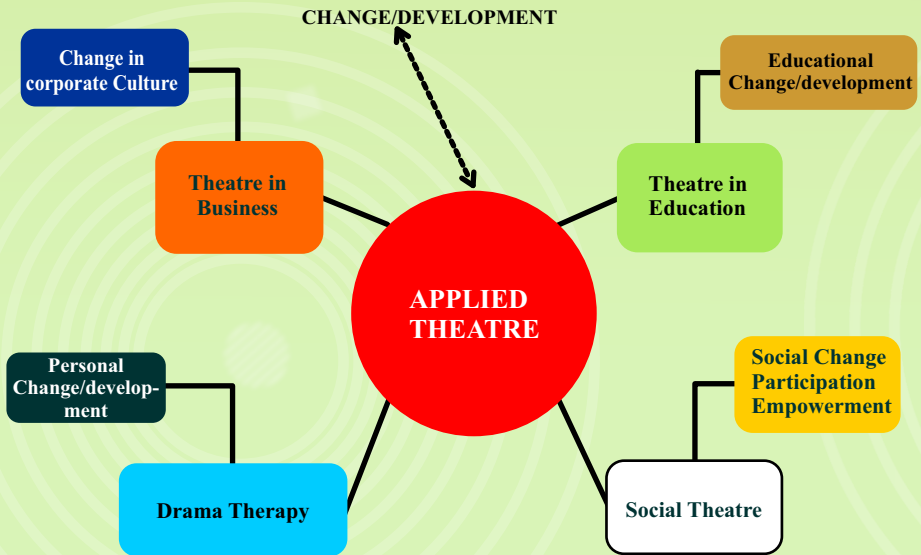




**FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF LAFIA**  
**INAUGURAL LECTURE SERIES NO.15**  
**FACULTY OF ARTS**



**APPLIED THEATRE:  
THE SCIENCE OF INDIVIDUAL AND  
COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION**

**VICTOR SAMSON DUGGA**  
Professor of Theatre and Social Change  
Department of Theatre and Media Arts

**May 28, 2024**



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**Applied Theatre: The Science of Individual and  
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## **DEDICATION**

To God Almighty, my Creator, Lord and King,  
and  
My late father, Zunya Samson Dugga, who pioneered many  
firsts and became my example.

## THE PRESENTER



**VICTOR SAMSON DUGGA, AvHF, MNAL, fsonta**

***Professor of Theatre and Social Change***

**Department of Theatre and Media Arts**

**Faculty of Arts**

**Federal University of Lafia**

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# **Applied Theatre: The Science of Individual and Community Transformation**

## **Protocol.**

### **I. Opening Remarks**

Mr Vice-Chancellor, my adventure into the world of theatre arts started with my active involvement with the Dramatic Society while in secondary school. In the first term of my final year at Government College Keffi in October 1983, I was suddenly suspended alongside six other students, for an offence that I knew nothing about. The accusation was that some final-year students had written a letter with rude content to the Principal of the College. Names of suspects were quickly listed and somehow without any prior knowledge of the matter or any invitation to face the Disciplinary Committee as others did, an emergency assembly was called and our names were rolled out as the culprits. I was as surprised as anyone. We were issued letters of suspension and when I got mine, I went straight to the Principal's office to protest since I was innocent. On getting there, the Principal was out and I only met the Vice Principal, Mr. Stevenson. He was a slurry slang-speaking black expatriate from Barbados. In my protest of the suspension, Mr Stevenson insisted that I took the suspension on the principle of 'obey before complaint'. I was angry that no one told me what I was accused of and was also not given the chance to explain anything. That sense of injustice, in my sixteen-year-old mind, created a heated emotion that would have lived with me and propelled my life in unprecedented ways. That sense of injustice in my sixteen-year-old mind created a heated emotion that would live with me and propel my life in unprecedented ways. I was later to find out that my name only entered the list because the letter was in impeccable English and the flowery words and clarity of thought that was expressed meant that someone with good literary expression was involved in the writing of the letter. That language fluency, which I developed from Form Two through extensive reading of books, From Pacesetters Novellas to James Hardley Chase, was how I became a suspect. Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, may I mention here today to tell the world I knew nothing about the purported letter. However, I suffered the punishment for an offence that I did not commit. The anger that I felt drove me to desire to

read Law in order to be a crusader for justice and my legal hero was easily the legal luminary, Gani Fawehinmi. Having made up my mind to read Law, there was only one obstacle - my mother. My mother's refusal for me to read Law was based on the stereotypical notion at the time, in which lawyers were perceived to be liars and at death, would surely go to hell; moreover, if a lawyer died he would be buried face down and she did not want that for her first son. Such was the widespread misinformation that abounded in the society and she merely flowed with it. So I had to think of going back to read the course that I initially chose to read - theatre arts. I wrote JAMB in 1984 and was admitted to read Theatre Arts at the University of Calabar, but I only passed with three credits from my first GCE. I tasted failure for the first time and knew the price of failure to be disappointment, frustration and stagnation. I persuaded my late father to re-register external GCE for me and without further tutorial assistance, I made four more credits at the next opportunity and entered the university at the age of nineteen. This time, with 220 points, I chose the University of Jos, inspired by the presence of the multi-talented artist and Professor of Theatre Arts, Sonny Oti. Indeed, my uncle, Mr Christopher Ewuga had to be personally involved in speaking with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Professor Daniel N. Wambutda, who facilitated the moving of my application from the Faculty of Law to granting me admission to the Faculty of Arts.

I entered the University as one of two pioneers from my family to ever step into the four walls of a university. The other person was my elder cousin, Mrs Laraba Ombugadu, who, with an NCE from the College of Education, went into the university as a Direct Entry student and became the first-ever graduate from my family. I am therefore conversant with gender equity and empowerment as many more females were to follow suit. These shaped my understanding and outlook on life. It was clear to me that whatever I did with theatre would have to be about making a difference and creating a better world. Mr Vice Chancellor Sir, these have been my focus, my passion and my deliverables.



## **II. The Science of the Theatre**

We are accustomed to 'Science' being associated with laboratories, test tubes, lab coats, chemical substances, telescopes and other apparatuses for testing ideas repeatedly to confirm their validity. In reality, science is the methodical study of the physical and natural world's structure and behaviour via observation and experimentation, and the practical application of scientific knowledge is known as technology. By this definition, everything with observation and experimentation has a scientific basis. Science, according to the Australia Academy of Sciences, is grouped into four: (i) Natural Science, dealing with life sciences (Zoology, Biology, Plant Science, etc) and the material universe (Physics, Chemistry, Space, etc.); (ii) Formal Science, dealing with Logic and mathematics - these first two foundational sciences are often called 'Pure Sciences' in that they deal only with theory (iii) Applied Science, which relies on existing principles from the Natural Science and Formal Sciences to develop new applications (Robotics, Agriculture, Medicine, Engineering, etc); and (iv) Social Sciences, dealing with the study of society and people (Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, etc). It is this last part that has become best associated with the expression of 'science' in the humanities.

Science is simultaneously therefore a branch of knowledge, a body of knowledge and an area, field or discipline of study. If the foundational principles of Social Sciences are used for theatre, which is about studying people, their society, their material world and their interaction with nature, then Theatre Arts is rightly a Social Science. So, permit me today to take 'science' to its roots of a systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the world through the arts of the theatre.

The German word for Science is 'Wissenschaft' (singular), or 'Wissenschaften' (plural) - literally 'knowledgeship', incorporating scholarship, research, study, higher education and academia generally. This word is used in reference to any of the fields of study obtainable in a university. In this light, it is quite illuminating to conceive of many fields as science. When used with respect to

the study of religions, for example, namely '*Religionwissenschaft*', the knowledge or Science of the Study of Religions, it triggers a different interpretation of science completely. It is in this wise that the study of Theatre Arts, rather being '*Theater Kunst*' (*Kunst* being the word for arts) is rather officially known in Germany as '*Theatrewissenschaft*' or the Science of Theatre, some may even mischievously translate it as Theatre Science. Yes, theatre incorporates science in the use of lighting technology, sound effects, environmental music for ambience, smoke effects, or makeup, when we have to use stage blood for injuries that make people cry while watching plays and films. However, these aspects are not in the scope of this Lecture.

The approach in this Inaugural Lecture is to trace the historical trajectory of Theatre and Performance Studies fields, theories and methods and analyse some performances within theatre-praxis research to unveil the application of theatre for human engineering. The lecture is concerned with the “doing” of Theatre and Performance Studies, establishing and understanding the methodological approach of applied theatre (AT) in the global and local contexts. The lecture explores examples of applied theatre in our academic journey and identifies transformative aesthetics in the process of performances.

Theatre as a branch of literature, therefore, means different things to different people. In a general sense, the theatre as a location or venue, is used to refer to a public place for viewing or watching events of various kinds. The term *theatron* was once used to characterise a venue for political, cultural, athletic, and joyous occasions. Viewers, called audiences, were able to witness the arrival of processions, dances accompanied by song and music, comedies and tragedies, sports competitions, and numerous self-fashioning activities by the Athens polis thanks to the slanting layout of seats and observation platforms. (Fischer-Lichte, 2014). The word theatre itself is traceable to many Indo-European languages from the English theatre, German *theater*, French *théâtre*, Spanish and Italian *teatro*, and Russian *teatr*. These are

derived from the Greek word *theatron*, which echoes from the word *thea* “show” or *theâsthai* “to look on”. This gives the second connotation of performance, the content of a show, to the word 'theatre'. It is both a place of watching and the performance being watched. This Greek origin of the term 'theatre' is often cited as the classical criteria by which every other theatre is measured.

Theatre scholarship has however grown this conception of classical theatre and sought to establish alternative paradigms in theory and practice. The general notion of formal theatre particularly from the 18th Century has been that of entertainment traditionally characterised by interpretation of scripts in mainstream theatre. Several genres of theatre also characterise different societies. From Broadway musicals, dance theatres and the burlesque to community rites of passage and festive performances, social contexts have always determined the predominant theatre culture. Theatre has however been heavily experimented upon and diversified all over the world.

### **III. Theatre Performance and the Social Relevance of 'Play'**

The vibrant culture of traditional and modern forms of theatre is fairly well known. Biodun Jeyifo (2017) recounts the experience of being taught by the foremost theatre professor, Joel Adedeji at the University of Ibadan. The curriculum for canonical world theatre history excluded African theatre history. The iconic book, *History of the Theatre* by Oscar Brockett first published in 1968, similarly excluded anything about Africa until its seventh edition published in 1995 (Dugga, 1996). Such histories were built on the Aristotelian and Western criteria of the evolution of ritual to theatre and the model found no parallel in Africa. Recent studies have even gone ahead to question the ritual foundation of the theatre. Rozik (2002) has argued that ritual and theatre are cultural entities that differ ontologically. He successfully argued that theatre is a type of medium as opposed to ritual, which is an actual modality of action, a specific sign language and messaging system. This is not a binary opposition because of their ontological distinction. One can therefore agree that theatre may or may not describe rituals, but rituals can employ a variety of media,

including theatre. Ritual and theatre are therefore mutually exclusive. Theatre is capable of even creating fictional rituals, just like films have succeeded in creating their reality within the make-believe world.

