
ZAINABU JALLO: A PSYCHOGRAPH AND PSYCHOGRAM DRAMATIST

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ABSTRACT: *The paper aims to analyze Zainabu Jallo as a psychograph and psychogram dramatist. The dramatist as the custodian of the peoples' culture and values watches the society and the individual and portrays the ills and follies of the society in his/ her works in order to correct them. This study uses the content analysis and relational analysis approach to examine Jallo's Onions Make us Cry and Holy Night. Her ability to delve into the internal system of the individual and the society with her literary dexterity is highlighted. It is established that as a psychograph and psychogram dramatist, Zainabu Jallo graphically and descriptively exposes the problems prevalent in not just contemporary Nigeria but the global community: Domestic Violence, Terrorism, Religious Crisis and other frustrating individual experiences.*

KEYWORDS: Zainabu Jallo, Psychograph, Psychogram, Dramatist.

INTRODUCTION

Not much has been written on Zainabu Jallo, a young and astute playwright. Zainabu is acute, discerning, perspicacious, sharp, and subtle in her writing. She has never accepted being a feminist playwright. To her, she has her experiences from the larger society. Zainabu Jallo is a freelance writer, script writer and playwright. She has worked as a journalist and just recently published *Onions Make Us Cry*, a play which put her on the shortlist for the NLNG literary prize 2010, a prize considered the biggest literary prize in Nigeria for people who have distinguished themselves in their fields with literary work. Under the connecting futures young writers, she was attached to Newspaper house to generate and write stories about young people and education, environment, social and informative issues that affect them. She was nominated by the British Council to cover "Contacting the World" and International Youth Theatre Project Manchester, UK. She has three published plays: *Saraya Dangana*, *Onions Make Us Cry* and *Holy Night* including a collection of open style poetry. She continues to write abstract essays which she debuts with as a writer.

As a playwright, Zainabu Jallo with her lenses and telescope has the capacity to delve into the internal system of the society or an individual within the society and projects whatever that is

buried within the ambiance of the society. Writing on the above premise, Akorede enunciates the job of a dramatist as he puts it:

The dramatist is the watchman in his society. He is the people's secret police. It is his duty to shift out information and to bring the culprits to the people's court. The court in this sense is the open theatre where the hidden, the concealed and the guarded are exposed not for the people's pleasure, but for their information and if possible, necessary action. (1994, p. 53). The playwright has his/her own style of watching the society and the individuals within the society. He/she has their own way of projecting the ills of the society to the entire world. He/she passes the information across, in some cases, by means of entertainments in drama, music and dance and even in literary work. It is therefore true that the theatre artist is the interpreter of the society. Thus, Adeniyi, quotes Soyinka as saying that; "... the artist has always functioned as the interpreter and the conscience of the society ..." (1994, p. viii). The playwright works within the ambiance of the society. He does not need to perform any magic so as to search into the heart of the society. He is a member of the society. In this view, Saint Gbilekaa notes that, "...the imaginative power and perception of an artist be he a poet, a novelist, or playwright, is not conceived in an abstract mechanistic society. It is conceived within the ambiance of a human society. His work therefore becomes a reflection of that society". (1994, p. 2).

The playwright is a documentarist. He brings to the fore what is latent, he deals with the present in order to build the future. He looks at human society, individual human behavior, psychology, perception, ideology, philosophy, cosmic order, worldview and ethos, then, he fashions a way forward. He does this for other artists like director and actors/actresses to project as they communicate the playwright's feelings to the members of the audience. Dandaura rightly observes that, Drama as a simulacrum of life is no longer news. The playwright is a member of society, so naturally, his artistic sensibilities are shaped and sharpened by the socio-economic contradictions and political happenings of his time...his works cannot be completely divorced from life or happenings in the society (2002, p. 102). It is a statement of fact that a dramatist is a spiritualist, an oracular, a fortune teller, a psychologist, a philosopher, an analyst, etc. who sees beyond the ordinary, and who can easily discern the human minds. Writing on a contemporary Punjabi Drama in India and Abroad, Sewak states that;

To portray reality, a playwright may adopt either different approach to analyse the objective world with a centripetal process or a different approach to probe the internal sources of action in a centrifugal manner. In the former, there is an attempt to interiorize the external and in the latter, to exteriorize the internal (1993, p. 68). This statement is quite apt with Zainabu Jallo's style of presentation. She creates a new style with poetic narrative and dialogue with a quintessence application of symbolism and metaphors.

