

Polemics of Nigerian Worldviews on Mystical Realism and Social Class Conflicts in Sam Ukala's *The Placenta of Death*

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“A thorough grasp of the worldview of any given group of people is a fundamental prerequisite for the understanding of the rest of the interconnected beliefs, ideas, values and practices of the group”.

Prof. O. U. Kalu¹

ABSTRACT

This study examines the nuances of Sam Ukala's contextualization of African social worldviews on mystical realism and the shades of social class conflicts in *The Placenta of Death*. The focal aim is to discuss and come up with plausible appreciation of the perspectives projected in the play as regards to the contexts and application of mysticism in the dramatized inter-personal class conflicts. Consequently, the reasons for these conflicts, the social stratifications emanating from these conflicts, the contextualization of the sides to the social divide, the realities of the deep mutual mistrusts, and the shades of contempt and apprehension that are projected in the play are part of the study foci. Thus this study applies magical realism as the preferred theoretical frame in analyzing the perspectives, contexts and realities of mysticism, numinous influences and supernatural connotations as well as the sociological suppositions on the reality of the never-ending social class conflicts. To discuss these contexts and perspectives as perceived in *The Placenta of Death*, we adopt contextual interpretative approach in a bid to extrapolate and provide locale and culture specific attributions of occurrences, actions and inactions dramatized in the play.

Key words: Africa Drama, African Worldview, Folkism, Magical Realism, Mythology, Mystical, Reality

INTRODUCTION

African worldview on mystical realities and social class conflicts are topics that have drawn numerous academics analysis, from several disciplinary and multidisciplinary trajectories. May be, this is because mystical realities and social class conflicts are in many ways universal yet with similar and dissimilar interpretive communities' perspectives. Again these two topics have been realities of man from the ancient times and have remained perpetual. Therefore, scholars variously are looking at the evolutionary trends, new definitions and comparative purviews. In this study, our focus is to critically discuss Sam Ukala's presentation of an enhanced experimentation trajectory in his quest to come up with an engaging utilization of folklore as well as its literary narrative technique, which he conceptualized and named folkism in his creation of a drama of social criticism, he titled *The Placenta of Death*. Thus, this study primarily is looking at the playwright's portrayal of specific African worldviews on mystical realities as it affects living life in relation to the realities of aggregations propelled by social

class struggles. However, to enhance our readers' appreciation of the terms folklore and folkism, as applied in this paper, we start by providing relevant insights. According to Dan Ben-Amos "definitions of folklore are as many and varied as the versions of a well-known tale" consequently, "both semantic and theoretical differences have contributed to this proliferation" (p. 3). Elaborating, Ben-Amos observes:

Anthropologists and students of literature have projected their own bias into their definitions of folklore. In fact, for each of them folklore became the exotic topic, the green grass on the other side of the fence, to which they were attracted but which, alas, was not in their own domain. Thus, while anthropologists regarded folklore as literature, scholars of literature defined it as culture. Folklorists themselves resorted to enumerative, intuitive, and operational definitions; yet, while all these certainly contributed to the clarification of the nature of folklore, at the same time they circumvented the main issue, namely, the isolation of the unifying thread that joins jokes and myths, gestures and legends, costumes and music into a single category of knowledge. (p. 3).

Furthermore, Ben-Amos adds that “to define folklore, it is necessary to examine the phenomena as they exist” because “in its cultural context, folklore is not an aggregate of things, but a process - a communicative process, to be exact” (9). Summing up his view in an interpretive context, Ben-Amos adds:

Folklore is the action that happens at that time. It is an artistic action. It involves creativity and esthetic response, both of which converge in the art forms themselves. Folklore in that sense is a social interaction via the art media and differs from other modes of speaking and gesturing. This distinction is based upon sets of cultural conventions, recognized and adhered to by all the members of the group, which separate folklore from non-art communication. In other words, the definition of folklore is not merely an analytical construct, depending upon arbitrary exclusion and inclusion of items; on the contrary, it has a cultural and social base. (p. 10)