Theatre has always existed in Africa, although without being classified as such. The tales by moonlight told by the eloquent and talented narrators always rode on the back of powerful oratory, melodious singing, good mimesis, role-play and logical content to deliver their moral lessons. The audience enjoyed it but never termed it a performance because they were engrained in the plot. Similarly, a festival complete with masked performers and the community standing around the village square would not necessarily name itself a theatre. Rather than celebrate the aesthetic qualities of the drummers, and dancers, or the elaborate designs of the dresses they adorn, the entire village would be focused on the transcendental essence of the gathering. Through these oral performances, informal education, morals, traditions, values and norms were passed from one generation to the other.

In Colonial times, the power of the coloniser was displayed in the subjugation and domination of the colonised physically and intellectually. Eurocentric scholars typified by the Ruth Finnegans, sought to impose their Western understanding on the oral literature in Africa. 'Some scholars noted the *connections* between their work and the progress in comparative studies in Europe...to bring out the *parallelism* between African and European tales' (Finnegan, 2012, 32). Their search for 'connections' and 'parallelism' led them to erroneous conclusions about the nature and function of oral performance in Africa. Theatre suffered and still suffers from much misunderstanding arising from non-contextual meanings devised from those early days. Our scholarship of liberation and self-affirmation has to, of necessity, re-examine and redefine our theatre within the world we live.

Recent scholarship and experience have since moved theatre on

and away from the pre-colonial and colonial contexts. The emergence of 'modern' theatre, a new form of theatre tradition entered into the space of African theatre. This took the form of literary writing and its interpretation in performance. Wole Soyinka's Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986 was received as much a personal recognition as well as a proclamation of Nigeria, nay, Africa's creativity. The recognition marked the 'arrival' of the theatrical activity by a Nigerian on the global stage, although Chinweizu would not accede to that view (See Amkpa, 2004).

It is characteristic of this formalist literary theatre to engage language, idiomatic expressions, and images of both imaginary and representative to portray life and living conditions. The generation of meaning from these has opened the theatrical event as a shared experience between actors and audiences. This, however, did not eradicate the traditional theatrical expression, which continues to co-exist through the unfolding ages. Indeed, traditional theatre has served as a source from which formalist theatre continues to draw. Olu Obafemi's (1996) study of cultural heritage and social vision in contemporary Nigerian theatre asserted that:

The structure of oral traditional performance festival theatre - which utilizes element of music, dance, story-telling, mask, and mime - provides the cultural matrix from which contemporary dramatists appropriate the material that goes towards the creation of their dramatic modes (12).

This borrowing from the primordial has its entertainment and nostalgic values but traditional theatre soon found itself displaced by competing new social variables such as religious fervour and a sweeping culture of information communication technology within a global village. The state of the uprooted traditional performances is poignant but has refused to fade. Scholars have agreed that new forms of theatre have continued to emerge with new functionalities within the cultural space of communities,

especially among different ethnic groups (Dugga, 2002; Onwe, 2024).

In *Creolisations* (2002), I recounted the use of *Engyo* aural performances under the cover of night in Eggon communities to bring stubborn and erring children to book. The combination of psychology, myth, and theatricality with adult connivance in role-play, is used to scare such children into promising to turn a new leaf and embrace a change from deviant behaviour. Theatre in that experience had more than the entertainment value. It always had a utilitarian value that was inseparable from the philosophy, nature and aesthetics of the performing arts for art's sake. In the DNA of the African theatre, being utilitarian is in close alignment with applied theatre and it is no wonder then that applied theatre is more easily received, adapted and deployed in Africa.

In contrast to the Western world, the argument of art for art's sake is far-fetched to the Africans. Taken from the French, the term "l'art pour l'art," (Art for Art's Sake) expresses the idea that art has an inherent value independent of its subject matter, or any social, political, or ethical significance. Art should therefore be judged purely on its terms: according to whether or not it is beautiful, capable of inducing ecstasy or revelry in the viewer through its formal qualities. The concept became a rallying cry across nineteenth-century Britain and France, partly as a reaction against the stifling moralism of much academic art and wider society, with the writer Oscar Wilde perhaps its most famous champion. The emptiness of art for art's sake led some Western theorists to seek to gain insight and new inspiration from across the African continent; among them was Peter Brook whose work, *The Empty Space*, has added to the theorisation on staging techniques (see Heilpern, 1989).

The functional application of theatre to social issues within communities became more visible in the 1980s. In the Western world, it had its roots in Bertolt Brecht *Lehrstucke* in Germany, where the learning potential of theatre has come to be widely

accepted as an alternative theatre model. Particularly identified as a political awareness platform of theatre, Erwin Piscator's directorial expression lifted this theatre to an agitprop level of active engagement. This has risen rapidly in profile across the world. The trajectory of using theatre for intervention in issues of development would later give credence to this vision of the social application of the theatre.

The giant leap from Bertolt Brecht's new aesthetic of 'Learning plays' in the twentieth century was a continuation of Alfred Jarry's and Vsevolod Meyerhold's practice which challenged received ideas of theatre performances. The several forms of theatre that were inspired by these antecedents have engaged audiences interactively in performances in different parts of the world.

The Brazilian Augusto Boal, whose seminal work *Theatre of the Oppressed* redefined the landscape and popularised participatory theatre, provided both written and practical insights into the use of theatre for community empowerment. Inspired by the ideas of Paulo Freire, who created a method of teaching that connects recognising problems to taking constructive action towards improvement (2017). Although Freire's first focus was on adult literacy, his methodology encourages us to consider how we can 'read' the culture that surrounds us. According to Freire, education is never neutral. People can be passive absorbers of knowledge, regardless of the subject matter, or they can adopt a "problem-posing" strategy in which they take an active role in the educational process (Freirian Institute). The Boalian theatre adoption of Freirian ideology offered strategies for solving problems and frequently with fresh perspectives on well-known issues. The theatre created opportunities for action, introspection, and future directions. Through this practice, Boal saw opportunities to plan, practice and implement change for the immediate community. If implemented correctly, the techniques examine possibilities and pose questions without dictating answers. This technique was beneficial only if applied correctly. Incorrectly applied, it created other problems of its own. Hartley

has rightly suggested the process for effective adoption of the Boalian 'Theory' by approaching it as:

a progression and exploration rather than a unified theory that can be applied unwaveringly. I do not believe that Boal's work was intended to be rigidly followed step by step without change, or that there is a single correct way of approaching it, rather that it invites experimentation and constant adaption to the particular issue, group and location. I see Theatre of the Oppressed as a way to explore ideas and progress distinctively each time the work is applied. (6)

This approach of adaptation is relevant to resolving the Boal weakness of a solo performer with an often bloated focus on the person of the performer rather than the issues at stake. It is also important that we are not looking for and fighting the 'oppressor' in all practices as envisaged in the *Theatre of the Oppressed*, as sometimes, we could be the oppressor of ourselves in some contexts.

The use of theatre for communication, correction, teaching and is however not new to Africa. For want of words, I referred to these phenomena of the use of theatre for divergent causes in development in my doctoral research in 2000 as 'Theatre for Specific Purposes' (Dugga, P. 118). Today, the term 'Applied Theatre' is used to capture the essence of using the entertainment potential in theatre to other ends. The global appreciation and application of this genre came home to me when editors included my article 'Icons and Metaphors in African Theatre against HIV/AIDS' among 31 articles from 15 countries in *Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice* (Prendergast and Saxton, 2009, 2016, 2023). This text assembled resources selected from the diversity of applied theatre practices so that those new to the field or seeking examples of experience may gain a broader and deeper understanding of the potential challenges and rewards of working with communities through



theatre. This book of readings continues to be appreciated as it has now been revised and is in its third edition due to demand. The need to expand and provide an international overview for students and practitioners on the basic understanding of applied theatre concepts still exists even now.

Different fields of Science have different approaches to research but in the end, knowledge is enriched. Applied research particularly aims at the pragmatic application of science or that knowledge derived to solve practical problems. Applied theatre is the pragmatic and scientific application of theatre to solve problems. These problems may be individual, social or corporate. To begin to apply theatre in solving problems, the first obstacle one finds is the obstacle of ignorance on the part of the public and sometimes the theatre neophyte, apprentice or amateur.

*Fig. 1: Different editions of the Seminal publication on Applied Theatre*



Although my article was identified for inclusion in the pioneering edited volume, my experience of applied theatre is just one of hundreds in Nigeria. This highlighted for me the need for deeper reflection and introspection of the several contents and contexts of the application of theatre in Nigeria. Permit me, therefore, to explore the use of theatre as a tool for social change, personal growth, and community development.

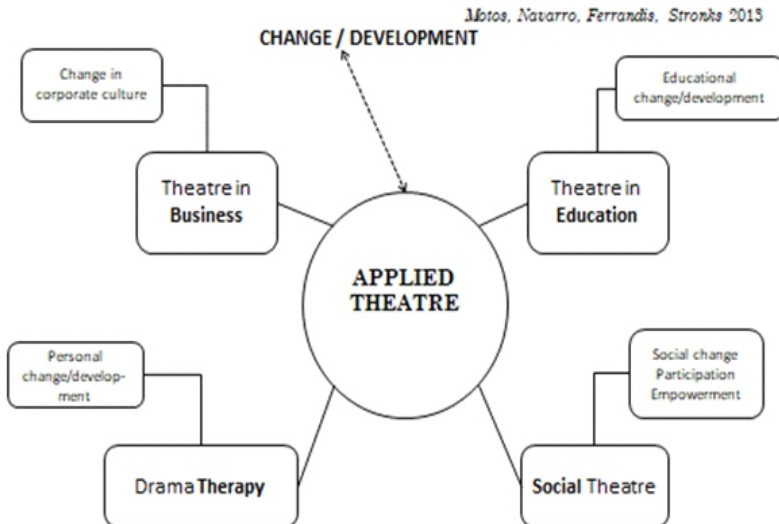
#### **IV. Theatre Applied**

Applied Theatre has several converging histories, theories and practices. The emergence of AT has its source in the application of theatre to issues of development across the world. Though the practice of grassroots, social, political or radical theatre has been practised for at least four decades, the term 'Applied Theatre' has emerged within the last three decades to capture the inclusive nature of alternative theatres (Prendergast & Saxton, 2009). The phrase "Applied Theatre/Drama" was introduced in 1990 and gained much traction in the subsequent decade. Tim Prentki and Shelia Preston (2008) trace the history of 'applied theatre' and its 'hybrid practices' through the educational and political reforms of the twentieth century in the United Kingdom and the United States. Their study reveals that 'The roots of applied theatre grew in the soil of progressive radical peoples movements in various places around the world' (11,13). According to Helen Nicholson (2014), the phrase is used as a concept to refer to dramatic activities that are predominantly performed outside of traditional mainstream theatre institutions with the express goal of enhancing the well-being of individuals, communities, and society (3). These alternative theatre practices abound in different forms and with appellations ranging from Theatre in Education (TIE), Popular Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), Theatre for Health Education (THE), Theatre for Development (TfD), Prison Theatre, Community-based Theatre, Museum Theatre to Reminiscence Theatre. The underlying similarity between the diverse forms is their commitment to 'the power of theatre in making a difference in the human life span' (Taylor, 2006).

