

Marriage as a peace-making device in conflict situations among the Igbo: Examples from selected Igbo plays

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Abstract

Marriage is a revered institution in Igbo land but it has been bedeviled by various problems and conflicts. However, despite all these, marriage has also been used as a peace making device and these have been reflected in various Igbo texts. This paper examines marriage as a peace making device among the Igbo as seen from three Igbo literary texts; *Udo Ka Mma*, *Eri Marara Ngwugwu* and *Ajo Obi*. The study sees lack of finance as presented in *Udo Ka Mma*, lack of a male child in *Eri Marara Ngwugwu* and lack of trust in *Ajo Obi* as possible reasons for conflict and its consequences among the Igbos. The study adopts an eclectic approach which embodies social conflict theory and psychoanalytic theory in the analysis of data. The findings reveal that some characters in the plays exhibit idiosyncratic tendencies which make them self centred and impair their vision. Moreover, it is discovered that clash of interest, greed, infidelity, inordinate ambition, suspicion and intrigue abound in the relationship of the characters involved in the plays and these led to a chaotic end. The study is therefore, of the view that people should shun some of these obnoxious practices that cause conflicts in the society and embrace peace. Marriage is a veritable tool used in conflict resolution in Igbo land and these can be seen in the three texts where different conflicts were settled through marriage.

1. Introduction

Literature is the mirror of the society and it brings out its ways of life, belief, custom, arts and makes them known to the people. Ugwu (2014:1) defines literature as a veritable tool for social transformation. Mkaanem (2007:80) sees literature as "a social phenomenon constantly sensitive to and expressing new aspects of life, current demands and hope giving rise to new social attitude and relationship which were hitherto unnoticed".

In traditional Igbo society, these relationships could be expressed in marriage. Marriage is a vital rite of passage where two families are united as one. According to Nwoye (1991:23) marriage is a sacred and permanent contract which is enacted when two people decide on their own accord and in the presence of at least two witnesses to exchange the formal consent to live together and go through life struggle jointly. However, the present study seeks to examine the role marriage plays in conflict resolution in Igbo society using three Igbo drama books: *Udo Ka Mma*, *Eri Marara Ngwugwu* and *Ajo Obi*.

According to Phil-Eze (2009:392), peace is the state of harmonious relationship, absence of violence, war, freedom from disputes, mental stress or anxiety between individuals, groups, states or nations. In like manner, Rumel (1981) contends that peace is the absence of dissension, violence or war, a state of concord, harmony and tranquility. Lending credence to the above assertions, Gultung (1996) adds that peace is a state of absence of hostility, disturbance or agitation. In other words, peace reigns where there is a state of justice or goodness and a balance or equilibrium of power or where natural respect for another's right, ideas, views or person is observed. The present study focuses on marriage as a peace making device among the Igbo as evidenced from Igbo drama texts.

2 Overview of Literature

Various theories have been applied in the study of marriage as a peace making device to resolve conflict. The theoretical study of this work is the social conflict theory using the psychoanalytic theoretical analysis. Social conflict theory is propounded by the criminologist Vold (1958). He sees social conflict as representing a universal form of interaction in which groups are naturally in conflict as their purposes and interest/goals overlap, encroach on each other and often tend to be competitive. Therefore, the competitive achievement oriented nature of modern society makes social conflict part and parcel of the dynamics of society. However, social conflict underlines the fact that social life or society as we know it is built both on reasonable consensus (which explains progress or growth) and on endless conflict or dissension among groups in the society. The theory postulates that the society exists in continuous struggle or friction between different groups.

Lending credence to the explanation given above, Schaefer and Lamm (1995:19) opine as follows "the conflict perspective assumes that social behaviour is best understood in terms of conflicts or tension between competing groups". Such conflict need not be violent. It can take the form of labour negotiations, party politics, competition among religious groups... The theory implies that social life basically is characterized by conflicts which take various forms and are expressed in divergent ways. Anugwom (2009:36) observes that social conflict

theories are theoretical viewpoints anchored on the inevitability of change in human society. He gives this consent on the assumption that change is the only route to development or progress in human society. This theory is relevant to our study because it explains how marriage can serve as a device for making peace in our society where there is an existing quarrel or conflict. There is the belief that marriage can be used as a peace making device where the system is already characterized by conflict of one kind or the other.