In the above comment, Ben-Amos alludes to culture specific descriptions of aspects and content ramifications that typifies a people's folklore realities. More so Ben-Amos explains that:

The textual marks that set folklore apart as a particular kind of communication are the opening and closing formulas of tales and songs and the structure of actions that happen in-between. The opening and closing formulas designate the events enclosed between them as a distinct category of narration, not to be confused with reality. (p. 10)

Thus, in line with Joseph Rysan, “folklore can be defined as the collective objectifications of basic emotions, such as awe, fear, hatred, reverence, and desire, on the part of the social group” (p. 10). Folkism in line with Ukala's postulation is an African oral folktale informed playwriting technique. In his conceptualization on the structure, technique and essential nuances of folkism, Ukala presents a bundle of ideas he calls ‘the laws of aesthetic response’ which encapsulates the dimensions of folkism. Hence, he states that folkism refers to “an indigenous dramatic aesthetic principle” which “may derive from the use in the African literary theatre of folk linguistic, structural and performance styles” (Ukala p. 38). More so, according to Ukala, the laws stipulating and guiding the composition of drama in line with the concept of folkism are eight in number and they are:

The Law of Opening; the Law of Joint Performance; the Law of Creativity, Free Enactment and Responsibility; the Law of Judgment; the Law of Protest against Suspense; the Law of Expression of the Emotions; the Law of Ego Projection; and the Law of Closing. (2001, p. 33)

These methodological approaches are essentially aimed at codifying the technique of scripting and enacting a drama based on the tenets of folkism. According to Ifeanyi Ugwu and Ikechukwu Aloysius Orjinta in their perspective on Ukala's concept of folkism, Ukala presents folkism as “the tendency to base literary plays on the history, culture, and concerns of the folk and to compose and perform them in accordance with African conventions for composing and performing folktale (1996, p. 285). Throwing more light, Ugwu and Orjinta observe that “Ukala is right when he notes that the African folktale provides a structural framework or a mould for the creative vision of folkism” (2013, p. 80).

Their explanation is that folktale “can easily be employed in composing literary drama because it shares a lot of features in common with a literary play” (Ugwu and Orjinta, 2013, p. 80). Essentially, the technique of folkism is to technically engage the ‘narrator’ to relate with audience at the beginning of the play, exchange pleasantries with audience at some relevant point in the play, intermittently stimulate the audience through dialogue, and then present a closing remarks to the audience in dialogue at the end of the play.

Consequently, Ukala artistically attempts at interrogating the prevalent social class conflicts in Nigeria and elsewhere through a creative drama that embodies folkism and African worldviews on mystical reality. Again, to analytically appreciate Ukala's bid to propagate his philosophies and convictions, this study critically looks at his creative blending of literal, metaphorical, mytho-poetic expressions and dramatizations in *The Placenta of Death*. To further appreciate Ukala's supposition and propositions for social class conflicts, this study examines the dramatized complexity of actions and inactions involved in the social class conflicts. Similarly, this study examines the application of mystical influences by foes and the supposed efficacy of mystical powers as a socio-cultural reality in *The Placenta of Death*. Furthermore, this study examines the conceptualization of mysticism and its efficacy as a form of magical realism.³ Thus, this leads us to probe into the domain of scholarly perspectives on the contexts and perceptions of mysticism in social realities and magical realism as a conceptual literary idea. In this regard, what do we mean by magical realism in line with this study?

