

**INTERROGATING HEGEL'S LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS AS  
FACTORS OF CHANGE INFEMI OSOFISAN'S  
*NO MORE THE WASTED BREED***

By  
**PROMISE ADIELE\***

**Abstract**

Change as used in this paper is the reformulation and realignment of social structures to achieve a new order. Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel was a German philosopher and theorist whose idea of change is encapsulated in the dialectic. Femi Osofisan is a Nigerian playwright whose idea of change is sustained by the dialectic. However, while Hegel's view of change through the dialectic is idealistic, Osofisan's conception of change through the dialectic is practical. There are divergent views among scholars and critics regarding a more potent, viable process of change, whether idealistic according to Hegel or practical according to Osofisan. This paper establishes that both processes of change are intricately interwoven, therefore can be reconciled. It also demonstrates that both processes of change can be understood in their reciprocal alignment. The change which takes place in Osofisan's *No More the Wasted Breed* is subliminally embedded in the three stages of Hegel's Consciousness, Sense-Certainty, Perception and Force & Understanding. In utilizing the rich potential of Hegel's dialectic, the paper portrays that all the characters in the play embody the attributes of Hegel's Consciousness in accordance with the roles assigned to them by the playwright. Given that the characters' experiences are mediated by the three stages of Hegel's Consciousness as mentioned above, they become agents of change to a degree which informs their social and economic awareness. In this way, this paper proves that both Hegel and Osofisan's methods of change provide a unified paradigm for the understanding and appreciation of change.

**Key words: Change, Dialectic, Sense-Certainty, Perception, Force & Understanding**

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\* Department of English, Mountain Top University, [poadiele@mtu.edu.ng](mailto:poadiele@mtu.edu.ng)

## Introduction

A critical study of Osofisan's drama shows that the process of change develops from the daily protocol of the human psyche. Hegel's idea of Consciousness explains the different stages of change in the individual mind in its quest to acquire knowledge. This study focuses on Hegel's Consciousness and its various dynamics in the development of the stages of change in Osofisan's *No More the Wasted Breed*. The study beams its critical searchlight on the characters showing how they transmute from one stage of development to another in conformity with their environment. Given that drama as a genre of art provides a platform for dialogue where the minds and convictions of the characters are revealed, it is most for Hegel's ideas of Consciousness to flourish. The foregoing assertion is valid because "the highest form of artistic representation is drama. The reason is that unlike ancient Greek sculptor or modern painting, for example, drama uses the most comprehensive of artistic mediums – the moving and speaking human body engaged in dramatic action". (Bates 2010, 24) It is "the moving and speaking human body engaged in dramatic action" which provides the avenue for various ideological musings to be enacted and recreated. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977) encapsulates the entire process of mind development and the various stages the human mind must undergo in its upward striving for the acquisition of knowledge. In this case, knowledge is understood as man's recognition of absolute truth regarding his existence, environment, and circumstance. Beyond his documented philosophical contributions, Hegel bestrides the intellectual world with a host of ideological provisions which are interdisciplinary.

The totality of Hegel's influence in the humanities is underscored by the observation that "Hegel's influence goes far beyond philosophy and literary studies. He gave new direction to anthropological studies; he has been credited for much that is found in the teachings of Christian Science; his influence on the thought of Karl Marx is common knowledge." (Paolucci and Paolucci 2002, 6) Instinctively, the world is reminded that "Hegel acknowledges the importance of "historical" reason whereby the interpreter and subject matter are both conditioned by this place in history. He also pays attention to the historical situation of the interpreter which may be very different from that of the author". (Thiselton 2009, 216) According to Thiselton, Hegel establishes a connection between the interpreter of a text and the historical moments which may be different from what is presented by the author. In this way, the interpreter at any given time is the master of his art so that different interpreters can produce different but useful perspectives of a text. With this

Hegelian position in mind, one is empowered to be at liberty to interpret a text using available historical moments different from what the author presents.

Many scholars and critics across the world, who are interested in the development of the human mind and the society, the interplay of various components that constitute social reality, including socio-cultural and political tensions, are inevitably faced with the task of reading Hegel. In their various interpretations, many have described Hegel's works as difficult, full of contradictions and at best convoluted. This seeming difficulty in Hegel's works can be traced from his early days as a university undergraduate. Although he was an average student, yet today he is considered as one of the most revered thinkers in academic circles. Although many have described him as an arc-rationalist who reduced every pattern of reality to an identifiable rational pattern, he however posited that every human accomplishment owed its success to passion. Several other critics have described Hegel within the matrix of theism on one hand and atheism on another hand and they go on to quote Hegel to substantiate their different positions.

