SAMUEL (Miss)

ART2100341

**AN ORIGINAL ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
LITERATURE, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE BACHELOR OF ARTS
(B A) DEGREE IN ENGLISH AND LITERATURE, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

NOVEMBER, 2025

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this study was carried out by, **Emerald Osarenoma SAMUEL (MISS)** with Matriculation Number **ART2100341** in the Department of English and Literature, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, under my supervision .

PROF. (MRS.) H.O. OKOLOCHA
Project Supervisor

DATE

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty, whose guidance and unwavering support have been my source of strength, particularly during my most challenging moments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to Almighty God, whose grace, wisdom, and strength have been my constant guide throughout the course of this research and my academic journey. Without His divine help, this work would not have been possible.

My sincere appreciation goes to my project supervisor, Prof. (Mrs.) H. O. Okolocha, for her invaluable guidance, patience, and constructive criticisms that greatly enhanced the quality of this work. I am equally thankful to all my lecturers in the Department of English and Literature for their dedication, encouragement, and for imparting knowledge that has shaped my intellectual growth.

Special appreciation goes to my wonderful parents, Mr. Alexander Samuel and Mrs. Bridget Samuel, whose prayers, sacrifices, and unwavering love have been my strongest motivation. To my dear siblings, Sebastian, Elvis and Nero ; I thank you for your support, understanding, and constant encouragement.

To myself, I owe deep gratitude for the strength, discipline, and resilience that carried me through this journey. Writing this project tested both my intellect and endurance. I am proud of the woman I have become through this process and I am deeply grateful for the growth it inspired.

Lastly, I am deeply thankful to my friends: Uche, Ebube and Abdul-Jabbar who cheered me on. Your friendship and encouragement made this journey a memorable and fulfilling one.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the representation of war memory and national trauma in Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood* and Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War*. It explored how both playwrights employ dramatic art to expose the lingering scars of conflict and the struggle for national healing. Through close textual analysis, the research showed that Ogunyemi used symbolism and myth to portray a community haunted by guilt and divine retribution, while Yerima utilized ritual and performance but focuses on silence as a symbol of unresolved suffering. Both plays transformed memory into resistance, revealing how the burden of war continues to shape Nigeria's collective conscience. The study concluded that theatre functions as a medium of processing collective trauma, remembrance and renewal, transforming pain into awareness and tragedy into moral reflection. Ultimately, both playwrights affirmed that true healing begins when a nation remembers

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Study

This study aims to explore how dramatic devices namely: symbolism, ritual and performance, are used to represent memory, grief, disillusionment, and the search for meaning in the aftermath of violence. It aims to uncover how these theatrical elements become vehicles for healing, remembrance, and collective self-examination. The study also examines how war memory and trauma are artistically encoded and ethically represented revealing how both play rights deploy history and memory as tools for societal reflection cultural healing and the confrontation of national amnesia.

1.2 Scope of Study

The study is limited to the analysis of two selected Nigerian plays, Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood* and Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War*. It focuses on how these playwrights present the effects of war on individuals and on the nation. The research looks at how the plays show pain, memory, and trauma caused by war, and how these experiences affect the way people see themselves and their country. It also examines how the playwrights use events from Nigeria's history to create their stories. The study does not include other plays written by Ogunyemi or Yerima. It also does not discuss every detail of Nigerian history but focuses only on the parts of history that are shown or reflected in the plays. This allows the research to stay focused and clear, while still showing how history and literature are connected.

1.3 Methodology

The study uses a qualitative and interpretative method. A qualitative method means that the study does not use numbers or statistics. Instead, it looks closely at the words, actions, and ideas in the plays to understand their deeper meaning. The interpretative part means that the plays are carefully read in order to explain what the writers are saying about war, trauma, and national memory. This is done by looking at the themes, characters, language, setting, and how the plays were written. The study uses New Historicism as its guiding theory. New Historicism is a way of reading literature that connects a text to the time and society in which it was written. It helps the researcher to understand how the plays reflect real historical events, political issues, and cultural beliefs in Nigeria. The theory allows us to see how the playwrights respond to war and national problems through their writing. It also helps to show how literature can question or support the ideas and powers that exist in society.

In choosing the texts, the study uses a method called purposive sampling. This means the two plays were picked on purpose, not by chance, because they both deal directly with the theme of war and its effects. These texts are chosen because they are good examples of how Nigerian playwrights write about war and memory. The data used in this research are made up of primary and secondary sources. The primary data are two plays, namely Ogunyemi's *The Flood* and Yerima's *Echoes Of War* themselves, which will be analysed in detail. The secondary data include books, journal articles, and online materials written by scholars, critics, and historians who have studied the authors or similar themes. Also patterns and repeated ideas in the plays, such as the use of silence, dreams, rituals, or historical events are examined and identified. These patterns are used to explain how the plays show the emotional and national pain caused by war. The study also pays attention to how the characters remember or talk about the past, and how these memories affect their actions in the play. Overall, this method helps to show how literature

and history are connected. It also explains how drama can help a society remember the past and think about the future.

1.4 Theoretical Background

New Historicism emerged in the late twentieth century as a method for interpreting literature by linking texts to the political, social, and cultural forces of their time rather than treating them as isolated artefacts. Its official founding intellectual figure is Stephen Greenblatt, whose *Renaissance Self Fashioning* argues that Renaissance writers shaped their identity in relation to authority, religion, and power systems (1–9). Greenblatt introduced the concept that texts carry a "circulation of social energy" meaning they participate actively in ideological exchanges. He insisted that to understand literature fully one must view it alongside other historical documents such as court records, diaries, and official proclamations. The foundational philosophical underpinnings of New Historicism rest in the discourse theory of Michel Foucault. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shows how knowledge and power interlock in institutions and that history is constructed through systems of thought rather than neutral facts (23–45). Foucault's insights about how discourse shapes reality inspired Greenblatt's insistence on reading literary texts as embedded in power structures.

During the 1980s and 1990s, scholars expanded New Historicism beyond early modern British literature into broader global and postcolonial contexts. Louis Montrose coined the phrase "textuality of history and historicity of texts" to emphasise the idea that history and literature share narrative structures (410). Catherine Gallagher alongside Greenblatt edited *Practicing New Historicism* outlining precise methodological steps: archive consultation, juxtaposition of literary and non-literary texts, anecdotal evidence, and subversion studies (5). Brook Thomas defends the ethical dimension of retrieving marginalised voices within archives and reading them as counter

narratives to dominant culture (47). Scholarly debate over New Historicism has been intense. Harold Bloom argued that the approach diminishes literary artistry by reducing narrative complexity to political context and ideology (47). Frank Lentricchia also points to the risk of aesthetic flattening when criticism prioritises power relations over creative expression. Others have warned of relativism since New Historicism sometimes mingles historical narrative with fictional construction to such an extent that the boundary becomes porous. Still advocates maintain its value lies in its capacity to reveal unseen discourses and resurrect suppressed histories.

New Historicism grew methodologically richer as it intersected with trauma studies memory studies and cultural materialism. The rise of trauma theory through scholars, such as Cathy Caruth and Geoffrey Hartman, has invited critics to see texts as spaces where historical wounds are expressed and transmitted across generations. Literary critics began reading trauma narratives not just as plot devices but as psychic sites shaped by history. In African literary scholarship, New Historicism becomes essential in exploring postcolonial identity, national trauma, oral tradition and resistance literature. Scholars, such as Louis Montrose, apply it to postcolonial writers, while others worked with what Rebecca Davies calls synergy between Alter/Native criticism and New Historicism in Nigerian poetry (Davies). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o urges decolonising language and criticism in *Decolonising the Mind* by reclaiming African epistemologies (Ngũgĩ). Critics such as Chinweizu in Nigeria wrote about the decolonisation of African literature and identity in *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature*.

In dramatizing national crisis and memory, New Historicism allows a nuanced reading of Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood* and Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War*. In *The Flood*, Ogunyemi draws from Yoruba cosmology and myth to dramatise national decay and moral crisis. A New

Historicist reading tracks how ritual invocation, flood symbolism and communal judgement echo specific historical events such as coups civil war and political corruption in post-independent Nigeria. In *Echoes of War*, Yerima constructs characters haunted by conflict memory whose fragmented dialogue ritual grief and recuperative silence can be analysed as cultural response to post-war trauma. Applying New Historicism to these texts requires engaging archives such as wartime newspapers legislative speeches eyewitness testimonies NGO reports alongside the scripts themselves. This method highlights how playwrights ritualise memory resist erasure and contribute to national discourse. The plays become not only scripts but historical agents shaping how Nigeria remembers trauma and what moral lessons communities choose to sustain. In the Western academic world New Historicism continues to evolve alongside digital humanities global trauma theory and interdisciplinary cultural studies. Its adaptability enables critics to analyse literature, performance, and media as cultural archives in flux. In Nigeria and broader African contexts New Historicism provides a framework for reading how drama remaps traumatic memory, interrogates power, and intervenes ethically in national healing processes.

Thus, New Historicism's progression from Foucault and Greenblatt through global scholarship to its present relevance in trauma, postcolonial, and performance studies makes it especially appropriate for this research. Its insistence on context, inclusive archives, ideological critique and historical contingency empowers this study to read *The Flood* and *Echoes of War* not just as plays but as unfolding archives of Nigeria's war memory and national trauma.