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The term psychograph is synonymous to a chart graphically representing the personality traits of an individual, while psychogram stands for a description of the personality traits of an individual, especially in literary form. To tackle Zainabu as a psychograph and psychogram dramatist, within

the propensity for her psychognosis of the human characters, some analysis of her two plays; *Onions Make Us Cry* and *Holy Night* will be done.

Onions Make Us Cry is a social drama which is rendered in a poetic narrative. It is an extremely fascinating play. The playwright captures a fresh style which is hardly employed by most playwrights of this generation. *Onions Make Us Cry* is feminist and brilliant. The play takes place in an insane asylum where Malinda Jandayi, a battered woman driven to murder her “wife beating husband” is kept. She recounts her descent into madness and tries to free her therapist, Lola Gambari, from a similar trauma and fate. *Onions Make Us Cry* is a complex play of three visible characters – Malinda Jandayi, a thirty six year old patient of post-traumatic stress disorder awaiting trial for homicide. Lola Gambari, a clinical psychologist whose duty it is to take care of psychiatric patients like Malinda Jandayi and Ezekiel Bajomo, Attorney at law. As a psychograph and psychogram dramatist, the playwright uses Malinda Jandayi and Lola Gambari to do a clinical analysis of post-traumatic stress disorder as it affects women.

The three women – Malinda Jandayi, Ellen Joe and Lola Gambari who are examples of the state of catatonic, were happily united with their lovers and their would be husbands before the change of the tide. Malinda an aspiring painter first met with Daniel Jandayi a postgraduate student in club Havana. Both of them are Afro-beat fans. As Malinda explains:

Malinda: In Club Havana, we met

Between silly giggles and a few drinks; the stage was set
Him a post grad student
Me, an aspiring painter.
Found out we had a shared love for Afro beat
Helped turn up the heat. We'd both visit the
Shrine inhaling prohibited smoke
Like an heir and heiress, we would dine
On exotic tables
Not minding if we went broke. Oh DJ would fly
Us from Lagos to Kano just to watch the Pillars play. (2013, p. 29)

This is an apt description of love attachment between the couple, Daniel Jandayi and Malinda Jandayi. The couple meets in a club, read each other, understand each other and come to terms – they get married. No sooner than they get their first child the sweet love turns sour. Describing the sour development between the two lovers, Malinda once again explains:

Malinda: Before Zulei, he was a spotless lamb. After the
Maternity ward, he became the devil's assistant.
Expectations were high
Devastating to realize the road led to nothingness
More or less, cos in the emptiness
Laid untold emotional pain, unmatching the physical. (2013, p. 30)

Malinda is confused about what has really brought such hatred between them. As she explains, the husband who has been as meek as a lamb turns into a brute. She tries to fathom the genesis of the

husband's sudden change from a caring and lamb – like young man to the devil's incarnate. She further probes into the cause(s) of such change in the hitherto lovely husband.

Malinda: Can't tell if it was the first child that unveiled a beast, so wild.

Then came the politics
Brought nothing but theatrics
Campaign strains
The bane of being a puppet on a failing string
I often was stone.
DJ's venom spread faster than I could control "My
Children must never see the side of me"
I stood by mantra; my life hung on it (2013, p. 30).

From Malinda's description of her husband, David Jandayi, a man as meek as a lamb turns Devil's incarnate. There are two major factors that would have led to David Janudayi's sudden change from a complete gentleman to a brute. The wife Malinda suggests such two factors thus: the birth of their first child or the nothingness that comes from politics.

Malinda makes up her mind that not even her children will read meaning into her countenance. She keeps a sealed lips while receiving all ill treatments from the once, a lovely husband. Lola Gambari probes further into how Malinda murdered her husband in cold blood.

Lola: And that night?

Malinda: He was going to kill me. Smelt it.

Lola: Intuition?

Malinda: Discernment. It was different. He wasn't DJ any more. His eyes told me so. He'd been completely possessed. The goblin who got his soul was the worst type. (2013, p. 31).

As the husband charges on her, she picks a pestle, the available weapon and smashes his skull. Malinda has been under the yoke of the aggressive and brutal husband who uses her as a punch bag at his pleasure. After she has murdered her husband, she seems to have fallen under a spell, a crisis in her head. She lives in between rejoicing for the murder of the brute of a husband and guilt for the murder of her beloved one. As Malinda later reveals to Lola in her state of mind:

Malinda: In my madness, I'm saner than ever

In grand fear and high fever;

Lived in a lovely white house. Turned out to be Hades.

