Dramatic Adaptation and Character Rebirth: A Focus on Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Utoh-Ezeajugh's *Nneora.*

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Abstract

Dramatic adaptation is the recreation of an older dramatic text to a newer one, using similar or related texts to influence or reflect the recurrence of plot, characterisation, situations and setting from source to adapted texts with a view to meeting current realities in the adapted text. This study is an attempt to establish that character rebirth or recreation in dramatic adaptations tends to produce more effective and successful adaptations. The selected plays for examination are; Henrick Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Utoh-Ezeajugh's *Nneora.* The theoretical framework adopted for this study is Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality. It employs the qualitative research design, while the methodology used is textual analysis. Whereas, the findings of this research reveal the invaluable role of character rebirth as a form of dramatic adaptation. Furthermore, this has unveiled issues of recurrent dramatic plots, settings, situations and even cultural similarities between the source and adapted texts. This study recommends the recreation of characters introduced in the source texts for addressing contemporary demands as contribution to knowledge among other details. It also highlights the innovative strategies of dramatic adaptation deployed in the adapted dramatic text.

Keywords: Dramatic adaptation, character, rebirth, and focus.

Introduction:

There is no gainsaying the fact that, a dramatic adaptation is a new drama text, or a retelling of the old story in the text to a newer format, that is based on an already existing text. Dramatic adaptations include intertextuality from the previous work, or the use of elements from the original in the newer one. Adaptations are used to creatively expand from the original idea in a new way, including characters, recurrent dramatic plots, situations and etc. Although, it may contain the same ideas but can be portrayed differently based on point of view, situation or time. From the above explanation, it is therefore, not out of place to say that, effective and successful dramatic adaptations require a respect of the original text which comprises such engines as character, (to which this study focuses on) environment, plot and language. This, means that, while adapting a text, we must respect the characters that are in the original text. What then is character, and of course character rebirth? A character is a person or individual in a drama that may have defined personal qualities and/ or in stories, while character rebirth is the rejuvenation or regeneration of a past or old character in a story, giving cause for remembrance.

Thus, the above explains that characters are indispensable in a dramatic text, for through the actions, and what people say about them, the audience is told of the personality of the character. It then behoves on the adaptor that, for him/she to adapt effectively and successfully, he must inevitably and sincerely transform or recreate either the fictional or source text's characters in the adaptation process, just as it could be done to thematic content. In that way, the story stands to be distilled, for it will meet the four engines of environment, action/plot, character and language. We are all aware that, it is through the actions of the characters in a similar mould as that of their original counterpart, that the audience can tackle and decide whether, the text is adapted one or not.

Theoretical Framework:

Adaptation constitutes the driving force of contemporary culture, with stories adapted across an array of media formats. But until recently, adaptation scholars, such as; Sanders (2006, p.19), Kracauer (1931, p.96), Andre Bazin (1930, p.32), Asheim (1942, p.103), Emile Zola, Jean Jacque Rousseau, Bresson (1950, p.87), Barry (1995, p.18) and etc etc have predominantly focused on repeated claims of