Performance practices in applied theatre primarily fall outside mainstream theatre. These take place in 'non-traditional settings

and with marginalized communities' (Thomson and Jackson, 2003, pp. xvi). Balme (2013) rhetorically asks the question about Applied Theatre that we all want answered when he logically queries: "Applied to what?" He responds reasonably that it is applied to those who participate in the theatrical process. Applied Theatre is characterised by one or more of the five following qualities:

- i. its performers may or may not be skilled in theatre arts;
- ii. its audiences have a vested interest in issues taken up by the performers;
- iii. it actively generates and interprets a theatre piece as against the interpretation of a written script in mainstream theatre;
- iv. It is a people-empowered and empowering art; and
- v. the theatre practitioner is a facilitator of learning



As shown in the schema above, Motos, Navarro, Ferrandis and Stronks (2013) articulated four broad categorisations under which the various diverse approaches to the applied theatre can be housed. These are **Theatre in education**, **social theatre**, **drama therapy** and **theatre in business**. For them, **theatre in education** is the use of theatre in formal and non-formal education for either staging of theatrical activities, *teaching* of curriculum or intervention in resolving the students' personal learning problems. **Social theatre** is also a formal or non-formal use of theatre as an intervention for *empowerment* and ultimately leading to *social transformation*. This theatre can take place in a variety of places such as prisons, refugee camps, hospitals, schools, museums, orphanages, and nursing homes with the different participant(s) found in each of the locations. **Drama therapy** (Therapeutic Theatre) applies theatre in therapeutic, clinical or community contexts when used as a *social-emotional learning tool*. **Theatre in Business** is the deployment of theatre in *training*, *counselling* and general *corporate events* which seek to *enhance the skills* of staff or *promote company values*. The staff of the business may participate in the theatre directly or simply be part of the audience.

The purpose of Applied Theatre in its various models is to reassert and celebrate memory and history or to undermine the status quo and promote positive social change. In both instances, Applied Theatre holds the potential to be educational, reflective and rehabilitative. AT as a diverse field that encompasses various theatrical practices used in non-traditional settings, often involves interactive and participatory performances, workshops, and interventions in communities, schools, prisons, healthcare settings, and more. The theatre practitioner acts as a change agent, enlisting the participation of the audience to varying degrees (Babbie and Mouton, 2005).

One of the primary goals of applied theatre is to bring about social change. It can address issues such as racism, inequality, gender discrimination, poverty, and more. Through storytelling, role-playing, and other theatrical techniques, applied theatre engages

participants and audiences in discussions and actions related to these issues. Applied theatre can also have a profound impact on individual participants. Through the process of engaging with theatre, individuals may develop new skills, gain self-confidence, and increase their self-awareness. It can be a tool for personal empowerment and growth. Applied theatre often works at the community level, involving residents in the creation and performance of theatre pieces. This can lead to a sense of community ownership and empowerment, as well as fostering connections and empathy among community members. For this Lecture, let us conceptualise applied theatre as a form of theatre that goes beyond traditional entertainment and aims to address specific social issues, promote dialogue, and create positive change.

**Applied Theatre and Higher Education:** Applied theatre uses a wide range of techniques, such as Forum Theatre (Augusto Boal's method), Playback Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed, and more. These techniques encourage audience interaction, discussion, and active participation. Applied Theatre is still in its embryonic state and will continue to grow. Globally, a few universities already have AT as an academic programme for the award of specialised degrees. Brock, Windsor, Cape Breton (Canada), Giessen (Germany), Surrey Birmingham City (UK), Akron, Dayton, Indiana, Pacific University Oregon and North Carolina (USA) now offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Applied Theatre. Some others with or without Bachelor's degree programmes in the area readily have Master of Arts degrees in Applied Theatre, including Leeds, Warwick, Goldsmiths University, Birmingham City, Derby, York St John, Plymouth, East London, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (UK), South Wales, New England (Australia), Southern California, CUNY, Michigan, (USA), Giessen (Germany) and Cape Town, being the only university in Africa. Only one university has a PhD programme in Applied Theatre - Victoria (Canada).

The recent curriculum review resulting in the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) by the National Universities Commission in Nigeria has lumped all programmes into one omnibus degree in Theatre Arts. This jettisoned the attempts by institutions to innovate as Theatre and Media Arts, Cultural Studies, Carnival Studies or Film Arts/Studies to reflect the wide application and adaptability of the theatre enterprise. The effort of the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA) to unbundle the programmes in the field has not received a favourable response yet from the National Universities Commission (NUC). The SONTA Committee, which I had the privilege to chair, had proposed eleven separate degrees to be housed in a new Faculty of Creative Arts, to have the following Bachelor of Arts Programmes:

1. Arts and Event Management,
2. Cultural Studies,
3. Dance Studies,
4. Development Communication,
5. Entertainment and Design Technology,
6. Fashion and Costume Design,
7. Film,
8. Media Arts,
9. Music,
10. Theatre Arts, and,
11. Tourism and Carnival Arts.

These were recommended as novel courses that would enhance interdependency among programmes and produce industry-ready graduates whose employability and entrepreneurial skills would make them globally competitive while bringing our education up-to-date.

In Africa, one notable promotional activity in applied theatre has been the 'Drama for Life' annual conference which has been hosted by the University of Witwatersrand, since 2008. It has forged an African centre for the professional training of Applied Drama/Theatre, Drama in Education and Drama Therapy practitioners, educators, therapists and researchers over the years.

It has also grown a network of artists using the arts for social transformation with specific reference to HIV/AIDS, Human Rights and Social Justice, Conflict Management and Peace Building, and Environmental Awareness. Its goal of the professional recognition of facilitators, educators, therapists and researchers in Applied Drama/Theatre, Drama in Education and Drama is still a work in progress.

#### **IV. Applied Theatre in Nigeria**

Theatre for Development (TfD) was introduced in Nigeria in the early 1980s by the spearheading work of Michael Etherton and his colleagues at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The simple technique applied at inception was to research social issues in communities neighbouring the university, devise plays based on the issues and perform the same to audiences in the communities. This model was later refined and adopted in the late 1980s as the modus operandi by the Federal Military Government for its Mass Mobilization for Self-reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) campaign programme. This formal adoption by a government agency the celebration to mark the arrival of the theatre form as a tool of liberation. Iyorwuese Hagher's *The Practice of Community Theatre* (1990) collected and documented the experience of many practitioners of the era.

In practice, many local issues which may or may not be replicated in other communities have been adopted in the application of theatre to development. The theatre has been used by various government agencies as an intervention strategy in agricultural extension services to educate farmers on new farming methods, by UNICEF to campaign for Polio vaccination and eradication of child-killer diseases, by non-governmental organizations in HIV/AIDS awareness, voter education and mobilization, peace-building. AT has also been applied by women groups in fighting for gender equity and by an environmentalist in highlighting the plight of degradation in the Niger-Delta. Since social issues around the notorious development conundrum have escalated the use of theatre in development has also enlarged in different settings. Varieties of social problems have emerged and with them

have spiraled several modes of application of theatre. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, governments, multinational corporations, communities and religious organizations have adopted applied theatre methodology at various times in Nigeria. Examples include Austin Asagba's Shell Company-sponsored work on environmental degradation in the Niger Delta, Steve Abah et al's work in public health in northwest Nigeria and UNICEF's mass literacy in southwest Nigeria. Other practitioners have used theatre for HIV/AIDS education, agricultural extension awareness, conflict management, reproductive health education, gender, voter education, good governance, youth empowerment, road safety, sex education and adult education. The possibilities are as endless as there are social problems.

Several more causes could be cited but only a few of these have so far been captured and documented by participants in journals and books. While applied theatre is evident, its documentation is not. It is neither organized nor comprehensive. Like in the communities where these works are carried out, everyone has done his or her interventionist work on a small scale. Critical studies by scholars, outside these participants are nearly absent. As a result, no critical and comprehensive documentation of the nature, variety and tangible results of Applied Theatre in Nigeria is available. This is primarily because the objectives of practices were *ab initio* to achieve practical and immediate goals of social change; documentation was not an important goal to the enterprise. The various practices in AT have continued, promoted more now by higher education institutions, civil societies and international development agencies but are not being comparatively studied nor documented. The knowledge about Applied Theatre and the development process that these transient practices may have engendered are therefore being thinly disseminated. Several of them have not been reported at all and like Africa's oral history, these stand the risk of being lost over time. There is therefore need to synthesize the forms and aesthetics of Applied Theatre in



Nigeria through a comprehensive collation of published data based on a summative evaluation of myriad practices and supplemented by a survey of field experience and practitioners' perceptions.

Applied theatre practices have continued to diversify the search for strategies to construct behavioural change, but there is ironically no strategy for ascertaining the impact of all these in the development of society. The eclectic nature of applied theatre has also not allowed for a holistic evaluation of the impact that the theatre mode has made in its confessed effort at 'development'. The implication of this is the need for a scientific evaluation that would generate a framework for the assessment of future work.

#### **V. The AT Laboratory: Individual Transformation through Classroom Learning**

The question has always been asked if theatre can be used to change an individual, a community or a system and how that can be done. In general, changing human perception and influencing their actions is not easily discernable or noticeable through the formal theatre performance for an audience, especially a gate-fee-paying audience. Change is not necessarily the motive for such theatre performances either. Lerner (1963) argued that changing society is dependent to a large extent on the ability to change the individual (331). Sparks (2007) was more pointed about it:

Change in individual social attitudes would lead more or less automatically, and without any serious conflict, directly to the transformation of the social structure and the patterns of life experienced by the whole population (24).

If changing an individual can have a prominent impact on the social structure, then not only is it doable but it is certainly inviting to engage in shaping individuals for the future. Although theoretically, this is the object of formal education, I find many examples in my practice where the theatre process became the tool for transformation.

A mother approached me as a young lecturer and wanted her daughter's admission changed from theatre arts to any other programme in the university. Her reason was that allowing her daughter to study theatre arts would lead the daughter to become wayward. I asked the mother why she came to me and the paradox dawned on her: she was asking me to change her daughter from a course where I and many others, by the grace of God, stood with moral integrity even as a young lecturer. I pointed out to the many other people she knew who were theatre artists and were spiritual and moral compasses in the community. Her request met a cul-de-sac and the daughter's studentship was not changed. The young lady was later to reluctantly play the role of a prostitute in a play that I directed. She was shy at first but with directorial guidance, she wore a mini-skirt and played the role well at the end of the production process. The performance enabled her to enter a world that she never imagined possible. That lady has grown up today to be a self-confident woman who runs an orphanage somewhere in eastern Nigeria. For her, the theatre was a process of self-discovery that allowed her to bring out the deep desire to be humanitarian and to help others. The mother's case was one of overcoming psychological and stereotypical obstacles.

A student in another practical class felt his reading theatre arts was going to end up in a fiasco, for he had a stuttering speech condition and would struggle to stammer his way through a simple sentence. It was virtually impossible to give him any role to speak on the stage. As a lecturer, one would have excused this condition as a natural phenomenon and told the student to come off the stage and probably end up as a stagehand or as a technical crew member. However, grooming young people in the theatre taught me to think differently and to allow them to explore beyond their fears and limitations. I held the class to ransom until he made an effort to speak. Insisting that the student take part in the play where he would have to speak, first in front of his classmates, and later to an enlarged audience became a turning point for the student. Initially, it seemed impossible but given no alternative, the student dug deep

into the human spirit to bring up resources he never thought were possible or available. By the final production, this student spoke with some difficulty but he spoke. It exerted all the patience that I could muster and resulted in the class collectively spending an enormous amount of time as we waited for the student to progressively get on with the speech therapy. Rehearsals then were the application of theatre to overcome his speech deficiency, covertly done within the theatre laboratory process and away from the glare of an audience. Many years later, I would smile to myself whenever this person came on television as a news reporter and ended up with the phrase, 'From Lagos, this is Blah Blah reporting for NTA Network News'. The speech deficiency in these latter years was still there but hardly noticeable. He had mastered the process of speaking and had even convinced his employers to give him a job that allowed him to become an ace news reporter. Without the confrontation in that class, he would probably not have gone into broadcast media reporting where his voice is a critical tool. Theatre may not have cured his speech deficiency but it certainly allowed the student to rise above personal limitations.

