

POINTS OF CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE IN KALU UKA'S
A HARVEST FOR ANTS AND EMEKA NWABUEZE'S *WHEN THE
ARROW REBOUNDS*

Abdullahi Lawal

Abstract

*Adaptation is one of the major sources of drama in Nigeria and dramatists of all generations in the country have not failed to explore it. Inter-genre adaptation (as against the intra-genre type) is one type of adaptation which some Nigerian playwrights have engaged in. Kalu Uka and Emeka Nwabueze are among the playwrights that have explored the inter-genre adaptation as demonstrated in their plays, namely, *A Harvest for Ants* and *When the Arrow Rebounds* respectively. The former was first performed in 1975 while the latter was staged to mark the 60th birthday celebration of the "Eagle on Iroko" (Chinua Achebe) in 1990. The two plays share the same source because they are derived from Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*.*

*This essay attempts to establish the points of convergence and divergence between Kalu Uka's *A Harvest for Ants* and Emeka Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds* since both of them derive from the same source material. In addition, an attempt is made to unravel the extent to which playwrights can go in the art of making prose fiction dramatic as exemplified in the two plays under discussion. The paper attempts to highlight the inherent differences and similarities in two different works based on one source as is the case with the adaptations of Chinua Achebe by Kalu Uka and Emeka Nwabueze under focus.*

Keywords: Convergence, Divergence, Comparative Study, Kalu Uka, Emeka Nwabueze, Chinua Achebe.

Introduction

Adaptation is one of the major sources of contemporary Nigerian drama. It has become the trend with many playwrights in this age to engage in inter-genre adaptation, transposing from already existing works into other genres as is the case with the two plays under examination in this essay: *A Harvest for Ants* (1975) and *When the Arrow Rebounds* (1990) by Kalu Uka and Emeka Nwabueze, respectively.

Adaptation in world literature remains one of the sources from which any genre of literature emanates, especially drama. Adaptation has a wide variety of meanings if it is taken from the general perspective, beyond the realm of literature. It is a process of modifying so as to suit new conditions. This subject could be applicable to any aspect of human existence. Adaptation is a tool of creativity through which man domesticates things around him. Samuel Kafewo is of the view that "adaptation...is a continuous process of life. Since life is in a continuous state of flux, things in life are always remoulded and reshaped into new structure" (302).

In literature, adaptation involves a process of transposition from one literary medium to another. To modify something is to establish a change in structure, function, theme or form, to create a new entity. Literary adaptation is the adapting of a literary work, such as a novel, into another genre like drama or poetry. This has received interesting attention from literary scholars over the ages.

According to Adeoti, "adaptation...raises the dilemma of 'originality' because of its acknowledged influence", and is thus "...marked by sameness and differences" (Adeoti 2010: 8-9). Hutcheon sees it as "a repetition with variation" (4), stressing further that:

...what is involved in adapting can be a process of appropriation, of taking possession of another's story, and filtering it, in a sense, through one's own sensibility, interests, and talents. Therefore, adapters are first interpreters and then creators (18).

The two works under review are offshoots of Achebe's *Arrow of God*, a prose fiction work. *A Harvest for Ants* was done in preparation for the 1977 World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC '77), as Kalu Uka observes in the 1975 brochure to the play (*A Harvest for Ants*: xx). The performance was well received by the audience perhaps because it was the first attempt of such inter-genre adaptation of Achebe's novel for the stage. *When the Arrow Rebounds* was done to celebrate Chinua Achebe at 60 in May, 1990. The performance of the two adaptations first took place at University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The thematic engagements of the two adaptations make them relevant to Nigerian/African socio-economic and political dilemma. The power of the people as portrayed in Achebe's *Arrow of God* becomes their focus.

Literary adaptation has been in vogue since the classical eras of both Greece and Rome. Most of the works of great Greek dramatists such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were transposed from Greek mythical narratives into the dramatic form in Classical Rome (Adcoti, 2010:12). Seneca, the Roman dramatist, successfully re-rendered and transposed Sophocles' classical play, *Oedipus Rex*, to the taste of the time under the same title (Kafewo, 302). Most of the works of Greek and Roman classic dramatists were based on pre-existing stories which were reworked to suit the medium of drama. Sophocles' trilogy (*Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*), like other Classical plays, were rooted in Greek mythology.