Another unique social conflict theorist, Ralf Dehrendorf (1959:165) also believes that society is characterized by both, equilibrium and conflict. He said that conflict can ultimately generate consensus and even integration and both are often prerequisite for each other. He recommended that the former should examine value integration in human society while the latter focuses on conflict of interest as well as the coercion that holds the society together in spite of strains. This theory helps to explain that conflict is the opposite side of peace.

Another theory relevant in this study is the psychoanalytic or psychological theory of analysis. This psychoanalytic theory helps us to understand the various psyches of characters. The theory propounded by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), is based upon the assumption that the human subconscious is made up of impulses, desires and feelings which are sometimes overlooked. These human mind components influence emotions, behaviour and actions of the individuals differently. The relevance of this theory to the present study is that through the characters involved in the drama texts, we get to know that their desire to have what they do not have, (that is lack) causes conflict in the society. One of these lacks which bring about conflicts in the home is childlessness or inability to get a male child.

Furthermore, Zaid (2009:1) opines that if a woman produces a baby girl for the husband, she could be sacked from the house or face the husband's terrible wrath because his wish is to have a baby boy. Another problem that can bring about society conflict is land ownership and dispute. Wehrmann (2005) asserts that a land dispute can be understood as a misuse restriction or conflict over property right to the land. Usually, the dispute over land can be between one community and another, between person and person or even between siblings. In this work, we shall see how marriages become devices to bring about peace in some situations.

Various studies have been carried out in the areas of conflict in Igbo. The issue of lack of a male child in a family has attracted the attention of scholars from different disciplines. Routledge (2011) working on sex of a child preference, which has been one of the major causes of crises in relation to child bearing in homes reports that most societies of the world prefer a male child to a female child. The study observes that preference of a son is linked with social customs, religious belief, etc.

Enete (2013) studied *Eri Mara Ngwugwu* which has conflict as one of its themes but she looked at corruption as a major factor. She studied corruption in the above mentioned work and found that Uduaku's exchange of Mrs. Okpala Okwuolisa's son in the labour room brought some conflict.

Ikeokwu (2008) discusses self construct and characterization in *Udo Ka Mma*. The study reveals that ego (psychological) as a dominant human trait underpins conflict. His findings also show that since conflict of ego is copiously emphasized, it follows that when selfishness opposes selflessness conflict is generated. He observes that vaulting ambition leads to various kinds of conflict.

Furthermore, Duruji (2015) in her study of conflict and its resolution in *Nwata Rie Awo* concludes that the conflict between Aworor and Obidike was resolved by apology mechanism. Aworor tendered an unreserved apology to his father. Equally, Achomadu (2014) discusses land case in *Udo Ka Mma* as the major factor that resulted in conflict between Obiekwe and Maduka. The study reveals that during the period of land feud, the political and economic relationship between the two communities became sour.

Ugwu (2014) carried out a study on child crises in Igbo land and enumerated some conflict situations associated with child crises to include absence of a baby in the home, child's sex and so on. The above problems generated a lot of conflicts in the Igbo texts studied. The Igbo culture has high value for a male child because they believe strongly that the male child will carry on the name of the family. Onuegbu (2009) has an interesting discussion on marriage in *Eri Mara Ngwugwu* between the families of Ochongaano and Uduaku. It looked at how Uduaku as a young girl jilted Ndubuisi and marries Ochongaano. The marriage ignited conflict when Uduaku could not produce a male child in the family.

3 Data Analysis

3.1 Lack of Finance as a cause of conflict in *Udo Ka Mma*

Chukwuezi's *Udo Ka Mma* exposes lack of finance where Ekwerike Omenikekwe, a brother to Obiekwe's father from Umobija used his land to borrow money from the grandfather of Maduka who is from Ndikpa twice. According to custom, a land that was used for borrowing money twice cannot be reclaimed by the owner. However, Obiekwe grew up and became the traditional ruler of Umobija and decided to take that land. Due to ego, he vowed to take that land from Maduka. The inordinate ambition and greed in Obiekwe led to a war between the two communities.

During the period of the land feud between Obiekwe and Maduka, the political and economic relationships between the two communities became sour. This situation resulted in economic blockade, war,

insecurity, etc. The land conflict in *Udo ka Mma* was resolved amicably when Dike, Obiekwe's son married Egondur, Maduka's daughter. The marriage brought about a rapprochement between both communities – Umuobia and Ndikpa.