"authorial influence" which is "faithfulness" to precursor text. But, not mindful of the fact that, no adaptation could achieve 100% faithfulness to source texts. Besides, the context of total fidelity of adapted texts to their sources completely defeats the function and significance of adaptation as an area of study. Against this backdrop, the theoretical framework adopted for this study is, Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality, which emphasises innovation of source text in recognition of recurring cultural and linguistic patterns the emphases of which become relevant to the advancement of contemporary societies across global cultures. According to her, intertextuality is the concept of texts borrowing from each other's words and concepts. This could mean as much as an entire ideological concept and as little as a word or phrase. For instance, in our daily research work, we borrow phrases and concepts from other works in our own. And that is intertextuality we are using, perhaps without knowing it. Though, it sounds intimidating at first, it is quite a simple concept really. Intertextuality denotes the way in which texts (any text, not just literature) gain meaning through their referencing or evocation of other texts. The term was developed by the post-structuralist Julia Kristeva in the 1960s, and since then it's been widely accepted by post-modern literary critics and theoreticians. Her invention was a response to Ferdinand de Saussure's theory and his claim that signs gain their meaning through structure in a particular text. She opposed Saussure's position, saying that readers are always influenced by other texts, sitting through their archives, when reading a new one. Basically, when writers borrow from previous texts, their work acquires layers of meaning. In addition, when a text is read in the light of another text, all the assumptions and effects of the other text give a new meaning and influence the way of interpreting the original text, serves as a sub-theme, and reminds us of the double narratives in allegories. Kristeva (1980, p.36), further defines adaptation as the shaping of texts meaning by another text. According to her, intertextual figures include: allusion, quotation, calque, plagiarism, translation, pastiche and parody. It is a literary device that creates an inter-relationship between texts and generates related understanding in separate works. By this statement, Kristeva is referring to the way in which texts gain meaning through their referencing or better still, an author's borrowing and transformation of a previous or original text to meet current realities. According to her, "texts are not a unilinear entity but a heterogeneous combination of texts."

Kristeva's statement here implies that, texts are not the creations of a single author but a compilation from pre-existent or diverse texts which several portions are borrowed to interlace and neutralise one another for a final copy. Furthermore, Kristeva, while arguing in defence of the post-structuralist concept of evaluation, says that, "any text is an amalgam of others, a part of a larger fabric of cultural discourse" (1977, pp.64-91). According to her, a text is a multidimensional space in which, a variety of writings, none of them original, "blend and clash" (Kristeva, 1977, p.146). By this argument, Kristeva means that, there are no particular texts claimed to be original or the source text, and that every text is a by-product from the pool of others which was lifted and recreated to forge the way forward.

But in all, both Kristeva consider the sole tool of adaptation as innovation of pre-existent text to meet contemporary relevance, which is in line with this study. From the foregoing analysis, we see that, intertextuality and transfiguring are crucial to our understanding of the manifestation of adaptation in Nigerian drama. Nigerian dramatists bring new perspectives into the source texts and draw the audience's attention to them. Similarly, character rebirth persuades character flux which allows influences from the old story's characters upon the new ones in order to redefine, reshape, evaluate and revalidate the characters for contemporary purposes and significance.

Dramatic adaptation therefore, cannot be separated from intertextuality, for it implicates the way in which similar or related texts influence, reflect the recurrence of plot, dramatic characterisation, situations and settings from source to adapted texts with a view to achieving innovations in the adapted texts. The primary motivation for dramatic adaptation as a focus of study is committed to reviewing the issues around adaptation with particular reference to its structural disposition as an area of study relevant to dramatic literature. We are all aware that dramatic text in its broadcast manifestation is a product of dialogue. Characterisation therefore, becomes imperative as the play will be open to scenes of dialogue within the characters. And this perhaps account for issues of trans textuality (which is the cognitive transfer of initial characters in a text to a new one) thus, precipitating the reality of intertextuality. So, what then is intertextuality? Intertextuality involves the practice which allows for the borrowing and assimilation of cultural ideas and expressions at the level of oral literature in order to reinvent, innovate and enrich

the language(s)of the benefitting interacting cultures. Thus, in a related sense, we can say that, dramatic adaptation is that subset/form of intertextuality which allows for trans textual transfers of recurrent plots, characterisation, thematic situations and archetypal motives; all of which foregoing recur in the cultural practices and realities across several geographical locations and generations apart. The above explanation implies that, a dramatist can adapt recurrent dramatic plots, characterisation and cultural situations/expressions beyond boundaries in order to reinvent his own cultural presentations to meet the contemporary environmental demands. Based on the foregoing, adaptation therefore is an organic practice for relevance and survival. Thus, logically and conveniently, we can affirm that, dramatic adaptation is a form of intertextuality. It is this practice that makes it possible for the selected Nigerian playwright studied here to adapt its source text successfully. (E.g.) Utoh-Ezeajugh's adaptation of the Norwegian classical drama, A Doll's House in the 5th century into a Nigerian cultural setting in the 20th century. Based on the foregoing explanations, one can say that, this theoretical framework adopted here is foregrounded on the following benefits:
It immortalizes the source culture by giving it a renewed vigor in the adapted culture.

