

## **A Conversation with Nigerian Playwright and Public Intellectual Ahmed Yerima**

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### **Abstract**

The concept of the public intellectual is yet to be well engaged in Nigerian scholarship. Although it has been implied in many critical works, works about writers, activists, journalists, lawyers, and others, the concept of the public intellectual has not been exclusively engaged to study Nigerian public figures of history and current Nigeria. In this paper, although much of it is an interview with award-winning and prolific Nigerian playwright, academic, and former Artistic Director of the National Troupe, and the Director General of the Nigerian National Theatre, Ahmed Yerima, it briefly establishes the public intellectual history in Nigeria before engaging the playwright on this subject and interrogating his status as a public intellectual or critic. During the course of the interview, Yerima also touches on other subjects facing Nigeria and the intersection between one of his plays, *Abobaku* (2015) and Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975).

**Keywords:** public intellectual, Ahmed Yerima, *Abobaku*, Elesin Oba, commentator

As I began my research project on the role and influence of the African public intellectual in the present world, playwrights, novelists, and academics were the group of people that first drew my attention. Among these many African writers who I considered was Nigerian playwright, Ahmed Yerima. As a result, I sought an interview with him considering his status as a public intellectual

who has through his plays, commented on and critiqued social and political lives of Nigerians. Having worked on many of Ahmed Yerima's plays, some of which were part of my doctoral thesis, the interview was conducted on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2019. I visited the office of the award-winning playwright and director at Redeemer's University, Ede where he is a professor in the department of Theatre and Performing Arts and a member of the school's Governing Council. Before this time, I had had my first encounter with Yerima when I read his play *Otaelo* (2003), an adaptation of Williams Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603) while still an undergraduate in 2007. By 2010 when I was graduating from the university of Ilorin, myself and four other members of our group (all final year students) decided to present Yerima's *Dry Leaves on Ukan Tree* (2001) for our compulsory practical final project. Having visited him to get more insights on the play, not only was he pleased to have us around, Yerima took the pain to come see the performance of the play which he claimed was not only an engaging performance, it was the first time he was seeing the performance of the play. Since then, the playwright has written many more thought-proving plays.

Considering the abundant number of elites, critics and social analysts both of the that past and current histories in Nigeria, it is somewhat strange that the theoretical concept of the public intellectual in relation to these people has not been explored as much as it should. With regards to Nigeria's colonial past, we have had politicians, socialists and civil activists who fought for the country's independence. Also, after the attainment of independence and transition to democracy, the country has had to face different political dispensations from democracy, to military dictatorship, to what I term 'half-democracy', and back to what we have today. In all these times, critics voiced and continue to voice out their concerns about the ways the nation was and is being run. Many of them, including writer, Ken Saro Wiwa, lawyer and politician, Bola Ige, politician and publisher, MKO Abiola, his wife, Kudirat Abiola and others, during the era of military

dictatorship were murdered because of the ways they criticized and questioned the policies of the government of the day. Others like Wole Soyinka, Chief Anthony Enahoro, veteran journalist, politician, nationalist, Amos Arogundade Akingba found themselves in prison or became political fugitives. Aside from Soyinka, writers like Femi Osofisan, Duro Ladipo, John Pepper Clark-Bekederemo, Zulu Sofola and many more have also raised important socio-political questions which have required that not only leaders but the society at large question their role (either actively or passively) in the unpleasant state that Nigeria finds itself today. Despite the influence of these critics in both past and present Nigeria, not so much has been written about them through the particular discourse of the public intellectuals.

Although there are works such as *In Islam and Colonialism: Intellectual Responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British Colonial Rule* (2006) by Muhammad Umar which explores how Muslim thinkers of the colonial era responded and reacted to colonial rule and activities such as propagation of Christianity within that region at the particular period, the British militarization of the occupants of that region, and the indirect manners in which the British dictated the rulings and practices of this people; *The Intellectual Dimensions of Corruption in Nigeria* (2007) by Shola Omotola which details the implication of the Nigerian academics/public intellectuals in the political affairs of this state where the “Nigerian academy is enmeshed in a deepening crisis of integrity, which has taken heavy tolls on the intellectual responsibilities of scholars” (38-39); and Emmanuel Remi Aiyede’s *Value: Intellectuals and Policy Process in Nigeria : A Theoretical Cum Ideological Explanation* (2013) which argues that although Nigerian post-colonial and post-independence intellectuals and scholars may have personal and individual differences, they were “voice of reason as they were involved in policy making and implementation” (30), roles which they have continued with even after multiple military dictatorial governments, there is still dearth