Furthermore, Hegel's interpretation of history pointed to the actualization of human freedom, yet he maintained that individuals were helpless victims of countervailing historical forces. More importantly, Hegel has been venerated and maligned in equal measure as a leading advocate of socio-political and economic status quo, yet his ideology has provided the necessary imperative for Karl Marx who is a major proponent of class realignment and revolutionary ethos. These interpretations of Hegel in varying degrees have made the understanding of his system a little difficult to the extent that some scholars have proposed a meaning of his system based on cultural peculiarities. In all of these, we can safely contend that Hegel's system of thought and ideology centres on the unity of opposites, reciprocity of contrary elements, and the progressive transmutation of history. His entire system encourages the world to consider elements and their opposites as inherent unity where the relevance and importance of one is upheld by the other, it's opposite. Thus, there is a unifying factor that bounds everything together no matter how disparate they may appear. This is evident in his treatment of history, character proficiency, dialectic, and the use of opposites.

### **Consciousness**

Hegel provides a systematic process of Consciousness as a form of knowledge. This he does in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. According to him "the knowledge or knowing which is at the start or is immediately our object cannot be anything

else but immediate knowledge itself, a knowledge of the immediate or of what simply is. Our approach to the object must also be immediate or receptive, we must alter nothing in the object as it presents itself. In appreciating it, we must refrain from comprehending it". (Hegel 1979, 58) Although Hegel's language of delivery is abstract and difficult, we are able to deduce that his concern regarding the development of Consciousness as a form of knowledge is predicated on the unmediated appreciation of an object in its purest form without any form of adulteration whether intellectual, religious, cultural or even psychological. This standpoint in the process of Consciousness is what he calls *Sense-certainty*. On *sense-certainty*, it is important to note that "knowledge is the direct sensory awareness of some object that requires no assistance from the mind". (Lawhead 2002, 364) Perhaps, Lawhead's submission describes the position and responsibility of the senses in acquiring knowledge in its purest and truest forms. It is important to note the word 'direct' in the quote above where it conveys a notion of independence of the senses in its acquisition of knowledge.

### **Sense-Certainty**

In *sense-certainty*, our experience or encounter with any object or event should be free from such external factors like religion, intellect, previous experiences, and any form of external intrusion so that a pencil remains a pencil, a lie remains a lie, murder remains murder and daylight remains daylight. In this way, we are certain that darkness in the sky is a major characteristic of nightfall just as brightness is a major characteristic of daytime:

Sense-Certainty immediately appears as the richest kind of knowledge, indeed a knowledge of infinite wealth for which no bounds can be found, either when we reach out into space and time in which it is dispersed, or when we take a bit of this wealth, and by division enter into it. Moreover, Sense-Certainty appears to be the truest knowledge for it has not as yet omitted anything from the object but has the object before it in its perfect entirety. (Hegel 1979, 58)

*Sense-certainty* first validates the immediate appreciation of darkness in the sky as the presence of nightfall. Although, there may be other interpretations of darkness in the sky besides the coming of nightfall, for example, if the beholder is mentally deranged or in a dream/drunken state. *Sense-certainty* maintains that it is only when we have interpreted darkness as a characteristic of nightfall that we are better positioned to move to another level of consciousness. This

also applies to brightness and daylight. To crime, if we experience a crime, say theft, first-hand, which involves the action of taking what belongs to another person, our experience of the act must not consider other external factors why the crime was committed. *Sense-certainty* maintains that stealing, in our first experience of it must be understood as a crime against humanity. Murder, the act of killing another person, must be seen as such. To go beyond the borders of this act and begin to examine such factors as reasons for the murder negates the principle of *Sense-certainty*. Drops of water from the sky are first and foremost, a sign of rainfall. If a government is changed, it is either an election has taken place or a coup has taken place or a king has died. If a woman's stomach is distended, she is pregnant. If a baby cries, he is in pain or discomfort. If a man is poor, he has not worked hard, and success must be seen as evidence of hard work.