In another class, we were confronted with a student who was physically challenged with clubbed feet. His two feet were crooked and opened sideways instead of pointing forward as human feet normally would. In an improvised workshop with my 300 Level Class, I directed that this student play the role of a motorcyclist who would pick up two passengers (the use of motorcycles for commercial transportation was becoming popular at the time and were accident prone. These were the early days of commercial motorcycle transportation and road traffic accidents (RTA) were rampant then, leaving many injured, some with broken limbs and a few dead. The mime was therefore to draw critical attention to the hazards of motorcycle transport. The play was therefore to make a commentary on the attitude and recklessness of the riders. Only in this case, the student cast for the role of the rider had physical difficulty in walking and more psychological difficulty in parading his physical disability before

his classmates. He feared they would laugh at him or worse, make fun of his condition for the rest of his school days and beyond. He was, therefore, reluctant to get on the stage at first but when he figured that this lecturer would not back down on the insistence that he play the role, he got on the stage but would not move. Some of his classmates tried to appeal to my sense of 'decency' to allow another able-bodied person to play that role instead and stop embarrassing the fellow. They reasoned that everyone could see that this person ordinarily had natural difficulty in walking. However, I stuck to my guns, convinced that we had reached a learning curve both for the student and his classmates. Eventually, the student delved into the movement and mimicked the sound of a motorcycle and riding around the stage. He stopped to pick up the two passengers before riding roughly once more in galloping movement across the stage, causing the three to crash. Of course, the rehearsal started quite slowly with great challenges initially but the play was eventually matured and was finally staged before an expanded open audience. That scene was one of the most memorable in the entire final play performance. The theatre process helped that student lose the negative sense of self-consciousness that inhibited his creativity and empowered him to live and express himself despite his physical challenges. This therapeutic function was probably not part of the academic takeaways in the course curriculum but it occurred in the class and reawakened the latent potential in the young man. The theatre delivered a transformation that was not physically curative but internally liberating. Today, that young student works for an international Non-Governmental Organisation and has been involved in delivering many transformational projects to several communities, oblivious to his physical limitations.

In these three instances, the theatre training process was shown to be a laboratory for the transformation in the personality of the students. It is for this reason that most effective Theatre Departments have informal relations between staff and their students which transcend beyond class engagements. The long

stretching hours used to get a play from casting to opening night with the audience in attendance are beyond the timelines and specifications of academic coursework. The training process is, therefore, an important aspect of the application of theatre to developing the human mind. The transformation in the trainee happens long before and occasionally while the audience is invited into the theatre auditorium. This transformation is akin to the actor in modern theatre wearing a military uniform and immediately experiencing an upliftment in power and assuming a commanding posture that enables the actor to play the assigned role convincingly. In this case, the upliftment was not merely to play a role and exit the character at the end of the production but to take home the transformation that lasts a lifetime. The use of theatre in achieving this self-discovery is often not scored in examinations but remains the lasting impact of the training process in the lives of the students. I have not taken time to ruminate over the impact of the process on the theatre lecturer as a facilitator, maybe that would be left for a Valedictory Lecture in a few years, God-willing and permitting.

## **VI. Enlisting Theatre in Changing Guards and Corporate Culture.**

Greg Mills (2012), a Special Adviser to Rwandan President, Paul Kagame identified that Africa is not an exclusive poverty enclave. He argued that:

Africa is not poor because its people do not work hard. Their productivity is low because of various factors, including poor health and skills, inefficient land use, and chauvinism. Few if any persons worldwide could claim to work as hard (for less reward) than rural African women (13).

There is no doubt that Africans, nay, Nigerians work hard, yet the level of poverty and economic deprivation is pervasive. The petrol-dollar-driven economy, in what some have termed the curse of oil, has weakened the growth and sustenance of other sectors.

Poor health, limited skills and inefficient use of resources all fall into the nexus of underdevelopment bordering on human incapacity to utilise resources at the disposal of the continent. These are often accepted concepts enshrined in the world of economics, politics, management and other domains in the Social Sciences. How can applied theatre feature in the social liberation of society particularly in repositioning an engineering company?

The opportunity to deploy theatre in business and corporate governance was presented when Lafarge, the giant French Company, bought up cement plants in Africa including Ashaka Cement in Gombe State. The takeover of Ashaka tagged the 'Star of the North', meant that the old governance structure and the mentality that led to the non-performance of the cement company had to be done away with. The new owners were bringing a new corporate culture based on total quality management (TQM) and required a pragmatic communication model to get the staff on board. Through the participatory management style that prioritises teamwork, an in-depth understanding of the basic processes that a company depends on to generate its product, and the use of statistical tools to measure its performance, TQM was a great tool for the pursuit of incremental, endless improvement (Pearson, 2000). The proximate department of theatre arts was at the University of Jos and someone suggested that we be contacted. The Dean of the Faculty, a Professor of French was so intrigued by the invitation that he enlisted himself on the team. A choreographer colleague, Bose Tsevende, was brought into the project as a choreographer while I wrote the script and directed the process. Three of us paid a visit to the Ashaka Cement factory in Funakaye Local Government Area of Gombe State to get a brief of the work to be done. We then spent another day doing some preliminary research on the state of the company and speaking with some of the workers in different units. Further desk research on total quality management and Lafarge was done using online resources and with the data acquired, theatre was deployed at the service of repositioning the management of Ashaka Cement. The assignment was not about getting a marketing strategy for the new investor, which would perhaps have been easy with their corporate

global reputation. This was rather about changing mindsets of the people within the company - their work culture, getting the workers to be more productive and moving away from the exact poor attitude to work that ruined the company in the past. The TQM approach was to reconfigure industry culture from a top-bottom to a bottom-up approach where senior managers and supervisors will relinquish their command and control and depend instead on the knowledge of line staff to redefine how they do their jobs and thereby reduce costs and improve service and productivity.



*Figure 2: Transitional Logos of Ashaka Cement Company*

We selected some of our best students who had skills in acting, singing and dancing and engaged them in the process of creating a challenging drama piece on changing an existing culture in the workplace. Armed with the data obtained from our preliminary research, we devised a script using the principles of total quality management. It was clear that competitors had taken the battle to their doorstep with a rival cement company setting up a big operation right in Ashaka in front of the company's factory gate.

There was no need for further evidence of the threat to Ashaka's existence than this rival cement company competing in their local space. Using such examples, we created a performance that explored the existential picture of the future for the company and made change an imperative. The story of the play incorporated the concern for the well-being of families, the need to move with global trends as well as the responsibility the workers owed themselves to effect a change. The message was for the workers to use the period of transition to embrace the new ownership structure that works on rewarding active participation and productivity rather than primordial sentiments.

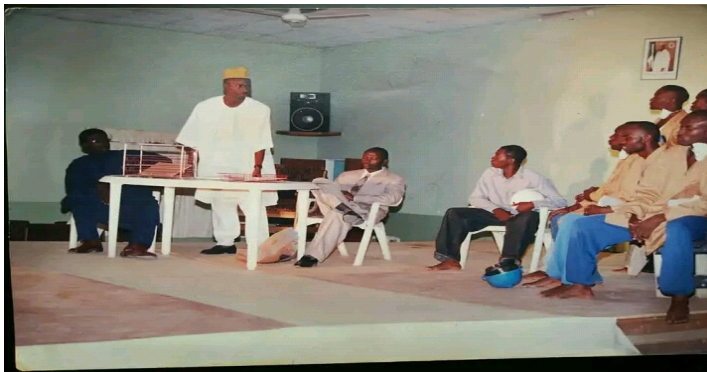
On the day of the performance, our team interacted with the management and staff of the company and went around the various sections of the company to have a feel of the work that is done in the Cement factory. We toured their laboratories and went into their two kilns to observe the production processes up to the bagging of the final product. Through this engagement, we first interfaced with our target recipients and virtually walked through the work routine in the shoes of the factory workers so that our theatre would be as authentic and realistic as possible. The play itself was spiced with humour, technically accurate terminology in cement production, anecdotes of family well-being and wrapped up in energetic acting, singing and dancing. We portrayed Lafarge as a groom and Ashaka as a prospective bride and the need for the bride to come to terms with the overtures of the groom for the marriage to be consummated blissfully. Of course, in real life, Lafarge had already taken over the company but to win the minds and souls of the reluctant workers, the theatre became the channel to try and espouse the advantages that Lafarge was bringing to Ashaka.



*Figure 3: The Cast in costume*



*Figure 4: Management announcing a change of ownership to the workers in the play*



*Figure 5: Workers' clash on the way forward*



The theatre performance was one of the last activities at the end of the transition period. Thereafter there was a change of management and a new structure of Lafarge Ashaka Cement took off. Today Lafarge has four cement factories in Nigeria: two in western Nigeria, one in the south south and Ashaka remains the only cement factory owned by Lafarge in northern Nigeria. How this applied theatre contributed to saving jobs, facilitating a good working relationship and enabling a convivial working environment may be measured at some other point but for us, the job was done. It was another day at the office, building understanding and camaraderie among workers being passed on from one employer to the other. Unfortunately, we have no way of measuring what impact our work had on the successful transition. In terms of pedagogy, the participating students had a good learning experience, as there was no better hands-on learning experience or industry readiness training that could surpass that offered by this corporate engagement.

Ideologically, the argument could be made that such theatre for business delivers and furthers the interest of the shareholders to the detriment of the working class in an industry like Ashaka Lafarge. The simple response would be that the role of capital in creating livelihood for the workers and their families through local manufacturing that utilises indigenous raw materials far outweighs the exploitation of a global import-reliant system. The latter makes the entire nation a consumer-dependent economy. It is therefore more expedient for the citizenry to develop capacity and efficiency to compete in a capitalist world.

## **VII. Applied Theatre in Community Engagement and Peacebuilding**

Mr. Vice Chancellor, I finished my PhD programme and was billed to return at the end of September 2001. However, on September 7 2001, violence erupted in Jos, Plateau State, in what would become a protracted conflict of religious and multi-ethnic colouration. What started as a little disagreement soon escalated into a major conflict that will persist for more one and a half decades. The city of Jos which was hitherto known to be a cosmopolitan city of peace, attracting many foreigners with its

cold weather, soon became a city of fear, attacks, and reprisals. The outcome of the sectarian crisis became most evident in the segregation of communities around the city. There was residential realignment with the relocation of people to communities of their own kin where they felt safe. Typically, people of a certain religion could not cross to another part of the city, so between 2001 and 2004, Jos became one city with different segments of people. It was normal for this erstwhile homogenous community with long standing relationships to live separate lives. If a child was born to a family with Christian and Muslim members, the naming ceremony will take place on a neutral ground. One advertised text message invitation to such naming ceremony read: 'Friends and relatives, please join us for the naming ceremony of our child. Let's meet in Terminus at Mr Biggs. The photographer will meet us there!'