on the subject of the public intellectual in Nigerian scholarship. With regards to the public intellectual and the literary writer/critics, this dearth is equally as clear. Dele Layiwola's *The Radical Alternative and the Dilemma of the Intellectual Dramatist in Nigeria* (1991) is one of the earliest works that deals with the literary writer as an intellectual. Using playwrights such as Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande, the article explores the implication of transposing historical texts either across nations or within a nation, jeopardizes and smears not only contexts but also affects the quality of the message of such transposed texts. Adebayo Williams in his article *Intellectuals and the Crisis of Democratization in Nigeria: Towards a Theory of Postcolonial Anomie* (1998) explores the influence of corrupt political practice on the roles of public intellectuals and academics. To him, "the reality of a military state has engendered a total destruction of the university system in Nigeria" (305) thereby leading to corruption even amongst intellectuals in the academics. Another in this line is a work entitled, *Political Power and Intellectual Activism in Tanure Ojaide's The Activist* (2008) by Uzoechi Nwagbara where he "examine[s] the repressive political power structure in the Niger delta and by extension, Nigeria, and how to resist this system through intellectual activism – a process that entails the incorporation of reasoned, ideological and the political education necessary to galvanise change in society" (250).

Wole Soyinka was the first African literary writer to be awarded with the prestigious prize for literature: Nobel Laureate in 1986. Since then, many other writers like Naguib Mahfouz of Egypt, South Africans Nadine Gordimer, and JM Coetzee have also been awarded the prize. These writers are not only known for their literary prowess, they are/were public intellectuals whose ideologies and activism were paramount in their countries' search for political freedom in many ways. In Nigeria, there are writers, theatre directors and actors who are often referred to as

‘Soyinkarians’. This is either because they allude to the person of Soyinka and his writing or because they write/direct plays similarly to how he does, Soyinka is a model they allude to in one way or another. One of such is prolific Nigerian playwright, Ahmed Yerima, who refers to Soyinka as ‘my father’. Yerima was a student of Soyinka during his undergraduate days at the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University. In this interview, the playwright’s status as a public intellectual is discussed. And as the interview progresses, Yerima pitches his play *Abobaku* (2015) with that of his ‘father’ Soyinka’s *Death and the King’s Horseman* (1975). Both plays discuss the role of the Elesin Oba/Abobaku using different contextual settings. Yerima also teases us with his current work, something we should be expecting soon. I have decided to conduct an interview with this writer because he is a contemporary Nigerian public intellectual in the way he uses his plays to speak to current debates on important national subjects. Thus, performing the role of the public intellectual as described by Odile Heynders. According to Heynders, the public intellectual “intervenes in the public debate and proclaims a controversial and committed and sometimes compromised stance from a sideline position” (2016, 3). Thomas Sowell also describes the public intellectuals as “people whose comments help create a climate of opinion in which issues of the day are discussed and ultimately acted upon by those with political powers” (2009, 284). Through Yerima’s role as a playwright and one who was once employed by the government, we can correctly place Yerima as an influential public intellectual in the Nigeria of today.

### **The Interview**

**AO:** I must start by appreciating you for the time you have given for this interview.

**AO:** You have held the office of the artistic director of the National Troupe, and the director general of the Nigerian National Theatre. How did your status as a government employee influence

or clash with your writing? Do you consider what response you might get from your employer or do you just write as inspirations come without necessarily considering this?

**AY:** Ehm, I think it is a mixture of all. But my writing is influenced by two major elements: Wole Soyinka himself. When you look at what Wole Soyinka did, by the time I met him, he had gone through prison, he had written *The Man Died*, I met him in 1977 when he returned from Germany and had picked up a position of Chair at Ife [University of Ife now Obafemi Awolowo University]. He was teaching us what was called Gorilla theatre, which was ways of making public speaking, making commentaries on issues that were current within society and forcing the society to listen by ambushing them with the dramatic work. He told us how we could pass a message via our art and the audience receives it, laughs about it, yet you have been able to pass a message to them. It was later he told us this was called iconoclasm. He also taught us about relevance. The kind of work that should go into an organic republic. So, with this in mind, by the time I got the job in government in 1991, I wrote the first play *The Silent Gods* which was for me, an experiment of Soyinka's iconoclasm and guerrilla theatre. I wanted a relevant play. I treated MKO's story and took it to a fictitious village and hoped that the government wouldn't find out but they caught me out. Same thing happened with *The Sick People* where I treated the subject of promiscuity among a particular area of the Niger-Delta region.