It enhances and revalidates the invaluability of structural affiliations in thought/faculty in cultural studies and literature, thus, giving birth to interdisciplinary orientation of knowledge.

iii Intertexuality by its very disposition is a tracking process for recreating and innovating culture for contemporary purposes and significance.

Methodology:
This study adopts the qualitative analysis research design on the selected adapted work of Nigerian playwright, thus, specifically deploying content analysis based on both the source text and its adapted version, case study, and descriptive approaches of the qualitative method to realise set objectives. The materials for this research are from twin sources, primary and secondary. The primary sources are the first-hand information from the play texts themselves, while, the secondary data are supporting information or the writings of others in the field, gotten from books, journal articles, magazines, the internet, and so on. These would be

harmonised by the analysis of the researcher, arguing for or against, and taking a stand where necessary, all aimed at providing a balanced view on the discourse, to realise the set objectives of the study. To achieve this, first, we must give a plot/structure analysis of the selected plays in question.

A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen and *Nneora* by Utoh-Ezeajugh

Nneora is an adapted version of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* whose, plot focuses on the married life of Torvald Helmer and his wife, Nora. A middle-class young couple with three small children, and their seemingly respectable marriage which relationship later turns sour as a result of mistrust amongst themselves. It is this play Tracie adapts by using Nigerian traditional elements like infidelity, unemployment, marriage, distrust, patriarchy and calls it *Nneora* with Ibsen's dramatic narrative to tell a comment in her present contemporary society.

Plot/Structural Development

Exposition

The play *Nneora* is set in the 21st century Nigeria, with modern elements like cars, banks, hospitals, and a combination of Nigerian traditional and modern Western costumiers. The play is structured in two parts and nine situations. The first two situations in the play have no direct correspondence with Ibsen's original version and introduce characters and circumstances which are different. Like its original source text, *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen which, opens in a Christmas season, *Nneora* by Utoh-Ezeajugh, also initially opens with some masquerades in a busy market square in Christmas season, seeking to charm the market women with their dances and antics for money. It's plot is scattered around several places, from the market to Ikenna's home, Dr. Frank's office, a busy street and finally Ikenna's home again. However, it formally opens with the introduction of the characters Nneora and Ikenna (Nora and Torvald) initially as single independent people in the local market. Mama Uduak, one of the market women, selling food items set out on a table, detests this and sends them away. Her neighbour, Nneora, who owns a shop selling different designs of cloth is more sympathetic and admonishes Mama Uduak: "Leave them alone; it is Christmas season that is how it is normally done" (p.2).

Dramatic conflict and rising action

The play attains its crises when a young man named, Ikenna (Ibsen's Torvald), an unemployed university graduate comes to see Mama Uduak to ask for some food items on credit. But he is already indebted to her to the tune of seven hundred and eighty naira and had not been able to pay. Thus, he is attacked by Mama Uduak to pay his debts, despite his pleas for mercy and consideration. Mama Uduak had had enough of his talk and was not accepting any more excuses. Nneora takes pity on Ikenna and pays off his debt and equally gives him money to buy some food. The foregoing development heralds the middle of the play culminating in the climax.

Climax

Like in the original version, *A Doll's House* by Ibsen, which reaches its peak, when Nora secretly forged her father's signature with the connivance of Krugdstard for a loan to fly her husband out for treatment; similarly, in Utoh-Ezeajugh's *Nneora*, the play reaches its peak when, Nneora, after finding out that, Ikenna is actually a qualified lawyer, offers to assist him secure a job. Nneora initiates a relationship with Ikenna by coming to his rescue. She keeps her promise and goes to see her friend Osita, (Ibsen's Krogstard) who is a bank manager. She asks him to help Ikenna find a job under the pretext that, he was her relative. However, Nneora and Osita are in an amorous relationship with marriage in view. Nneora is however reluctant, because, Osita has a wife who, is although now estranged from her husband. Nneora suspects that Osita's estranged wife might one day come back to him. Osita is infuriated by her stance, but is too deep with her to refuse her request. He offers Ikenna the job and finally, Nneora and Ikenna get married.