Some critics have posited that *sense-certainty* is the basest form of human knowledge because it can duly be related to the kind of knowledge associated with infants who behold the world in its purest, undiluted form. To maintain this level of knowledge at the level of maturity is to revert to infancy which will ultimately leave the world in a blind spot. Others who argue against *sense-certainty* maintain that any experience and interpretation of the world without mediation will impair the upward improvement of the human process of knowledge and will see humanity gradually slide backwards, to the primitive Stone Age. We will however relate this to Osofisan's selected play for this study and show how they contribute to the attainment of change.

In a way, Femi Osofisan's dramaturgy and artistic currents share a lot with the creative bent of German playwright, Bertolt Brecht. Commenting on Brecht, Richard Gilman observes that "his interest in the self-centred on its apprehensible, one could almost say, "reportable" qualities, not its mysteries, and particularly on its behaviour in social and objective contexts" (1987, 195). Like Brecht, Osofisan shows a remote commitment in locating the self, the individual as a focal point in creation in relation to his immediate world. For Osofisan, the individual has the capacity to determine his fate rather than depend on spiritual abstractions for relevance and advancement. This much is demonstrated in his play *No More the Wasted Breed*. The play is regarded by many critics as Osofisan's rebuttal to Wole Soyinka's earlier play, *The Strong Breed*. In Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*, he revisits the African tradition where certain people are selected to carry the burden of the society and therefore die a vicarious death to save that society. However, Osofisan takes a different view in *No More the Wasted Breed* where he argues that those who bear the burden

of the society and die in the process are wasted breeds therefore, should reject that fatalistic destiny where the gods control the lives of men.

Beyond rebutting Soyinka's play, Osofisan creates a different identity over the relationship that exists between men and the gods and posits that men should be masters of their destiny and reject any ill fate bestowed on them by gods and mythical images. Osofisan's plays are better understood in their immediate social context. 'Social' in this context means all human platforms which accommodate different activities without stratification. Commenting on the relevance of 'social' as a contextual paradigm for drama, Molly Anne Rothenberg remarks that "it is assumed to have an independent existence with its own properties and powers, while at the same time being the most general feature of all human activity" (2010, 15). It is this social context that gives *No More the Wasted Breed* a pride of place in Osofisan's oeuvre. Beyond the commitment to social awakening, the play rehabilitates Osofisan's project of the interaction of opposites and how they share an inevitable and reciprocal relationship. This is demonstrated more by the interaction between two different realms of existence, the physical realm represented by Togun and Saluga and the supernatural realm represented by Olokun, god of the inland waters and his wife, Elusu, goddess of the inland waters. However, the play shall be critically examined at the different levels of Hegel's Consciousness to reveal how at each stage, change is manifested.

In interpreting *No More the Wasted Breed* at the level of *sense-certainty*, we immediately consider the bubonic plague which afflicts the people of Egure community in its isolated form as only a form of epidemic. In dealing with the human reaction against the epidemic, Osofisan explores the hearts of the characters, their inner minds, and their emotional state to reveal a hidden but subtle aversion for supernatural powers and their sometimes destructive tendencies. This method is justified by the observation that "writers are the engineers of the human soul" (Nnolim 2010, 33). By exploring the soul of his characters, Osofisan is able to establish the hidden tensions of their hearts which galvanizes the actions in his plays. Characters in Osofisan's drama are elastic in projecting the playwright's conviction. This is because the "character is the proper centre of the ideal artistic representation, because it unifies in itself the aspects previously considered, unifies them as factors in its totality" (Hegel 1987, 236). It is from Saluga, a character in the play that we appreciate the nodal tension in the land perpetrated by the gods.

SALUGA: ...Food supplies are short, the fishes have fled, all the plants have rotted away. And on top of all that now comes this plague that is eating away the children. (38-41)

Saluga's remarks above paint a picture of the tragic situation in the Egure community. As the first stage of Hegel's Consciousness, *sense-certainty* adopts an unmediated understanding of the incidence as a phenomenon of existence intricately associated with humanity. Every living thing, at one point or another, experience a failure in optimum function due to a variety of reasons most of them bordering on lack of care, but among human beings poor hygiene or inadequate nutrition. Sickness or plagues among human beings in many parts of African are attributed to many factors among them, the intervention of the gods when humans fail to offer sacrifice to propitiate them. Although a further reading of the play reveals the immediate cause of the boubonic plague ravaging the community, our understanding of the situation at the level of *sense-certainty* precludes all other factors surrounding the plague, thereby restricting our knowledge of the situation to just a general sickness.