**AO:** So, *The Sick People* gave you another perspective to the responsibility of the public intellectual?

**AY:** Oh yes, after I had written it and it needed to be performed among the original owners of the tradition, they were not happy with the title. They said the content depicted their practice; however, they are not sick people. It is a practice that has been passed to them from generations gone by. So, I realized another responsibility of the public commentator, first, you must be sensitive to those

whose materials you are going to use. Secondly, since you would be testing this work among the people whom this practice belongs, they must be able to identify themselves with it. Because if they don't, you have actually lost in your effort of making an intellectual comment about them to the society. These plays pull out the intellectual responsibilities in you. When researchers and analysts begin to examine these works, you begin to see how they germinate and how you have spoken to the society even in ways you did not consider at the time of writing.

**AO:** Thank you for that comment, it goes to say that as an authority in terms of the ways you create ideas by yourself and then bring it to reality as a public intellectual, you sometimes go ahead or foreshadow the future of the society from where you write. For instance, in your play *Aetu*, the little girl Aetu is raped at a tender age of fourteen by a man of seventy. This play was published in 2006. However, by 2013, a senator with exact name as yours, senator Ahmed Yerima married a girl of thirteen. He did not stop there, he proposed to the lawmakers at the national assembly for the marriageable age of a girl be brought down to thirteen, thereby, neglecting the global Human rights declaration of eighteen. Do you see yourself as a seer or more generally, what would you have to say about playwrights sometimes foreshadowing the future like Soyinka did with the *Kongi's Harvest*?

**AY:** With all sense of humility, one would say Yes. I think because you perceive the society, you are quite and observant, you are able to fictionize your observations. A good playwright cannot afford not to predict the society since he studies this society attentively. Also, we live in a society which does not really appreciate history, they do not want to learn. So, most times, as a playwright, you find out that you are repeating issues that have been treated at a high level by other playwrights. In fact, by the time I read Shakespeare, I told myself that everything has been written. The only thing Soyinka did was to give them his name: he Africanize them. So, what I do also is

to give it my name. Because Elsin Oba happened in Oyo doe does not mean Ife does not have his own. You see, what I have been finding interesting these days has been the whole concept of Ilari, the carrier. Something like Soyinka's *Strong Breed*. So, I ask myself, what has Nigeria learnt from Soyinka? In Nigeria where we find out that when you are a playwright like Soyinka or singer like Fela who made impactful comments about the nation and are great intellectual speakers, there is a problem. Nigerians just draw a line and say *were ni won* (they are crazy), do not listen to them.

**AO:** You mean people do not take them seriously?

**AY:** Yes! That is what I mean. So, in that case, you learn how to speak to them in a different way. Sometimes, you make them laugh and judge the characters in the play and by the time they would realise, they would recognise that they are the ones that are represented on that stage. So, the playwright becomes the social conscience of the society because he watches and studies this society to create and attribute meaning to what he studies. And when he does this and events reoccur, the same society begins to say hmm, he is a prophet, he foresaw this future. However, what he has done in reality is to understand the society at a particular time and understand that events repeat themselves, but the society fails to learn. You see that what the likes of Sophocles, Aeschylus, Euripides all problematised are still happening. Nobody listened to them, so they died. Shakespeare came, wrote about humanity, flaws, Arthur Miller, Bertold Brecht, Soyinka, Osofisan, and little boys like us are also picking up form there. So, humans only realise 'after the fact'.