Shakespeare, a dramatist of all times, substantially explored adaptation as many of his dramatic works were developed from already existing stories, myths, historical accounts and even other plays of other

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dramatists. *Othello*, *As You like It*, *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Romeo and Juliet*, among others, are good illustrations of this assertion. Shakespeare found the plot of *Othello* in a famous Italian tale: Giraldi Cinthio's collection of tales, *Hecatommiti* (Muir, 7). Betiang maintains that Shakespeare's *As You Like It* was a story based on *Rosalynde*, a prose narrative by Thomas Lodge published in 1590 (34). Adeoti expresses the adaptive disposition of Shakespeare in these words:

Shakespeare, in manifesting the "looking back on the ancients" spirit of the Renaissance, was adept at adaptation. Besides his theatrical transposition of English Royal history as documented by Holinshed, many of his plays were based on already existing stories or dramatic compositions. *Hamlet* is based on an earlier version of the revenge tragedy by his contemporary, Thomas Kyd. *Troilus and Cressida* was sourced in *Troilus and Cryseyde*, a medieval narrative poem by Geoffrey Chaucer (2010:12).

Bertolt Brecht, widely associated with the famous Epic Theatre, also made commendable attempts at adaptation. He remoulded some existing plays from other traditions as well as myths and legends of other cultures. John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* was adapted into *The Three Penny Opera*, further adapted by Wole Soyinka into *Opera Wonyosi*, "a conflation of Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*" (Adeoti, 2010:26). Thus, adaptation is a global literary engagement.

Adaptations, basically, are of two types, namely, intra-genre adaptation and inter-genre adaptation. Under each of these branches.

there exist other types. Intra-genre adaptation is a kind of adaptation whereby a genre is adapted or reworked on in the same genre to suit different perspective, cultural background or ideology, among others. This could be drama-to-drama, novel-to-novel, poem-to-poem, and film-to-film, among others. The most famous among these types is drama-to-drama adaptation.

Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides* (1973) was adapted from Euripides' *The Bacchae*. *King Baabu* (2002) was derived from Alfred Jarry's *The Ubu Plays*, particularly *King Ubu*. Osofisan's *Women of Owo* (2006) was transformed from Euripides' *The Trojan Women*, while *Tegonmi: An African Antigone* (2007) was also transposed from Sophocles' *Antigone*. Ogunyemi's *Eniyan: A Morality Play* (1987) is a free adaptation of *Everyman*, an anonymous English medieval morality play, previously adapted by Hugo Von Hofmannsthal into *Jedermann* (1911). The same story was adapted for operatic drama by Duro Ladipo through artistic collaboration with Ulli Beier. Ahmed Yerima also has adaptations of J. B. Priestly's *An Inspector Calls* and Shakespeare's *Othello*. The list of this type in Nigerian drama is long.

Inter-genre adaptation involves a particular text being transposed into or re-worked to suit a different genre entirely. The examples of this type are also many. This could be novel-to-drama, drama-to-film, novel-to-film, drama-to-poem, drama-to-novel, and film-to-drama, among others. This essay is concerned with the novel-to-drama type of adaptation as exemplified by Kalu Uka and Emeka Nwabueze in their dramatic adaptations of Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* into *A Harvest for Ants* and *When the Arrow Rebounds* respectively.

Artistic distortions and variations are the main features of adaptation and they range from distortions in theme, characterisation, language, plot-structure and setting, the five elements through which an adapter creates divergence. In doing that, the derivation is worked upon so that the old story and the old medium can fit into the new story and

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the new medium through the five elements earlier listed. This artistic endeavour will then reveal the new work and make it original because an adapter must have done a creative work on the source. Thus, the dilemma over originality earlier raised is removed because an adapter is an artistic creator in the process of adaptation.