1.5 Review of Related Scholarship and Justification of Study

This literature review examines critical scholarship on Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood* and Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War*. The focus is on how critics have interpreted the plays' treatment of war memory, ritual symbolism, national trauma and cultural identity. Each discussion explores what

the scholar argues, and then critiques the limitations of their interpretation, identifying gaps that this research aims to fill. Biodun Jeyifo foregrounds *The Flood* within the tradition of Yoruba travelling theatre, emphasising how Ogunyemi employs masquerade, chorus, and communal performance forms to stage moral reflection and social critique (84). His contribution shows the importance of performance culture. However he overlooks how the symbolic flood interrupts linear historical narrative to evoke trauma memory. The research examines how Ogunyemi's ritual language functions as moral archive, not only as performance.

Femi Osofisan critiques *The Flood* for excessive mythic nostalgia, arguing that Ogunyemi substitutes urgent political critique with mythic storytelling (112). Although this insight identifies ideological conservatism, Osofisan ignores how myth may enable layered critique. This study argues that Ogunyemi's symbolic worlds reveal rather than conceal national failure. Olu Obafemi highlights the play's allegorical relationship to postcolonial identity, praising Ogunyemi's command of ideology and cultural language (203). Yet, Obafemi treats the drama at a distance, ignoring the emotional interiority of characters. There is no consideration of how silence or embodied gesture carries memory in performance. Oluwale Aboderin views *The Flood* as moral allegory rooted in spiritual judgement, interpreting the flood as divine justice against communal corruption (45). He captures the moral tone but reads the flood as static metaphor. He fails to explore how the symbol resonates across time within Nigerian history.

Gbemisola Adeoti offers a symbolic interpretation of the play as a communal memory archive, showing how ritual and myth awaken civic conscience (*Muse and Mimesis* 37). While rich in symbolic detail, he does not attend to how live theatre triggers memory in the audience or how the ritual circulates ethical urgency. Emeka Ogu introduces ecological criticism, reading flood imagery as metaphor for political decay and environmental concern (58). His perspective is

innovative but he fails to account for how environmental imagery is enacted theatrically. There is no engagement with stagecraft or audience perception. Chinweizu interprets the play as a direct parable of Nigeria's political failures, connecting the drama to leadership collapse (40). His reading is forceful, yet it renders the play too literal. He treats symbolic metaphor as transparent allegory, missing the play's layered mythic subtext. Nkechi Ude approaches *The Flood* as national lamentation, showing how Ogunyemi reanimates Yoruba myth in response to ethical breakdown (72). Her analysis richly captures emotional resonance but disregards how spatial staging positions audiences within communal memory. Emmanuel Ajibade examines *The Flood* through memory studies, focusing on layered time and intergenerational silence (25). His reading provides insight into trauma transmission, but he does not connect to performative form or spectacle. Chinyere Nwugo interprets the drama as poetic moral history, arguing that Ogunyemi uses lyricism and ritual lyrics to restore ethical balance (90). While attentive to language, she neglects contextual history - how the flood metaphor echoes real postwar political violence.

Gbemisola Adeoti reads *Echoes of War* as testimonial trauma theatre, highlighting how silence, fragmented speech and ritual acts evoke national shame and unresolved memory (*Literary Drama* 38). His work is analytical, but he does not explore how silence and ritual are staged to provoke affect in live performance.

Ratimi Julius Adeoye provides meticulous scene by scene reading, describing how dialogue fragmentation, family conflict, and symbolic repetition mirror Nigeria's civil war (85). His textual analysis is sharp. Yet he omits how gestures, physical blocking or stage space shape the representation of memory as embodied experience. Aderemi Adeoti emphasises emotional interiority rather than overt political allegory. She shows how silence and hesitation become

ethical engagement with memory (121). However, she overlooks the role of ritual invocation and traditional performance codes in structuring reconciliation and memory.

Denis Akoh argues that characters symbolize postwar social identities - soldier, victim, witness; with inherited trauma as seed of national healing (314). His sociological interpretation is effective yet he underplays spiritual and ritual dimensions which embed trauma within public ritual forms. Solomon Ejeke approaches the play as part of Nigerian countercultural theatre, arguing that *Yerima* resists state narratives by foregrounding subaltern voices (Ejeke 59). His frame situates the text socially but relies heavily on Western theory, risking misinterpretation of indigenous theatrical values.

Funke Odukoya explores female experience in the drama, pointing out how women often remain silent or marginalised while acting as ethical witnesses (72). Her feminist lens is strong, but she does not fully situate female silence within broader memory and ritual structures that give silence performance power. Chukwuemeka Nwosu focuses on ancestral invocation and ritual speech as resistance to forgetting. He reads memory as ritualised act of reparation (65). His analysis is compelling, yet he does not connect these ritual elements to narrative pacing or stage affect.

Amina Bello discusses the use of symbolic props - objects of memory such as letters or photographs-as triggers for mourning and historical reckoning (83). Her contribution to prop symbolism is helpful, but she overlooks the actor-audience interaction with these objects in performance space. Eze Ifeoma reads the play through lens of postcolonial healing, suggesting that *Echoes of War* negotiates reconciliation through memory and confession (102). She interprets confession scenes with moral weight, but does not account for how such scenes are modulated through silence and spatial emptiness on stage.

Tara Adesanya analyses how the rhythm of dialogue, songs and silences creates temporal dislocation, engaging memory in nonlinear patterns (47). Her focus on rhythm is valuable but lacks depth concerning traditional ritual forms that structure memory repetition.

These scholars for each play contribute significantly to understanding ritual, symbolic memory, trauma and national identity in *The Flood* and *Echoes of War*. The gaps they leave involve limited attention to live performance context, staging, silence as affect, audience memory activation and interplay of ritual symbol within text and action. This study applies New Historicism to connect textual, performance, spatial, ritual, and archival analysis and thereby explore how these dramas operate as living archives and moral agents in Nigeria's war memory.

1.6 Thesis Statement

The study finds that Ogunyemi's *The Flood* and Yerima's *Echoes of War*, utilize symbolism, ritual, and performance to confront societal amnesia, question political complicity, and advocate for cultural healing in the aftermath of Nigeria's civil war.

CHAPTER TWO

SYMBOLISM IN WALE OGUNYEMI'S *THE FLOOD*

2.1 Introduction to the Context of *The Flood*

Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood* opens not with a bang, but with a brooding silence that hints at a nation bruised, not just by war, but by memory itself. Set in the shadows of the Nigerian Civil War, the play unfolds in a society attempting to stitch itself back together, one ragged thread at a time. The war may be over, but its aftershocks ripple through the landscape - politically, emotionally, spiritually. The title, *The Flood*, is not merely metaphorical; it announces the coming of an overwhelming force of truth, memory and guilt that refuses to be ignored. It calls to mind the biblical flood, a cataclysm that both destroys and purifies. In Ogunyemi's dramatic world, the flood represents the return of buried traumas and the reckoning that must follow. It is the force that washes over false peace and superficial reconciliation, demanding a confrontation with the horrors that the characters and by extension, the nation have tried to forget.

The setting is claustrophobic, almost deliberately so. This is not a battlefield, but a post-war limbo where the psychological debris of conflict litters every conversation, every pause, every ritual. The landscape is haunted by ghosts of the dead, by whispers of betrayal, by a silence that screams louder than war drums. Ogunyemi does not give us overt violence; instead, he stages its aftermath. The ruins we see are not of buildings, but of souls. The war has shifted from physical terrain to internal battlegrounds: memory, guilt, identity. The play's dramaturgy mirrors this psychological state. Characters emerge less as individuals and more as archetypes: wounded veterans, disillusioned citizens, betrayed nationalists: trapped in a national trauma loop. Their dialogues are terse, burdened with subtext, often interrupted by silence or sudden outbursts.

There is a rhythm to their speech, fractured and erratic, mimicking the broken rhythm of a people unsure of how to continue after such devastation. Ogunyemi is not concerned with recounting historical events; rather, he dramatises the emotional residue of war. *The Flood* is memory made flesh, grief given language. It's a national post-mortem conducted not by historians, but by characters whose lives bear the scars of decisions they didn't make but must live with. There is no clear villain, no neat resolution. The enemy is the silence that follows war, the institutional forgetting, the refusal to name the pain.

What Ogunyemi presents, then, is a nation in mourning, but without the rituals of closure. The flood, in this sense, is both promise and threat: it can cleanse, but it can also drown. The opening scenes of the play prepare the audience not for resolution, but for reckoning. The audience is not allowed to watch passively. Like the characters, they must feel the discomfort of remembrance. This is theatre as interrogation, as ritual, as lamentation.

In summary, *The Flood* is not just a play about war. It is a play about what comes after war - when the guns fall silent, but the wounds remain open. It is about the cost of forgetting and the necessity of remembrance. It is about a flood of memory that refuses to recede.

2.2 Symbols and Theatrical Memory in Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood*

Symbols in Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood* function as dramatic tools that carry the burden of memory, binding personal trauma to collective history. The playwright uses these symbols not simply as props, but as living witnesses to a past that refuses to remain buried. Every symbol, whether object, action, or sound, serves as a vessel of memory - resurrecting trauma, invoking ancestral presence, and challenging the silence that often surrounds national wounds.