There is sickness in the land, the people are dying and the natural consequence in the prevailing situation is to seek a cure. This informs Togun's effort in consulting the priest of the inland waters to seek solution to the ailment that threatens the life of his son. Our knowledge and awareness of the boubonic plague in the land, if restricted to its purest form at the level of *sense-certainty* will provoke a desire for a change in the form of a cure. However, if our knowledge is mediated by such extraneous factors such as the cause of the plague, its spread and counter spread, this will ultimately derail an effective response for a change in the form of an immediate cure. Sickness at the level of *sense-certainty* must be understood as a natural phenomenon. This can be caused by such factors as poor sanitary conditions, climatic change or bodily response to climatic changes. In Africa however, sickness could be caused by supernatural forces such as the gods who may be angry with the community for what they did or did not do, for example, the case with the Egure community. Given our interpretation through the prism of *sense-certainty*, the sickness that besieged the Egure community is only a natural occurrence and it is only when it is understood in this way that a change in the form of a cure can be pursued.

Our second interpretation of Consciousness at the level of *sense-certainty* is the inevitable interaction between the physical realm represented by Togun and the priest on one hand and the realm of the supernatural represented by Olokun and Elusu on another hand. This interaction between the two realms of

existence can be understood as the coming together of two contrary forces. However, our knowledge of this interaction at the level of *sense-certainty* must be understood as an enquiry into divine essence to unravel the mysterious sickness confronting the people. As Biokun consults Togun the priest of Elusu, the mind immediately comprehends this act as a routine effort by humans to resort to extraterrestrial and supernatural powers for solution to the many existential malady confronting them. For *sense-certainty*, this is a basic activity that is associated with the human nature, that is, the tendency to always seek higher supernatural powers for solutions to diverse issues of life.

Togun's assurance to Biokun that his son will be well after the human sacrifice complies with the natural practice of human propitiation of supernatural elements for their advancement. So that our consciousness and knowledge of this human and supernatural interaction at the level of *sense-certainty* can be summarized in this way: A human confronted by sickness that threatens the life of his son consults a priest of the god of inland waters for solution to save his son's life. This basic and primary knowledge of the scenario quickly sets the stage for further elucidation and interrogation. Are humans right to consult gods and supernatural beings for solution to their basic problems? Are humans right to consign their fate to supernatural beings? Without our basic knowledge at the level of *sense-certainty*, these questions which further develop the plot of the play will not arise. For example, if we subject our knowledge of the interaction between humans and gods to other forms of knowledge, the plot development and instant turn around we witness with the arrival of Saluga, will be subverted and delayed to the extent of altering the change which takes place after the interaction. To this end, we can say that basic knowledge, unmediated, and free from secondary consideration immediately gives rise to a catalyst in the chain of change.

Saluga acts as the catalyst of interaction between humans and gods. He promptly questions why the poor should always be offered as sacrifice for the safety and protection of the rich. Although Saluga's apparent impudence is initially punished by Elusu, goddess of the inland waters who strikes him dead, Olokun, husband to the sea goddess finds reason in Saluga's argument, wakes him up and banishes his wife Elusu. In this way, humans are restored and encouraged to pursue a new dynamic order of life devoid of any supernatural interference. Although knowledge at the level of *sense-certainty* has been criticized as too elementary and basic, it offers insight into a child-like innocence that is not mediated or adulterated by multifaceted aspects of other forms of knowledge. With the foregoing analogy, *sense-certainty* embraces the



human and supernatural interaction in this way: If there is a disruption of cosmic harmony, humans by their nature will respond to achieve change by consulting the supernatural domain. It is either the supernatural essence assists humans and offer help or they repudiate humans and leave them to suffer. This short summary is what Osofisan projects in his play. Although the introduction of Saluga brings a new dimension to the human/supernatural interaction, it becomes a turning point for victory on the side of the humans.

### **Perception**

The Second stage in the analysis of Consciousness as a process of knowledge acquisition and experience is *Perception*. According to Hegel, "Perception...takes what is present to it as a universal. Just as universality is its principle in general, the immediately self-differentiating moments within perception are universal"(1987, 67). In *Perception*, the occurrence of objects and our experience of them must be viewed as possessing universal properties and not as being exclusive to culture, environment, and our personal opinion of them. Universality therefore is a cornerstone of *Perception* so that the human faculty or the senses at once relates its experience as plausible across the divide of humanity. A few examples will suffice here. Darkness as a characteristic of nightfall must be understood as a universal phenomenon capable of taking place in any part of the world. Light, as a feature of day must be seen as a universal manifestation of daylight. There is a sense in which some experiences can only relate to culture, geography, and history.