The Plot-Summary of the Two Plays

The plays centre on Ezeulu who represents Umuaro community before the Great Ulu. Ezeulu is the father of them all, in the spiritual realm. He performs other activities such as invocation of prayers during festivals like New Yam Festival and Pumpkin Leaves Feast and everyone responds as expected. There are ancestral/market spirits that visit them during the festivals. They are: Eke, Oye, Afo and Nkwo. They come to testify to the power of Ezeulu. The principal settings of the play are Umuaro and Okperi, although Umuaro is more prevalent in the plays as many actions take place there.

The Christians, led by Goodcountry, try to persuade their members to kill the sacred python. But Moses Unachukwu, the first acclaimed Christian in Umuaro, does not agree. He maintains that the sacred python does not affect their worship in any way and he predicts the possible extermination of the community if the python is killed. Ezeulu is sent for by the white man without knowing why, and he tells the messenger that Ezeulu does not leave his hut.

Ezeulu summons the elders of Umuaro to come and hear the message he has received from the white man. Nwaka, the very good friend of Ezeidemili and the two obvious enemies of Ezeulu is the first to respond to Ezeulu's message, saying that there is nothing bad if a friend invites his friend. Ezeulu is the friend of the white man and it is no evil if

he (the white man) now invites him (Ezeulu). This receives a good applause from the audience. Nwokeke suggests that six elders should follow Ezeulu but Nwaka rejects it totally. Ezeulu makes them understand that he knows what to do but has only called them so that they would not claim ignorance of the situation.

Oduche imprisons the sacred python in his box and this story spreads across Umuaro. Ezeidemili sends his messenger to tell Ezeulu to do something regarding the abomination committed by his son in his compound, although, this is rooted in hatred and envy. Ezeulu then tells Akuebue that what the custom says if the sacred python is killed is clear but in this case the python did not die in the box. Ezeulu sets out to Okperi. He is detained in the guardroom at Government Hill for thirty-two days because the white man believes he treated their message with contempt and also refuses to be anybody's Chief except Ulu. Clark who succeeds Winterbottom finally releases him.

The news of Ezeulu not accepting the white man's offer spreads throughout Umuaro. On his return everybody comes to visit him and congratulate him. But Ezeulu has made up his mind to fight his detractors. He is to announce the date for the New Yam Festival which he did not do because of the three remaining sacred yams. Even he gets angry when his assistants come to remind him. The elders of Umuaro also persuade him but he tells them that eating the remaining yams is like asking him to embrace his death. After much hunger, people are buying costly foreign yams while their yams get spoilt in the earth. Obika seeks permission of his father to carry Ogbazulobodo for Amalu's second burial ceremony which leads to his death, shaking Umuaro to its foundations.

The Church people have already announced to the people to bring their yams to the Christian God who alone can protect them against the anger of Ulu. When Akuebue informs Ezeulu about this, he

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immediately asks from Oduche if it is true. Oduche confirms it and Ezeulu gets angry at him for not telling him since he is there to be his eyes and ears. At the end, Goodcountry sees many more people, far beyond his expectation, bringing their yams to Church in order to avert the ruin of their yams in the soil. Ezeulu appears to have psychological problem searching for his son in the church. Elogo finally finds him in the Church to his great relief.

Points of Convergence between the Two Plays

The central message or issue raised in the two plays is the demonstration of the power and will of the people as against the personal and selfish motive of the Chief Priest of Ulu (Ezeulu). The message is also in consonance with the message portrayed by Chinua Achebe in *Arrow of God* which serves as the source for the two adaptations.

The power of the people is portrayed through Umuaro people dumping, their wicked god and its selfish priest for a new God in whom they believe they can find sanctuary, protection and immunity to harvest their yams which, if delayed, will rot inside the earth, resulting in mass hunger and starvation. This idea is obviously registered in the two works though through different styles of dramatic presentation.

In adapting *Arrow of God* into drama, both artists engage in elision and interpolation in the areas of plot-structure as well as characters. The too many characters that usually feature in the genre of fiction in literature is not in conformity with dramatic genre. Thus, in varying degrees, both Uka and Nwabueze reduced the characters of the original prose text to a reasonable and manageable number for their dramatic actualisation.