Falling Action

Like in *A Doll's House* by Ibsen, whose actions begin to dwindle when Torlvard Helmer falls sick and there is no money to fly him abroad for treatment, which situation moves Nora to stick out her neck by, luring Krudgstard into the forging of signatures to facilitate the loan required to settle her husband's flight, in order for him to be treated abroad; so also, in Utoh-Ezeajugh's *Nneora,* actions in the play reveal a certain level of structural slide when Ikenna takes ill not long after their marriage. This condition of ill-health precipitates far-reaching financial need for medical attention at the instances of Ikenna who had neglected his health to the

point, the family doctor declared that he need to be flown abroad for treatment or else run the risk of death. Thus, similar in action to the original version, Nneora sticks out her neck, lures Osita, her former acquaintance to sign a loan she applies without the knowledge of her husband in order to fly him abroad for treatment. Osita, like Krugdstard in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* who fell for Nora, falls for Nneora's request with a condition that they shall sleep together. Nneora, like Nora in Ibsen's *A Doll's House,* who after getting the loan disappoints Krugdstard, also disappoints Osita in Utoh-Ezeajugh's eponymous play. Thus, similar to Krugdstard in *A Doll's House* who resort to blackmail Nora, Osita in Utoh-Ezeajugh's *Nneora* also resort to blackmail Nneora by sending a letter containing her dealings to Ikenna. Like in the original version where Torlvard later receives a phone call from a stranger who claims he has delivered to his office a sensitive mail about someone close. Utoh-Ezeajugh's Ikenna also receives a phone call from a stranger who claims he has delivered to his office a very sensitive letter about someone close. Like in the original version where Nora becomes very worried and persuades Torlvard to forget about the letter until Christmas Eve, similarly, in Tracie's *Nneora,* Nneora becomes very worried and persuades Ikenna to forget about the letter until Christmas Eve. Dr. Frank, (Dr. Rank in Ibsen's version), seeing that Nneora is worried, tries to cheer her up and informs her that she is going to have twin male children. Osita confronts Nneora again in her home. She pleads with him to leave everything, but he refuses.

Resolution

In the original version, *A Doll's House* by Ibsen, the play's actions come to an end when, Torlvard and Nora returns home and Torlvard finally reads the letter and becomes frantic. Discovering the truth about Nora, he condemns, abuses her and orders her to leave his house with her children. So also, Utoh-Ezeajugh's *Nneora* comes to an end when, Ikenna and Nneora returns home. Ikenna finally reads the letter and becomes frantic. Discovering the truth about Nneora, he condemns, abuses her and orders her to leave his house with her children. Few minutes later, Osita and Linda walk in to apologise for Osita's actions with a promise not to discuss the issue again. Linda accidentally informs Ikenna that Nneora is going to give birth to twin boys. Ikenna, realising Nneora's innocence, and delighted with prospect that he is at last to have sons, tries to apologise and convince Nneora to stay. But Nneora decides to walk out of the marriage with her children.

Character Rebirth in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen and *Nneora* by Utoh-Ezeajugh.

For purpose of clarity and comprehension, the keyword characterisation is explained. Characterisation is the representation of person(s) (or other beings or creatures) in narrative and dramatic works of art. Characterisation entails two methods namely; direct and indirect. The direct method deals with the attribution of qualities from character's actions, dialogue, or appearance. Such a personage is called a character. The term, characterisation, was introduced in (335 BCE) by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. Though, he promoted the primacy of plot over characters, that is, a plot-driven narrative, arguing that, tragedy "is a presentation, not of men, but of action and life". But he later revised this view, when the primacy of the character, that is a character-driven narrative, was affirmed first with the realist novel, and increasing later with the influential development of psychology. But one question arises: Who initiates these actions to life and culture? We are all aware that, "character entails traits, attributes and vices which can also be defined in ethnic and cultural dimension. This then means that, drama basically entails the use of characters who imitate the actions of historical or imagined character. Character, therefore is dramas human centre, and character is revealed through dialogue. Dialogue has three major functions. One is to advance the plot; secondly, to establish setting; and finally, to reveal character.