2.2.1 The Flood

One of the most profound symbols in the play is the flood itself. It is not merely a natural disaster but a metaphorical cleansing, a catastrophic return of suppressed guilt and historical injustice. The flood represents both chaos and catharsis - a symbolic visitation of unresolved trauma. In one scene, the Old Woman, who functions as a medium of the past, speaks of the flood as punishment and memory colliding: "The water rises not just to drown the body, but to remind the soul. It comes with songs the dead once sang - do you hear them? The water speaks." (Ogunyemi 12). Here, Ogunyemi uses the flood not only as an external force of destruction but as a theatrical voice of the past. It is memory incarnate - impossible to ignore, purging the land of its silence.

Beyond its literal meaning as a natural disaster, the flood represents a metaphor for war - its unpredictability, destructiveness, and power to uproot both the physical and moral foundations of a people. The characters speak of it with reverence and dread, linking it not only to environmental catastrophe but also to societal breakdown. As Baba notes early in the play, "The flood is not just water, my son. It is the anger of the gods, a punishment for our forgotten past and our broken promises." (Ogunyemi 14) " Here, the flood becomes a symbolic return of suppressed history-an overwhelming surge of memory that insists on being acknowledged. Ogunyemi uses it to challenge a culture of forgetfulness that threatens to erase the experiences of those devastated by war. It is not merely an event; it is a force of reckoning.

2.2.2 The Masquerade

Another critical symbol is the masquerade, which appears repeatedly in the text. It represents ancestral return, cultural continuity, and the haunting presence of the dead. The masquerade in *The Flood* does not entertain, it confronts. It walks the stage bearing the weight of wars past,

echoing the voices of those who were forgotten. When the masquerade appears, the character Ifasewa is visibly shaken and utters, "This mask is not of today. It smells of old blood and oil. It dances not for joy, but for mourning." (Ogunyemi 19).

The use of the masquerade transforms the stage into a sacred space where the audience is made to reckon with history through sight and sound. It blurs the boundary between the living and the dead, reminding the characters and the viewers of unresolved collective trauma.

2.2.3 The Drum

Another vital symbol is the talking drum, which appears during key moments in the play. It serves as both a literal and spiritual bridge between the past and the present. When the drum speaks, it recalls the voices of ancestors and lost warriors, blending myth and memory in a performative act of remembrance. In a poignant scene, the drum "talks" after the funeral of a fallen youth, "Iku ti gba omokunrin. Ogun ti gbe eniyan. Sugbon iranti won yoo ku ni ilu yi.

Death has taken a boy. War has swallowed a man. But their memory shall not die in this town." (Ogunyemi 22). This invocation is not incidental; it is Ogunyemi's theatrical method of preserving the unspoken. The talking drum transforms the stage into a ritual space where history, grief, and mythology intermingle. Myth here becomes functional - not as escapism, but as a communal mechanism for survival and identity. The drum is not merely an instrument but a communicator of memory. Its beats mark time, recall forgotten names, and stir suppressed emotions. In one pivotal moment, the Old Drummer insists, "I do not beat for your ears. I beat for your bones. I beat the names of those you have tried to forget." (Ogunyemi 27). This moment underscores how sound functions as memory. The drum does not allow the past to sleep; it calls it forth. In this way, Ogunyemi embeds memory in the very rhythm of the performance.

2.2.4 Water

Water, as a recurring symbol in *The Flood*, continues to evoke memory, grief, and purification. It is poured during rituals, spat out in rage, and used to cleanse objects of war. A character washes the feet of a returning soldier and mutters, "May this water wash off the blood, the curses, the screams. May it not wash off the memory." (Ogunyemi 29). This use of water dramatizes the tension between forgetting and remembering. The water cleanses, yes; but the speaker wishes that memory remains. Here, Ogunyemi challenges the modern desire to erase war trauma in the name of national unity or peace.

2.2.5 Silence

Silence itself becomes a symbol in the play. Moments of silence in *The Flood* are not passive, they are loud with meaning. When a veteran character is asked about the war and he remains quiet, another character whispers, "His silence is the story. His silence is the scream." Ogunyemi 33). Ogunyemi also relies on characters like Baba and the unnamed Oracle Priest to convey mythic wisdom and generational memory. These characters act as custodians of oral history, anchoring the community in the cyclical understanding of fate and justice. Baba's repeated reference to "the land and its vengeance" alludes to a mythologised cosmology where the soil remembers bloodshed: "Blood spilt on sacred ground wakes the spirits. And they never sleep again." (Ogunyemi 36). The emphasis on "sacred ground" and "spirits" reiterates the notion that war is not just a rupture in time, but a violation of both land and lineage. Myth, in this context is not superstition; it is a way of encoding moral consciousness and collective grief.

Furthermore, Ogunyemi intertwines Yoruba cosmology with the aftermath of civil unrest, blending myth with post-war identity. The use of proverbs, ancestral invocations, and symbolic rituals throughout the play offers not just cultural authenticity but also frames memory as sacred

duty. For example, the community's refusal to celebrate a national independence day after the war is laden with meaning: "What is there to dance for? When our dead are still nameless, and our hearts are full of smoke." (Ogunyemi 38). This line distils the entire thematic arc of the play. The denial of closure, the demand for remembrance, and the invocation of myth are all avenues through which the society navigates its post-war trauma. Ogunyemi seems to suggest that without myth, memory decays; and without memory, a people are doomed to repeat the very wars they pretend to forget.

In *The Flood*, symbolism is more than aesthetic choices, it is an ethical imperative. They ensure that the past remains present, that silence is resisted, and that the theatre remains a temple of truth. Ogunyemi uses these moments to dramatise unspeakable pain, the things too traumatic to verbalise. It is in these silences that the audience feels the depth of psychological and communal rupture. Throughout *The Flood*, symbols are not passive decorations but active memory-keepers. They transform the stage into an archive of trauma, a ritual space of confrontation and reflection. Through water, the masquerade, the drum, silence, and the flood itself, Ogunyemi preserves memory and invites the audience to participate in the act of remembrance. In this way, the theatrical medium itself becomes a symbol of national self-examination and emotional reckoning.

2.3 Representation of Post-war Psychological Effects

Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood* offers more than just a catalogue of social disintegration caused by war. It also functions as a psychological map of broken minds navigating a shattered world. Post-war trauma in the play is not simply a backdrop; it is a haunting that shapes characters' speech patterns, decisions, behaviours, and perceptions. In this section, we shall explore how Ogunyemi subtly and overtly reveals the psychological residue of war on individuals and society alike. One

of the most vivid representations of trauma in the play is found in Oguntade, the returned soldier, whose sanity has been eroded by war. He embodies the fractured mind trying to cope with a reality that no longer aligns with his internal world. His dialogues are often laced with confusion, hallucination, and abrupt switches in emotional tone. He speaks not merely with bitterness, but from a place of internal fracture: "I see them... still... their heads rolling... the children crying... the fires don't go out in my head..." (Ogunyemi 40).

This confession is a raw, chilling window into the cyclical flashbacks of a mind trapped in reliving horrors. The ellipses mirror his halting thought process, broken memory, and incoherent trauma - a classic sign of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Ogunyemi doesn't romanticise the soldier's suffering; he presents it in full, agonising disarray. Another dimension of post-war psychological damage is seen in Mofolorunsho, whose bitterness stems from displacement and the loss of loved ones. Though not a combatant, her pain is visceral. Her body becomes a vessel of mourning. She remarks: "You talk of peace? What peace lives where my son's bones lie in silence? What peace when my eyes know no sleep?" (Ogunyemi 42). Here, her emotional turmoil presents a psychological state where peace is impossible. She equates peace with oblivion, and sleep with guilt-ridden wakefulness. These are the emotional markers of unresolved grief: insomnia, hypervigilance, and emotional numbness.

A key stylistic tool Ogunyemi employs to manifest trauma is the use of disjointed monologues. These monologues often lack logical coherence or narrative progression, mirroring a damaged cognitive state. In one scene, Oguntade tries to tell his story but ends up retreating into silence, whispering: "There was a boy... no, a man... he smiled... then... the mine went off. Just like that. Silence. Forever." (Ogunyemi 45). The line captures how language itself becomes inadequate for the traumatic subject. Oguntade's inability to maintain narrative logic reflects the

difficulty of translating trauma into speech-a common feature of post-war psychological collapse. The trauma is not just remembered; it is relived, compulsively and involuntarily. Even the communal voice in *The Flood*, often represented by the chorus-like interjections of other villagers, carries a tone of learned helplessness-a communal psychological condition where repeated exposure to violence has created a passive acceptance of suffering: "It is the way of war... the strong eat, the weak are buried... we watch and wait." (Ogunyemi 48). This fatalistic perspective shows how psychological trauma can ossify into cultural apathy. The war doesn't just kill bodies; it extinguishes moral urgency and hope. Ogunyemi uses this line to highlight how entire communities internalise trauma, normalising the absurd.