Furthermore, plot-structure in prose fiction seems usually long and apparently endless, depending on the writer. In the art of transplanting a narrative form into dramatic medium, too long narration which is permissible in prose fictional works is dealt with by Uka and Nwabueze. To make the dramatic presentation of Achebe's *Arrow of God* realistic, the plot-structure in the work had to be adjusted for effective stage adaptation. Hence, events and stories not relevant for the stage had to be excised.

Both Kalu Uka and Emeka Nwabueze also engage in such dramatic techniques as African total theatre, actor-audience participation, the principle of collectivity and aesthetic use of language, thereby reinforcing the Africanness of the original text. African total theatre technique can be felt through the elements of the African mode of performance, such as music, song, dance, masquerade display, incantations and presence of gods, among others. This technique is explored by Uka and Nwabueze in their adaptations in the portrayal of the four gods or spirits, Eke, Oye, Afo, Nkwo, that visit Ezeulu and his people in the celebration of the New Yam Festival. This is reminiscent of the visit of the gods in Kalabari religious life as described by Robin Horton as follows:

...there is a great pressure for the elaboration of the gods as persons in their full panoply of passions and prejudices, as tangible characters...This involves the dramatisation of the gods' presence by human actors who go through sequences of behaviour which in some way or other typify their characters and attributes – a procedure seen by Kalabari as bringing the gods as guests into the village...This is why the mime and masquerades are just as effective means of bringing the gods into the community where they are performed as in the induction of possession (89-91).

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Oyin Ogunba describes below a similarly strong relationship between the living and their ancestral spirits in that type of communal rite as exemplified in *When the Arrow Rebounds* and *A Harvest for Ants*:

The whole performance appears geared towards transcending humanity or the natural order; that is, to create larger than life-size characters who put on other worldly appearances, speak the strange language of spirits, stride between heaven and earth or between the abode of water spirits and land with ease, and at the end of it all, dance through to possession, that is, to a standard acceptable to the supernatural patrons. All these ideas have implications for the organisation of the drama and must be held ultimately to explain the uniqueness of the artistic form (12).

Music, song and dance constitute the soul and essence of African performance rooted in the African way of life. Music and song are maintained throughout the adaptations in a sort of total theatre production. Bakary Traore underscores this view as follows:

African music cannot be separated from the corpus of theatre. The communal nature of music and poetry, presupposes dialogue. African dances are mimic and thus theatre-oriented: in this way song and dance help to make theatre complete (113).

Music is not peculiar to Africa; it is a universal tool. Awodiya explains that "it has a nerve-soothing effect on the body and it nourishes the soul" (180). Shakespeare has also underscored the importance of

music to human existence in some of his plays such as *The Merchant of Venice* where he speaks through Lorenzo as follows:

But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motion of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music (211).

Through music and song, festive or religious atmosphere is created as can be seen in African traditional or Christian religious drama. Uka and Nwabueze maximise these elements to actualise the African mode of performance in their adaptations.

Actor-audience participation is also one obvious technique used in the adaptations to establish African style of performance. The African Audience has a tradition of responding spontaneously to the performance on stage, which is in line with the position of Ola Rotimi that the African audience is like the Polaroid camera that produces instant pictures (ix). This type of relationship is what Uka and Nwabueze attempt to portray in their plays by bridging the gap that exists between audience and performers as in Western theatre.

Collectivity, based on the African communal spirit, is a similar technique that Uka and Nwabueze explore in their works. Ezeulu, more or less, personifies the Umuaro community, while the elders are portrayed in the plays as the representatives of the people of Umuaro, and their decision is binding on the Umuaro community.

The two adapters also engage in the exploration of the African mode of expression as part of the dramatic techniques in the plays. It is discovered in the plays that Igbo/African modes of

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expressions are adequately employed, using Ezeulu and the elders of Umuaro, in particular, to actualise this motif. Igbo proverbs, stock sayings, idioms and other oral traditions are explored in their attempt to unveil the aesthetics of language inherent in the African society. This corroborates the position of Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* that "among the Ibo, the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten" (5).

Social background or setting is another factor that the works have in common. Uka and Nwabueze adopt Umuaro and Okperi as major settings in their plays as in Achebe's *Arrow of God* leaving out the minor settings of the original text. This is to be expected, given the common source of the adaptations. This concludes our exploration of the points of similarities between them.

