Presentation of Self-esteem and Motivation in Habib Yakoob's
The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die

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Abstract
Identity-related issues have become prevalent in recent times and they continue to cause conflicts and personality confusion. Consequently, scholastic endeavours to understand characters through social or psychological theories are constantly at the forefront of attention. As a result, to understand character and behaviour, the bulk of extant research on the relationship between self-esteem and character is sociological or psychological in nature, with quantitative study methods utilised to explain character traits. However, there are few such works in literary studies, including Nigerian literature. Therefore, this study examines the presentation of self-esteem in Nigerian drama in Habib Yakoob's *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die*. The study adopts the qualitative research design and William James' Self-Esteem Theory through content analysis to show social inclinations and mental tendencies that influence characters' behaviour. According to the text, the main characters are influenced by processes of self-esteem such as self-perception, self-verification, feelings of esteem, self-evaluation, and morality in their behaviour. The study concludes that in Nigerian drama, self-esteem is an important factor in understanding character behaviour in society.

Keywords: Behaviour, Character, Nigerian drama, Self-esteem, Self-perception, Societal behaviour

1. Introduction

Drama, by its nature, strives to reflect society, including both its positive and negative aspects. By reflecting social ills, it serves a corrective purpose by causing society to recognise its mistakes and make amends. It also acts as a societal example of virtues or admirable traits for others to imitate. Writers create tales that depict human life and activity by using characters who, through their words, actions, and emotions, transmit certain messages for the purposes of education, information, and entertainment (Shalini & Samundeswari 170). In the opinion of Adekunle, writing drama is a reconstruction of reality and an expression of feelings that are closely connected to the experiences and circumstances of the author (87). Correspondingly, Dubey (85) opines that literature and, by extension, drama often represents socio-economic struggles combined with culture, myth, and religion. Buttressing that literature is connected to society and propagates social and moral issues across time, Ifeoma adds that no writer has ever been entirely shielded from society's attitudes, morals, and values during upbringing, and it makes it difficult to find a piece of literature that does not reflect these social attitudes (109). Aside entertainment, Nigerian literature explores the nation's social domain that is riddled with socioeconomic, leadership, poverty, corruption, and religious charlatanism. Consequently, dramatists from Nigeria have unquestionably and resolutely conveyed these conditions in a range of dramatic genres. From the above, drama, becomes an outcome of how people interact with their surroundings and how issues and other crucial and frequently contentious topics are

exposed. By having such a wide audience, drama has demonstrated its ability to advance civilization by fostering morals and ethics in society.

Due to issues of identity that are garnering world-wide attention, it becomes important to study characters, what motivates their actions, and how their overall esteem is developed in society. Focusing on the self-esteem theory to explain identity issues, the idea was first proposed by William James in 1890. Cast and Burke claim that James did not view self-esteem as a separate quality that required more study and clarification, but in order to provide a more accurate description of self-esteem and its functioning, many psychologists and psychology theorists have built upon the original notion since then. The academics note that James provided a straightforward equation to define self-esteem, claiming that it is equal to success divided by human pretences. Here, the term "pretentions" relates to aspirations, principles, and core convictions. When human actual achievements are low and thought potentials are great, people tend to view themselves as failures; yet, when the opposite is true and the pleasures are endless, self-esteem increases (1041). Consequent on William James explanation on self-esteem, sizeable number of research carried out on self-esteem has relied on one of the three conceptualizations which are— firstly, concentration on self-esteem elements to determine what either increase or decrease self-esteem. Secondly, according to studies, self-esteem is viewed as self-motivation as people want to behave in ways that uphold or enhance positive self-evaluations. And thirdly, it has been found that having a strong sense of self-worth protects against unfavourable situations, that is, self-esteem serve as buffer against discrimination (Brown et. al. 620).

Research on drama and self-esteem has shown positive findings, as both concepts have been researched into to answer identity related matters. For instance, Lapinski and Weems used drama as a therapy to understand self-esteem in teenage females, and to boost it. The research reveals that Lapinski emphasises the subjective element of self-esteem (30) and Weems emphasises the power of self-love (146). Yee et. al. discovers that youth who took part in theatre performances had better levels of self-esteem, indicating that drama might be a useful instrument for self-esteem growth (218). These findings all point to the potential of drama as a technique of increasing self-esteem. In the socio-psychological field, Grantham and Ford in their review note a group of researchers who concentrated on the psychological study of some talented and culturally diverse students. The researchers were noted to have expanded on self-esteem and accomplishment analysing, how talented African American students' racial identity development influenced their academic performance. To achieve this, a comparative research was carried out on the African American students and with students of other races through the self-esteem theory (18–29). Similarly, Watkins et al. develop appropriate questionnaires to carry out a theoretical analysis of the self-esteem of some African and Australian children. The research concludes that children sampled from African countries were more similar in terms of self-esteem to each other than to Australians (165). In like manner, Twenge and Crocker conduct research on race and self-esteem, comparing Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians, employing quantitative research to examine race differences in self-esteem among 712 respondents (408). Apparently, the application of self-esteem theory in the research was evaluated methodologically from a quantitative research method approach, mainly because self-esteem used to be often measured using self-report inventories, also known as Likert scales.