*Perception* collapses the boundaries of mediation and extends the frontiers of universal comprehension and application of knowledge. The question that naturally arises is this. Does every human experience or occurrence have universal properties? Perception maintains that even in situations where experiences appear to have a cultural background, we must strive to relate it to a universal dimension. The appearance of masquerade, a cultural phenomenon, must be related as having the possibility of occurring anywhere in the world where human beings inhabit. Robbery, natural disaster like landmines, volcano, earthquake, must all be seen and understood as universal occurrences with the potential to occur anywhere in the world. The relation of events or objects as universal properties in human experience creates a stable thought which will abolish any form of bias. Perception rejects stereotypes. If a man has told a lie, he committed the act because he is a human being and not necessarily because he is from a particular region often associated with lying. If a man has committed rape, therefore, our *Perception* of the act should be appreciated

from a universal perspective and not from a narrow prism. If drops of rainfall take place, it must be understood as a universal phenomenon and not because a particular region has a preponderance for much rainfall. Murder, riot, childbirth, celebrations, funerals, accidents, and a totality of human experience must be understood and appreciated from a universal perspective. This is the main focus of *Perception* as a stage of Consciousness.

*No More the Wasted Breed* embraces universal models in three different categories as far as knowledge at the level of *Perception* is concerned. The three different categories are (1) the outbreak of an epidemic, (2) The inevitable relationship between the realm of the supernatural and the realm of the physical. (3) The triumph of the will of man over cultural, primitive practice. Consciousness at the level of *Perception* in *No More the Wasted Breed* views actions and events from a universal prism. The first event that we interrogate as we did under the critical searchlight of *sense-certainty* is the bubonic plague that ravaged the entire Egure community. In its simple appreciation, the mind immediately delineates sickness as a phenomenon that can occur anywhere in the universe where human beings inhabit. As a natural phenomenon, the occurrence or outbreak of sickness is not precluded to any definite section of the world. It breaks the barriers of race, tribe, religion or even modern development as there are available pieces of evidence in history which show that sickness and plagues have ravaged various parts of the world at different times. Osofisan's recreation of the deadly bubonic plague in the Egure community serves multiple purposes but the most important is to initiate an inevitable interaction between humans and gods. This conveys the understanding that "in the symbiotics of Yoruba theology, however, the gods yearn for reunification with the humans who first conceived them and are tied to humanity by a common fallibility and reciprocal needs"(Wright 1993, 13). Accordingly, the relationship and eventual interaction between humans and gods is inevitable as both can't do without each other. However, the mind, in its quest for knowledge and at the level of *Perception* only recognizes sickness or plagues in their universal spectrum.

In a broader perspective, the evidence of the deadly bubonic plague at the level of *Perception* can be interpreted as a cause-and-effect situation where each time humans are confronted by such life-threatening challenges, they promptly seek solution. This is a universal practice and must be understood as such. In the play, through the dialogue and exchange between Olokun and his wife Elusu, it is revealed that the entire Egure community is suffering from an epidemic due to their failure to propitiate and offer sacrifice to Olokun goddess

of the inland waters. The solution is a human sacrifice through a carrier ritual to assuage the goddess of the sea. Through this kind of ritual, humans lubricate the continuum between them and the gods through which good life is guaranteed. "Through this inviolable connection, the carrier ritual is usually part of a process through which the community discharges its misfortunes and renews its allegiance to its founding, protective orisa." (Richards 1996, 15) This singular scenario is immediately viewed at the level of *Perception* as a universal occurrence with the possibility of taking place in any part of the world where humans inhabit. History is replete with humanity's suffering and punishment as a result of a failure to offer sacrifice and lubricate the continuum between the physical realm and the supernatural realm. This kind of punishment towards humanity is recognized by many cultures, religion, and creed around the world. It occurs in a residual form and with this in mind, the events of *No More the Wasted Breed* are immediately accorded a universal platform, divested of any sectional interpretation.

Although the epidemic that ravaged the Egure community is conveyed through dialogue and exchange by the characters, the mind at the level of *Perception* recognizes the incident as a universal occurrence therefore, the playwright has not highlighted any extra ordinary circumstance within human spheres. As expected, the outbreak of epidemic as a universal model naturally initiates the inevitable relationship between the realm of the supernatural and the realm of the physical. Olokun and Elusu's contact with Togun, Biokun, and Saluga conforms with universal practice where humanity always consults a higher spiritual realm to unravel the mystery of their existence or seek solution to a malignant problem confronting it.