Points of Divergence between the Two Plays

The first point of divergence to be considered in the two adaptations of Uka and Nwabueze is the plot pattern or structure. The plot of Uka's *A Harvest for Ants* appears episodic, needing a narrator to piece together. Thus, a narrator (story-teller) appears six times in the play to clear the grey areas. On the other hand, Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds* follows the linear plot structure as each movement is chronologically linked to the other. This is the classic-Aristotelian plot style of a beginning, a middle and an end.

Characterisation is another area of divergence in Uka's *A Harvest for Ants* and Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds*. The playwrights employ different sizes of casts in their adaptations. There are characters found in Uka's adaptation that do not feature in Nwabueze's play. Anosi (story-teller or narrator), Ojinika (a market woman),

Akukalia (a young firebrand and warmonger), Nwosisi (another elder), Ofoedu (Obika's young friend), Nkechi, Young Girl (Okuata), Obielue (Nwafor's playmate and Akuebue's son), Ogbuefi Ifeme (an elder), among others, do not feature at all in Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds*.

Another aspect of characterisation in the two works is that the same character playing similar roles in the two plays is given different names. In Uka's adaptation, Ezeidemili's messenger is given a common name of Young Boy while Nwabueze gives the name of the same character as Azuka. The name Town Crier does not appear in Nwabueze's adaptation as found in Kalu Uka's. In place of this character, Ezikolo is used. The Ikolo and The Ugili Tree are presented as characters of the Heartbeat of Umuaro in symbolic manner by Kalu Uka.

There are other differences in character portrayal. For example, Ezeulu's assistants in Uka's *A Harvest for Ants* are two (Nwosisi and Obiesili), whereas Nwabueze makes the assistants to be three (Obiesili, Ezekwe and Chukwulobe). While in Nwabueze's play, Chukwulobe is among Ezeulu's assistants, Chukwulobe becomes Ogbuefi Chukwulobe in *A Harvest for Ants*. Thus, Uka's play has a larger cast than Nwabueze's because of the additional characters in the former.

Furthermore, Ezeulu and Obi are portrayed as being less tough than in Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds*. Uka's Ezeulu and Obika are relatively soft and compromising, whereas Nwabueze's Obika proves to be very stubborn, the way he relates with other characters including his father, Ezeulu. The case of the white man's messenger whom Obika angrily asks to go and fill his mouth with shit is one good illustration of this view. Like his father, he is impatient and temperamental, aside the youthful exuberance added to Obika's actions in Nwabueze's story.

Anosi does not feature at all in *When the Arrow Rebounds*. In *Arrow of God*, he is portrayed as a rumour monger who usually picks

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derogatory news from Ezeulu's compound to the people of Umuaro. The instance of Oduche and the sacred python which he spreads like a town crier is a reliable point of reference. Kalu Uka makes good use of Anosi by modifying him to play multiple roles in the dramatic adaptation: Story-Teller, Medicine Man and his original role in the novel, though in different degrees. Uka uses this to reduce the characters to the minimum. By using Anosi as a story-teller, Kalu Uka is able to relate many stories of events which Nwabueze excludes from his own dramatic action, for instance, the marriage of Obika which Anosi reveals as follows:

(During this telling, dramatisation proceeds at three levels: Story-teller's voice, bridal union and extension of symbols, idea and image by lights).

Shortly after the sighting of the new moon, a pleasant event, as pleasant as any man could wish, took place in Ezeulu's house: Obika married a young wife. Her name was Okuata. Obika's bride was tall. Her face was a fine cut. She was called "Oyilidie". Her comeliness was like Obika's antelope features. Her breasts were full, and had a slight upward curve. They would not fall and sag too soon. On the day she arrived, with her people, her hair was done in the new 'OTIMILI' fashion – eight closely woven ridges of hair run in perfect lines from front to back of head, each ending in a small upright tuft. She wore strings of 'JIGIDA' on her waist. Most of them were blood-red in colour. The strings of JIGIDA clinked as OKUATA and her young female companions danced (*A Harvest for Ants*: 21).