There was hardly any week passing without a news item in the global media about Jos Nigeria until it reached a point of media fatigue. Peace-building initiatives at this point were relegated to crisis management jingles on the radio and television appealing for peace. In this climate, social and economic activities took a nosedive. Academic activities were greatly hampered and the reputation of the University where I worked suffered immensely.

Working with the Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies (CECOMPS), University of Jos, we deployed theatre to build bridges and bring about reconciliation. Serving at that time as the Executive Director of the Advancement Office, I knew the non-kinetic approach that theatre could bring to the table. We approached the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Abuja with a proposal on peacebuilding for the city of Jos. The embassy was initially sceptical but cautiously receptive and gave the sum of three hundred and fifty thousand Naira for a workshop on peace in Jos City, in the first instance. The success of the workshop led to a forty-nine million naira grant to the University for a three-year project of peacebuilding. The project involved three major segments: the first part was engaging communities and bringing them together; the second part was creating the content of the engagement; and the third and final part was involving other non-

governmental organisations religious groups and the media in sustaining whatever outcomes that the engagement process generated. In 2004, we led a group on a peace exploratory visit to Angwan Rogo; it was perhaps the first time in three years that non-Muslims ventured into the area. The compound of the COCIN Church had become the community refuse dump as no refuse collection services were being extended to them. The people living there had been tagged as murderers of anyone who strayed into their community and stigmatised. The youth leaders of Angwan Rogo were therefore overjoyed to have us visit the community to dispel the rumours and fight the stigma they have had to endure. We got their buy-in to the process of peacebuilding and asked for a date to engage the larger community at the local primary school grounds.

Working with my colleague, Professor Reuben Embu, we assembled a group of young talented artists, multi-talented and skilled in theatre who were unafraid to be deployed in community engagement. We devised a play titled 'Bond of Peace', drawing from real-life scenarios to showcase life in the city of Jos, before, at the commencement, during and after the conflict. This technique of not minimizing or obscuring cultural or religious differences has similarly been reported by Leffler (2022) to have been successful in engendering intercultural dialogue in applied theatre among High School students (75).

The performance, which was about eighteen minutes long, detailed the negative impact the conflict had on human life across all strata of society. The talented actors and actresses performed the play impersonating multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious characters negotiating life through fear, apprehension, suspicion and recrimination. The message of the play was sensitive but frank and factual. The entertainment quality cached in mime, action, comedy and songs ensured that the traumatised communities could laugh, even if it was only momentarily and ask themselves how different they were from the characters in the performance. That loosening of pent-up anger and the comic look at people's folly in the ideas that continued to fuel the conflict offered the audience a chance to seek an alternative future in

mutual communal existence. At the end of the play, we stopped the action without resolving the conflict and transferred the issues to the context of the audience's immediate community. The actors would remain on the stage while we, as applied theatre workers, became facilitators of dialogue, using the elements of the play as stimulants for our conversation.

*Figure 7: Scene where the Crises Begins with highlighted Cultural Differences between erstwhile Good Neighbours*



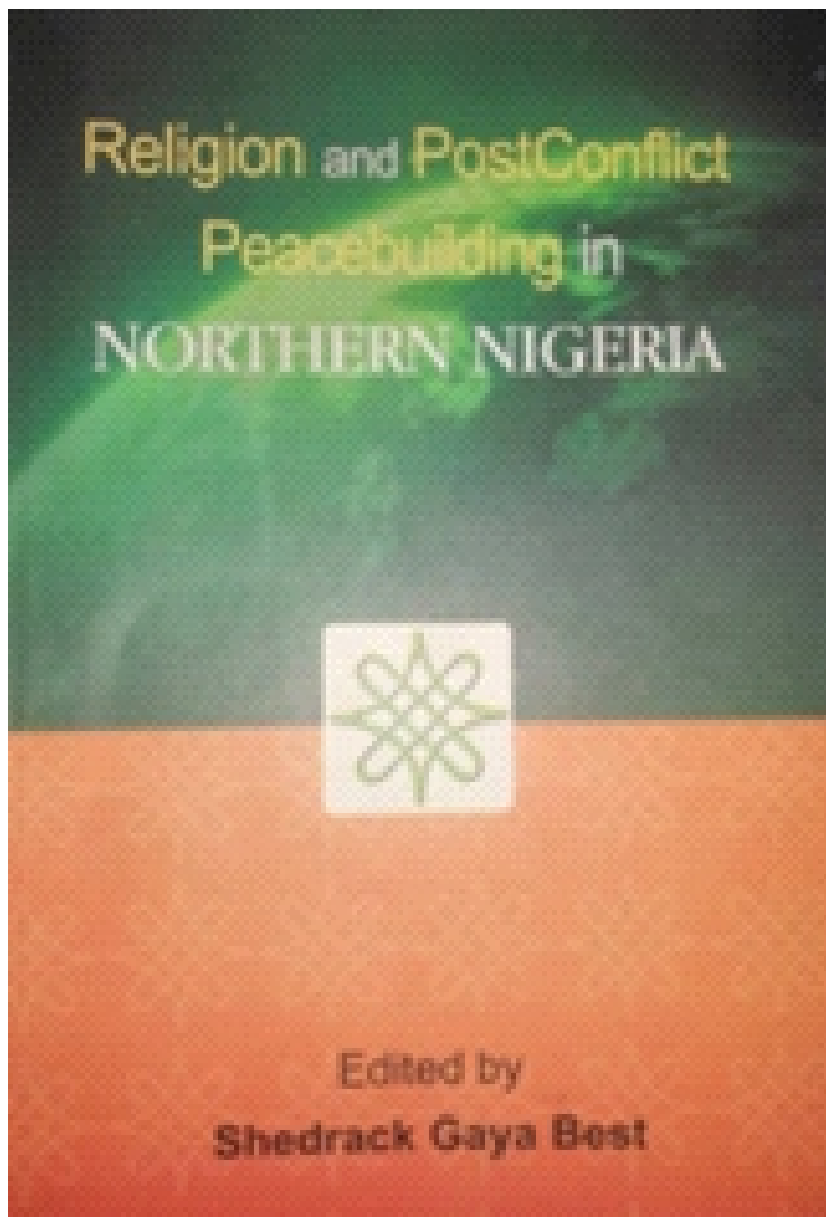
We found that communities were eager to speak up and ready to engage in conversations that they never had the opportunity to have before this time. Some comments from communities that we engaged with included the disadvantages of segregated living, the loss of economic opportunities and the recurring threat to life occasioned by the disruption of normal life. The first community engagement was held in Angwan Rogo, followed by engagement in Angwan Rukuba/Nasarawa Gwom - these two communities being the hottest flash points in the two divides of the conflict. Other locations where engagements were held included communities in Dadin Kowa, Jenta Adamu and Barkin Ladi. There was another iconic meeting at Angwan Rogo where youth leaders were invited to observe peacebuilding proceedings with reciprocal visits to Nasarawa Gwom/Angwan Rukuba where the roles were reversed.

*Figure 8: Inaugural Lecturer with Prof. A.N. Gambo, Director, CECOMPS, a Community Leader from Angwan Rogo and Dutch Diplomats at Nasarawa Gwom/Angwan Rukuba Performance Intervention*



Having engaged with the communities, we became trusted allies in the peacebuilding process. We took the next step to bring these communities to sit down and dialogue with each other. This was no longer about applying theatre or deploying performance; it was about real life there taking our roles away from the familiar stage and stretching our commitment beyond the scope of theatre. The roles of peacemakers and independent arbitrators in the conflict were not jobs we applied for but were flung at us anyway. When the first bomb blast in Jos occurred in Angwan Rukuba, one of the youth leaders called immediately to alert me of the occurrence and to let me know that they were going to retaliate. Although he was merely informing me, I pleaded with him to hold back his group of angry youngsters, assuring him that the military and the police would already have barricaded the connecting road and thus needlessly exposing his group to security risks. In this instance, we played the role of the voice of reason which prevailed and saved some lives perhaps because the youths did not go on a revenge mission that day. We can only speculate what could have happened if we had stayed aloof.

*Figure 9: Book published by CECOMPS, supported by the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Abuja*



The experience of using theatre for peacebuilding underscored the fact that bringing people together is the easy part; there were issues of social justice, unemployment, inadequate infrastructural development and good governance in the feuding communities that were beyond applied theatre. With the globalisation of conflicts that always draws local communities into its fold without rationale, no community is immune from crisis. As we have seen in the Israel-Gaza war, the Ukraine-Russia war and indeed in pockets of events that happen in other remote places of the world, one event in the obscure corner of the globe can have repercussions for communities in Nigeria. Our intervention achieved a breakthrough in bridging physical barriers among residents of no-go areas and helped to identify key activists and partners in the peace project that would be enlisted in building the relevant peace partnership. The personal highlight for me was my assembling parties in the conflict - religious leaders, community leaders, women leaders and youth leaders in one bus and driving from Jos to Abuja for an engagement with ambassadors and diplomats of the European Union (EU). The EU Diplomats wanted to hear the story from the key people in the conflict and since travel advisory made it impossible for them to visit Jos, we brought Jos to them in Abuja. The ride to Abuja was tense as the diverse groups of people were speaking only to their kin. Once we got to Abuja and they vented their anger and could hear the pains of the other side, the animosity was de-escalated and the return journey to Jos was one of the best I have ever enjoyed in my life - people exchanged numbers, spoke freely across the divide and new friendships were built among the erstwhile warlords in the conflict.

This peacebuilding engagement involved personal risks but the conflict de-escalated. We demonstrated how the university can be an instrument in this process of peacebuilding. A book, titled *Religion and PostConflict Peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria* (Best, 2011) was published as part of the deliverables from the peace project. However, the real impact of the engagement cannot be assessed and evaluated by us, the participants. We went, we saw, we did our best. What is unarguable is the satisfaction we derive from folding up our sleeves and getting busy rather than standing aloof and moaning about the devastating state of affairs.



### **VIII. Applied Theatre and the Benefits in our Praxis**

Applied theatre can have a profound impact on individual participants long before it imparts community life. Through the process of engaging with theatre, individuals may develop new skills, gain self-confidence, and increase their self-awareness. It can be deployed as a tool for personal empowerment and growth. At the community level, applied theatre combines with community organising to make the most impact. Applied theatre, engages residents in the creation and performance of theatre pieces, which are often more than mere performances. They range from collectively negotiated perspectives and communal accomplishments to the forging of new levels of trust and understanding. This can lead to a sense of community ownership and empowerment, as well as foster connections and empathy among community members. The performance itself becomes a passing phase but the internalised product remains. The succinct words of Alan Read (2009) about the transient nature of theatre can be humbling:

Concepts are useful in identifying and discussing transient phenomena and theatre is the transient art par excellence. It is theatre's prerogative to exist in a place for a unique, unrepeatable moment and then to perpetuate in the memory, but no more. The advent of recording media such as video invites theatre to believe it perpetuates, for future consideration and appreciation, but has done little or nothing to alter the essential ephemerality of theatre. (12)

There are several reports of community projects carried out in Nigeria, especially journal articles and student dissertations and theses in institutions of higher learning but there is no deliberate documentation of emerging theories of the thriving practice of applied theatre. Few of these works get published locally so circulation is mostly restricted and the take-home lessons are often lost with the ephemeral practices. This has made it difficult to evaluate the expanse to which applied theatres have spread, the frequency of their application and their outcomes in the short and long terms.