One after the other, I raised my babies

With a broken tooth, bruised limbs, cracked ribs,

Countless black eye ... shifted jaw

All these, against the law (2013, p. 23).

Malinda describes herself as one among the crazy bunch ... psychotic psychos. She is taken to a psychiatric intensive care and placed in the hands of a clinical psychologist-Lola Gambari. The doctors in charge of psychiatric intensive care have run a series of test on her. Everything about her was normal, but they still go ahead to investigate her on catatonic schizophrenia.

Lola Gambari is a professional clinical psychologist who is supposed to investigate Malinda's state of mind. Lola's role is that of psycho therapeutic. She is married to Ali Gambari. Lola Gambari falls into the same marital fate as Malinda. Like Malinda she keeps her burden to herself, but unlike Malinda, she cannot react to the husband's brutality. She is dying in silence. They have married for two years but no children yet. Whenever she takes in, the pregnancy is aborted due to excessive beaten she receives from her husband, Ali Gambari.

Ironically, rather than Lola, a clinical psychologist investigating Malinda on her state of mind, it becomes the other way round. This is evident in Malinda's dialogue with her in one of her visits to the clinic:

Malinda: You stare at yourself each time you come here.

Except of course, you didn't slay anyone ...not

Yet at least... you fear it won't get to that eh?

Makes your job hell. You yearn for my company,

Yet you despise it. You are frightened, me, or

Anyone else will see through you...sadly your
worst fears are being borne out.

Lola: Enough...please

Malinda: (ignoring her) wouldn't even let your best friend

Know...cos every union should be heavenly...

A haven, glorious eh? Wrong! (Hitting her fist on bedpost) Untrue!

Lola: (Getting up in fury) enough I say Malinda Jandayi! (2013, p. 26).

Malinda having understood her precarious situation refuses to let her go. She protests but Malinda understands her clearly that if she does not rescue her from her present debacle, she will end up in a more serious psychiatric hospital.

Lola once comes to Malinda in one of her investigation moment with a swollen chin. When Malinda asks what caused her swollen chin, she lies that she slipped in the bathtub. Another time she failed to appear in the clinic for two days, she lies again that she had fever. The truth is that, her husband beat her up and even pulled a bunch of hair from her head. Malinda who now turns a clinical psychologist in place of a patient advises her:

Malinda: You must help yourself...do something... so not to end up like me. My fate might take me to jail for the rest of my contemptible life.

Lola: No more of your imperious, haughty... And overbearing comments...

Malinda: Well, everyone is a patient of something (2013, p. 27).

After Malinda has done a satisfactory character analysis of Lola Gambari, a clinical psychologist, she gives in. she involuntarily opens up to Malinda her ordeal with her so called lover. She presents a bunch of her hair which she wraps in a white handkerchief and gives it to Malinda.

Lola: Rooted them out last day I was here. Gave me a wild migraine. Had to call in sick.

Malinda: My crystal ball told me it wasn't malaria.

Lola: Ali is a good man

Malinda: And chickens are animals

Lola: I cannot explain it. A lamb and a lion in one fine body.

Malinda: Love is never any better than the lover. Wicked people love wickedly, violent people love violently...

- Lola: Had four miscarriages.
 Malinda: He sure is a good man
 Lola: I live in a bad dream. (2013, p. 28).

These are the love crises that have rocked Malinda Jandayi and Lola Gambari. From this moment, both aggrieved and agonized women click to each other with a common aspiration and awareness. The third woman psychiatric patient is not clearly defined but the reader comes to terms with the character through Malinda Jandayi. The invisible character in question who occupied the next room to Malinda in their psychiatric room apartment is Ellen. Ellen is disappointed by her lover Joe. After Joe has wooed Ellen with every hope of marriage, he picks another girl from the blue and elopes with her thereby leaving Ellen demeaned, and she ends up as a psychiatric patient. According to Malinda,

Malinda: Ellen is the name of the lady who stays in the next room right? (Lola nods) Well she keeps yelling into my sleep at someone called Joe, who lured her into believing they both will take on the roles of a man and wife. On her finger, he put a diamond ring, in her head, crystal hopes. He is married to another... she talks like Joe is sitting there with her, when she begins to scream, I guess its Zipporah...you know, the other Lady Joe ran off with – she sees (2013, p. 13). The three characters are united under the umbrella of love, abuse, intolerance, to some extent, infidelity and above all men's chauvinism against women.