MAGICAL REALISM AS A UNIVERSAL SOCIAL REALITY WITH CULTURE AND LOCALE SPECIFIC INTERPRETATIONS

Magical realism according to Isabel Allende is in literary studies viewed as “a literary device or a way of seeing in which there is space for the invisible forces that move the world” (1991, p. 54). Furthering Allende notes that all such mystical and numinous forces “find a place in the absurd” and that the “unexplainable aspects of magic realism” relates to each individual's “capacity to see and to write about all the dimensions of reality” (1991, p. 54). Evidently, Allende believes that magic realism as a literary device and concept captures as well as encapsulates the socio-cultural belief in the existence of the mystical aspects and things in life. Similarly Stephen Slemon notes that magical realism metaphorically is akin to “an oxymoron, one that suggests a binary opposition between the representational code of realism and that, roughly, of fantasy” (1995, p. 10). Espousing on magical realism conceptual purview, Brenda Cooper argues that when a literati consciously applies it, he “strives, with greater or lesser success, to capture the paradox of the unity of opposites” thus “it contests polarities such as history versus magic, the pre-colonial past versus the post-industrial present and life versus death, capturing such boundaries between spaces, is to exist in a third space, in the fertile interstices between these extremes of time or space” (1998, p. 1). To Ann Bowers, “magical realism relies upon

the presentation of real, imagined or magical elements as if they were real” thus “magical realism therefore relies upon realism but only so that it can stretch what is acceptable as real to its limits” (2004, p. 21). The ideas of Allende, Bowers, Cooper and Slemon are in line with the perspective of this study that magical realism predicated on human experiences and realities is a conceptual platform aiding the classification and discussion on various phenomena referred to as mystical and numinous. Thus, looking at the universal social perspective on mysticism, Hans Penner concludes that “mysticism now covers a host of beliefs and experiences” (1989, p. 11). This premise concurs with Sallie King’s view, which suggests that mystical experience may be understood as “a form of awareness in which the experiential sense of a separate subject and object is not present” (1988, p. 273). To a number of acclaimed scholars, such as Robert Forman (1990), G. William Barnard (1992), and Jonathan Shear (1994), mystical experience should be understood as one of pure consciousness or unmediated awareness, whereas Wayne Proudfoot describes the non-ordinary quality of mystical experiences as ‘anomalous’ (1985, p. 148). On the socio-religious dimension, Samuel Brainard observes that “people involved in the study of religion question the important roles mystical experiences play in religion, yet it has proven difficult to agree on what it means for an experience to be mystical” (1962, p. 359). Furthering, Brainard argues that “much of the research and writing in the field of mysticism continues to presume that the phrase ‘mystical experience’ does, in fact, designate a coherent category of experience” (1962, p. 360). Again, Brainard contends that “the experiences we call ‘mystical’ or translate from other languages as being ‘mystical’ all have two characteristics” which he refers to as ‘non-ordinariness’ and ‘profundity’” (1962, p. 362). Non-ordinariness, he notes pertains to mystical experience not being explainable within a conventional and naturalistic context (Brainard, 1962, p. 373). On the other hand, profundity, encapsulates experiences such as telepathy, clairvoyance and astral travel, which may be considered naturalistically unexplainable (Brainard, 1962, p. 379). In concordance with the notion that mystical realities are universal phenomena with locale specific interpretations Emeka Ania-go in his analysis of Inua Ellams’ play *Untitled*, observes:

Inua Ellams play *Untitled* in many ways represents some familiar African belief system and ideological worldviews on mystical realities, particularly the efficacious potentialities of their mystic rituals and divinations. (p. 519)

The convergence of all these scholarly opinions is that people appreciate that some realities may neither yield to empirical nor common sense approach to their understanding. Essentially, these perspectives are in concordance with this paper’s supposition on African worldview on mystical realism and mystical experience. Again these scholarly views will help us in our analysis towards enhanced appreciation of the dimensions of African socio-cultural worldviews on mystical realism and mystical experience, which are replete

in Nigerian folktales and drama as utilized by Sam Ukala in *The Placenta of Death*.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE PLACENTA OF DEATH