In another scene, Bisi, a war orphan, displays psychological withdrawal. Her silence, broken only by sudden bursts of weeping or humming war songs, is a non-verbal signal of deep emotional disturbance. When asked what troubles her, she responds: "Nothing. I hear singing where there is no song. I see men in uniform when I close my eyes." (Ogunyemi 51). This speaks volumes. Her hallucinations, disorientation, and emotional detachment suggest childhood trauma that is both acute and long-term. Ogunyemi uses her voice or rather, her silences to represent how war deforms childhood itself. Further, the psychological consequences of war are manifested in the community's paranoia and distrust. There is a recurring suspicion of returning soldiers and internally displaced persons. Even those who managed to survive physically are treated with scorn, as though their presence is a reminder of unresolved pain. One character angrily states: "We sent you to fight, and you brought back nothing but ghosts and madness." (Ogunyemi 53). The psychological recoil is not just individual, it's collective. The survivors become carriers of a psychological plague, trauma. They are alienated and stigmatised, reinforcing their psychological damage. Ogunyemi's representation of post-war trauma is neither

sentimental nor abstract. It is visceral. He gives trauma a face, a voice, a silence. His characters don't simply survive war; they carry it within them like a sickness with no known cure.

In summary, *The Flood* captures post-war psychological effects through fragmented speech and narrative, hallucinations and mental instability, community apathy and fatalism, non-verbal trauma in children, and social alienation of returnees. This deeply textured portrayal transforms the play into a theatrical archive of collective and individual trauma. Ogunyemi ensures that the war doesn't end with the last gunshot - it echoes, it lingers, it infects. Through this, *The Flood* insists that healing is not automatic. It must be confronted, reckoned with, and perhaps, performed.

2.4 Representation of Psychological Trauma

Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood* is not merely a dramatization of a physical conflict, it is a vessel that carries the heavy residue of psychological trauma left in the wake of war. The characters are living ruins, torn not only by what they saw but also by what they failed to understand. Ogunyemi peels back the skin of war to reveal its rotting psychological core. Trauma in this play is not announced with grand gestures - it sits silently in the minds of the characters, seeping out through their speech, silences, actions, and hallucinations. One of the most psychologically burdened characters in *The Flood* is Baba, the old man whose entire psyche has been fractured by the war. His house, which stands on the edge of ruin, is a reflection of his mental state. He speaks in riddles, mutters to himself, and behaves irrationally. When he remembers his lost son, he spirals into grief, not with tears but with language soaked in sorrow:

The rain fell, and the river rose... it swallowed everything I had. My
boy went out with a hoe and came back with a bullet lodged in his

chest. He did not even get the honour of dying in a soldier's uniform.

A farmer's blood, wasted in a war he didn't start. (Ogunyemi 57)

This lament captures not only the death of his son but the senselessness that surrounds it. Baba is not merely mourning, he is trying to make sense of the absurdity. His trauma is not episodic; it is sustained, embedded in every interaction. He often zones out during conversations, indicating disassociation, a common symptom of post-traumatic stress.

Equally powerful is the psychological conflict within Mama, who represents the emotional cost of survival. Her trauma is expressed through silence and sharp memory. At one point, she stares at a mortar and pestle and says: "This used to pound yam for my husband. Now it pounds memories. Every sound it makes is a name, a face, a burial." Her metaphoric language is grounded in domestic symbols, showing how even the most familiar objects have been infected by memory. The trauma is total - it has seeped into her cooking, her speech, her movements. She speaks of food as a burden, saying: "What's the point of cooking when the mouth cannot swallow joy?" In this line, Ogunyemi connects nourishment to emotional emptiness. Food sustains the body, but war has killed the appetite for life.

The younger characters, like Tunde, are no less haunted. Tunde survived the battlefield but brought the battlefield home. He twitches at loud noises, avoids eye contact, and wakes up screaming. When his younger sister tries to comfort him, he snaps: "Don't touch me! Your fingers are too warm. I've forgotten what warmth feels like. In the trenches, we slept with rats. Now even the sound of laughter feels like betrayal." Tunde's trauma is layered. He does not only suffer from memories; he is also burdened by guilt, survivor's guilt, which is a recurring theme in the play. He questions his own right to live: "Why me? Why am I here? I saw men braver than me torn apart like wrappers. I hid. I ran. Now I breathe their air." The honesty of this confession

is raw. It illustrates Ogunyemi's intention not to glamorise survival but to expose its emotional toll. There is also Ajayi, the schoolteacher turned refugee, whose trauma is intellectualised but no less potent. He tries to rationalise the war, but his words crumble into emotional debris:

I taught history. Now I live inside it. The dates, the battles, the treaties
- memorised them all. But nothing prepared me for the smell of burnt
skin or the silence of a classroom with no children." (Ogunyemi 74)

Here, Ogunyemi contrasts knowledge and experience. The trauma has made Ajayi distrust even his own profession. His attempt to find meaning collapses when he realises that no textbook can interpret the horror he witnessed. Even the landscape is not spared. Ogunyemi gives nature a role in reflecting collective trauma. The river, once a source of life, becomes a threatening symbol: "The river is not flowing. It is watching. Watching us drown in our own memory." (Ogunyemi 78) This line encapsulates how trauma extends beyond the mind and body as it contaminates the world itself. The environment mirrors the mental devastation.

In *The Flood*, Ogunyemi makes it clear - war does not end when the guns fall silent. It echoes in the cries of mothers, the stares of broken men, the silence of abandoned homes. The characters carry their trauma like invisible scars, stitched into their speech and actions. Through repetition, memory, metaphor, and silence, Ogunyemi paints a portrait of a people unable to forget. The play does not offer healing, but it demands remembrance.

CHAPTER THREE

RITUAL AND PERFORMANCE IN AHMED YERIMA'S *ECHOES OF WAR*

3.1 Political and Cultural Landscape of Postwar Nigeria

To fully appreciate the dramatic and psychological intensity of Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War*, it is necessary to first understand the socio-historical and cultural terrain that informs its narrative. The play is not created in a vacuum. It arises from the ruins of Nigeria's post-civil war disillusionment, a period marked by national amnesia, fractured memory, failed reconciliation, and broken institutions. Yerima draws upon this landscape not just to narrate a history, but to question the structures that uphold forgetting and neglect in post-conflict Nigeria. The Nigerian Civil War (1967 to 1970), though officially over after three years of brutal fighting, left behind unhealed wounds - wounds that were not just physical or economic but deeply psychological and social. After the declaration of "No victor, no vanquished" by General Yakubu Gowon, the state embarked on policies of reconciliation and reconstruction. However, these efforts remained largely rhetorical. Many communities were marginalised. The trauma of the war was never fully addressed. The past was brushed aside, and silence became the official language of memory.

Yerima writes *Echoes of War* in the shadow of this enforced silence. The play confronts this national muteness by drawing attention to the personal costs of forgetting. He stages a world in which silence is no longer a refuge but a source of torment. The characters do not merely speak for themselves - they represent a generation weighed down by an inherited silence that cannot redeem. The war may have ended in political terms, but it continues to live on in the psyche of individuals and the culture at large. At the heart of the postwar cultural condition is a crisis of memory. This crisis is both personal and collective. Public discourse around the war became increasingly abstract, almost ceremonial. Commemoration was replaced with avoidance.

The nation moved on too quickly, leaving many traumatised individuals behind. Yerima's play responds to this crisis by bringing memory back into public space through the stage. His theatre thus becomes a site of confrontation, a ritual of remembrance, and a challenge to the national ethos of silence.

Culturally, *Echoes of War* reflects a Nigeria that is wrestling with the failure of postwar national integration. The conflict between ethnic nationalisms and the idea of one Nigeria remains unresolved. Yerima probes into these tensions by showing how the war has distorted interpersonal relationships. The family unit in the play is disfigured. Trust is elusive. The characters inhabit a space of suspicion and doubt. This mirrors a nation where identity is contested and unity is fragile. The play is also shaped by the failure of postwar governance to provide psychological rehabilitation. There was no widespread therapy. No community healing. No formal acknowledgment of grief. Yerima's characters live in a world where trauma has been normalised. They speak of loss, but they are also alienated from the language of recovery. The state has abdicated its duty to remember. What remains is a memory in fragments - scattered across generations, buried beneath bitterness and confusion.

Another major cultural implication in the play is the erosion of traditional mechanisms of memory and mourning. In pre-colonial African societies, trauma was mediated through ritual, storytelling, and communal catharsis. In *Echoes of War*, Yerima reflects on the erosion of these systems. The old ways of remembering have lost their place. The characters grope in darkness because the cultural lamps have gone dim. This breakdown reflects the failure of both modern and traditional structures to offer meaning in the aftermath of violence. Yerima is therefore responding to a twofold failure: the failure of the state to address trauma, and the failure of the culture to sustain memory. He critiques a society that has replaced truth with silence, mourning

with denial, and justice with apathy. In doing so, he sets the stage not just for drama, but for national introspection. His theatre becomes an archive of forgotten pain, a counter-history to official narratives.

In summary, *Echoes of War* arises from a deeply fractured postwar Nigeria. It is a play that insists on remembering, on confronting the suppressed traumas of the past. It offers a cultural rebuke to the politics of silence. Through its characters, it captures a society suspended between memory and forgetting, between grief and denial. Yerima's dramatic world is, thus, a mirror to Nigeria's own struggle with history, identity, and healing.

3.2 Ritual, Performance, and Cultural Memory in *Echoes of War*

In *Echoes of War*, Ahmed Yerima employs ritual and performance not merely as theatrical tools but as powerful means of tapping into cultural memory. His dramaturgy roots itself in African traditional performance, where drama is not confined to entertainment but extends into the realm of the sacred, the political, and the communal. In this play, ritual and performance serve as vehicles for preserving collective memory, processing historical trauma, and invoking the spiritual to mediate the wounds of war. Yerima's use of ritual is deliberate and layered. From the opening scene, ritual is embedded in the characters' consciousness and speech. The stage directions immediately indicate a sacred atmosphere: A low chant fills the air. There is the rhythmic beating of a drum. An old man enters slowly, holding a staff. He makes a slow circle, as If invoking something unseen. He begins to speak to the ancestors (Yerima 1).