Another notable difference in characterisation in the two works is that in Nwabueze's play, Ogbuefi Nwaka and Ezeidemili are good friends who never go against each other even when one seems to be wrong. But Uka makes Ezeidemili see sense in the position of Ezeulu, most especially, pertaining to the issue of the white man's arrest and detention of Ezeulu. Ezeidemili in Uka's work is portrayed differently from what Achebe and Nwabueze create in their works. This conversation between Ezeidemili and Nwaka throws more light on our position:

NWAKA: Yes. Only Ezeulu can do so, though. He tied the knot, he should undo it. He passed the shit which is smelling, he should carry it away.

EZIDEMILI: Ogbuefi Nwaka! You speak with too much enmity in your heart. Ezeulu is after all, a priest like me. A priest, like the priest of Ogwugwu. I think he knows his responsibility. He did well to tell us before he left. This matter of the white man is not as easy as you make it. It is not Ezeulu who alone will suffer when suffering comes. He is our number one Chief Priest. We left him to go alone to Okperi. We left him to go with anger in his heart. It is people like you who are too bitter who caused the trouble.

NWAKA: You surprise me!

EZIDEMILI: Yes. Let me surprise you (*A Harvest for Ants*: 59-60).

Ezeidemili also goes with Akuebue and Obika to welcome Ezeulu in his compound. Uka makes Ezeidemili feel unhappy when Ezeulu is detained as against what Nwabueze establishes in his adaptation. His Ezeidemili is more reasonable and compromising than Nwabueze's.

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Ezeidemili's response in *A Harvest for Ants* to Akuebue's and Obika's call when Ezeulu is released reinforces our view on this. It goes thus:

EZIDEMILI: Well. Well. This is the hand of the god. We must go welcome him. Nwaka. Akuebue. Obika. Let us go I am happy again. The white man's illness is a timely divine help from our god(s) (60).

At Ezeulu's compound it appears that serious dance celebration is organised to welcome Ezeulu in Nwabueze's play. The stage direction can buttress our point. In fact, the whole Movement Six is dedicated to that, as quoted below:

EZEULU'S house. The sound of singing and drumming is heard in the background. Enter Umuaro village youths singing EZEULU'S praises. They are followed by some elders. They are in celebrative mood. EZEULU is sitting in his traditional position. He is flanked on both sides by OBIKA and AKUEBUE. EZEULU'S wives MATEFI and UGOYE enter, closely followed by EDOGO. The women greet the elders by kneeling down in front of them and the elders placing their hands on their back. The music rises in tempo. Young girls of Umuaro dressed in traditional dancing costume come out and dance some traditional steps. The onlookers are visibly impressed. MATEFI and UGOYE come forward and place some coins on the forehead of the dancers. AKUEBUE does the same. EZEULU shows no visible emotion. OFOKA, one of the elders, raises his hands and the music and dancing come to a sudden stop (When the Arrow Rebounds: 34).

On the other hand, Kalu Uka succinctly uses Obiageli, one of Ezeulu's daughters, to establish this celebrative mood after Ezeulu's release. Ezeulu orders Obiageli to offer them a good song rather than a dirge-like song. After Obiageli presents a good song to them in Igbo language, the reaction of the people is inherent in the stage direction that follows: "*Everybody claps, applauding the performance. Ezeulu is pleased*" (*A Harvest for Ants*: 63)

Conflict is unavoidable in drama. It is through it that "a play depicts a contest in which man's conscious will is employed to achieve a certain goal, which is very hard to reach, and whose realisation is actively resisted" (Yerima 33). Kalu Uka does not strongly situate the conflict appropriately in his own adaptation. The conflict in his work is not established early enough. The three phases of conflict as Achebe and Nwabueze portray them in their works are absent in Uka's play. He only aptly demonstrates conflict between Ezeulu and his people. The conflict between Ezeulu and his compound, between him and the colonial factor, is not clearly established.