Likewise in the Nigerian literary domain, self-esteem has been adapted socio-psychologically and researched through the quantitative method. Umar et. al. adopt a quantitative research approach to study the influence of self-esteem on the academic achievement of six public senior secondary schools in Gashu'a Education Zone, Yobe State. Their findings demonstrate a substantial positive association between self-esteem and academic accomplishment among respondents, with no significant difference between the academic achievement of students with high self-esteem and those with low self-esteem (151). Kirfi and Lawal study the effect of esteem, confidence, and personality on Nigerian university students in Sokoto. Their findings suggest that constructive self-perception, appraisal, and evaluation should be prioritised in the concept of excellent behaviour (54). From the foregoing, there seems to be little done from the literary aspect, especially in the analysis of characters in the self-esteem domain and as qualitative research.

Focusing on literary characters, Berry and Brown note that Aristotle (335 BCE/1996), who wrote the first literary theory treatise, The *Poetics,* states that for a play, narrative should take precedence over character. This notion has since come to dominate most literary theory over the last two millennia. For instance, folklore analysts of the 20th century created intricate categorisation methods for plot types, but no corresponding classification of character types was presented. Because of this, there was no established framework in literary theory to classify the characters that stories centre around (288). Any previous attempts at character classification were strictly defined within the parameters of the plot in which they appear, limiting the readers' understanding of characters in these analyses to the narrative theme or function they fulfil while maintaining character description as protagonists, antagonists, major, minor, dynamic, static, round, flat, and stock (Berry and Brown 289). Recent trends in character development suggest a deeper interest in socio-issues, necessitating a discussion of this type of characteristic. Therefore, analysing personalities can never be overstated, given that identity is a genuinely human reality. In addition, the paper sees the need to extend the discussion further on the self-esteem of characters and factors that influence actions to aid understanding of identities in society. Based on the foregoing, the assessment of characters and behaviour in this study incorporates self-esteem and a qualitative research methodology approach. Accordingly, the study examines the depiction of self-esteem in characters' behaviour in the Nigerian drama, Habib Yakoob's *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die*.

Utilising the self-esteem theory revealed that individuals are intrinsically motivated to become different in their behaviour; the main characters in the selected drama aimed to have a favourable view of themselves, and the processes of the self-esteem assisted in achieving this. Each main character developed intrinsically through phases of self-perception, self-verification, and feelings of esteem. Analysing the characters with these brought to light how the characters developed motives and how they were able to buffer against negative feelings.

2. Review of Literature
Self-Esteem Theory
Self-esteem originated in the 18th century and was originally reflected in the writings of David Hume. Hume is noted to believe that it is necessary to appreciate and think well of oneself since it serves as a motivator, allowing people to reach their maximum potential (Morris and Brown,

19). William James, a philosopher and psychologist, is credited with establishing self-esteem as a unique psychological construct. James defines various aspects of the self, with two degrees of hierarchy: the processes of knowing (the "I-self") and the consequent knowledge of the self (the "Me-self"). According to him, the I-self's observation of the self and subsequent storing of those observations generates three categories of knowledge, which collectively account for the Me-self (James 240-241). Judge et. al. note that in the mid-twentieth century, consequent on the advent of phenomenology and humanistic psychology, there was a rekindled interest in self-esteem as a treatment for psychological diseases such depression, anxiety, and personality disorders. Psychologists began to see the link between psychotherapy and personal fulfilment in persons with high self-esteem as beneficial to the discipline. This contributed additional components to the idea of self-esteem, including the reasons why people tend to feel less deserving and why people grow discouraged or unable to overcome obstacles on their own (30).