Many cultures across the world owe their existence to the opinion and machinations of supernatural elements. This is to the extent that people do not conceive human existence without a regular relationship with the underworld. As Biokun's son is ill and almost ready to die, he decides to consult Togun, the priest of Elusu, to find a solution to his ailing son. Togun reveals to him that he is a carrier, one who has been chosen to die to save his people. This scenario readily brings to mind the events in the Christian Bible where Jesus Christ, the son of God, was chosen to die vicariously to save humanity. Again, this same theme is highlighted by Wole Soyinka in his play *Death and The King's Horseman* where Elesin, horseman to the late king is required to die with the king to give peace to the community and ensure that the late Oba makes an unhindered journey to the underworld. Furthermore, the same theme is captured by Hope Eghagha in his play *Death not a Redeemer* where Chief Karia

is required to die a sacrificial death to save the entire community. In all these, the issue of sacrificial death recurs and therefore can be viewed as a normal practice with universal possibilities. Therefore, Biokun's choice as a carrier, chosen to die vicariously for the community is a necessary condition that has the possibility to occur if viewed from a universal prism.

The second significant incident in the play is the interaction and confrontation between two different realms of existence, the physical realm and the supernatural realm. Man's quest for solution to his many problems has always brought him face to face with higher spiritual powers although the mode of interaction may differ from one geographical entity to another and from culture to culture. In Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Caesar orders his servants to offer sacrifice to the gods to determine the cause of the tempest and appearance of a lion at the capitol the previous night. In Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, king Odewale invites Baba Fakunle, a blind seer and a custodian of the *Ifa* oracle, to enquire of him the solution to the mystery surrounding the death of King Adetusa, the late king. These events demonstrate that there is a universal practice where human beings always consult supernatural powers to seek help and solutions to their problems. The emergence of Olokun and his wife Elusu, god and goddess of the inland waters, to listen to the plight of humans also demonstrate that human beings have the capacity to invoke supernatural powers to attend to their needs. However, this invocation of supernatural powers cuts across various traditional practices and even in the Christian religion. Cult practices have universal dimension and as it occurs in *No More the Wasted Breed*, we appreciate it more when viewed from a universal prism. Although the interaction of the supernatural and the physical serve many different purposes for Osofisan, it basically underscores a universal practice within humanity in their search for truth, solution, and essence. It is within the interstice of universality that the understanding of the event must be rooted.

The third event in the play, the triumph of humanity over supernatural beings, can also be viewed at the level of *Perception* in its universal possibilities. During the confrontation between Olokun and his wife Elusu on one side and Biokun and Saluga on another side, Saluga demands to know why the poor are always the ones chosen as carriers, to die for the rich. Elusu punishes Saluga by striking him to death. However, Biokun makes a valid case for humanity and succeeds in convincing Olokun on the injustice that humanity has suffered in the hands of the gods. Touched by Biokun's argument, Olokun revives Saluga from the dead and then banishes Elusu to another generation. This act is seen

by many critics as victory for humanity over supernatural forces and this can also be viewed from the broad prism of universality. Man has always mastered supernatural elements and has in many instances dictated their peregrination and growth.

### **Force and Understanding**

The third and final stage of Hegel's Consciousness is *Force and Understanding*. This stage examines the law-like forces that attract the various components of an object together binding them in eternal unity. Terry Eagleton critically observes that "Hegel will dexterously combine concrete and abstract, sensuous and spiritual, negating the former terms only to reinstate them at a higher level" (1990, 143). This Hegelian idea of the inevitable conjoining of opposites after what seems to be a protracted contrariety is upheld by *Force and Understanding*. While in unity, the mind examines the interplay and interaction of these various components, their tensions, relationships and complementary dispositions. It is only when the mind has appreciated any object constituted in this way that it can show a good understanding of that object in relation to the external world. For the force of attraction to be effective, the various components to be attracted together must have dissimilar properties or qualities. They must be opposites and contradicted to each other. When the mind identifies these opposites and contraries, it then goes further to relate their eventual unity to the force that bound them together. Once the force has achieved its main objective, it emphasizes these opposites in unity as they are continually realigned in a new relationship where they determine humanity's impulses, reflexes and reactions towards their environment.