Whatever practice we have carried out in the application of theatre, even with the contemporary presence of audiovisual documentation and widespread live streaming, the most profound knowledge remains in the memory of the participants. The trophy of the application of theatre is evident in the lives and post-performance experiences of the participants. Like the broken bone that is reset through orthopaedics, the bones heal and the patient recovers to walk probably with inconsiderable evidence of the broken bones. Only the X-ray images of the broken bones tell the story of what was before it was corrected and healed. The 'healed' life corrected by the AT is deprived of any social 'X-ray' images to retell the world before the application of theatre. Whether their lives are shaped, altered or redefined by the theatre, only they can testify to the impact. However, this power of theatre proven in the lives of the participants occurs at different levels in the audience. Post-production evaluation is another level where theatre has not established much awareness and research. There is therefore no other way of gauging the effect, impression or impact of the spect-actor audience that participates or simply experiences applied theatre.

Another aspect of the innovation in applied theatre is the experimentation with methods and Techniques. Theatre is both spiritual as it is aesthetic. Theatre is generally about the experience of the make-believe, or what we allude to as the willful suspension of disbelief in the formal theatre. Soyinka reports that American students acting in his play in the US experienced deep emotional and physical possession during rehearsals. The Bori possession performances in which the performer is possessed by the spirit of the character are replicated across the world in some societies. The divestment of theatre of all its accoutrements in Peter Brooks' *The Poor Theatre* does not relieve the theatre of its power to transplant the actor into another world. Applied theatre uses a wide range of techniques, such as Forum Theatre (Augusto Boal's method), Playback Theatre, and more. These techniques encourage audience interaction, discussion, and active participation. In one Museum theatre experience in Johannesburg, South Africa, guests are shared into two racial categories to experience the same

historical narration of Apartheid. Whatever race one is categorised into for the museum tour, the outcome is almost always the same; the audio-visual recollection accompanied by real-life photos, voices, sound effects and re-enactment amplify the inhumanity of the Apartheid years. AT has shown itself to be a scientific ground-breaking experimentation.

Another aspect that stands out is the extension of the basics of theatre. In formal theatre only three essential ingredients are required for a complete theatre experience: the performer, the performance text and the audience. In applied theatre, a fourth ingredient, the facilitator (s) is added to the mix. The role of the facilitator takes theatre application beyond the realm of art. It is here that more 'science' in applied theatre is most visible. The facilitator may be required to be a lawyer, a juror, a counsellor, a health advocate, a psychologist, a welfare officer, or whatever else the subject at hand demands. If to Shakespeare, all the world is a stage, with AT, the facilitator can assume any role in the process of catalysing change.

Finally, no work of applied theatre would succeed without the active collaboration of others - co-theatre workers, professional and non-professional actors, civil society, community leaders, government agencies, and ordinary folks. Collaboration: marks the willingness of the facilitator to engage with others in the process of creating change. It is an admission to being human, to not knowing it all and to being fallible. This Inaugural Lecture on applied theatre is therefore not about what I did but about the many people God allowed me to interface and collaborate with over the years.

## **IX. Recommendations for Entrenching Applied Theatre in Nigeria.**

It is not true that we do not have a vision of a future and that the future is therefore bleak. The African Union has lucidly captured an ideal Africa in its *Agenda 2063* document. If vigorously pursued, that collective vision would guarantee that no African emigrates and that wars, violence, banditry, political instability

and social insecurity would be a thing of the past. However, the envisioning and the realisation of that aspiration are poles apart at the present. People would certainly need to be mobilised around the Agenda 2063 to arrive at a transformed Africa. Applied theatre has a role to play in a greater Africa of the future.

1. There is a need therefore to engage the growing theoretical understanding of the application of theatre to social development. One strategy would be to comparatively study approaches to applied theatre and the status of functional applied theatres elsewhere in the world, particularly in Europe and South America as it compares with the experience in Africa and here in Nigeria.
2. Field visits to key past and current sites of past applied theatre work in Europe, Asia and South America for research, and evaluation of the impact of the use of applied theatre is rarely undertaken as new projects are readily engaged instead. Audience surveys using quantitative and qualitative measures and other scientific research are also rare. The knowledge of the field therefore remains one-sided, told mainly from the practitioners' advocacy perspective. This approach will enlarge the field by providing a model for evaluating the efficiency of applied theatre.
3. While types of applied theatre have been enumerated by their functionality, the techniques have yet to be studied in-depth. There is a need to provide a taxonomy of applied theatre techniques and forms by pulling together the characteristics from the field of practice towards a theorisation of the nature and scope of applied theatre especially in Nigeria. By looking at the components of typical applied theatre interventions, presenting a conceptual framework would help to make sense of the 'logic' of such theatre practice holistically. This would help to establish working models for the application of theatre to development and perhaps close the gap of the absence of

theorising in the African theatre experience.

4. Working in sensitive areas and topics of social change also requires ethical considerations. Applied theatre practitioners should consider issues of consent, representation, cultural sensitivity, and the potential for harm when addressing deeply personal and societal issues. One can only imagine how the attempt to advocate for same-sex marriage in a typical conservative African rural community would be received. The applied theatre worker should therefore be extremely sensitive to and responsive to the needs of the target group.
5. The point has been made above about the paucity of published works on applied theatre. There is a gap in accessing published and unpublished materials including audio-visual recordings on the subject from all over the world. There is a need therefore to use audio-visual and information communication technology to document applied theatre globally and its adoption in Nigeria so that learning from past applications can be more easily facilitated. This way, a richer warehouse of materials sourced from diverse local practices in Nigeria from field reports can be studied for a broader appreciation of the field. This multimedia documentation would provide development agents with an applied theatre 'how to' facilitation kit and training manual.
6. Apart from the practitioners of applied theatre, a new opportunity arises for critics to survey practitioners, development agencies and their work through interviews and focus group discussions to establish parameters and outliers in the field. These counterparts of literary critics will highlight issues and provide an in-depth understanding of the internal framework that supports applied theatre. Evaluation and impact studies can be challenging, but they are essentially relevant for

understanding theatre's effectiveness in promoting personal transformation and community change. Researchers should be encouraged to use qualitative and quantitative methods to measure the impact or outcomes of applied theatre projects as much as the process itself.

7. With the unbundling of the Mass Communication Programme by the NUC, Film should rightly be located in the Faculty of Creative Arts, rather than be duplicated in both the Communication and Creative Arts faculties. Development Communication can remain under the Faculty of Communication Studies. Applied Theatre should be a full degree programme in Nigerian Universities.

## **X. Conclusion**

Applied Theatre, in my intellectual, academic, and practical experience and sojourn, has been a multidisciplinary field that utilises theatre as a means to facilitate personal growth, foster community development, and drive positive social change. It has been most rewarding as a dynamic and evolving practice, to draw from various theatrical traditions and techniques to engage individuals and communities in critical dialogue and action. If the aspiration of *Agenda 2063* of the African Union to be amongst the best performers in global quality of life measures is to be realised, then applied theatre has to be listed as one of the critical enablers for the mobilisation of African people.

The various adventures of our exploits in applied theatre, have challenged our humanity and demanded the deployment of our time, talent and skill in the different facets of theatre. Any recognition and accolades in the process have been merely to suggest that we have been on the course of achieving our objective of a better world through the instrumentality of our teaching and practice of theatre.

Thank you for your attention.

## **XI. Acknowledgments**

This journey would certainly not be the same without my path crossing with those of numerous others for whom I am truly grateful. First and foremost, is the Lord, God almighty, whom I encountered on 17th August 1991 and received salvation through the price paid by Jesus Christ. Certainly, I would not have been alive or even have travelled the path that I did without the trajectory that my life has taken since then. That experience changed everything, and truly, until I met Him, life was meaningless; but with Him at the centre, the purpose was restored and my life became ordered, directed and guided. And now I know and understand how all my abilities come from God and to Him alone be all the honour and the glory forever and ever.

Let me then begin with those whose names ought to be here but are not mentioned. You are dear to my heart and I do not take your love, friendship and encouragement for granted. I am grateful to my dear wife, Anthonia Eleajo Dugga, who has travelled every single step with me since August 1996. As my companion, she raised the bar for me every time she said I am her genius. Our children, Asalame Dugga Esq., Ahlu Dugga, Abbah Dugga and Ayieda Dugga, have all shaped the way we think about issues, relationships and life in totality. To my mother, Esther Makponi Samson Dugga, thank you for your hard work, resilience and faith from which I learnt firsthand. To my siblings, Delight Kuje, Arc. Bennett, Tarri, Awasku, Godwin, Awasku and Sunday Dugga and their families, it has not been easy leading from the front, but your close following has kept me in step. To my mother-in-law, Martha Ifah and my in-laws, thank you all. To my extended family members in the Ekairi Family, I celebrate the blessings of God upon us, particularly the heights attained by our sisters aunts and daughters.

I am grateful to my teachers from primary school until now. Starting with Mr Iliya Kumbugu in Primary 1 through to the many others at Government College Keffi, notably, Mr Emeka, Prof. Sonny Oti, Prof. Shamsudeen O.O. Amali, Hajiya Lantana Ahmed, Late Dr Milcah Dadirep, my Long essay supervisor who went to heaven via the EAS Aircrash in Kano in 2004, Prof. John

Illah, who taught me rigorous academics and university administration, Roger Howard who guided my work in Essex, Late Prof. Dr Eckhard Breiting, my Doktor Vater, his wife, Dr Pia Thielmann, Prof. Umar Danfulani, (who connected me with Germany and pestered me for two years until I responded and sent a simple email that made the difference), Prof. Augustine Enahoro, Late Prof Olowo Ojoade, who wrote several references for me, and all my teachers over the years. I have mentors and elders who influenced me in the theatre from afar and from close range: Prof. Duro Oni (UniLag), Prof. Femi Ososfisan (Ibadan), Prof. Biodun Jeyifo (Harvard), Prof. Olu Obafemi (Ilorin), Prof. Lanre Bamidele (Ibadan), the Late Prof. Jenkeri Okwori, Late Prof. Ayo Akinwale; I am also blessed with friends who are scholars and great minds: the Late Samuel Kafewo, Prof. Emmy Unuja Idegu (Calabar), Prof. Reuben Embu, Prof. Ojo Rasaki Bakare (FUOYE), Prof. Emmanuel Dandaura (NSUK), with whom we shared countless international engagements, Prof. Tor Iorapuu, Vice Chancellor, Benue State University, Prof. Olayemi Akinwumi, Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Lokoja, Prof. Andrew Haruna, Former Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Gashua and Prof. Audu Nanven Gambo, Vice Chancellor, Karl Kumm University, Vom.

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My students, who have become my colleagues, Prof. Dennis Akoh Ameh (former DVC, Academic, AE-FUNAI), Prof. Gowon Ama Doki (SONTA President), Prof. Sarah Lwahas and all staff of the Advancement Office at UniJos who helped me combine academics and other lives, and Dr Mark Onwe Ogah, who has also become our son, you have made the journey most rewarding before the proverbial heaven. Our other sons: Pastor Amen Emmanuel (Asipita), Captain Peter Emmanuel (NA), Benjamin Echor and his wife, Dorcas, Dr Kingsley Edinoh and family, and Dr Martins Agena, Rector of Alfred Torkula Polytechnic, Makurdi. God bless you for your love.