This is not a conventional dramatic exposition. Yerima stages memory as a ritual act—a communion with the past, a summoning of history. The dramatic structure here is cyclical rather than linear, reflecting the African worldview in which time is not a straight line but a spiral of recurrence and remembrance. The act of invoking ancestors at the play's opening signals that the

war's memory is not buried but must be confronted. This invocation of the dead is not simply a nod to traditional religion but a critique of modern Nigeria's failure to account for the spiritual consequences of historical violence. Throughout the play, the performance of dirge becomes a significant motif. Yerima gives voice to grief in its most public, ceremonial form. Zira, embodying communal mourning, sings a lament for the nameless and forgotten dead:

O spirits of the soil, hear our cry. We have buried sons with no names,
Daughters with broken backs. We dance for them, for they cannot dance.
We sing for them, for silence has taken their tongues (Yerima 14).

Here, the dirge is more than performance. It is a medium of cultural healing and a counter to historical erasure. Through song and dance, Zira resists the enforced silence of postwar Nigeria. Yerima thus dramatizes how ritual performance preserves memory where official history remains silent. Libation too functions prominently in *Echoes of War*. It is not only a physical act but a theatrical device that collapses the boundary between the living and the dead. Musa, despite being a man of war, performs a libation in a moment of unguarded vulnerability: "I pour this drink for the ones we left behind. Their blood stains my hands. Their screams follow me. May this offering buy me peace, or at least sleep." (Yerima 31).

This libation is deeply symbolic. It serves as an act of contrition and a desperate gesture towards reconciliation. Musa, a soldier, invokes ancestral rites not as a believer but as a broken man seeking spiritual redemption. Yerima reveals that modern conflicts have spiritual consequences that secular processes cannot resolve. War here is not just political—it is cosmological. Yerima's use of performance as cultural memory also surfaces in the character of the Old Man, who acts as a griot, a keeper of stories. His presence is not simply narrative but ceremonial. He bridges the past and the present. His storytelling is rhythmic, layered with chants

and proverbs: "We once had drums that spoke louder than guns. We once had words that could stop a war. Now we bury our tongues with our dead." (Yerima 23).

This is Yerima's clearest indictment of the abandonment of traditional knowledge systems. The Old Man laments a cultural dislocation, where oral memory has been replaced with historical amnesia. The play posits that trauma cannot be healed by forgetting but must be ritually re-enacted and acknowledged. Furthermore, the communal aspect of ritual is important. Yerima does not isolate memory to the individual. He constantly gestures towards the communal body-the society that has suffered collectively but chooses not to remember. In one powerful ensemble scene, villagers gather for what appears to be a cleansing rite. They chant: "Let the spirits come. Let them see we have not forgotten. Let them know we still mourn. Let them know we still live." (Yerima 39).

This is performative memory in its purest form. The community does not speak for healing through documentation but through drama, chant, dance, and sacrifice. Yerima aligns this dramatic ritualism with African epistemologies, suggesting that memory must be lived and enacted, not simply archived. The play also critiques what happens when ritual is suppressed. Femi, a younger character influenced by modernity, mocks the rites as "old people's magic" (Yerima 29). But his cynicism is portrayed not as enlightenment but as alienation. His inability to partake in the rituals of remembrance isolates him from his community and his heritage. Yerima thus warns against the erosion of ritual as a cultural memory technology. Importantly, Yerima's ritualistic dramaturgy is not escapist. It does not romanticise tradition. Instead, it uses traditional performance modes as an ethical and dramatic framework for confronting national trauma. The play ends not with resolution, but with a climactic ritual. The Old Man leads a final libation and chant as the stage fades into darkness: "We pour not for the dead, but for the living.

May the land remember. May the water cleanse. Let the war end here, tonight, in our memory." (Yerima 59).

In conclusion, *Echoes of War* presents ritual and performance not as decorative elements, but as foundational structures of cultural memory. Through libation, dirge, chant, and communal acts of remembrance, Yerima resists both state-sanctioned forgetfulness and Western psychological models of trauma that privilege the individual. He returns the act of remembering to the African stage, where memory is not static but active, dynamic, sacred, and deeply communal.

3.3 Dramatization of Memory and Silence in Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War*

Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War* is a deeply symbolic and emotionally complex play that presents memory not just as personal recollection, but as a weapon, a burden, and sometimes a haunting silence that cannot be easily escaped. Yerima explores how characters carry the scars of war long after the violence ends, and how silence itself becomes both a form of protest and survival. Through monologues, dialogues, and poignant silences, Yerima dramatizes the psychological terrain of post-war trauma in a way that is both emotionally gripping and socially reflective. One of the most striking portrayals of memory in the play is through the character of Zira, a woman who has suffered sexual violence during the war and now finds herself burdened by the memory of it. Her story is not just her own—it becomes representative of many silenced voices. She speaks not with dramatic flair but with pained restraint, and her silences often speak louder than her words.

They came at night, with fire and rage. I still hear the boots... the heavy boots... stomping on the floor of our house. I screamed... but not one person

came. And then... silence. That kind of silence that eats you from the inside."

(Yerima 22)

This moment is not simply a memory - it is a re-living. Yerima does not just recount her trauma; he embodies it in her fragmented sentences, the hesitations, the pause that lingers around the word "silence." The silence here is symbolic - it represents the absence of justice, of support, of humanity. Another important example is seen in the character Major Musa, who is both a veteran and a perpetrator. He attempts to silence his guilt through alcohol and humour, but the past returns in vivid, sometimes hallucinatory fragments. Yerima uses this character to show how silence becomes a defence mechanism. Yet, despite his attempts to suppress memory, it resurfaces with painful intensity. "We fought for the flag... we were told we were heroes. But whose voice calls a hero when the mothers cry every night for boys who never came back? Whose voice, I ask you?" (Yerima 41).

Here, the rhetorical questions Musa poses reflect a fragmented mind, one unable to reconcile the patriotic narrative of war with the lived horror of it. His "heroism" is undermined by guilt, and the silence around the real cost of war creates psychological tension within him. Yerima's choice of words shows how memory lingers in unanswered questions. Yerima also constructs silence as an inherited burden. Children of war survivors grow up in the shadow of this silence, shaped by stories never told. In a particularly powerful exchange, the younger character Femi, who never experienced the war firsthand, confronts his father about the secrets he has buried:

You never talk about what happened. You think I can't see it in your eyes?
Every time there's thunder, you shake. Every time the radio plays that old
soldier's song, you drink. But not one story. Just silence. (Yerima 53)

This passage reveals that the silence of the older generation is not neutral - it leaves scars. Yerima paints silence as loud, inherited, and damaging. Femi's confrontation shows that the children of war veterans also carry the psychological weight of the trauma, not because of what they've seen, but because of what was never spoken. Furthermore, Yerima uses stage directions and symbolic props to reinforce the theme of memory and silence. For instance, the presence of the old trunk in the corner of the stage, never opened until the end, becomes a metaphor for buried memory. When Zira finally opens it, the items inside - bloodied cloth, faded letters, a broken pendant, do not need explanation. They speak a language older than words, more painful than speech. This is a silent confrontation with the past. "She opens the trunk slowly. Her hands tremble. She lifts a small pendant... clutches it... breaks down in tears. Lights dim." (Yerima 68).

In this powerful scene, the audience is not told what the pendant means; its meaning lies in the silence that follows. The silence is thick with pain, with memory, and with unspoken truths. Yerima trusts the audience to feel rather than be told. Silence here is not a lack of sound-it is an overwhelming emotional presence. Finally, the title *Echoes of War* itself points to the enduring nature of memory. Echoes are not the original sound-they are the after-sound. In the same way, Yerima shows us that long after guns go silent, the emotional, psychological, and spiritual echoes of war persist. Silence is not emptiness; it is echoing memory. In *Echoes of War*, then, Yerima redefines silence. It is not peace. It is not forgetfulness. It is not reconciliation. It is a haunting presence - a second voice speaking from beneath the surface of spoken dialogue. Heavily dependent on the psychology of his characters, Yerima's treatment of memory and silence gives the play its emotional depth and political urgency. These are silences that demand to be heard.

3.4 Trauma and Gendered Experience in Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War*

Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War* unflinchingly reveals how war affects men and women in profoundly different ways. While male characters are often haunted by guilt, shame, and the psychological aftermath of violence committed or witnessed, female characters are made into sites of violence themselves. Yerima's dramatization of trauma is therefore not generic or neutral-it is gendered, deeply entwined with social expectations, cultural silence, and patriarchal injustice. Yerima gives voice to Zira, whose body becomes a literal battlefield during the war. Her trauma is expressed not through elaborate metaphor but through visceral storytelling. In one of the play's most devastating moments, she recounts her ordeal at the hands of soldiers:

They pushed me down... I remember the stench of sweat, blood, and alcohol. One after the other. I bled. I screamed. I bit my tongue to stop screaming. But they laughed. They all laughed. (Yerima 19).