Zainabu creatively and intellectually agrees to men's superiority over women hence, she fails to bring out the effect of women's debacle, traumatic and catastrophic impact on men from women. The playwright succeeds in telling a one sided story. Husbands to the aggrieved wives are not given any little opportunity to air their views. It is not on record that men are all bad while women are all angels. Perhaps, the playwright feels that men are good shock absorbers, which whatever their wives do to them are inconsequential to their psychological makeup. However, the focus here is that, Zainabu uses her telescope to delve into the internal system of the society which projects whatever that is buried within the ambience of the society. The feelings, the psychological demeanour, the traumatic experience, the loss of ego, and the "destruction of womaness" in the three characters; Malinda Jandayi, Lola Gambari and Ellen are psychographically and psychogramatically enunciated and adequately dealt with. One may easily refer to Zainabu Jallo *Onions Make Us Cry* as a psycho therapeutic dramatic form.

Zainabu Jallo's second play, *Holy Night* was published in 2012 by Author House, Bloomington. The play deals with contemporary issues in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large. It is a haunting story that delves into the familiar world with its quantum devastations. The present state of debacles, anarchy, grotesque, enormous destruction, etc are expediently and graphically presented in her manner of poetic and classical rendition of characters, episodes, situations and events. The play contains eight characters with two structures that run alternately. The first structure contains two characters, Veteran and Ibrahim while the second structure contains six other characters namely, Hameed, Professor, Hauwa, Bulus, Alex and Dancer. The two structures have independent episodes or situations but with the same intent – it is a Christmas Eve with a series of bomb attacks.

The first structure contains the story of Veteran and Ibrahim who are locked up in a game of mistrust. Veteran, a Biafran war veteran sits permanently on his step mother's wheel chair. The wheel chair is placed at the door of his house where he seems to be 'Waiting for Godot', perhaps waiting for members of his family who have gone to the market on Christmas eve to replace their table cover, but never returned till the end of the play. Veteran relates his life experiences to Ibrahim who happens to be his companion at the moment. He goes on thus:

Veteran: I had become an individual, two sons and a husband and all things elemental to her existence. She froze on a hot evening when other soldiers from the village return home. I came too late. I could have been one of the sheep to her. (2012, p. 46).

Veteran talks of the agony his mother passed through during the Nigerian Civil war when his father, his brother and he were conscripted into the Nigerian army. Both his father and brother never returned. He returned too late as the mother died broken hearted.

Veteran: I cried. I buried her in our green patch under the tree where we regularly had lunch on the farm. I buried her alongside thousands of memories... I was left with my stepmother in whose wheelchair I now sit. (2012, p. 47).

The land where they farm has been devastated by miners as the miners leave the land in ruins. Life becomes unbearable for the community as he says:

Veteran: Our rocks and hills looked away today. They have failed to protect us

The hyenas lost their teeth

The zebras question their stripes...

Dogs now live on trees. The problem is... there are just too many of them (2012, p. 48).

These are the situations under which the Biafran war Veteran lives in. On the other hand, Ibrahim, a vulcanizer who runs to veteran seeking for protection after receiving a gunshot from stray bullets, is the only child of his parents. He has to seek self-protection due to incessant communal clashes. "I swallowed the protection...three years ago". (2012, p. 32) He continues as he divulges his experiences in life, even though, a young man:

Ibrahim: I have many fires. Too many fires

The embryo was fire

It spat me out prematurely

My mother could not survive it... my fire

Inside of me...these raging flames

No one can tame

My fire, they devour me...

The last fights before this

My fire burned... It touched belongings

It consumed histories and cattle.

Smiles and futures

Mine and other fires ... arghhhh!

My father does not know this. (2012, p. 35).

Ibrahim lost his mother at birth. He expresses the awful experiences he has encountered in life. The society is no longer safe for him as he seeks protection from the veteran.

The same Christmas Eve, in another part of the town, Moslems are carrying out pogrom against other religions. There is a tumult in the market which causes the following characters: Professor, Hauwa, Bulus, Alex and Dancer take shelter in Hameed, a butcher and Moslem's meat shop. Outside is a tumult-amidst gun shots, wailing and crying. In the meat shop, the "refugees" realize that they are not safe as they are in the claw of a Moslem enemy – Hameed. They try to tie him up to no avail. From this moment, we are made to understand individual experiences both within their family and the nation at large.