In University administration, I have worked directly under many Vice-Chancellors and all of them have enriched my perception, submission and competence in different ways: I acknowledge Prof. Monday Mangwat, Late Prof Celestine Onwuliri, Prof. Sonny G. Tyoden, Prof. Hayward Mafuyai, Prof Ekanem I. Braide, Prof Sanusi M. Liman and Prof. Shehu Abdul Rahman for enlarging my scope and understanding of the university and the life of an academic.

My bosom friends and brothers, the Late Prof. Dauda M. Enna, Late Prof. Amin Zaigi, Dr Jonathan W. Thani, Provost, College of Education Akwanga, Pastor David Bature and Pastor Naphtali Enwongulu and their wives, have been worthy travellers on this path. With co-labourers that God joined with me, Pastor Chingtok Ishaku and his wife, I see vision and strength driven by a purposeful life. I am glad that we have eternity ahead of us. To the many students that God allowed my wife and me to shepherd from 1997 to date, we can only appreciate how you have grown spiritually as well as physically. My Pastor, Rev. Emmanuel Kanos of The Parliament Church, Jos (formerly Zoe Christian Centre) has been another school that I attended to shape me into the wholesome person I have become today. My brethren at Kings' Summit Church, Akwanga and Enoch Centre, Lafia are more than a family on earth. To past, present and future members of the Chapel of Light and the FULafia Christian Community, I say 'Sit High In New Elevations - SHINE!'. Let me particularly appreciate Pastor Femi Gbemi and Bimpe, his wife, Sis. Ene Adoda-

Emmanuel and family, Elder Katomba Mbaba, Min. Oloche Abi, Chris Barau, Dr Oluseun, Dr Godwin Obande, Dr Joseph Zira, Prof. Aleruchi Chuku, and many others have bent their backs to carry the burden on this campus. The many student leaders and JCCF members in this University with whom it has been an absolute pleasure to work, thank you for the partnership that has made being in the university so rewarding. Last but not least, I appreciate the editorial services of Dr Blossom Ottoh-Agede of the Department of English and Literary Studies who on short notice proofread the draft of this Inaugural Lecture.

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## **CITATION OF PROFESSOR VICTOR SAMSON DUGGA, AvHF, MNAL, fsonta**

Professor Victor Samson Dugga, AvHF, MNAL, fsonta, was born to the family of late Mr Samson Dugga and Mrs Esther Dugga on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1967 at Akwanga, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. He finished his primary education at Akwanga North Primary School and proceeded to the prestigious Government College Keffi in 1979 for his secondary education. After he left Keffi, he was admitted to the University of Jos and obtained a Bachelor of Arts, Second Class Upper degree in Theatre Arts in 1990. He went for NYSC to the then Anambra State and served at Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Enugu where he was rated a prolific News Reporter covering some of the most sensitive beats. He returned to the University of Jos for his Master of Arts in Theatre Arts and graduated in 1993. In 1994, he earned a Commonwealth Academic Fellowship to the University of Essex, United Kingdom and a Master of Arts in Literature (Drama) in 1995. Under a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) scholarship, he went to the University of Bayreuth (pronounced '*Buyroit*'), Germany. Dugga earned a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Literature in English, scoring Magna Cum Laude (Excellent) in the thesis and Summa cum Laude (Distinction) in the oral defence in 2001. He also studied at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa for a Postgraduate Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation between 2007-2008. Professor Dugga attended several professional training in educational fundraising such as the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Institute for Educational Fundraising, Durham, UK – 2004 & 2005 and the Fundraising Cadetship: *Inyathelo*: The South African Institute for Educational Advancement, Cape Town, South Africa – 2005.

### **Academic and Administrative Career**

Professor Dugga began his sterling academic career as a Graduate Assistant at the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Jos, Plateau State in February 1992. He engaged in impactful research, teaching, and community service and rose through the ranks to become an Assistant Lecturer in 1993; Lecturer II in 1996; Lecturer I in 1999; Senior Lecturer in 2002; and Reader/Associate

Professor in 2005. In October 2008, he was promoted to the position of Professor of Theatre and Social Change. Professor Dugga has taught and supervised over a hundred student projects at the undergraduate level and over twenty dissertations and theses at the postgraduate level in the following areas: Theatre and Social Change, Applied Theatre, Theatre for Development, Development Communication, Playwriting, Play Creating, Play Directing, Dramatic Theory and Criticism, Theatre and the Media, Theatre Design, Film, Radio, Television and Traditional Theatre Aesthetics, amongst others. He has also directed over twenty-five major plays by prominent African and world-renowned playwrights. He has written and published altogether over seventy critical books, book chapters, journal articles, edited collections, technical reports, reviews, monographs and creative works.

He has served the University of Jos in different capacities at the department, faculty and university levels including:

**Secretary**, Department of Theatre Arts Academic Board, **Staff Adviser**, Association of Theatre Arts Students, **Member**, Departmental Registration Committee, **Member**, Departmental Examination Committee, **Theatre Manager**, University of Jos Open Air Theatre, **Examination Officer**, This illustrious teacher prepared and conducted examinations with credibility and without any incidence of leakage or misconduct.

**Member**, Faculty of Arts Computer Network Committee, **Faculty Representative**, University Ceremonials Committee, **Faculty Representative**, Remedial Studies Board, **Member**, Faculty of Arts Examination Misconduct Committee, **Chairman**, Faculty Information Committee: Supervised the introduction and entrenchment of ICT culture in the Faculty of Arts, **Secretary**, Departmental Postgraduate Committee, Theatre and Communication Arts. **Member** and later **Chairperson**, University Development Office, Jos-Carnegie Partnership Sub Committee, University of Jos - 2002 – 2004: planned and won the first major institutional grant to the University of Jos. He designed the Curriculum for the Mass Communication Degree Programme that started in the Department of Theatre and Communication Arts, University of Jos.



He was PG **Coordinator**, Departmental of Theatre and Communication Arts, **Secretary**, University of Jos Strategic Planning Committee (2007 – 2009): Responsible for the planning, writing and implementing the 3rd Strategic Plan of the University - 2009 – 2014.

He was elected **Faculty Representative** to the University of Jos **Senate** from 2002- 2008 and later a Statutory **Member of the Senate**, from 2008 – 2012.

Professor Dugga pioneered philanthropic fundraising through educational advancement practice in Nigeria. He worked with three vice-chancellors and served for eight years as Executive Director of Advancement at the University of Jos between 2004 and 2012. In that capacity, he raised funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to develop the university's alumni relations, marketing and fundraising. In addition to raising funds from diverse sources for the university, he launched the first annual Fund Programme in the West African sub-region. Professor Dugga won, stewarded and managed the project execution of the following grants:

- i. Three grants from Carnegie Corporation of New York to the tune of \$6.3m over nine years - managed the \$900,000 Advancement Office Intervention fund of \$350,000 in 2003-2006, \$300,000 in 2006-2009 and \$250 from 2009 – 2012.
- ii. He was the Institutional Anchor for STEP-B World Bank (\$5m Centre of Excellence in Multimedia Technology and Cinematography – with the University of Lagos and National Film Institute, Jos)
- iii. STEP-B World Bank (\$398,000) for *Artemesia Annuia* cultivation in Langtang South, Plateau State,
- iv. Royal Netherlands Embassy, Abuja (N50,500,000): Plateau Peace Project 2007-2011.
- v. Shell (N50,000,000 ICT Complex grant), Sky Bank (N50,000,000 Lecture Theatre Building).
- vi. Aliyu A. Doma (N150,000,000) University of Jos Indoor Theatre, Naraguta Campus, University of Jos
- vii. Several material gifts such as buses donated by Banks, alumni and pre-alumni donations among others.

In 2012, this astute university teacher and administrator transferred his services to the Federal University of Lafia (FULafia), Nasarawa State as one of the pioneer professors in FULafia. Professor Dugga was the pioneer **Head of the Department** of Theatre and Media Arts at the Federal University of Lafia, Nigeria, from February 2014 – 2018. Within this period, he designed the Undergraduate Curriculum, installed the Theatre Auditorium and Media Studio facilities and got full accreditation for the undergraduate programme. Later, he designed and got approval to commence the M.A. & PhD programmes in the same department.

Similarly, he was the pioneer **Dean of the Faculty of Arts**, Federal University of Lafia, Nigeria between 16th June – Dec 2012. He later served two additional terms as Dean of the Faculty from January 2014 – February 2017 and September 2018 – June 2021 respectively. Within this period, he chaired the Committee on Review of University Brief (July – August 2014); led the preparation of the Faculty Academic Brief and Strategic Plan, managed the first accreditation of three foundational undergraduate programmes (2012-2016); led the commencement of seven additional programmes, accreditation of five more programmes, designed and commenced postgraduate programmes in the Faculty. Professor Dugga was the **Chairman**, Research and Publication Committee, Federal University of Lafia, responsible for the administration of TETFund Institution-based Research (IBR), published the first editions of two journals in Science and Technology and Humanities (2014 to 2016), Institutional **TETFund Desk Officer** for academic programmes, oversight of staff training and conference attendance (2014 to 2016).

Professor Dugga took **Oversight of The Federal University of Lafia** (for various durations) on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor at different periods, such as 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014, 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2014 and 8<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014. He was a **Member of the Governing Council**, Federal University of Lafia (Representing the Senate), from 2015 to 2019.

Professor Dugga is currently the **Dean**, School of Postgraduate Studies, Federal University of Lafia, Nigeria. From 21st June 2021 the present - he has restructured the administrative Units in the School, overseen the automation of processes from admission to transcript production, reorganised academic programmes, increased graduation rates and expanded admission numbers within three years.

Ladies and gentlemen, permit me to inform you that Professor Dugga is a consummate researcher that has won several research fellowships and grants including the Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellowship, UK, 1994; the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdiens (DAAD) Fellowship, Germany, 2000; the Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship, University of Bayreuth, Germany, 2<sup>nd</sup> January to December 2013, November 2014 to January 2015, and June to August 2015. He was the principal investigator and research team leader for Association of African Universities (AAU) for 'Setting up Advancement Office in a Sub-Saharan African University, Ghana, 2009; African Union Commission for the 'Study on the Establishment of the Ongoing Cooperation Activities Between the European Union and Africa with Regard to Cultural Goods', Ethiopia, 2014; Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Digital Cooperation Fellowship on 'Transformations and New Realities in Nigerian Theatre in the Covid Era', a research collaboration with Professor Cecile Sandten of Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany, November 2021 - January 2022.

This avid researcher and erudite scholar is widely travelled having transversed over thirty countries of the world. He attended and participated in over fifty national and international conferences, workshops, retreats and seminars across Nigeria, Africa and Europe where he served as keynote speaker, resource person and paper presenter.

Furthermore, Professor Dugga has supervised six PhDs, ten Masters and more than one hundred undergraduate students. At different times, he served as an external examiner for NCE at State Colleges of Education, Gidan-Waya, Kafanchan and Akwanga;

Bachelor, Master and Doctorate degrees at different universities including Ibadan, ABU Zaria, Nasarawa State University Keffi, Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos; University of Calabar; University of Abuja, Ekiti State University, FUYOYE, Oye-Ekiti, Benue State University, Makurdi; Plateau State University, Boko, University of Maiduguri, Taraba State University, Jalingo and the Chancellor College, University of Malawi. He has also served as a professorial assessor for twenty-two professors across Nigeria and beyond.