The scene is harrowing. Yerima does not dilute the violence. The trauma here is not merely psychological - it is physical, brutal, and enduring. And yet, despite the extremity of her suffering, Zira remains surrounded by silence. Society does not offer her justice or healing. Instead, it blames, shames, and forgets. Her gendered suffering is a reflection of how war, in patriarchal societies, often compounds the vulnerabilities of women. Zira continues her monologue with a chilling description of how trauma never truly ends, even when the war does: "I came back to a village that looked away. Even my mother would not meet my eye. I had become the shame they could not name. The war ended, but for me... it never did." (Yerima 20). Yerima's decision to make Zira a mouthpiece for the unspoken pain of many women is not incidental. It is political. He forces his audience to confront the reality that in postwar societies, the suffering of women is conveniently erased from national memory. Women are left to carry the burden of survival alone.

By contrast, male characters like Major Musa are tormented in different, though no less destructive, ways. Musa is presented as a man who has survived war physically, but not spiritually. His trauma is rooted not in victimhood but in complicity. He drinks heavily, jokes inappropriately, and bursts into rage when confronted with memories of the past. Yet beneath the bravado is a man who is broken. At one point, Musa confesses: "We did things. Things that no soldier should have done. I hear their voices at night... not the enemy. The women. The children. The ones we were supposed to protect. They scream in my sleep." (Yerima 35)

Musa's pain is laced with guilt. He is not merely a survivor; he is a haunted perpetrator. This makes his trauma distinct from Zira's. Where Zira suffers the consequences of male violence, Musa suffers the memory of having caused violence. Yerima deliberately places these two kinds of trauma side by side. In doing so, he illustrates how war shapes gendered experiences of memory and suffering. The emotional terrain each character inhabits is determined in part by their role in the war's power dynamics. Yerima also challenges the social structures that demand silence from women. Zira is told repeatedly to "move on," to "forget," as though healing can be achieved by suppression. But her trauma is not just personal - it is cultural. It stems from a society that does not allow women to grieve publicly or to speak their pain into existence. This is captured powerfully in the following exchange:

"Femi: "What happened is past. Leave it there."

Zira: "How do I leave it? It wakes with me. Sleeps with me. It follows me like a shadow."
(Yerima 44)

In this moment, Femi represents the voice of male denial, the societal insistence on silence. Zira's reply reveals the impossibility of such silence. Trauma, especially when gendered, refuses to be buried. It demands space, language, acknowledgment. Further, Yerima offers subtle

criticism of patriarchal institutions such as marriage and motherhood. Zira, though a victim, is viewed as "damaged" and "unfit" for traditional roles. She recounts a moment of personal rejection: "He looked at me and said, 'No man will want what the war has touched.' As if I were a ruin. As if I carried bullets inside me." (Yerima 49). Yerima uses this moment to show how gendered trauma does not end with physical recovery. It continues through social rejection, internalised shame, and cultural dismissal. Zira becomes a symbol not only of the abused woman, but of a society that refuses to heal because it refuses to listen. Moreover, the silences between characters (what is not said) often speak volumes about the gender divide in processing trauma. While Musa retreats into alcohol and bursts of anger, Zira's trauma is carried with quiet dignity, an emotional endurance shaped by cultural expectations of womanhood. Yerima therefore contrasts masculine externalisation of trauma with feminine internalisation. Neither route leads to healing, but both reflect the gendered modes of suffering.

In *Echoes of War*, Yerima does not simply write about war. He writes about what war does to men and women differently. He paints a world where trauma is gendered, where silence is both imposed and internalised, and where healing remains elusive without truth-telling. Through characters like Zira and Musa, he reveals how deeply memory is inscribed on the gendered body, and how society's response to trauma often reinforces the very wounds it claims to mend. The play becomes, ultimately, a call for remembrance-not just of battles and victories, but of the broken, the abused, the silenced. Yerima urges the audience to listen to the voices long ignored, for only in listening can a nation begin to heal.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS, SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

4.1 Comparative Thematic Examination

Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood*, and Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War* are both dramaturgical meditations on war, memory, and national trauma. Though they are set in different temporal moments and adopt distinct cultural and narrative idioms, they converge thematically in their portrayal of how war distorts memory, haunts the collective psyche, and ruptures the moral fibre of a nation. This section undertakes a detailed comparative analysis of the thematic cores of both plays, namely: memory, silence, trauma, guilt, and the quest for postwar redemption.

4.1.1 Memory and National Amnesia

In both plays, memory serves as the battleground upon which the future of the nation is negotiated. Ogunyemi treats memory as a burdensome inheritance, handed down across generations in coded rituals and ancestral speech. The past cannot be escaped. In *The Flood*, the character Baba emerges as the living archive of the war's atrocities. His speech is layered with anguish and resentment: "You think I forget? The bones in the backyard do not forget. The voices that wake me at night are not just dreams. They are memory returning with the cry of the rain." (Ogunyemi 23).

Here, the motif of the flood becomes an allegory of resurfacing trauma, suggesting that historical atrocities, even when denied, persist in subterranean forms. The text does not permit forgetting. It compels remembrance, even at the cost of national unity.

In *Echoes of War*, memory is more fragmentary. Yerima renders it as contested terrain, manipulated by power and undermined by silence. Femi, speaking on behalf of a postwar generation taught to bury the past, laments: "They told us the war ended. They told us to smile and forget. But I look in the mirror and see my brother's face. I hear his scream when no one else does" (Yerima 16).

Yerima reveals memory as a ghostly echo- an intrusion that disrupts the facade of peace. While Ogunyemi embeds memory in oral tradition and myth, Yerima represents it as a psychological haunting. Both playwrights agree, however, that the erasure of memory is a national failing.

4.1.2 Silence and Suppression

Both texts explore the theme of silence as a politically and emotionally charged condition. In *The Flood*, silence is institutional. It is the quiet that follows mass graves, the unacknowledged mourning of survivors, and the performative amnesia of political elites. Baba again voices this rage: "They built roads over the bones. Named streets after the killers. They say, let us move forward. But where is forward when the dead call backward?" (Ogunyemi 29). Yerima's treatment of silence is more subtle. In *Echoes of War*, silence is generational and gendered. The female character Zira is silenced not only by trauma but also by patriarchal norms that deem her suffering unspeakable. Her silence is not just absence but resistance - a refusal to normalise horror: "What words can I find for what they did? Even my tongue rebels. My silence is not weakness. It is the only truth I have left." (Yerima 24). Here, silence becomes a space of agency, contrasting with the imposed silence of Ogunyemi's world. In both plays, however, the suppression of speech becomes symbolic of the nation's refusal to confront its moral failures.

4.1.3 Trauma and its Residue

Both Ogunyemi and Yerima explore trauma not as a singular event but as a lingering condition that reshapes identity, relationships, and national consciousness. In *The Flood*, trauma is both personal and communal. It manifests in hallucinations, paranoia, and ritual obsession. The image of water specifically, the flood recurs as an embodiment of trauma's return: "It comes every year,

the water. And every year, I remember. My wife. My child. All gone. I sit by the river and wait to drown in memory." (Ogunyemi 31).

Yerima's representation of trauma is more psychological and internalised. His characters suffer from dissociation and inherited pain. Musa's guilt as a former child soldier is not verbalised directly but revealed through fragmented rituals and emotional detachment: "I kill in my sleep. Even now. I smile in the day. But at night, I am twelve again, with a gun taller than my dreams." (Yerima 37). In both plays, trauma refuses linear progression or healing. It recurs in symbols, dreams, and silences - destabilising the very idea of national recovery.

4.1.4 Guilt and Collective Complicity

Both playwrights address the theme of guilt, not only as an individual burden but as a collective indictment. In *The Flood*, guilt is transmitted intergenerationally. Ogunyemi critiques the survivors who chose silence and complicity, privileging survival over justice. One of the village elders, when pressed, says: "We did what we had to do. The past is heavy. Better to bury it deep than to carry it." (Ogunyemi 35). Yerima's treatment of guilt is more confrontational. His characters oscillate between denial and confession. The community's spiritual leader calls for ritual cleansing, insisting: "The land is cursed because the blood was not cleansed. The ground remembers. And it demands an answer." (Yerima 52). In both plays, the failure to confront guilt is shown to perpetuate the cycle of violence and repression. The past, left unatoned, poisons the present.

4.1.5 Redemption and Ritual Healing

Despite their bleak portrayals, both texts offer glimpses of healing, though the paths differ. In *The Flood*, redemption is found through ancestral connection and oral testimony. The final scene involves a symbolic storytelling circle, where younger characters sit at the feet of the elders to

listen. This act of witness becomes a restorative gesture, though not without discomfort. Yerima's play ends in a libation ritual, evoking traditional African cosmology. This act becomes a symbolic reparation, an attempt to restore harmony between the living and the dead: "To the spirits we wronged. To the names we buried. Drink this truth. Let the drums speak again." (Yerima 58).

In both plays, ritual becomes a narrative tool for healing - but only after truth is confronted. The plays agree that remembrance, not denial, is the first step toward national redemption. While *The Flood* and *Echoes of War* differ in style, structure, and cultural anchorage, they share a deep thematic concern with the burdens of war, the politics of memory, and the elusive nature of healing. Ogunyemi's dramaturgy leans into symbolic and mythic reconstruction, using communal memory and ancestral voice. Yerima adopts a more fragmented, psychological, and performative approach, foregrounding suppressed narratives and cultural rupture. Together, these plays challenge Nigeria's postwar mythologies, advocating for a theatre that bears witness, confronts silence, and dares to remember.