Put in a more direct way, while force pulls opposites together, understanding appreciates them and their relationship in unity. In this way, Hegel posits that opposites cannot be separate or stay apart for too long because there is a natural force that will inevitably ensure that they intermingle and complement each other. As the last stage of Consciousness, *Force and Understanding* stabilizes the mind and achieves equilibrium. At this point, conflicts and contraries achieve harmony for further progress. In relation to literary criticism, it is at the level of *Force and Understanding* that our appreciation of the various conflicts and contraries created by a writer coalesce. As the mind arrives at this point, it incorporates elements of *Sense-Certainty* and *Perception* and goes on to reconcile the ignorance of the former with the encompassing universality of the latter. This is because having moved from a position of first-hand interpretation of objects which is partial, the mind

ascribes universal characteristics to objects and then to the final stage of ultimate union of opposites. This is the stage that highlights Hegel's dialectic suppositions. *Force & Understanding* as the last stage of consciousness in part draws on the elements of *Sense-Certainty* and *Perception*, and then defines its own scope which borders on the law-like force that attracts contraries together and unites them in a harmonious, reciprocal relationship.

*No More the Wasted Breed* in many respect resembles Wole Soyinka's play *Death and the King's Horseman*. Although the major focus of Osofisan's play at the ideological level is to demonstrate that humanity should no longer be sacrificed to die in the name of a nebulous tradition, other interpretations of the play have also emerged. Most of these interpretations try to explore the African tradition that makes room for sacrificial death, the role of the gods in causing human misery and the reciprocal relationship between the realm of the physical and the realm of the supernatural. Although the latter category is our focus in this section, we will examine the two former categories to highlight the inevitable relationship between two opposite realms of existence made possible by Hegel's *Force & Understanding*. Death through human sacrifice has existed from time immemorial as many cultures, religion, and tradition recognize and make room for it. The Holy Bible, a literary compendium for the Christian religion, recounts how the patriarch Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his only son Isaac. "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering, on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you". (NKJV 1982, 11) According to the Genesis book of the Bible, Abraham, a friend of God, obeyed the divine instruction and went to the mountain to sacrifice his only son Isaac. However, God intervenes and provides a heifer for the sacrifice. Also, the same Holy Bible recounts the story of Jesus Christ, the only son of God who offered to die on the cross of Calvary for the sins of the world, a vicarious death which saved the whole world from doom and condemnation. From these two instances, there is evidence in the Christian religion that death by human sacrifice was permitted. This trend of dying through human sacrifice has permeated many cultures and indeed the African culture has its own provision for death by human sacrifice. It is this trend that Soyinka captures and portrays in his play *The Strong Breed*. It is also this same trend that Osofisan tries to condemn in his play, *No More the Wasted Breed*. Osofisan argues that the fate of humanity should not be sacrificed to the whims and caprices of an unseen spiritual essence but rather, humanity should become masters of their destiny, taking their fate in their hands.

Other critics have also interpreted *No More the Wasted Breed* from the perspective of spiritualism where they interrogate the role of the gods in causing human misery and tragedy. In the play, the supernatural realm, represented by Elusu goddess of the inland waters unleashes mayhem on the Egure community for their lack of worship and propitiation for twenty-five years. As a result of the anger of the goddess, the waters recede, fishes die, there are no harvests and the worst of it is the presence of the bubonic plague that killed people in their numbers. Thus, there is a constant influence of the gods in the lives and affairs of men. Against this backdrop, humans are presented as being at the mercy of supernatural elements who determine their fate, their happiness, and their foibles. However, our interpretation of the play from the perspective of *Force & Understanding* underlies the inevitable, reciprocal relationship that exists between the physical realm and the supernatural realm. As both realms exist independent of each other, there is an unseen force that pulls them together which they are unaware of and which they contribute nothing to. Their eventual relationship reveals that they require the existence of their opposite number for regeneration and progress. At the beginning of the play, through the exchange between Olokun and his wife Elusu, it is obvious that the supernatural realm feels neglected because humans did not make sacrifice to them.