Primarily, *The Placenta of Death*’s story is about the shades of perennial painful socio-political social class conflicts in a fictional kingdom called Owodo-land. In this kingdom, Ukala portrays the existence of a subsisting parallel rigid ideologies, philosophies and socio-cultural worldviews as the forces propelling social class tensions and segregation between the residents and citizens, the wealthy/influential and the abject, and the freeborn and non freeborn. Literally, on the one hand, Ukala in *The Placenta of Death* places the wealthy and those that wield significant socio-political influence as the oppressors, whereas, on the other hand, the oppressed in the play, includes all abject citizens and non-influential slaves and freeborn. Though Ukala metaphorically speaks to Nigerians and about Nigeria in the play, technically his thematic concern, (social class conflicts) is a universal common that reverberates all around the world. Thus Ugwu and Orjinta are of the view that “the play therefore smacks of an African brand Marxism by recommending the class-consciousness of the masses, and raising this awareness to a level that inspires a collective struggle against oppression” (p. 81).

REALITIES OF SOCIAL CLASS CONFLICTS AND MAGICAL REALISM IN THE PLACENTA OF DEATH

In *The Placenta of Death*, Ukala’s narrator commences his story by greeting the audience in the usual African oral folktale rendition approach; “Ladies and Gentlemen, I welcome you warmly to tonight’s story session”, to which the audience responds accordingly. Expectedly, through the spontaneous involvement of the audience in the play’s storytelling process, and in their response to warm greetings directed at them in the opening remarks of the play, Ukala clearly declares his intent to build a play in line with African traditional folktale rendition technique. Ukala accentuates this style in the narrator’s acknowledgement of the audience response to his greetings and the follow-up deliberate encouragement of dialogue between the narrator and the audience. This storytelling opening style affords Ukala through the narrator, the latitude to commence his literary engagement in a language subsumed in scorn without the usual dramatic detachment:

Narrator: I hope you had a fine day at work. That is, if such a thing still pays for the transport to it and the worker is cudgelled almost to death by hunger and its attendants (p. 13).

This manner of speaking paints a sarcastic picture of the unsavoury realities most civil servants in Nigeria mostly contend with. Again through the Narrator, Ukala sets the tone on the thematic focus of the play, as indicated in the beginning song, in a metaphorical language which is:

Like a dirge for a nation shredded by riches and strife, such as Owodoland, the setting of power and injustice, enjoyment and anguish. Riches became a high fence

between brother and brother. Nature strangely welded opposites in order to level them up. But levelling-up created charring friction (p. 13).

In this opening salvo, Ukala begins the actual process of situating the nuances of reality of stratification and segregation and the attendant consequences which manifests in variegated forms as social class conflicts. Here, Ukala indicates that the social divide revolves around wealth in the first instance. Those who possess wealth fraternize because those who do not have wealth view them collectively as oppressors. In other circumstances, depending on the socio-political gain, Ukala indicates that the following sentiment could suffice: "the daughter of a slave is a slave. She cannot bear an heir for Owodoland, even though the goddess of fertility resides in her womb" (p. 14). In this regard, Ukala indicates that social divide shifts from wealth as the determinant of fraternity to genealogy as the ideological bent. Again this circumstance consistently remained a global phenomenon, though at a varying magnitude. Thus, it is a telling universal common which usually becomes prevalent mostly during electioneering manoeuvres. Practically every community, kingdom and country throughout the ages has at one time or the other, witnessed upheavals of varying proportions, from skirmishes to wanton ethnic cleansing. Ukala's referent, 'slave is a slave', is a dense metaphor which beyond the literal, subsumes the notion of 'otherness' on account of genealogy. Thus, globally, in political manoeuvres, politicians attempt to corner electoral gains by encouraging sentiments and biases, through deliberate inflammatory inflection of genealogically informed homogeneity and heterogeneity. Clearly, Ukala is unambiguous in alluding to the factors that instigate social class conflicts, the social stratifications and divide emanating from these conflicts, the realities of the deep mutual mistrusts, and the shades of contempt and apprehension bedevilling communities and countries, globally.