QGAMBA: Ala Uhu Umuezeukwu bu ala di n'ogidi. Ekwerike Omenikekwe nwanne nna Obiekwe jiri Ala a biri ego ugboro abuo n'aka Okoroigwe nna nna Maduka. Umunna unu mara na ala e biri biri ego Ugboro abuo bu ala furu efu. E rebiela ya isi (1.70).
(The land of Umuezeukwu is in Ogidi. Ekwerike Omenikekwe, the brother of Obiekwe's father used it to borrow money from Maduka's grandfather twice. Kinsmen, the custom is that a land used to borrow money twice can never be reclaimed or redeemed)

UMUNNA: O bu ihe mere eme
(It is the right thing)

The family of Obiekwe was poor to the extent that they used their land as collateral to get loan from Maduka's grandfather two times. In such case, the land can never go back to Obiekwe's family. The id in Obiekwe made him to desire for the land that does not belong to him.

Obiekwe always stood up in anger to swear, to threaten or to scold. His idiosyncrasies demonstrated his superiority over everybody as he threatens Dike in the presence of his kinsmen not to marry Egondur.

OBIEKWE: O nweghi ka Dike zopu ukwu n'ama si na ya na-aga n'ulo Maduka. O nweghi ike ya. O bughu n'ulo m. agwo turu mbe na-atu n'enu okpokoro (71-72).
(Dike cannot leave this village to go to Maduka's house. He cannot do that. It can never happen in my house. He is just beating about the bush).

Obiekwe's interest to claim Uhu Umuezeukwu land was borne out of greed and inordinate ambition. He wanted to acquire more lands at all cost.

OBIEKWE: O bukwa m bu oku na-agba n'ozara? Onye nochiri m uzo aga m emenyu ya anya O bu dike na ibe ya. (74)
(Am I not the fire that burn in the desert? He that stands on my way I will crush. It is man to man).

Obiekwe grew up to see their land in the hands of the Madukas and was never happy despite the fact that the land was used to borrow money. The conflict was resolved when Dike, the son of Obiekwe married Ego the daughter of Maduka.

3.2 Lack of male child as a cause of conflicts in *Eri mara Ngwugwu*

The wide spread of male child preference to female child comes from the societal belief or perception that a male child is superior to a female child. This is based on roles expected to be played by each sex at home and in the larger society. Lack of a male child was the cause of conflict in *Eri mara Ngwugwu*. Ochonganooko was presented in *Eri mara Ngwugwu* as a greedy man and because despite the number of girl children he had, he was not satisfied and he indulged in extramarital affairs with young girls. Ochonganooko's dire need or desperation to have a male child put his wife into temptation of exchanging his girl child with another woman's son to satisfy her husband. This can be gleaned from the excerpt below:

OCHONGANOOKO: ... O bu uche m ikwu okwu ilubata nwanji ozu. O bughu nani n'ihu na ime na-esiri gi ike ka m ji eche nke a kama isi ihe o jiri di m mkpa buna o dibeghi nwoke I mutara. (45-46).
(... It is my intention to marry another wife. It is not just because you have delays in child bearing that makes me think of that, but because, you have not yet gotten a male child).

This study depicts Ochonganooko as a greedy man whose character could not allow him to take things the way they are, child bearing and sex selection are the exclusive gifts of the Almighty God but Ochonganooko wanted to turn the mind of God to favour his selfish interest. This attitude of Ochonganooko encroached into the interest of Uduaku who looked for a nurse to exchange a baby boy with her own if eventually she gives birth to another baby girl. This is in line with the social conflict theory that postulates that the society exists in continuous struggle but this time, in the family. Let us examine the conversation below.

NQOSU: Gini ka I na-ekwu?
Abu m chukwu na-enye nwa, ka a si ka mu nye gi nowoke? O ka mma na I jisiri ike, Na-ekpe ekpere, ka uche chinaeke mee. (P. 50).

(What are you talking? Am I God that gives child that I will give you a male child? It is better that you pray very hard so that god's will be done in your life)

UDUAKU: O bu taa ka m kpewere ekpere?
Ugbu a, O buzihi epkere ka m na-ekwu okwu ya. Ihe m chorọ bu nwa nwoke, ụzọ abụla ụzọ ... (P. 50).
(Is it today that I started praying? Now, I am not talking about prayer, what I want now is a male child at all cost)

However, Uduaku who was threatened by Ochonganooko, that he would marry another wife and throw her out of her matrimonial home because she did not have a male child paid a nurse the sum of four hundred naira only and promised to pay more if she exchanged a baby boy with hers if her own baby was a girl. The request was granted and she rejoiced while going home with a baby boy named Tagbo. The baby girl grew up in the family of Okpala Okwuolisa by the name Nneka. Uduaku did what she did because her interest was encroached on and she tried to compete with her husband who wanted to take another wife.