Hameed, a Moslem owns the meat shop where the gentlemen and the ladies run to during the insurgency attack. The group is afraid that it has run to the den of lions. This is evident in the Woman's appeal:

WOMAN: I beg you. Do not kill us. My maid is Muslim and I am very good to her...not just to her, this goodness I refer to is extended to her mother as well... who passes it on to the entire family. (Looking to the others for support) We have run into the arms of the enemy, don't you see that? (To Hameed) let us out! Please just let us out. (2012, pp. 19 – 20).

Nigeria has faced a series of such pogrom since the independence either as a result of ethnic or religious chauvinism. The playwright carries us deep into individual feelings and experiences. It is true that the nation has gone hailstorm, but the individual problems continue to have strong impact on them in their life time. Let us view the account rendered by a professor of Sociology who happens to be among those held up in the butcher's shop. First of all he speaks on a new dimension to crimes in the country and then the treatment meted to him by his boss in the office.

PROFESSOR: Here we are, catching up remarkably fast. It was sticks and stones... matchets, setting building ablaze. Now we have bombs going off. Remarkable journey through evolution. From roast bamboo to paper tube crackers. We don't hear of bombs going off in China as often. Good tiding friends. It is a reason of good and evil...Explosions! On embellishes the sky and the other is here with us. (2012, p. 52).

This is the heart of the matter. The crisis in the country is summed up in the above memorable passage. Apart from the general insecurity that has ravaged the nation; the individuals have their personal woeful experiences. The playwright systematically delves into the minds of the individuals as is evident in the professor's narrative:

Professor: I had an unquantifiable regard for my dean at the University where I teach... he strongly recommended me for a Ph.D scholarship... They were to become the four most invigorating years of my career...the most abominable for my marriage.

My mentor, my dean and my wife had been copulating like two restless bonobos, while I had my head buried in research (...) (2012, pp. 54 – 55).

This is one out of several frustrating experiences recounted by the Professor of Sociology. There are more revelations by the individuals who have been taking shelter in the butcher's meat shop. Hauwa's ordeal is unique. She did a true confession by exposing her skeleton in the cupboard. She is quintessentially deceitful to her spouse. She has the following confessions to make.

Hauwa: (...) my husband...He does not know me. He thinks he does. (My baby) was conceived on floral cotton sheets; a wedding gift. He was conceived on a bed of untruth... of betrayal and lie. He didn't ... doesn't know, the teenage boy he thinks is my brother, is my son. A

son whose father I do not know...I hate that he is unable to see through me... that he is unable to use his sixth sense. (2012, pp. 79 – 80).

Hauwa has carried the burden of her deceit and infidelity for a long time and in this seemingly doomsday, she decides to purge herself of her evil machination by releasing her overburdened mind to the public.

Bulus is a one eyed driver. He equally narrates his experiences. He got blind at the age of twenty one. According to him:

Bulus: I have seen the rich earth colour...I could tell when it was what it was. After a dose of heavy antibiotics for an ear infection at 12, my right eye began to dim out and a proper eye on one face. When it finally blanked out at 21, I became whole again. (2012, p. 61).

Bulus' blindness could be as a result of self-medication. In a nation where the health care services are nothing to write home about, a nation where hospitals are mere consulting centres, what else will be expected of the citizens that to go on self or personal experiments with their lives? Bulus uses his state of blindness to commit crimes by causing deliberate accidents.

Bulus: So I am a half blind driver...what the hell is wrong with that?

Professor: Everything

Bulus: I like to be in command of people's destinations. I too am a god. I have a say. Someone in the back seat will depend on me to take him from X to Y. I am part of progression. I propel fates. (2012, p. 60).

Bulus reveals his evil machination further:

Bulus: (Excited) I planned to crash into a pear tree tomorrow at noon with my first passenger. I thought I had to do something different this Christmas (...) (2012, p. 60).

Zainabu reveals the anatomy of the nation by penetrating the psychic of the nation and the individuals.

Alex is another character bottled up in Hameed's meat shop. As gunshots continue unabated, he begins to talk hysterically. Professor comes to observe Alex's misnomer behavior and speech as he says:

Professor: He is having a panic attack.

Alex: No, I convulsed frequently as a child. I am used to this.

Dancer: Are you convulsing?

Alex: My mind is. They feared that someone with a bad eye had come to visit when I was born. I fell off my father's moving motorcycle at 6. At 10 thunder struck the house of my grandmother while I visited ...she has remained deaf since then. At 14 a mad man singled me out of a multitude in the main market. He dealt me a blow on my face. My nose broke and I died for a few moments. (2012, p. 78).