Projecting further the thematic engagement in *The Placenta of Death* on the social realities of the social class conflicts accentuated by wealth divide and politically orchestrated genealogy otherness, Ukala, presents shades of social worldview, philosophy and ideology which aid people in validating their side to the divide of subsisting social class conflicts:

Our ancestors will not let her. The herbs in the bush will not let her. The throne of our fathers will not bear the messy bottom of a slave-king. (p. 14)

In this instance, the speaker alludes to the social philosophy supporting the view that the dead are active participants in the happenings in the lives of the living. In the same vein, Owodo alludes to socio-cultural attribution on medium-ship and communion with the dead which are examples of mystical experiences:

The Oba's father, who contracted the marriage, has since gone, he needs some rest. He will not find it (funny) if you call him up for reproach endlessly. (p. 14)

Another form of mystical experience is the communication with oracles, whereby empirical evidence of such communication cannot be established. This is found in the following comment by Ihama:

Oba places no premium on consultation. Didn't he, for example, appoint our Iyasare without consultation with even the oracle. (p. 14)

In another instance, the actions of the character Ibo embody the perspective of mystical experiences, thus, it is widely believed that barrenness can be influenced by mysticism, and some acts are acknowledged as occult practice and their mannerisms.

IBO: The face of white chalk is the face of rejoicing; No one kills the teeth of laughter. (Blows chalk). The face of white chalk is the face of the new born; the chaser of the chicken catches a fall. Here is white chalk, white chalk, white chalk, its white chalk that I have for she that has come. No one kill the teeth of laughter. (p. 16)

Again, another character, Ebuzun, expresses some widely held views on the conceptualization of the manifestations of witches as belonging to mystical experience, when he says, "let me tell you: people think that witches are always poor people, but that isn't true at all" and also that the "wealthy witches are usually more heartless" (p. 18). Furthermore, Ebuzun adds, referring to another character Izagodo; "when you talk, they gaze foolishly at you as though they had lost their tongues to the god of dumbness" (p. 18). In his speech, Ebuzun suggests that there is a supernatural being that controls human reality such as dumbness. Thus the following comment is an affirmation of African socio-cultural acceptance of mystical occurrences in *The Placenta of Death*:

Omoni's pregnancy wasn't yet securely seated. An ill-breeze could have blown it off. Pregnancies have disappeared mysteriously in this kingdom. Fam! Like that. Not even through a miscarriage. (p. 23)

In line with African cultural philosophy, an individual may be blamed for another's affliction, because inferences could be made as regards to application of magical influences. In accordance with this line of view, Iziegbe notes that Ibo might not have been pregnant at all; maybe she could have stuffed her belly with rags. Thus, Iziegbe notes that "the day she would remove the rags, she could fling herself to the ground and groan that her rival has bewitched her with miscarriage" (p. 23). In answer to Iziegbe remarks, members of the audience observe: "and Omon would have been in trouble" (p. 23). At this point, it is plausible to suggest that Ukala alludes to the possibility of social class conflicts involving devious machinations, such as claiming that one's rival has applied destructive mystical powers to harm him or her. Again, Ukala explains that individuals are aware of the possibilities of devious diabolical intent and actions; hence they get 'boiled' and 'roasted' in charms by their medicine men or women. Here, Ukala applies the expressions 'boiled' and 'roasted' metaphorically to suggest any process of fortification with mystical powers. Philosophically, Ukala through the character, Osaze, portrays a subsisting ideological worldview prevalent in Nigeria:

Some people came right into the middle of this world. Others came perching on its edge, due to no fault of theirs. We belong to the group that is perching on the edge. In dancing, we cannot compete with those in the

middle, for if we but over swayed with as much as the breath of the tongue of the snake, we would fall right into the abyss of the forgotten. That's how it is, my daughter. (p. 44)