The character of Ochonganooko here is akin to that of Aworo in *Nwata Rie Awo* in the area of trying to use his position to victimize his wife, hence he fell in love with his own daughter. However, his action differs from that of Aworo because, he did not marry Nneka rather her marriage was used to restore peace between the two warring families.

NNEKA: Nke kachari buru isi okwu Bu na o nwere onye na ekwu okwu ilu m Lee mgbaka di m n'aka, o bu onye ahụ nyere m ya. (p.56).
(The main issue is that someone is asking my hand in marriage. Look at the ring I put on which he gave to me).

OCHONGANOOKO: Nonsensi!, ginị na-aza mgbaka. Otu a ka umu nwoke si aghogbu unu, onye jee zuta mgbaka koko, o nye nwanyi..... (p.56)
(Nonsense! What is ring? That is how young men deceive women, one goes and buys one kobo worth of ring and gives to a woman).

Ochonganooko in *Eriri mara Ngwugwu...* was depicted as a greedy man and an infidel. He exhibits idiosyncrasies that portrays self centeredness in him, he confused Nneka to remove her mind from a suitor and make love with him against her wish, because she needed money and Ochonganooko was ready to give her money, she yielded to his advances. This is an example of the exploitation of the less privileged by the privileged. Exploitation creates a fundamental conflict of interest between social groups since one gains at the expense of another. This is seen in the texts under study here. Ochonganooko unknowingly and out of recklessness commits incest with his daughter. It is an abominable sin against the earth deity. Ochonganooko knowingly or unknowingly snatched Ndubuisi of his bride at marriage point. This is an example of the exploitative tendency of a realist character.

However, nemesis caught up with the nurse and she paid for what she did. The nurse made an open confession, and it became known that Tagbo was the son of Okpala Okwuolisa and Nneka was the daughter of Ochonganooko. After the confession, the matter was settled amicable because Taagbo and Nneka got married.

UDUAKU: ...Biko, ana m ario gi ka I kawa ahụ kpofuo okwu ahụ, ebe o buna Taagbo na Nneka aburula di na nwunye, Echeghi m na o di ihe fulahuru anyi... (p.83).
(... please, I am begging you to forget about the matter since Taagbo and Nneka are now husband and wife. I do not think that we lost anything...).

3.3 Lack of Trust as Cause of Conflict in *Ajo Obi*

When trust eludes a family, what follows it is suspicion. Ezenwata, at the beginning of the play suspected Obiageli (his wife) and Onyema (his friend) after Obiageli had received a phone call from Onyema when he was about to go to work. He alleges extra marital relationship between Obiageli and Onyema.

EZE: Lee anya Onyema, ka m gwazi gi, wepu anya na nwunye m. ihe mu na gi nwekotara onu bu aku anyi, nwunye m esoghi na ya Ga... a... (21).
(Look Onyema, let me tell you, remove your eyes from my wife. What we have in common is wealth, my wife is not part of it. Go...)

Ezenwata, later went to Onyema's house to ask him to forgive him for the misunderstanding they had in his office over an alleged suspicion with his wife. He invited Onyema to a reconciliatory party in his house. *Ajo Obi* manifests intrigue as part of Ezenwata's character for him to have organized such a reconciliatory party in his

house. He concentrated in taking Onyema and Obiageli pictures indiscriminately during the purported party in his house. Ezenwata wants to use these photographs (especially where two of them are close to each other) as evidence against them. Onyema became apprehensive of the gesture and questions him.

ONYEMA: Eze, foto nke a i na-ese anyi aghara aghara o dikwa na mma?
(Eze, these snap shots you take us anyhow, is it for good?).

However, the id, made him to be completely unconscious of the truth in the matter followed by the ego that gave way to aggressive impulse in him. He decided to commit suicide so that he will put Onyema into trouble based on the statement given by Onyema after his death.

ONYEMA: Gini ka o chorọ inweta abughị ikonye m okwu n' isi, ka ndi mmadu si na o bu m gburu ya ka m duru Obiageli.
(What else did he want, rather than to put me into trouble, so that people will say that I killed him to take Obiageli?).