### **Community Service**

Professor Dugga has served in different capacities of service to local, national and international communities. Beginning with his role as Founding Arts Editor, Campus Echo, Student Newspaper, University of Jos, 1990, he was later a weekly Columnist, writing "Kaleidoscope" for *The Sunday Standard* Newspaper from Jan. 1992 to July 1993. He was a volunteer Radio Programme Presenter, Anchoring 'Link Up', 'Coast-To-Coast' and 'Reflections', on Radio Plateau 2 FM 90.5, Jos, Jan. 1992 to Sept. 1994;

He was a Consultant/Facilitator, McArthur Foundation / NPTA-Sponsored Theatre for Development "Talking Aids" Projects, University of Jos, (1995), Otukpo, Benue State (1996); Consultant/Facilitator, United Nations Fund for Population Activity (UNFPA)/Plateau State Ministry of Health Campaign on Female Reproductive Health, Kalong and Yelwa, Shendam L. G. A. (1998), Kasuwan Ali, Mangu LGA (1998). In these projects, he deployed Applied Theatre.

He was a Resource Person at the National Film Institute (NFI), Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC), Jos, Nigeria, 1998 – 1999; a Voluntary Consultant and helped to draw up the B.A. degree programme for Theatre and Cultural Studies programme for Nasarawa State University, Keffi, 2003. Nationally, he was the Secretary, the Nigeria Universities Advancement Directors' Forum- 2005 – 2010 and Chairman, Nigeria Universities Advancement Directors' Forum - 2010 – 2012. He served as Collation Officer, Presidential Elections (Kokona Local

Government Area) and Gubernatorial Elections (Obi Local Government Area), for Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nasarawa State 2019 and Member of World Tourism Day, Nigerian Local Organizing Committee, 2004.

He has been a Consultant to many states, national and international arts festivals and educational institutions/agencies on Strategic Planning, Project Development, Management and Monitoring and Evaluation, 2007 to present. He was Co-consultant, Nasarawa State Ministry of Culture and Tourism to the National Festival of Arts and Culture, 2002, 2008, 2009 & 2010 and Abuja Carnival, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 & 2012. Served as Artistic Director and led the State to the first prize at both the NAFEST and Abuja Carnival in 2010; Consultant to the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru for the setting up of the Advancement Office, 2017.

He has served as Member and Chairman of fifteen Accreditation and Resource Verification Teams of the National Universities Commission to fourteen Nigerian universities since 2008, including, UniLag, LASU, Redeemers, Igbinedion, OOU, Ago-Iwoye, ABU, Zaria, Unical, AKSU, Uniport, Crowther University, Ajayi Crowther Univ., Oyo, NDU, Wilberforce Island, IMSU and AIFUED, Owerri. He was an Expert Assessor for the Nigerian National Order of Merit (NNOM) Award, Nigeria, 2018 and a Member of a team of the Academia that contributed ideas to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Term Agenda of President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration, Coordinated by the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, 2019. He served as a Member of the Presidential Visitation Panel to Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria, 2021.

Dugga was Chairman, Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA) Nigerian Theatre Professors' Committee on Curriculum Design for the Establishment of Faculty of Creative Arts for the National Universities Commission, 2017-2019; Member / Secretary, Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Prizes Award Jury, 2010 – 2012. Judge, NYSC Director-General Annual Arts and Theatre Festival, Abuja, 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005;

Chairman, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) Jury for Creative Writing Awards, 2015- 2020; founding Editorial Board Member, EggonNews Community Newspaper, 1999 - 2014; Member and later Chairman, Governing Board, ERCC College of Health Technology, Alushi, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, 2015-2018 and January 2018 - December 2023; Member, Board of Trustees, Federal University of Lafia Multipurpose Staff Cooperative (FULMCS), 2016 – Present; Member, Eggon Council of Elders, 2017 – Present, and a Special Marshall, Unit 7, Lafia, Federal Road Safety Commission, 2015 – Present. He is the Chairman, University Sports Committee, 2021-Present, and also the Chairman, University Community Service Committee, 2023-Present.

**Internationally**, on the continent, Prof. Dugga was a **Member** and **Secretary**, African Union Observer Mission for Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Uganda, 14th-22nd February 2011. He was a **Member**, African Union Working Group that created the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage in 2018. He also currently serves as an **Expert** for the Technical and Advisory Committee of the Great Museum of Africa (GMA) in Algiers, Algeria, for the African Union.

Professor Dugga hosted the First African Conference of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) held in Abuja (2005). Subsequently, he became a Resource Person and Faculty/Facilitator at CASE Africa Annual Conferences in Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria between 2007 and 2013.

### **Membership in Professional Bodies and Associations**

Professor Dugga is a distinguished member and fellow of several learned societies and professional bodies: Member, Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA); Member, African Literature Association (ALA); Member, International Drama/Theatre in Education Association (IDEA); Member, Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE); Member, Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA); Fellow, Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA); Member, Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL); Fellow, African Higher Education

Collaborative (AHEC); and Fellow, Alexander von Humboldt (AvH).

### **Awards and Honours**

It is worthy of note that Professor Dugga started receiving awards, honours and commendations from his undergraduate days. For example, he received the Jack Tilley Gyado (Scholastic) Prize for the **Best Graduating Actor**, University of Jos, 1990; Nigerian National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) **State Commendation Award**, Anambra / Enugu States, 1991; Complex “A” **Faculties' Committee Commendation** for High Academic Performance in Publications exceeding promotion requirements for Senior Lecturer, University of Jos, 2003; **Pillar of NUTAF** (Nigerian Universities Theatre Arts Festival), Nigerian Universities Students' Association, 2006; **University Management Commendation** for Successful Endowment Fund Launching as Chairman, Endowment Fund/Souvenir Sub-committee for 21<sup>st</sup> Convocation, 2007 and Lifetime Achievement Award, Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA), 2014.

He won the Swiss Society for African Studies & FIFA Literary Competition for an original short story with his 'Over the Bar' in Zurich, Switzerland in 2001. He is the 2009 winner of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA)/NDDC J.P. Clark Award for Drama with his play, *Hopes Harvesters*. Most recently, out of the over one hundred and forty entries, his play, *Gidan Juju* was nominated on the eleven works on the longlist for the most prestigious literary award in Africa, the \$1000,000 NLNG Prize for Literature, 2023. The work did not eventually win it but the recognition was a good enough reward. He was awarded the Individual Staff Award for **Effective Service Delivery and the Best Dean** at the Federal University of Lafia in 2023.

Dugga holds the traditional titles of **Aren Engla Akun**, by Akun Traditional Council, Nassarawa Eggon, Nasarawa State, 2011; **Zhudo Migili**, Migili Traditional Council, Jenkwe, Obi LGA, Nasarawa State. 2014; and the **Aren Engla Eggon**, Eggon Traditional Council, Nasarawa Eggon LGA, Nasarawa State. 2021.

## **Personal and Family Life**

This distinguished professor and consummate administrator professes Christ and is a dedicated servant of God. Since 2004, he has worked with ex-students cultists and university management and got many students to publicly renounce cultism at the University of Jos, University of Agriculture, Makurdi and Nasarawa State University, Keffi. He served as the **Associate Pastor**, The **Parliament Church**, (formerly **Zoe Christian Centre**), Jos 1997-2012. He has been the Senior Elder (Lead Pastor), **Enoch Centre**, **Lafia** and also the **Chairman** of the Elders Council, **Chapel of Light**, Federal University of Lafia, from 2014 to present. It is interesting to note that this accomplished yet workaholic professor creates time for extra-curricular activities such as watching sports, golf and tennis, fish farming and gardening.

Lastly and importantly, this renowned and internationally acclaimed professor is a family man. He would not have achieved much without the support of his lovely, amiable and dedicated wife, Dr Mrs Anthonia Dugga, herself an ebullient university teacher, and passionate lover of God and people. Together, their marriage is blessed with four biological children: Miss Asalame - a lawyer, Mr Ahlu - a rap artist with the Stage name 'Pablo-the-Wave', Miss Abbah, and Miss Ayieda, and numerous adopted children.



**INAUGURAL LECTURES SERIES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF LAFIA**

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.	Prof. Mbe Nja	A Digital Glance at Policy Implementation	16 <sup>th</sup> Dec., 2015
2.	Prof. Moses Udo Ikoh	Sociology of the Criminal, Arc of Tension and Harvest of Insecurity in Nigeria: Patterns, Linkages and Implications for National Security	29 <sup>th</sup> Sept., 2021
3.	Prof. Amin Zaigi Ngharen	History, Culture and Resistance	24 <sup>th</sup> Nov., 2021
4.	Matthew Olaleke Aremu	Exploiting Underexploited Plant-Based Foods	23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov., 2022
5.	Prof. Uji Wilfred Terumun	Migrations, Social and Economic Development in Historical Trajectory	12 <sup>th</sup> Dec., 2022
6.	Prof. Okpèh Ochayi Okpèh, Jr	The Historian as a Catalyst: History, Ideology and the Social Process	14 <sup>th</sup> Feb., 2023
7.	Prof. Idris O.O Amali	Oral Poetry as Repository of Knowledge: An Investigation of Idoma Alekwaafia Masquerade	5 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
8.	Prof. Christian C. Echeta	Daring the Jungle of Research in Ceramics: Contending with its Technical Realities and the Diplomacy of Colour	14 <sup>th</sup> June, 2023
9.	Prof. Aleruchi Chuku	Indoor Fungi: Friends or Foes?	22 <sup>nd</sup> June, 2023
10	Prof. Rebecca Ape	Health Information Needs of Nigerians: An Integrative and Inclusive Approach to Library Services for National Development	10 <sup>th</sup> October, 2023
11	Prof. David B. Ugal	Fertility: A Double Edged Sword	22 <sup>nd</sup> November, 2023
12	Prof. Monday U. Ukwela	Insects: Diversity, Natural and Strategic War	12 <sup>th</sup> March, 2024
13	Professor Ilemona Adofu	Navigating Nigeria's Economic Horizon: Can We Harness Monetary Policy Reforms to Achieve Financial Deepening For Sustainable Growth?	16 <sup>th</sup> April, 2024
14	Zara E. Kwaghe	<i>Herstory</i> In the Making of Modern Nigeria: Patriarchy, Women and the Politics of Knowledge Production	14 <sup>th</sup> May, 2024
15	Victor Samson Dugga	Applied Theatre: The Science of Individual and Community Transformation	28 <sup>th</sup> May, 2024

## SIGNIFICANCE OF INAUGURAL LECTURES IN FULAFIA

The rite of passage to be come a professor in a university has for hundreds of years included the test of having to profess one's knowledge to a lay audience and fellow academics. Indeed, the origin of the title 'professor' comes from the need to profess, or declare publicly, one's knowledge. The occasion of inaugural lecture presentation is therefore an essential component of the University's public events through which the institution engages with audiences with a broader interest in its research, including funders and decision makers from government, academia and industry. Professionals and academics gain a unique opportunity to engage across knowledge boundaries for the benefit of mankind.

### VISION

To become a renowned institution of learning, research and innovation for positive socio-economic transformation of the nation.

### MISSION

Training of graduates and equipping them with skills for socio-economic development.

### CORE VALUES

Integrity, Innovation and Excellence.