Here, Ukala alludes to a higher being or force as the one responsible for the social class divide. However, a differing opinion coming from Members of the Audience rhetorically asks: "one who is standing on the edge of the world and does not feel safe there, shouldn't he push his way to a safer place?" (p. 45). This position by the Members of the Audience suggests that one can change his life conditions through effort channelled in the right place and direction at the right time, to achieve maximum effect. However, Ukala through the character Osaze explains that the reality of one's position in life is not essentially about effort, but, is much dependent on destiny. He illustrates this in following manner, directing his response to the Members of the Audience. As part of the bitter and lethal rivalry that ensues in a polygamous family setting, the following dialogue projects the nature of response and reality of actions and inactions. Ukala uses the common intrigues and devious plotting, which usually occur and involve securing territorial space through diabolical and all forms of devious means applied, to define metaphorically the nature of social class conflicts as a universal common, with Nigeria as the interpretive community.

Consequently, Ukala presents wealth as a very powerful tool which can be effectively deployed to achieve a dramatic change in an individual's social status. He projected this philosophy through Emeni, who though is labelled a slave because his ancestors were slaves, and should be categorized as an oppressed but is classified as oppressor because he made enormous wealth which aided him in acquiring an enormous social influence. Emeni's daughter, Ibo, though labelled a slave because of her descent from slave bloodline, is by virtue of being a daughter of an influential wealthy man and the Oba's first wife, effectively categorized amongst the oppressors. Those who were labelled slaves because their ancestors were slaves however are categorized as oppressors because of their family's enormous wealth and influence through their close alliance with the monarch. Thus, Emeni by the virtue of his daughter's marriage to the Oba is placed on same pedestal with the royal household, the community leaders, and the oppressors. Thus, Ukala presents the fictional character Owodo III, Oba of Owodoland as the leader of the oppressive regime in Owodoland.

CONCLUSION

Ukala's narrative style in *The Placenta of Death* is akin to African folktale telling technique which features prominently a narrator, who delivers his story to an audience. This audience in turn actively participate in the story delivery through relevant responses to the narrator's questions or by asking questions spontaneously, either individually or collectively, when circumstance necessitates. Again this kind of drama allows for the audience to contribute to the story telling process through rhythmic clapping of hands, stamping of feet, humming or singing of chorus, once more as the

story's circumstance requires. Majorly, this paper looks at Ukala's presentation of a web and nuances of social class conflicts persisting amongst the affluent, the moderate, and the abject, all of which constitutes part of our analytical discussion. This study examines Ukala's dramatization which recognizes individuals as gendered, racially constituted, unevenly privileged, which portrays many layered lives that are both structurally determined and idiosyncratically forged. Meanwhile, beyond the contextualization of the potency of wealth as the dominant determinant of quantity of respect accorded each individual in the dramatized Nigerian socio-cultural milieu, Ukala robustly dramatises the contexts of acrimony and throes that pervade most polygamous families. In this regard, Ukala portrays the shades of diabolical and murderous designs aimed at securing and defending one's perceived share of, and rights from the family's commonwealth. Therefore, Ukala in this play, dramatically projects the Nigerian socio-cultural belief and acknowledgement of the efficacy of mysticism in human activities. Specifically, in looking at Ukala's portraiture of divisive social class conflicts, our interest tilts towards his projection of affluence as a crucial factor in the determination of individuals' social relationship with one another in the dramatized Nigeria's socio-political aggregation. Hence, this paper analyzes how Ukala, through this play, perceives and interrogates the subsisting realities in Nigeria socio-political space, as an attempt to better appreciate the conditions which reduces nearly everything to social class struggle. Again the latent drive evident in peoples' consciousness at seeking and consolidating that metaphorical 'base' and 'superstructure' provides the platform to philosophize on human propensity and inordinate quest to obstinately accumulate stupendously mundane things. Therefore, this phenomenon propels us to re-examine the concept of humanism and its relationship to power and oppression in line with Ukala's dramatized philosophy, ideology and attendant logic. Consequently, Ukala in *The Placenta of Death* propels us again to seek the proper social response towards social oppression, to review the realities of our actions and inaction towards institutionalized social injustice, and to philosophize on the context of whose fault is it that some individuals have far more than they can expend in a life time, whereas many lack the very basic needs.