Dialogue as the most important and consistent action is the revelation of a character. Therefore, the recreation of characters from source to adapted texts is no doubt a leeway to represent both the characteristic and structural tools of cultural imperatives of the playwright's society with a view to having effective and successful dramatic adaptation. Thus, in the play, *Nneora* which is an adapted version of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Nneora is a very dynamic character, who is the very like of Ibsen's heroine, Nora, in *A Doll's House*. She is the protagonist heroine of the play. Utoh-Ejeajugh used her to portray the seemingly deceitful and infidel, but virtuous nature of womanhood in her society. Nneora, though still a young woman, is later married to Ikenna and has three children. At the play's outset, Nneora is bubbly, care free, humane, compassionate and excited about Christmas. For example, when Mama Uduak confronted young Ikenna, Ibsen's Torvald because of debt he owed her. It is Nneora who owns a shop in the market and finding it embarrassing pays the debt and even offers to assist him get a job. This

promise, she actually keeps and finds a banking job for Ikenna through her boyfriend, Ostia, who is a bank manager. However, after some years, Nneora and Ikenna got married, but only to the dislike of Osita who stands to assist her every time, thinking he can marry her. Nneora initially was independent and controlling her own life. For instance, even her dealings with Ostia, despite the fact that. She is seeking favors from him. She still refuses his request for her hand in marriage. Nneora, like Ibsen's Nora, is a spendthrift. She admires spending more money on presents, but Ikenna, like Torvald, chides her and calls her a typical woman. But lately, Nneora apparently has relinquished her position of power to her husband. Whereas she had been the one to get him a job and get him started in the career. He is now the man of the house, the bread winner, the one who decides how the family's money should be spent. He is the one whose wishes must be paramount. If she is to get her way, she must carefully negotiate with him. Nneora, from the play, we discovered that, her husband, Ikenna stopped her from the shop business. All of these in a bid to assert his superior position of headship. Nneora, though a virtues woman, also engages in deceit. She is instrumental in getting someone in the bank to sign documents which allowed the release of money, her husband needed for his treatment, corresponding directly with Nora's actions to save Torvald in similar circumstances. In this case, however, there is no forgery involved, but rather, as Nneora reveals later, a promise of sexual favors. These situations, she kept away from her husband, when even her youthful friend, Linda advised her to tell her husband. This, alone portrays Nigerian women as deceitful and infidel in their husband's house. However, when finally, Ikenna learns of all these and ordered Nneora's packing from his house with her children, she realises herself and takes the bold step of leaving her husband for good. For she felt that, she was doing all of that to sustain the family. Thus, society acclaims her to be a virtuous woman.

Another character who is the Nigerian counterpart of Ibsen's Torvald Helmer is Ikenna. Utoh-Ejeajugh featured him in this play to represent the extremely possessive and quite chauvinistic characters in her society. This is evident in the following exchanges between Nneora and Ikenna:

Nneora: (*Going behind him and massaging his neck*). You really look tired. Did you have a very busy day?

Ikenna: I was saddle with a very difficult client the whole day. I barely managed to shake him off some ten minutes ago.
Nneora: Oh, poor you. I know how you must be feeling. I used to have some difficult customers too when I still owned a shop.
Ikenna: Your shop! There you go again Nneora. How can you compare a shack in the market with my executive position in a merchant bank?
Nneora: (*Feeling hurt*). It may have been a shack but I owned it…
Ikenna: And now I own. You are solely mine; shop, body and soul. So, honey, why are we arguing about something that belongs to me?