**AO:** That does means that the public intellectual writes back to the society what the society tells him.



**AY:** That's the fact. In that way, he is a teacher as much as he is a learner. Like I was saying earlier, if we had listened to Beckett, Ibsen more, if we had learnt from *Waiting for Godot*, we would have said Jesus' coming may take longer. When I was listening to the pope who said it has been 2000 years, yet Jesus has not come. he concluded that Jesus is not coming again. I began to think isn't it more sensible to make ourselves the Godot and begin to prepare ourselves to go meet him rather expect him to come save us again? In fact, in my new play *Pengun*, a woman gives herself as a carrier for the shortcoming of her people and then said you must worship me. But she branches the shrine of Obatala and told Obatala that she only wants to die for a hundred years. Since the people say they will divide my body into four parts and bury my head at the village square, could you just join my body parts back together so I will return in a hundred years' time and retain my status as the Iyalode? Unknowing to the community, Iyalode returns and no one knows. By the time the priest confirms this, the whole community must give her the honour that is due her. The playwright in this case re-interprets general myths. He takes away those that do not work and re-interprets them to make new meanings to the new society.

**AO:** So, in *Pengun*, you re-mythologized an idea that Beckett had stated earlier. However, you frame it within a culture and a society you want it to be relevant in; a culture where you want to have an impact.

**AY:** Exactly! That is how the public commentator maintains and retains his status as a valid commentator on his society. In fact, if you look at my *Abobaku* with Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, you will see that Soyinka is only talking about the Elesin Oba while Yerima is talking about other *ikus* (deaths) in the palace: *Iku Ilari*, *Iku Ife*, *Iku Abiku* etc. while different carriers have to die for their kings, you see that at the end, Yerima trivializes it. In this way, Yerima asks the question, what if we die and find out that all the things, we hold sacred are really not worth

it? When we now die and find out, we again say hmmm, that playwright said so. He is indeed a prophet. So, most times, it is the interpretation of the playwrights' societies that gives them the titles, public intellectual, seer, teacher, social conscience of the society. But what he has done is to demythologize the present myth the society holds from his observation and re-myths them so that the society can find meaning in them.

**AO:** Since you have mentioned *Abobaku* and *Death and the King's Horseman*, I would just continue on that note.

**AY:** Yes!

**AO:** Having been mentored by Soyinka, I observe that you have ideological convergences and divergences. The reading of these two plays reads similarly yet differently. *Abobaku* seems to downplay or cast a shadow on the position of the abobaku. Firstly, you feminized the position of the abobaku by making her a female but for Soyinka, he uses a strong, well-respected male for that role.

**AY:** But he debases him. He debases him until he is not even qualified to be a child.

**AO:** True, he is described later in the play as a eater of leftovers.

**AY:** Ehen ... So, I will rather have a proud, arrogant, vibrant young woman you know. And I wanted you to know that the whole idea of giving up life is not a responsibility; it is something that comes from the heart. I mean, life is sweet. I may not be rich, but I like the life I am living. My iPhone, my funny cars, my bicycle, they all mean a lot to me. For me to say I want to give them up. I mean, *obe o da lorun* (the knife does not befit the neck). There is no easy death. Therefore, the abobaku must have a reason beyond, I love this man [king]. So, when the time comes for Ajibade to die the ritual death, he does not find a reason but Faramola does. She

remembers that Ajibade had saved her life, a long time ago when he carried a sacrifice for her. So, there is a relationship between her and Ajibade which is different from the peripheral one Ajibade had with the Oba. That is what I was trying to do there. Questioning the symbolic relevance of the mind, purpose, and reason for sacrificial death. So, I wouldn't say my play debases the position of the abobaku, instead, I would say it suggests that the love between the carrier/abobaku and the king should be as strong and profound as the one between a husband and a wife. Faramola in my play finds death more meaningful and as an act of love to sacrifice herself for her husband. When the husband hears of his wife's intention to die his death, he also gives himself in for the same ritual death he had escaped from. So, the display of love between this couple should be the reason and fundamental for ritual sacrifice and not the ceremonial oath Ajibade takes at the beginning of the play where he swears to stand by his king when he is alive and follow him to the place of the ancestors when he dies. So, love, will, purpose and death are concepts I heightened in *Abobaku*. When I directed Soyinka's play, what I found out was that the man has no soul. All he wants to do is to enjoy at the detriment of the people, the king, and the world he is supposed to leave behind. For Faramola to sacrifice herself, her unborn child, and the implication it has on her father who also dies, I depict in this intact, the stupidity of death.

**AO:** So, picking it up from there, may I say that the same mind Olunde has in Soyinka's play is the same that Faramola has in your play? The desire, the Will, as Soyinka calls it, having something to die for.