This is contrary to what we discover in Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds* in which conflict is quickly and well established right from Movement Two involving Goodcountry (colonial factor) and Moses Unachukwu (African factor). The latter protests against the Goodcountry's intention of crushing the sacred python. Thus, our minds are prepared for the conflict which blows open in Movement Three and goes on till the end of the play. In Movement Three, the conflict between Ezeulu and his compound, Umuaro community, and colonial predicament is adequately established. As a result of the strong line of conflict in *When the Arrow Rebounds*, Nwabueze provides a better plot pattern, a balanced dramatic dialogue and a potentially good performance, much more than in Uka's *A Harvest for Ants*. Thus Ahmed Yerima's observation that "conflict motivates the action of the

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characters...(and)...also determines the reactions of the characters" (34) is borne out in Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds*, where actions and reactions are made to flow smoothly.

As Ahmed Yerima posits, dramatic dialogue "...is mainly a piece of creative and imaginative dialogue" (76). In both works, the African language is used alongside English. But Nwabueze succeeds to a greater extent in economising his words which is a great asset in drama, through which "the playwright's skilful manipulation of words and the arrangement of such words...creates... the character, the plot and the play as a whole" (Yerima, 76). The dialogue in *When the Arrow Rebounds* is strong and sequential, much of which is lifted directly from the original and manipulated to suit the adapter's intention.

On the other hand, the dialogue in Kalu Uka's adaptation is less pungent, perhaps because much of it is created anew, with less reliance on Achebe's language, and minimal echoes of the original text. Nwabueze in his adaptation of Achebe's *Arrow of God*, uses language at three levels: elevated language for the more important characters such as Ezeulu, Elders of Umuaro, among others; Pidgin English for the lower characters and to create humour or comic relief; the local language (translated or untranslated). Kalu Uka also uses untranslated Igbo words on a very large scale. The use of the local language in the play by Nwabueze is to create "African sensibility and embellishment". The following conversation involving Ezeulu, Jacob and Clarke is quite revealing:

CLARKE: Your name is Ezeulu?

(JACOB approaches EZEULU and interprets the question in Igbo).

EZEULU: *(In Igbo)* Tell the white man to go home and ask his father and his mother their names *(JACOB hesitates, then approaches CLARKE and interprets the answer).*

CLARKE: *(Angry)* What? *(Thinks)* That mistake again! I think I will have to be brief with this fellow. Jacob!

JACOB: Saah! *(When the Arrow Rebounds: 29).*

At the end of the story in Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds*, Ezeulu is portrayed as having contacted "psychic nakedness" as a result of his strange and abnormal actions. The stage direction says it all:

Just then, there is a shout from behind the auditorium: "where is my son?" Enter Ezeulu. His demeanour reveals psychic nakedness, though his frame and carriage show glimpses of affluence. He looks scornfully at the congregation, peering into the vacant spaces as if he is looking for a lost lamb (53).

In Uka's play, Ezeulu has a long speech through which his psychic imbalance is disclosed. The line goes thus:

(Now in leopard skin war dress, reminiscent of the Pumpkin Leaves scene, but is a burlesque of it as he raves, alone, on stage). Where is my son? Where is my assailant, I must face him! Death is insect. I am insect! Insect will crush insect, there! That's me. What is my offence? Death! Ah, I will tell

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you! With Obika's matchet! Matchet the rain! Matchet the fire! Fire will die, yes? Dust is dust, gathered from a moon! Dust is ours, dust. Ezeulu is covered with mud. Me, the youngest, the swiftest ogbazulobodo. Now smoked! Me, *ugonachomma, na acho uche Chukwu. Ulu! Ayayaya...a-ya-ya-yayaya!* (He dashes out. Fading lights briefly mask the movement. Slowly,...Ezeulu returns, moving...moving...moving (82).

In conclusion, an attempt has been made in this essay to look at the areas of convergence and divergence between Kalu Uka's *A Harvest for Ants* and Emeka Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds* to reveal their artistic similarities and differences, as works derived from the same source of Achebe's *Arrow of God*. We have established that Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds* is stronger in stage presentation than Uka's *A Harvest for Ants* because of its more powerful plot-structure, better conflict management and more effective dramatic dialogue. In spite of the differences between them, however, we note that the two plays faithfully project the central message of their common source, Achebe's *Arrow of God*. They are both good examples of inter-genre adaptation, from novel to drama.

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