We can see from this situation that power has reversed from Nneora to Ikenna. Ikenna is a lawyer who at the play's outset had been jobless. He is helped by Nneora to offset all his debts with Mama Uduak and finding a bank job for him. He later marries Nneora with whom he has four female children, which Ikenna considers as nuisance to him, and he makes no effort to hide it. He does not seem particularly fond of his children, even prefers to have them away with relatives, because, for him, they make too much noise and disturb him when he wants to work at home. Ikenna also wishes the child his wife is now expecting will be a boy. The above shows clearly that, they have had some many children because of his desire for a male child. Ikenna despised all women, including his daughters. For him, women make the house unbearable to anyone. This is hinged on his straightforwardness and traditional beliefs about marriage and society. Though, he loves, and is very affectionate towards Nneora, but treats her more as a pet child or object than a real person.

At the end of the play, when the event of deceitfulness and infidelity broke out, Ikenna did not listen to the voice of reason, but ordered his wife, Nneora, out of his house. He considers his reputation more to anything. When Nneora tells him, she is leaving him, Ikenna at first reacts by calling her unserious and saying, she is acting like a stupid child. However, when he realises how resolute she is in her decision. Ikenna offers to change and desperately searches for a way to reconcile with her. His despair as Nneora exits at the very end of the play suggests that, despite his patronising and unjust treatment of her, Ikenna really loved Nneora (or at least the idea of her).

Linda is another character Utoh-Ejeajugh introduced in *Nneora* as representing honesty, truthfulness and women who resist oppression in our societies. She is Mrs. Linde in Ibsen's original version, *A Doll's House*. Linda is an old school friend of Nneora. She is the wife of Osita whose oppression she faces was too much and was forced to go to school by an evening program. They had even bore two children before. But after graduation, Linda took her children and left for the West. But when she realised that, she can now come to fight for her identity, she returns to the country which proves strange to her. She and are school friend, Nneora comes to meet quite by chance on the street as Nneora makes her way home from the hospital.

After recognising each other, the duo had to discuss about their lives. Thus, revelations from this discussion made Linda to advise Nneora on the need to open up to her husband and equally, Nneora advising Linda to go back to her former husband with her children and make a good home. Actually, she tells Nneora of her miserable life without a husband and stability of mind, thereby will prevent her from fitting into the traditional role of women as caretakers and nurturers. It is this conviction that causes her to seek to reconcile with her husband, Osita towards the end of the play. She believes very deeply in honesty and try to stop Osita from doing what he is doing, especially the letter he wrote to Ikenna, thereby ensuring that Ikenna should not find out about Nneora's secret. Although, this at first seems like a betrayal of Nneora, it turns out to ultimately be a decision to Nneora's benefit as it is after Ikenna finds out about the debt that Nneora is able to see the true nature of her marriage.

The twist is the above confirms Linda's belief that honesty is always better than deceit, even if Linda's expectation was that it was Nneora's deceit that needed to be exposed, not the shallowness of Ikenna's feelings. Although, Linda seems to act the role of Mrs. Linde in Ibsen's play, their circumstances are markedly different from each other, though, and the two women experienced some suffering, which matured them. But in terms of education and life experiences, they appear to have a bit more in common. They both drop out of school albeit for different reasons.

A seeming antagonistic character, at least, at the beginning of the play in Utoh-Ejeajugh's African version of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is Osita. Osita as a character is

the very like of Krugdstard in Ibsen's play and portrayed as an oppressor to women and African ideals. He is a highly educated bank manager, costumed in suits and other fashionable cloths. He believes that, to be successful means to have a Western style education, and abuses his wife because she dropped out of school. Ostia's wife, Linda, recounts how she was married off to Osita at an early age and dropped out of school because he made her pregnant. Osita was saucy in his words. This is revealed at the time, when he was made director in the bank, and during Linda's discussion with Nneora, where Linda says he abused her both physically and verbally.