**AY:** Yes, but to me, Olunde's death was stupid. He is a medical doctor to be. He is already a saver of life. To me, Soyinka was playing in a very flippant way in the sense of commitment with all due respect to 'my father', that he has come to die in the place of his father Elesin but for me, Olunde does not owe his father and needs not to die on his behalf. You see, Soyinka does

something similar in *The Strong Breed*. Those who should save lives are those he kills. He does that so we could agree that we are a wasted breed because we do not appreciate what we should appreciate. Look at it this way, for Soyinka himself, when he dies, what would people say? That he was a great man. University of Nsuka will say ‘we are naming a hall after Soyinka. In fact, I gave a lecture the day the art theatre hall in university of Ibadan was named after Wole Soyinka. He will lie in state in Ife, the university that sent him away to the UK that he was not good enough. We did not want to give him a chair claiming he did not have a doctorate. But when Cambridge announced his chair, we gave him one immediately and even backdated it and so on. So, to me, death is an element of commitment. That’s why a man can Will himself to death. You see, when you feel your work is done on earth, you can Will yourself to death. That is what Jesus did. After fulfilling the purpose for which he came, he said it is finished. Unless your work is done, you can’t be finished. Without commitment, a sense of duty does not allow you to Will yourself to death. So, the basic difference between *Death and the King’s Horseman* and *Abobaku* is this same death subject. While one is the glorification of the person of the Elesin, the other one is the psychological search of the mind, of the reason for the essence of the release of life.

**AO:** So, you are saying an abobaku is not just the title or the physical portrayal and glorification of a figure, but what resides in him. His will, desire, readiness and finding a reason to face death when the times come that ultimately defines him.

**AY:** Exactly. I didn’t tell the Ife abobaku to run away. I didn’t tell Ajibade to run away.

**AO:** That is quite expository I must say. Now I see more points of divergence in both plays. Now, talking about Faramola, you empower her so much in the play and I can remember some lines where you compare her to Jesus Christ.

**AY:** Yes, I empower Faramola because I found that she, again, this is a man's world, but women are beginning to pick up. And when they pick up, they need more than what a man needs to pick up things. You see, sometimes I imagine if I would have been able to write some of my plays like those on Egun, Esu, etc. if I were a woman married to a man, especially a man who is a pastor. I'm sure some days he wouldn't want to sleep with me. He would say 'look at this woman, only God knows if the devil does not possess her'. Even as a man, sometimes my wife asks me, "don't you think that God gave you this creative gift so you could write plays that would praise Him?" but I tell her, man is my embodiment of Esu (trickster god).

**AO:** Thank you for that insight. Now this will take me to see at a further comparison of both plays and how yourself and Soyinka, both public intellectuals portray death in your plays. Before the death of Elesin, Olunde commits suicide in *Death and the King's Horseman*. Before Ajibade's ritual suicide, Faramola commits a ritual suicide herself in *Abobaku*. It seems to me that you both are condemning the death (sacrifices of the deaths before the ordain deaths) in both plays.

**AY:** Hmmm. To be an abobaku, it takes a process. It is a process that takes you there. When I directed Soyinka's play, I went to Oyo. Kabiyesi took me to the musicians. I told the Alafin, I wanted to know the song that a man listens to and prepares him to die. You know the scene when Praise Singer asks *Elesin Oba*, "can you hear me?" and he replies "faintly, faintly". When they sang the song, that was when I understood. *Ere iku ni, kin so oun erin o/Ere iku ni, kin so oun erin o/lala aye to ba wun e lola je/lala aye to ba wun e lola je o/Ere iku ni, kin so oun erin*? Loosely translated as (this race is not a fun race; it is a race of death. Lala you can enjoy your lives now as much as you want, this is not an amusing race, it is a race of death). So, once the chosen person is selected, he begins his ritual and rites, these start the process of being an abobaku. So, for my play, I look at it from a feminist angle. Like what Kudirat Abiola did. That, 'my husband wanted to

achieve something. He died during the process. So, I am going to continue the work. She was also killed in this process. So, I present her as the character who has the balls to face death because there is a bigger and more existential reason to do so.

**AO:** This I can understand also details why you must positively compare Faramola to the Christian saviour, Jesus Christ. You also did the same thing in your play *Aetu*. In *Aetu*, you place Aetu alongside powerful Yoruba gods like Obatala, Orunmila, and Esu, which is the essence of feminism: empowering women. This makes me want to ask, do you also share the opinion of most African feminists/womanists who believe that African women are the spiritual powers of their homes and families?