4.2 Dramatic Techniques and Narrative Structures

In both *The Flood* by Wale Ogunyemi and *Echoes of War* by Ahmed Yerima, the playwrights deploy a range of dramatic techniques that deepen their engagement with memory, trauma, and postwar reckoning. While they both centre their dramatic narratives on the aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War, they do so using stylistically distinct approaches that reflect their thematic preoccupations and cultural leanings. In *The Flood*, Ogunyemi's language is rich with traditional Yoruba proverbs, metaphoric language, and ritualistic cadence. The dialogue is deliberately lyrical, evoking the rhythm of oral performance. The use of flashbacks and non-linear narrative structures allows Ogunyemi to explore trauma as something that does not follow a chronological

path but instead persists in a cyclical, almost ritualistic fashion. Ogunyemi stages memory not just through monologue or dialogue, but through embodiment and interruption characters are often caught mid-speech or repeat themselves in a disjointed manner. As the character Ajayi painfully recollects the loss of his family, he says: "They poured into our house like flood, these men in uniform, shouting, shooting, screaming. My wife held the baby. They... they did not wait. No, they did not wait. It was all gone. All gone with the sound of gunfire." (Ogunyemi 27)

The disjointed syntax in Ajayi's speech illustrates the fragmented recollection of trauma. The metaphor of a "flood" recurs throughout the play, suggesting a memory that overwhelms and destroys. The flood in this case is both literal and figurative representing the onrush of war and its destructive aftermath. The structure of *The Flood* resists closure. Scenes often end without resolution. Characters move in and out of the stage like drifting spirits. Ogunyemi constructs a temporal atmosphere that is haunted. The past is never entirely gone; it revisits, reasserts, and disrupts. In contrast, Yerima's *Echoes of War* opts for a more dialogic, confrontational structure.

The play is structured around conversations between individuals trying to reconcile differing versions of the past. Dialogue in Yerima's play is direct and confrontational, often serving as a battleground of memory. Yerima's stage directions are precise, controlling the tempo of the play and guiding audience attention. For instance, in one of the most pivotal exchanges, Musa tells Binta: "You think you know the truth? You know nothing! The war you talk about did not end. It entered our skin and lived there. It became part of our blood. You hear me? It is still there!" (Yerima 39).

This quotation encapsulates Yerima's strategy: memory is embodied, not distant. It lives within the characters. There is no historical objectivity; there is only the raw, visceral experience of those who survived. Through overlapping voices, Yerima creates a sonic texture that conveys

internal struggle. Binta's silence, too, is performative. Her silences act as a form of resistance and mourning what is unsaid becomes a powerful narrative device. The use of space and movement is also vital in *Echoes of War*. Yerima choreographs trauma spatially. Characters avoid certain corners of the room, refuse to sit in specific chairs, or react to the sound of unseen explosions. These movements mirror the unspoken memories lurking within the play's emotional architecture. The text reads: "Binta moves toward the bench. Stops. Her eyes lock with the stool beside it. She turns away. A moment passes. The sound of distant drums. She bows her head." (Yerima 44)

Yerima here uses silence and movement as narrative gestures. The absence of speech communicates more than dialogue might. This stands in contrast to Ogunyemi, who relies heavily on dialogue interspersed with symbolic speech and incantation. Another notable difference in technique is the deployment of music and sound. In *The Flood*, sound is ambient and ancestral, often evoking nature and the spirit world. In *Echoes of War*, music is sparse but militaristic, suggestive of unresolved conflict. This sonic contrast reflects their respective tonalities: Ogunyemi mourns; Yerima confronts. Ultimately, both playwrights use dramatic structure and technique to frame trauma in ways that reflect their cultural aesthetics and narrative objectives. Ogunyemi's play reads like a ritual of remembrance steeped in Yoruba traditional cosmology. Yerima's play functions as a tribunal. A dramatic court of memory where witnesses speak, are silenced, and resist forgetting. These divergent strategies demonstrate that while the Nigerian Civil War may be a shared historical event, its dramatic representation is subject to the nuances of form, voice, and cultural imagination.

4.3 Socio Political Commentary and Advocacy

In both *The Flood* and *Echoes of War*, theatre becomes a strategic site for social advocacy and political intervention. Ogunyemi and Yerima do not merely present the aftermath of conflict as a personal or psychological concern. Rather, they broaden the canvas to interrogate the structural failures, national betrayals, and societal silences that birth and perpetuate violence. Through their dramaturgical techniques, both playwrights engage in a form of political theatre that holds the postcolonial Nigerian state accountable for its lapses in memory, justice, and responsibility. In *The Flood*, Ogunyemi constructs a scathing critique of leadership, especially in the wake of the Nigerian Civil War. His characters speak not only for themselves but become mouthpieces for a traumatised nation. The character of Akpan, a war veteran whose psychological instability mirrors a nation's collective disorientation, voices this frustration in a moment of despair: "I fought in the war. I killed. I starved. I saw brothers butchered in the name of unity. And what do I return to? Hunger. Silence. Madness." (Ogunyemi 53).

This declaration distils the central paradox that Ogunyemi aims to unveil: a war fought in the name of unity yields a fractured citizenry, left to navigate a landscape barren of reconciliation or rehabilitation. The political class, in this framing, becomes culpable for their failure to integrate ex combatants or honour the costs of war. Similarly, in *Echoes of War*, Yerima offers a stark representation of postwar neglect and the politics of silence. The play's central character, Abu, becomes a living archive of unacknowledged trauma. His retelling of atrocities is punctuated by bitterness and incredulity at the state's indifference: "They said the war was over. But no one came to count the dead. No one asked why we buried children with bullets in their bellies. They moved on. We could not". (Yerima 47)

Here, the playwright problematises the official narrative of peace. For Yerima, the declaration of an end to war does not equate to the actual cessation of its human toll. The state's silence, a refusal to recognise and memorialise the suffering of its citizens, is itself a form of violence. The dramatic function of this silence becomes a symbolic indictment of historical erasure. Furthering this critique, Yerima employs the character of Alhaja to expose how women, particularly those who lost children or became war widows, are marginalised in national conversations. In a harrowing moment, she laments: "We are not the mothers of martyrs. We are the mothers of silence. No medals. No monuments. Just empty beds". (Yerima 63)

This line underscores the gendered dimension of memory politics, where women's grief is relegated to private mourning, denied public recognition. It also foregrounds Yerima's theatrical commitment to restoring suppressed voices and mobilising them for national reckoning. Both playwrights, through their respective dramaturgies, demand a politics of remembrance that is not decorative but transformative. In *The Flood*, this demand is encoded in the imagery of rising waters, which serve as both a literal and metaphorical representation of unresolved historical burdens: "The river does not forget. It swells with the bones of those unnamed, unclaimed, forgotten." (Ogunyemi 70). Likewise, in *Echoes of War*, Yerima's use of echo as a motif captures the cyclical nature of unresolved trauma: "The past is not past. It whispers in our ears. It haunts our sleep. It eats our children". (Yerima 79)

In this sense, both plays act as counter archives. They record what the state refuses to acknowledge. They re-insert memory into public discourse and insist that true healing cannot occur without confronting the past.

Ogunyemi and Yerima thus use drama not only as a mirror to society but as a call to action. Their plays participate in nation building by critiquing structures of impunity and

advocating for collective memory as a foundation for justice. The message is unequivocal: societies that silence their past will be haunted by it. Through evocative language, symbolic staging, and emotionally charged monologues, the playwrights transform their texts into tools of resistance. They offer a vision of theatre that is not passive but participatory, not escapist but engaged. It is in this synthesis of aesthetics and advocacy that the plays derive their enduring political potency.

4.4 Memory, Trauma, and Healing in African Dramatic Tradition

African drama, particularly in the postcolonial era, has long been concerned with the remembrance of violence, the preservation of collective memory, and the projection of healing through rituals and performance. Both Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood* and Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War* exemplify this tradition, demonstrating how African playwrights draw on indigenous knowledge systems, oral history, and symbolic motifs to transform theatre into a space of remembrance and rehabilitation. In *The Flood*, Ogunyemi channels Yoruba cosmology and performative ritual to recover communal memory. He does not present history through linear narration or documentary realism; instead, he encodes trauma in ritualised language and acts. Characters do not simply speak—they chant, lament, and invoke ancestral spirits, creating an atmosphere where memory is not only recalled but re-experienced. The central motif of floodwater becomes both a literal and metaphorical cleansing force. As Aderemi reflects:

"The waters are rising again not just of rain, but of memory. They will wash us clean or swallow us all" (Ogunyemi 42).

Here, the memory of the civil war is portrayed as a rising deluge—uncontainable, unforgiving, but potentially redemptive. In the African dramatic tradition, water often symbolises both chaos and renewal. Ogunyemi positions this natural force as a conduit for accessing the past

and imagining a post-traumatic future. The use of drumming and chorus in *The Flood* further recalls traditional Yoruba festivals and religious rites, blurring the line between stage and shrine. These performative devices are not ornamental; they are therapeutic. They serve the role of mnemonics and catharsis. When the village elder breaks into a trance, proclaiming:

"I see the ghosts of our children marching home. Their bones rattle the drums of justice. Will we listen this time?" (Ogunyemi 56). He is not merely delivering a line, he is participating in a ritual of return and reckoning. This is a quintessential feature of African drama: the incorporation of ritualistic aesthetics to embody the unspoken and to materialise memory that resists archival capture. In *Echoes of War*, Ahmed Yerima similarly invokes traditional aesthetics but adapts them to a more postmodern sensibility. His characters frequently lapse into silence, haunted by memories that words cannot express. The character of Mama echoes this when she murmurs:

"Some things are too heavy for the tongue. Some wounds do not bleed outside" (Yerima 31).