Thus, Utoh-Ejeajugh uses Osita to symbolise the negative impacts of the western world on African culture. Viewing critically, one can argue that, Utoh-Ejeajugh developed this character to educate African leaders to stand up and fight for their rights and say no to oppression from the Western world. Osita is also a blackmailer. He uses his position in the bank to make demands from Nneora, when even knowing that she is married, and when she refuses or disappoints him, he resorts to blackmail. It was Ostia's letter of blackmail he wrote to Ikenna that finally tears them apart or destroys their marriage.

Yet again, another character, Utoh-Ejeajugh features to represent the bachelorhood of society is Dr. Frank. He is the very like of Dr. Rank in Ibsen's *Doll's House*. He is a doctor by profession and who is best friends with Ikenna and Nneora, who he visits every day. Dr. Frank suffers from bachelorhood and so lives lonely, and when he is asked to marry, he will only make lighter the matter and laughs over it. He is the family doctor to both Ikenna and Nneora. Nneora goes to see him, and it is Dr. Frank whom seeing Nneora's anxiety and countenance in her face, gives the report of the ultra sound results, which Nneora is bearing twin male pregnancy in her stomach. The importance of Dr. Frank's role perhaps lies entirely in this revelation, because the fact of the expected sons is important in the play, a piece of information Nneora keeps from her husband till the very last moments of the drama.

Finally, we also have the character of Mama Uduak. Utoh-Ejeajugh uses her to represent a contrast to Osita, who symbolises the Western world. Mama Uduak like Nneora is a trader in the busy market of the city. She hates the masquerade

dancers who come around to charm people, and collect money. She sells regularly to Ikenna on credit, until one day, Ikenna visited her to negotiate for another credit when she confronted him and demands for her money which has risen to the sum of seven hundred naira. Mama Uduak gripped him and made it so serious that Nneora who was her next neighbour could not bear and finally settles them by offsetting the whole bills, and even gives him extra for next time.

When the acrobatic displays and complicated dance movements gradually attract a large audience, including Nneora who is on her way from the hospital joins the crowd of spectators and engrossed in watching the dancers, it was Mama Uduak who taps her on the shoulder and gives a start (p.49). Mama Uduak in the play is given the role to use 'Pidgin English' all through the play, even though the text is written in Standard English, Utoh-Ezeajugh uses Pidgin English to break the gap between Mama Uduak and the educated characters. The use of Pidgin English by her marks the meeting point between Western and African language. Utoh-Ezeajugh illuminates the character of Mama Uduak, giving background information on indigenous society and practices. The dance performance in colourful costumes together with the masquerade procession illustrates the rich Nigerian culture embedded in the figure of Mama Uduak. She is found in situations that involved the two performances.

Mama Uduak lacks academic excellence; she tries to excel in the market business and will not take nonsense from anyone. She establishes the first conflict in situation one to set off the action of the plot by confronting Ikenna to pay back all that he owes. As an elderly woman, she also serves as a guide and help to Nneora in the text representing the communal spirit in African societies.

Conclusion

The selected play under study addresses the issue of character rebirth between source and adapted texts. That is to say, there is the need for character recreation to perfect dramatic adaptation from older texts to newer ones. We have found in oral narratives and works of other writer's materials that playwrights recreate characters and rework to address behavioural concerns and cultures. This adaptation is, therefore, motivated more by the urge to preserve the existing characters and to meet the current realities or to comment on the present. Thus,

the Nigerian playwright need not introduce entirely new characters from outside their source text rather than tap the similarity of roles that exist between the two plays. Though, over the years, there has been efforts concentrated on the debate of which criterion is best suited for an adaptive process, as exemplified by both "fidelity" and "intertextuality" theorists, the study yet acknowledges "intertextuality" as the criterion for assessing adaptation studies, but also expand the focus beyond these two to the 'convergence' theory. So far, the focus has been on character rebirth as a paradigm for successful adaptation in Utoh-Ezeajugh's *Nneora* within the tradition of literary drama. The video film genre, however, has also been open to this artistic practice because some popular titles are adapted from existing literary texts.

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