**AY:** Yes, yes, yes. I always believe in the strength of the spirituality of a woman. When you look at our cultures here in Nigeria most especially, history and tales tell us that when the clan or a community needs to make a sacrifice, when it is not an animal, it is the young girl, a woman who has not known men that is often used for sacrifice. So, they have this nature of spirituality in them more than men do. I also believe that the older a woman gets, the more entrenched she is spiritually. And as strange as it might sound, the man dispels himself, he frees himself. Therefore, things are dropping off from him. By the time he is old, he has given up so much beliefs. The woman on the other way round holds on to faith and spirituality. She doesn't dispel much. You see, most times men like to be the ones giving orders, making commands while women receive and accommodates. So, because of her ability to listen, she takes in, reasons more and therefore, she knows more than him. I was sick and admitted some months ago. While I was lying there in the hospital bed, I got hungry around 2am. When I opened my eyes, what I saw was my wife sitting beside me praying. You see, that is the kind of spiritual 'fortressness' the woman brings to her family. I am aware that some intellectuals do not like the way I present our women, I do so because of our culture. You

see, the Nigerian culture traps them. It predetermines their destiny and controls the space which they can go. That is why you find that in *The Sisters* and *The Wives*, even though empowered, the women still find themselves trapped one way or another. The society curtails the dreams and aspirations of women. Hillary Clinton is a typical example. Her political aspiration was halted by societal culture. You see when that woman dies, she will never forgive Americans, especially womenfolk.

**AO:** This reminds me of Raewyn's Connell's argument that "men and boys are ... in significant ways gatekeepers for gender equality" (2005:1802). She questions their willingness to not only to open the gate but to "open the gates for major reforms" (1802).

**AY:** Yes. You see, even when they open the gate, they tell the women where specifically to go. They have created a path for her to follow. If she goes beyond that, they create new strategies that will make her fall. So, I agree with Connell, are men truly ready for gender equality? Are they ready to give up the advantage they have over women? One of the strongest female presidential aspirants here in Nigeria was brought down by claims that someone made love to her in a car. Immediately, Nigerians started talking about how immoral and unqualified she is. Another very articulate female presidential aspirant was accused of once been married to one of the Emirs, critics also questioned her nationality. Some said she was of Ghanaian origin. You see, all these efforts are aimed at discrediting her for attempting to offset the status-quo.

**AO:** I was going through the list of your work since you started writing in the late 1980s and I noticed that from then till around the year 2000, you did not give attention to the subject of gender as much as you have done since the turn of the century. I am just curious, did anything change? Why the attention now?

**AY:** The society is changing, and women are also becoming heroes within my contemporary society. As a playwright and public intellectual, I must react to that. I must react to the fact that we have not allowed them to rise to the status they could have. I think I also have to mention this, as my daughter started growing up, I began to appreciate the position of young women in the society. So, sometimes, I dig into historical archives, go on research mission, get stories, and then make contemporary meanings to them. Even though some of the stories in my plays have historical backgrounds, as a playwright and public commentator, I have to make them meaningful and relevant to my contemporary society and audience. That is my role. I have to follow the tempo of the society.

**AO:** Lastly, in the midst of the debate going on among gender scholars in Africa as per where African feminism stands, how do you relate to that? Do you see yourself as a feminist or womanist or Nego-feminist?

**AY:** I am not any. I am just a storyteller who uses women to buttress the content of my plays. But I respect the persona of a woman. I respect her spirituality. I respect her importance within the society. I respect the fact that my story has to hinge on her because she is the delicate tool through which I tell my story. I respect the fact that I have to ridicule her at a point, highlight her at a point, beautify her at a point, in order to arrive at the essence of my story. So, I will rather that you (the scholar) do the classification.

**AO:** Thank you for your time and insights on the subjects that have been discussed today.

Conclusion, through this interview, both the interviewer and the interviewee have been able to reaffirm the status of this playwright, Ahmed Yerima as a public intellectual of high note in a nation as Nigeria which does not in any way lack the presence of critics. Through his play and the



engagement of social realism, the playwright uses his plays to speak to the leaders and the led in the nation concerning various subjects that continue to curtail the growth of the nation. Also, through the analysis of some his plays, the playwright has been able to breakdown some of these plays to the understanding of many.

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