Although some critics have portrayed the supernatural as being all sufficient, it becomes clear that they require the continual patronage of humans to subsist. Elusu's constant nagging and complain to her husband shows her frustration for not receiving patronage from the Egure community. It is this gap created by the failure of humans to offer sacrifice to the goddess of the sea that creates an inevitable platform for both realms to mingle. There is a sense in which we can say that the humans, having ignored the goddess of the sea by failing to offer sacrifice to her, no longer recognize the power and influence of the sea goddess. It is also safe to say that the people of Egure community never appreciated the gods as responsible for their rich harvest. This is so because, had they recognized the influence of the supernatural real in their lives, they would have offered sacrifice and the required propitiation to avoid the tragic consequences they faced as a result of their indolence and neglect. Unknown to the people of Egure community, there is a force located in the cosmic universe which subliminally pulls them together with the gods. It is this kind of force in creation which constantly pulls opposites together that underlies Hegel's idea of knowledge at the level of *Force & Understanding*. According to Hegel, whenever opposites occur in a text or even in daily

experience, our understanding and appreciation of them must be rooted in their unseen, inevitable relationship made possible by a force that constantly pulls them together. It is only when opposites are so joined in this kind of reciprocal relationship that we can appreciate more their qualities and inner constituents. This is because the understanding and appreciation of any phenomenon can only be absolute when it is juxtaposed with its opposite. For example, the properties and qualities of black as a shade of colour can only be appreciated if it is placed side by side with its opposite colour white. Capitalism as an economic mode can only be understood if it is compared to socialism.

Hegel argues that opposites cannot remain permanently apart because human consciousness and knowledge at the level of *Force & Understanding* will always endeavour to reconcile their differences by joining them together. Therefore, our understanding of Osofisan's *No More the Wasted Breed* shows two opposites inevitably drawn together by their complimentary properties which they seem unaware. While the gods require regular sacrifices by humans for their regeneration and for the continual lubrication of that spiritual gulf between the living and the dead, between the supernatural and the physical realm, the humans require the divine intervention of the gods for their good harvest, good health, and bountiful economy. In this way, it is difficult to see how the two opposite realms can exist independent of each other.

We can safely contend that Hegel's *Force & Understanding* as the last stage of human consciousness strives to locate the inevitability between opposites and demonstrates how they cannot do without each other. This reciprocal relationship can be located within the sphere of humanity or even within animist realms and platforms. However, whenever *Force & Understanding* pull opposites together, there is always an object that stands as a unifying factor to reconcile their basic differences. In the case of *No More the Wasted Breed*, Togun, the priest of Olokun becomes the unifying factor, a bridge between the two opposite realms of existence. He represents the only tangible contact for Biokun to access the spiritual realm for a remedy to his son's threatened life. This also applies to the real of the supernatural as Togun also serves the same purpose for the goddess Elusu and her husband Olokun. If humans were to offer sacrifices to the gods, it is through Togun the priest that it will be carried out. If the gods have any message for the humans, it will be through Togun that the message will be conveyed. Therefore, Togun acts as a magnet between the two realms to pull them together. Although the scientific properties of a piece of metal known as magnet has the capacity to attract another iron, we use it here



as a metaphor to demonstrate the level at which *Force & Understanding* operate in the process of unifying two opposites.

### Conclusion

From the analysis above, change is an inexorable attribute of humanity. However, the contentions and debates about the more potent process of achieving change are healthy but none should diminish the other. From the analysis given, the two processes of change, theoretical by Hegel and practical by Osofisan are as important as the other and both can effectively be utilized to achieve change. In trying to separate the two processes or argue about the potency of one over the other, the processes of change can be impaired. Change is a continuum. It will consistently acquire new paradigm, new vistas, and new methods wherever humanity subsists. By critically analysing Osofisan's *No More the Wasted Breed* with Hegel's levels of Consciousness, the paper has proved that the theoretical and practical terms of change can conveniently cohere to provide a rhythm suitable for humanity. Overall, knowledge is an indelible accolade of change.

*Sense-certainty* therefore strives to promote first-hand experience in its purest form without any kind of mediation or interference. This is because a mastery of a first-hand experience in its truest form provides a positive platform from where other levels or stages of consciousness can develop. Without this first-hand initial mastery of experience in our quest for knowledge, the subsequent development of consciousness will be partial and harmful. At the level of *Perception*, the mind easily views Biokun's circumstance from a universal perspective without intrusion or mediation. Specifically, in *Perception* according to Hegel, the mind, in its quest to obtain knowledge, after the infantile and child-like stage of *sense-certainty*, must accord universality to every event to be able to appreciate and understand it. Through *Force & Understanding*, it is revealed that opposites attract. We appreciate Osofisan's constant effort to demonstrate that there is a thin line between the real of the supernatural and the realm of the physical and this consciousness runs through most of his plays.

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