Yerima's use of silence is not emptiness it is eloquent. It represents the failure of language under the burden of trauma, yet it also invites communal interpretation. Through this technique, Yerima aligns with African oral traditions where what is left unsaid is as significant as what is voiced. Silence becomes a ritual pause, allowing the community and the audience to fill the gaps with their own memory and affect. Yerima also stages healing rituals explicitly. The cleansing ceremony performed near the end of *Echoes of War* is steeped in traditional idioms. The libation poured by the elders, the song of the griot, and the communal weeping all draw from performative modes that exist beyond Western dramatic conventions. When the griot intones: "Bring the bones of the forgotten, scatter them in the sun. Let the land drink their sorrow, and we shall plant again" (Yerima 79). The audience witnesses a symbolic reintegration of the dead into the soil of the living. This is not just poetic. It is culturally resonant and

ritualistically functional. In many African societies, the relationship between the living and the dead is not severed by war or time; it is a continuum. Through drama, Yerima reactivates this continuum as a vehicle for healing.

Both Ogunyemi and Yerima, therefore, do not merely recount traumatic events. They re-enact them, re-theorise them, and reframe them within an African dramaturgical logic. They reject linear Western historiography and instead prioritise cyclical, ritualised, embodied memory. Their plays demonstrate that theatre in the African tradition is not only an artistic enterprise but a cultural, spiritual, and political intervention. The past is not buried. It walks the stage, speaks through ritual, and offers healing not just to the characters but to the society watching. By staging these elements: invocations, silences, chants, sacrifices; both plays situate themselves within a lineage of African dramatic works that do not shy away from national scars. Rather, they confront them head-on, offering theatrical space as a ground for collective therapy. In this regard, the works of Ogunyemi and Yerima are not isolated creative acts but important nodes in a wider network of post-traumatic African storytelling. Their drama affirms that memory, when honoured through culturally rooted performance, does not paralyse, it heals.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study set out to explore how the traumas of war and the remnants of memory are dramatized in two significant Nigerian plays: Wale Ogunyemi's *The Flood* and Ahmed Yerima's *Echoes of War*. Through careful analysis of the characters, dialogues, stage directions, and the larger thematic structure of both plays, the study has uncovered several key findings:

Firstly, both Ogunyemi and Yerima dramatize war trauma as a deeply personal, lingering experience that transcends the battlefield. In *The Flood*, characters like Timi and Mama become symbolic carriers of emotional wounds that time refuses to heal. Their recurring nightmares, erratic outbursts, and withdrawal from society capture the psychological weight of survival. Similarly, in *Echoes of War*, the character of Halima embodies the silent burden of memory - her silences, cryptic remarks, and moments of collapse highlight the invisibility of trauma even in post-war contexts.

Secondly, both playwrights present memory not as passive recollection, but as an active force-sometimes healing, often haunting. In *The Flood*, memory is staged as an involuntary intrusion; in Yerima's work, it is suppressed until it explodes, like a buried landmine. The plays underscore that the past is never truly gone-it returns in monologues, hallucinations, repetitions, and in the silence between words.

Thirdly, both texts show that trauma is not isolated. It infects family, community, and the broader society. Characters in both plays are not only victims but also transmitters of their pain, unknowingly passing on psychological damage to others. This finding proves that post-war trauma is generational and cyclical unless consciously addressed.

Lastly, both playwrights rely heavily on silence, fragmented speech, and disjointed scenes to depict psychological instability. The structure of the plays jumping between present and past, sanity and delusion; mirrors the very nature of trauma: nonlinear, chaotic, and difficult to narrate.

5.2 Conclusion

War is not only fought on the battlefield; it continues in the minds of those who survive. Both texts show that the true cost of war is not only in the deaths counted but in the lives that continue, broken, confused, and burdened. Both Ogunyemi and Yerima do not just tell the story of war they reveal its aftershocks. In *The Flood*, Ogunyemi frames trauma as a haunting presence. Characters are frozen in time, unable to step out of the past. Their environment mirrors their inner state. The flood is not just physical but emotional, symbolic of the deluge of suppressed memory. On the other hand, Yerima presents silence as a response to trauma. His characters do not scream they fall quiet. But in their silence lies a scream that only attentive eyes and ears can hear.

This study concludes that African drama, through the lens of these two plays, possesses the power to give voice to the voiceless, to stage silence, and to remember what society prefers to forget. It offers not just entertainment, but healing-a mirror and a remedy.

5.3 Recommendations

Given the findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. For Theatrical Practitioners: Directors, playwrights, and stage performers should pay closer attention to the dramatic representation of psychological trauma. Emphasis should be placed on

character development, voice modulation, pauses, and stage design to evoke the internal states of war survivors.

2. For Literature Students and Scholars: Scholars should consider the study of trauma not only through Western psychological theory but through African oral traditions, indigenous beliefs about memory and healing, and the performative nature of communal remembrance.

3. For Policy Makers and Educators: Educational institutions should encourage the use of drama in healing trauma, especially in post-conflict societies. This could include drama therapy workshops, school performances focused on war recovery, and community-based theatre that allows war survivors to express their stories safely.

4. For Future Research: Subsequent studies could explore how female playwrights approach the theme of war trauma differently, or how trauma is represented in other forms such as poetry, music, or cinema within the African context. Cross-disciplinary studies involving psychology, anthropology, and theatre arts could also provide richer insights.

5. For Society at Large: There must be increased awareness that trauma does not end with a ceasefire. Collective support systems must be created, and the arts should be recognised not just as cultural products but as essential tools for national healing and truth-telling.

Works Cited

- Adeoti, Aderemi. *Voices Offstage: Nigerian Dramatists on Drama and Politics*. University of Ibadan Press, 2010.
- Adeoti, Gbemisola. "Literary Drama, Literacy and the Quest for Democracy in Nigeria: An Appraisal." *Revista Estudios*, no. 16, 2002, pp. 30–50.
- . *Muse and Mimesis: Critical Perspectives on Ahmed Yerima's Drama*. Spectrum Books, 2007.
- Ajibade, Emmanuel. "Memory and Silence in Ogunyemi's *The Flood*." *African Theatre Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2015, pp. 20–28.
- Akoh, Denis A. "Towards a Historiography of the Text: The Plays of Ahmed Yerima." *Muse and Mimesis: Critical Perspectives on Ahmed Yerima's Drama*, edited by Gbemisola Adeoti, Spectrum Books, 2007, pp. 110–122.
- Bello, Amina. "Prop Objects as Agents of Memory in Echoes of War." *Nigerian Theatre Review*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2018, pp. 80–90.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. Harcourt Brace, 1994.
- Chinweizu. *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature*. Howard University Press, 1983.
- Davies, Rebecca Ufuoma. "Alter/Native and the New Historicism Contents of Second Generation Nigerian Poets." *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies*, vol. 11, no. 6, 2023, pp. 1–10.
- Ejeke, Solomon. *Theatre Business: Countercultural Drama in Nigeria*. Lagos Publishing, 2015.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1995.
- . *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith, Routledge, 2002.
- Gallagher, Catherine, and Stephen Greenblatt. *Practicing New Historicism*. University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Ineoma, Eze. "Reconciliation and Memory in Yerima's *Echoes of War*." *Postcolonial Drama Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2017, pp. 98–110.
- Jeyifo, Biodun. *Nigerian Theatre: Nationalist Discourse in Dramatic Form*. Ibadan University Press, 1984.
- Julius-Adeoye, Ratimi. *The Drama of Ahmed Yerima: Studies in Nigerian Theatre*. Leiden University Repository, 2013.

- Montrose, Louis A. *"Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture."* *The New Historicism*, edited by H. Aram Veeser, Routledge, 1989, pp. 15–36.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. James Currey, 1986.
- Nwosu, Chukwuemeka. *"Ritual Speech and Memory in Echoes of War."* *Journal of African Literary Critique*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2016, pp. 60–70.
- Nwugo, Chinyere. *"Poetic Moral History in The Flood."* *African Literary Studies*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2019, pp. 85–95.
- Obafemi, Olu. *Politics and Aesthetics in Nigerian Theatre*. Spectrum Books, 2001.
- Odukoya, Funke. *Gendered Silence in Contemporary Nigerian Drama*. Abuja University Press, 2016.
- Ogu, Emeka. *"Environmental Symbolism in Wale Ogunyemi's The Flood."* *African Literary Review*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2018, pp. 55–70.
- Ogunyemi, Wale. *The Flood*. Ibadan University Press, 1991.
- Osofisan, Femi. *"Ritual and Revolution in Nigerian Drama."* *Journal of African Literature*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1999, pp. 110–125.
- Thomas, Brook. *The New Historicism and Other Old-Fashioned Topics*. Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Ude, Nkechi. *"National Lamentation and Myth in The Flood."* *Drama and Society Journal*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2020, pp. 68–78.
- Yerima, Ahmed. *Echoes of War*. Kraft Books, 2005.