The conflict caused by lack of trust led Ezenwata to his untimely death and Onyema suffered detention and interrogations in the hands of the police. The suspicion was resolved when Obiageli married Uche, a different person altogether as against Onyema she was accused of having extra marital relationship. On the other hand, Onyema married to another person even before Obiageli got married.

The marriage between Obiageli and Uche restored the image of Obiageli and her family back in their community as against what the people were saying that she killed her husband and married his business partner. Also, the image of Onyema was equally restored.

UCHE: E – e, o o ije elu uwa. Ije anyiufo na ekworo na-eweta. Onye erighi eri, o zoro n'ukwu. Onyema nwoke ibe m, o bu out a a nkita sirie rie nsi, eze ree ewu ... (170).
(E – e, this is world. That is what envy and jealousy can cause. If you don't eat, you may pick with your leg. Onyema my friend is that how the dog ate the excretes and the goat suffers the pains).

3.4 Use of peaceful language that fosters marital peace

Language is a means whereby human beings communicate with one another. It makes human beings distinct from animals. Man is capable of acquiring and utilizing language. This is a creative process peculiar to man. Finocchiaro (1964) defines language as "...a system of arbitrary vocal symbols which permit all people in a given culture or other people who have learned the system of that culture to communicate or to interact.

Moreso, language is the vehicle of communication. It might be words, sounds and gestures, etc. MacBride et al (1981) reveals that the development of language was important for two main reasons. First, it gave a scope and strength to communication content and secondly, allowed for precision and detail of expression in communication.

The following excerpts portray this:

OBIDIYA: O ka mma nwoke ilu onye di ya mma n'obi, Dike si na onye ahụ bu Ego, ada Maduka. O bukwa gi ji aka gi bia luru m? O nwere onye lutara m gi.
Hapu okwu ihere chee ihe di n'ihu. Udo ka mma. A sirie na mmiri dorọ n'uju, dorọ nwa nkita. Nkita na-aju nri ma o naghị aju oku (pp.57-76).
(It is better for a man to marry a woman of his choice. Dike said he has found Ego, Maduka's daughter. Are you not the one who married me? Did anyone marry me for you? Forget about shame think about what is before you. Peace is supreme. The water that is in the earthen pot is there for the dog. A dog refuses food but does not refuse a call).

Obidiya believed strongly in her choice of words so that peace could be restored by that marriage. Obidiya employed the use of proverb where she says

Mmiri dorọ n'uju
Dorọ nwa nkita.

It was used to emphasize the need to have peace because if Obiekwe refuses he would be defeated by the people of Ndikpa and he would still remain in that defeat. This supports social conflict theory because it believes that society is characterized by conflicts.

In the course of marriage as a peace making device, the playwright employed irony in the speech of Maduka when he repeated what Ogamba said about Dike's visit to Maduka's house. The statement was a way of bringing in peace because Maduka chased Dike and his friend, Ekwewe away from his house with cutlass.

The following excerpt below supports this:

MADUKA: Ụmụọbịa, ndị ọgọ m, unu anwụla. (N'ọchị) Obiekwe, Dike Nwa gi Na-akpa ọchị. Ọ sị na m natara ha nke ọma. Okwu ya agwaala m na obi ya dị n'ebe ada m dị. Obi dị m uto na unu choro ka okwu a zuo nọ ezuo, ruo Nke unu choro ilu ada m. Mu na ezi na ulo m atuleela obibia Dike, Tinye ya n'akpa na-echezi ihe unu ga-eme. Okwu buzi nke Ego igwa anyi ihe bu uche ya n'okwua.... (p.90)
(Ụmụọbịa my in-laws live long (in laughter) Obiekwe, Dike your son is funny. He said that I entertained them well. This has shown me how much he is interested in my daughter. I am happy that you people want this matter to be solved once and for all to the extent of marrying my daughter. My family and I have resolved and accepted Dike's intention and we are waiting for you. The ball is in Ego's court to tell us her mind....)

The above metaphorical expressions gave the impression that marriage has solved an age long war between the two communities, Umuobia and Ndikpa. Some paralinguistic features used in the text whenever they are discussing the issues of marriage shows that they have peace in their midst. This is shown as follows:

These expressions are on the side of Obiekwe

Ha nile ebido Chịwa ọchị (p.76)

(they all started to laugh).