Alex's experiences are devastating. They portray a nation that has failed- failed in solving its security, political and social problems.

The playwright, Zainabu Jallo, a Psychoanalyst dramatist could be seen as an epidiascope of the human existence. By epidiascope, it means, like a type of lamp which throws pictures of non-transparent or objects such as photographic film or pages from a book onto a surface, so is Zainabu who seems to be deeply rooted in human psychology that enables her to dissect human behavior, mind and psychic.

All the characters in the two plays, *Onions Make Us Cry* and *Holy Night* hold one thing in common – personal devastating experiences which either emanate from their spouses, families, colleagues, personal attitude and the society in general.

The three characters in *Onions Make Us Cry*; Malinda Jandayi, Lola Gambari and Ellen an invisible character who stays in the next room to Malinda share common experiences, as they seem to suffer from “psychotic psychos”. This is as a result of devastating experiences from their spouses. Malinda confronts her problem headlong as she smashed her husband, Jandayi’s skull with a pestle. As she puts it:

Lola: (calmly) What happened the night your husband was hit with a pestle?

Malinda: You pretty much said it all. Pestle met with nape in utmost antagonism...unimaginable reflex ever. (2013, p. 25).

Within the concept of the above statement, Malinda ends up with the miserable life of hate and love. Hate and love, “impenetrably on a dainty face?” A perfect façade with pore left open to unearth tons of pain, hate and love.

Lola cannot do what Malinda did. Malinda finally sums up the life Lola is living with her husband in what looks like an epithaph:

Malinda: How I detest the psycho talk...you need one yourself you know...you’ve taken on the cloak of fear so agreeably. I’m afraid it looks embarrassingly sad on you. I know, because I was you. In those early years, after a fine diamond cut Wellendorf band was slipped onto my finger. (smiling). There is heaven and there is hell, you know, they fade into each other... tralala and the best man wins. Hmn my panoramic view tells me the melodrama will swallow you up... like Jonah and the mysterious Whale...Not like you aren’t aware. (2013, p. 25)

Then she continues as she seems to have taken over the job of a clinical psychologist from Lola.

Malinda: You stare at yourself each time you come here. Except of course, you didn’t slay anyone... not yet at least ...you fear it won’t get to that eh? Makes your job hell. You yearn for my company, yet you despise it. You are frightened, me, or anyone else will see through you...sadly your worst fears are being borne out. (2013, p. 26)

Malinda, a thirty six year patient of post-traumatic stress disorder awaiting trial for homicide now turned a clinical psychologist admonishes Lola Gambari, a clinical psychologist who is silently suffering from traumatic stress disorder and whose patient Malinda is. The playwright in her psycho-analytical prowess sees through the character of Lola Gambari and exposes her through her patient, Malinda.

Malinda: you must help yourself...do something...so not to end up like me. My fate might take me to jail for the rest of my contemptible life (2013, p. 27).

In the second play, Professor leaves the following memorable passage for us to divulge in *Holy Night*:

Professor: For a glimpse of futile labour; limping into the crushed night. On a gritty path called idle; we, labeled nonentity. Suffocating as we fight to keep our sanity. Us people, swaying with the tropical palms in a fiery gust. We begin to hear. Deathless tongues meandering through an abyss of fear. A frantic fraternity in discordant march. Of a people awaiting the sacred golden egg to hatch. Make bright the gloomy light (...) (2012, pp. 85 – 86)

CONCLUSION

As a psychograph and psychogram dramatist, Zainabu Jallo in her two plays, *Onions Make Us Cry* and *Holy Night*, presents a gloomy atmosphere of a nation and the people as victims of the nation that often leaves its citizens in atmosphere of rancor, hunger, poverty, deprivation, needs, insecurity; the nation where falsehood, anarchy, religion fanaticism, nepotism, tribalism, bribery, corruption leave the citizens decimated, a nation where the government beguiles its citizens.

The two plays present similar subject matter: the hopelessness among the citizens as a result of their personal life styles and as the result of the government's insensitivity to the plight of its citizens. Both subject matters are contemporary. Men's chauvinism against women is always with us as evident in *Onions Make Us Cry* and the ethnic and religion wars in our societies as well as individual's evil machinations as found in *Holy Night*. Like the Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria, there are a series of bomb blasts on Christmas Eve, and crying and wailing from the dying. Professor rounds off saying; "When I say to people, there is evil in the DNA of every human, they think I am insane". He continues; "It grows and eat things up. It ravages good things. It sinks every sprouting promise". (2012, p. 53)

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