By using social class conflicts as one of his focal thematic engagement, Ukala deftly draws attention on a very topical universal common. Though Ukala's characterization and story nuance undoubtedly situates his story in Nigeria, however the thematic concern, the social class conflicts is global. Evidently, Ukala alludes to a prevalent global phenomenon whereby individuals in all nations are segregated as immigrants or citizens, natives or residents, freeborn or outcast, aborigines or settlers, and wealthy or poor. Again, Ukala in *The Placenta of Death* attempts representing how people react to these segregation by striving through all means to move from one side of the unfavourable divide to the perceived favourable other. Furthermore, Ukala touches on how individuals strive to legitimize their integration from one side of the social divide to the other through marriage, bearing of children for one on the favourable side of the di-

vide, and through acquisition of influence through enormous wealth. Metaphorically, Ukala through the character, Second Woman, sums up the reality of the masses, especially the downtrodden:

Our problem is [...] No. Our problems are lack of political power, lack of the will to go for it, excessive individuality and selfishness, readiness to cringe and scramble for bones from the meat that rightly belongs to us [...]. In short, our problems are ourselves. (pp. 42 – 43)

Interestingly, Ukala alludes to the reality facing those who attempt to move from one side of the divide to the other. He indicates that such individuals have to contend with open and covert stiff antagonism by the groups or individuals disgruntled by their attempt to move from their subsisting side. In his portrayal of the depth of bitterness and acrimony that emanates from such conflicts, Ukala notes that the wounded from either side of the divide could resort to devious inclinations and machinations. Artistically, Ukala heightens emphasis on this global perennial socio-political fault-line, the vicious cycle of alignments, and re-alignments that emanates as a matter of inevitability. Though this play *The Placenta of Death* like other supposed Marxist ideologically driven plays, which eulogizes mass action as the needful to set aside the perceived oppressors, it apparently forget to allude plausible road map that will be functional in Nigeria given Nigeria's peculiarities. Lastly, the penchant by Marxists' towards prescription of toppling of oppressors clearly ignores history replete with reality that as long as wealth-divide exists, so also the concept of the wealthy as the oppressors and the poor as the oppressed will persist.

END NOTES

1. Prof. O. U. Kalu worked as a professor of Religion at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and obtained his PhD at Toronto University, Canada.
2. Sam Ukala, a Nigerian academic born in 1948 established himself as a playwright, poet, short story writer, actor, theatre director, and film producer, rose to professor of Theatre Arts and Drama at Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. He came up with the theory of 'folkism' and has published plays: *The Slave Wife*, *The Log in Your Eye*, *Akpakaland* (winner of the 1989 ANA/British Council Prize for Drama), *Break a Boil*, *Iredi War*, a 'folk-script', which won the 2014 Nigeria prize for Literature. Ukala has also worked with the British theatre Horse and Bamboo Theatre in 1999 and with Bob Frith wrote the visual theatre piece *Harvest of Ghosts*, which toured the UK and the Netherlands.
3. The first of the terms 'Magischer Realismus' or magic realism, was coined in Germany in the 1920s in relation to the painting of the Weimar Republic that tried to capture the mystery of life behind the surface reality. The second term, *lo real maravilloso* marvellous realism, was introduced in Latin America during the 1940s as an expression of the mixture of realist and magical views of life in the context of the differing cultures of Latin America expressed through its art and literature. The third term, *realism mágico* or magical realism was introduced in the 1950s in relation to Latin American fiction, but has since been adopted as the main term used to refer to all narrative fiction that includes magical happenings in a realist matter-of-fact narrative, whereby, 'the supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, and everyday occurrence - admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism' (Zamora and Faris 1995, p. 3).

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