Obi dara ya mba

O na-ekwe n'isi (p.77)

(he became down cast and continued to shake his head).

On the side of Maduka, when Obiekwe's family visited his house, some paralinguistic features were used to express the fact that peace has come through the marriage of Dike and Ego.

Ehudata n'ala chia ọchị (p.89)

(Bend down and laugh)

N'ọchị (p.90)

(in laughter).

Enye ya mmanya (p.90)

O gbajuru n'iko.

(He gave her a cup full with wine).

The words of Ejike in *Eri mara Ngwuugwu* helped to avert police case in the matter between the families of Ochonganooko and Okpala Okwuolisa over the exchange of their babies by Uduaku. The expressions below gave the impression that the marriage of Taagbo and Nneka automatically brought peace between their families.

EJIKE: ...Ebe o bu na Umuntakiri abuo a na akwadowebu ilu onwe ha O dibeghi ihe ura mere anya

Bikon ndi anyi biara be ha, unu emeela (p. 78)

(... since two of them are engaged in marriage, nothing has spoilt. Please, my people that have come here thanks very much.

The use of proverb in this expression is to highlight the fact that their union will solve the problem or conflict generated by lack of male child on the side of Uduaku.

The marriage also brought Uduaku back to Ochonganookol's house after she had ran away due do the evil she committed. Hence this excerpt:

OKOTO: Otu aka ahụ ka m na-ewerekwa ohere a wee na-ekele unu ekele puru icha n'isi nwanne m Nwanyị bu Uduaku. Unu agbalika wee si ya lotawakwa. Bikonu, ka anyi kpofuo ihe nile a merenu. Ndewo nu (p.80).

(In the same vein, let me use this opportunity to thank you people specially on behalf of my sister, Uduaku. You people tried so much to allow her to come back home. Please, let us forget what has happened, Welcome all.

The speaker has expressed joy that peace was at last restored in the family of his sister through the daughter's marriage.

4 Conclusion

From our analysis, we found out that lack of finance as presented in *Udo ka mma* brought about conflict in the form of land dispute between Obiekwe and Maduka. In *Eri mara Ngwugwu*, the conflict was caused by lack of male child in Ochonganooko's family. This led to the exchange of new born babies in the hospital to favour Uduaku, who needed a baby boy.

Furthermore, we saw that conflict among the Igbo is often associated with lack of finance and lack of a male child. We have also seen that these situations have negative effects on the characters, families and society at large. Marriage is a veritable tool used in resolving conflict in Igbo society. This is one of the reasons why marriage is encouraged and recommended as a conflict resolving device among the Igbo.

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APPENDIX

1.0 SYNOPSES

The playwright is Anelechi Banabas Chukwuezi

1.1. *Udo ka Mma* (UKM)

Udo ka Mma is a 92 pages play – It is a tragicomedy. It is a tragedy because of lack of finance and the evils associated with Obiekwe's ego and its resultant effects which led to the destruction of lives and property on both towns Umuobija and Ndikpa. It is a comedy because marriage serves as a peace making device to resolve the conflict. The protagonist, Obiekwe of Umuobija was greedy and refused to heed to the tradition that a land used as collateral twice can never be reclaimed. He insisted to take the land from Maduka of Ndikpa. The people of Ndikpa felt offended and insulted and vowed to fight with the last drop of their blood. The two communities were engaged in a civil war and the war was on the side of the people of Ndikpa. The people of Umuobija were defeated and it reduced Obiekwe's respect and reputation within their environs.

The land dispute which caused war, hatred, bitterness, economic blockade was resolved through the marriage between Dike (Obiekwe's son) and Egondu (Maduka's daughter). It restored peace between the two communities that were once enemies.

1.2 *Eriri mara Ngwugwu*

The playwright is Goddy O. Onyekaowu. It is an 89 paged play. It is a tragicomedy. It is tragic because Okwuike Ogbunanjo is a ritual murderer. He murdered his wife, Orije because she reported his notorious activities to the police and he served twenty years jail term. Her murder took place at Iguedo where she was on exile with her two children, Okoto and Uduaku. Before her death, she told her children the kind of father they had and his where about. Okoto in a bid to eliminate his father who threatened to kill his mother after serving jail term killed an innocent visitor that came to Iguedo with a letter from Ikodi. Ekweonye to inform Orije that Okwuike had been released from jail, so, that she would be on alert. Later their father came in their absence and murdered their mother. After mourning the death of their mother, Uduaku and Okoto were left alone. There was a marriage contract between Uduaku and Ndubuisi. On the wedding day, inside the Church, while Ndubuisi was waiting for Uduaku to come back from the conveniences, she elopes with another man called Oghonganooko. They left for overseas where they lived for fifteen years.

However, they later came back to Ikpongwu, Uduaku gave birth to two girls for Ochoanganooko. Due to lack of a male child, the husband threatened to divorce her and marry another wife should she give birth to another female child. In order to escape being divorced, she arranged with a nurse, gave her money to exchange her baby girl for a baby boy at birth. On the day of her delivery, another woman delivered a baby boy, the nurse exchanged the baby boy of one Mrs. Okpala Okwuolisa from Umuoto for that of Uduaku as earlier planned – the boy was Tagbo and the girl was Nneka. Tagbo became a university undergraduate and Nneka was a teacher at Igedo. They became friends and planned to marry each other but Tagbo's father refused to give his consent because he was in love affairs with Nneka. Ochoanganooko committed incest unknowingly with his own daughter.

The evil that men do lives with them, the nurse was dismissed from work because of her rude behaviour to patients especially one commissioner's wife. She visited a pastor, who prayed for her – she repented and confessed her sins to pastor. It was on this process of confession that she told the pastor how she exchanged the two babies in the hospital. The pastor prayed for her and told her to confess to the two families that were involved. She made the confession, and it brought about conflict between the two families. Uduaku ran away to her brother at Igedo. Ochoanganooko was confused and ashamed because of the incest he committed with Nneka, his daughter.

The conflict was resolved as the two families, Okpala Okwuolisa and Ochoanganooko agreed that Tagbo married Nneka. They also told Ochoanganooko to go and bring back his wife from Igedo. He brought back his wife but never forgave her of her sins. One day he traveled with her, and there he sold Uduaku to a ritualist and came to tell his kinsmen that she was drowned in a river. As her burial arrangement was going on, Uduaku arrived with her father who saved her life from ritualist. Okwuike narrated what happened to his son Okoto, as the young man identified Okwuike as their father, and his mother's killer ran into the house, brought out a knife and stabbed Okwuike. Ochoanganooko, ran into a room and committed suicide.

1.3 *Ajo Obi*

Ajo Obi is a play written by Nwaozuzu, G.I. It comprises of one hundred and seventy one pages (171). Ezenwata, popularly called Osisinamiego was a business man. He had a business partner called Onyema, both of them lived together before Ezenwata married Obiageli. After his marriage Onyema moved into his own house. Obiageli was a housewife. She usually answers or picks the phone each time Onyema phones Ezenwata and exchange greetings with him.

However, the way Obiageli exchange greetings with Onyema was not acceptable with Ezenwata. He grew jealous and became suspicious of the relationship between Onyema and Obiageli. To worsen the situation, Onyema presented a gold bangle to Obiageli on her 25th birthday party which she had earlier requested her husband to buy for her. The accusation resulted to a strong conflict that involved Obiageli's mother-in-law beating her up. The wind of the allegation of extra marital relationship between Obiageli and Onyema gets to the knowledge of their neighbours and colleagues in their office. Ezenwata and Onyema became sworn enemies.

Ezenwata pleaded for forgiveness from Onyema. He planned a reconciliatory party one Sunday evening. During the party, he gave Onyema and Obiageli several snap shots and Onyema asked him why, because this was to incriminate them. Along the line, he announced that the party has come to an end and that he would travel with Onyema that night to Lagos. Their guests left the arena, Onyema equally left.

Ezenwata and Onyema, before they left for Lagos, discussed about the risk involved in travelling at night. Ezenwata occupied the back seat. At Onitsha head-bridge, Ezenwata ordered Onyema to stop for him to ease himself, at that point he brought out gun and shot himself. Onyema took Ezenwata's corpse back to his house deposited him in a chair in his bedroom. He left for Lagos that night. It was Obiageli who called Onyema on phone that her husband had died.

The matter was handled by the police and the mystery behind the handprint of Onyema on the gun and tumbler could not be unraveled as Onyema arrived Lagos early. The mystery of his death was made known when Uche the police Superintendent married Obiageli and invited Onyema to their house. The marriage between Uche and Obiageli exonerated Obiageli and Onyema from allegation of extramarital relationship.