Processes that are sources and functions of self-esteem and are noted to be involved in the development of self-esteem are: self-perception, self-verification, and feeling of esteem. Self-perception refers to how people see themselves, which might influence their self-esteem. Self-verification is the tendency for people to seek validation of their self-concept, which affects their self-esteem. The feelings of esteem, which include feeling appreciated and accepted, play an important part in shaping self-esteem by offering a sense of worth and confidence (Trzesniewski et. al. 210). Lachowicz-Tabaczek and Śniecińska, in their research to understand how self-esteem develops, identify four self-belief domains connected to self-esteem: agency, morality, strength and energy to act, and acceptance by others. Two of their studies, including those of 411 university students, are used to explore the link between self-esteem and self-concept. The results confirm that these four areas (agency, morality, strength, and energy to act) are rather independent. Self-evaluation of agency was the best predictor of self-esteem, followed by self-evaluation of strength and energy to act and acceptance by others.

Self-evaluation of morality turned out to have no or a negative link with self-esteem. The findings confirm ideas positing that self-esteem stems from either the perception of one's own agency or acceptance by others (24). At the end of the research, the finding established that self-esteem is influenced by both societal expectations and personal ambitions (Lachowicz-Tabaczek and Śniecińska 32). In line with Baumeister et. al.'s view, experiences in a person's life have a significant role in the development of self-esteem (43). It becomes imperative to study those factors that influence characters' experiences, impacting their behaviour. Consequently, the processes adopted by the study to analyse the main characters' self-esteem in the selected drama texts are: self-perception, self-verification, feelings of esteem, self-evaluation, and morality.

Self-perception is an individual's perception of themselves and their qualities, as well as their opinions about those features. Self-perception consists of two key perceptual processes: self-concept, which is an individual's impression of who he or she is, and self-esteem, which is how individuals rate and evaluate those attributes (http://introtocommopensource.ridgewater.edu/). Self-perception is a psychological term that describes a person's perspective of oneself, including their mental and physical characteristics. Self-perception may be both good and negative. Improving one's self-perception can be

accomplished by focusing on one's strengths, and understanding one's self-worth (psychologs magazine 2023).

Self-verification asserts that people desire others to see them as they see themselves and will actively seek to ensure that others perceive them in ways that reinforce their stable self-views. Self-verification is founded on the assumption that people have a strong need to affirm and stabilise their deeply held self-perceptions. Based on this, people are driven to maintain their self-esteem (Lecky 18; Talaifar and Swann 3). Psychology researchers have shown that people employ three separate techniques to establish self-verifying social environments. First, people may create self-verifying "opportunity structures," which are social situations that meet their requirements. They may, for example, seek and enter partnerships in which they are likely to find confirmation of their self-views and abandon connections in which they do not obtain self-verification. A second self-verification method is to communicate one's self-views to others in a systematic manner. People, for example, may exhibit "identity"cues"—extremely apparent indicators and emblems of who they are. Physical looks are a particularly powerful sort of identification signal. The clothes one wears, for example, can display several self-views, including one's political leanings, financial level, religious convictions, and so on. The third way people might express their identities to others is through their activities. When an individual's efforts to gain self-verifying assessments fail, they may still hold to their self-views by employing another self-verification strategy, which is seeing non-existent evidence (" Gosling, S. (2008). Snoop: What Your Stuff Says About You. New York: Basic Books. Reviewed by William Danton, Ph.D., ABPP, University of Nevada School of Medicine, Reno, NV"; Swann et. al., 995; Swann and Read, 1120).

Self-esteem has been connected to a variety of positive and negative emotional states. Esteem is closely associated with a set of feelings related to how individuals perceive themselves (Brown and Marshall, 575). According to research, self-esteem is both a quality that remains steady throughout time and a condition that changes from day to day and hour to hour. Individuals who succeed at essential jobs, feel accepted and respected by others, or achieve something valuable or important have a good self-concept, which leads to high self-esteem. When people fail, do something destructive, or feel neglected or criticised, the negative components of their self-concept become more visible, resulting in poor self-esteem. Furthermore, research has indicated that high self-esteem is related with several favourable outcomes, such as protection against mental health disorders, happiness in occupations, better social interactions, and a more positive feeling of well-being (https://www.verywellmind.com/why-it-s-important-to-have-high-self-esteem-5094127).

Self-evaluation and morality are inextricably linked via the idea of self-esteem. Self-esteem is a global quality that represents an individual's overall assessment of their worth or value. Moral self-esteem is a flexible feature of self-concept that corresponds to the characteristics of the prototypically moral individual. People are driven to regard themselves as moral and typically overestimate their own morality, while feeling threatened when their moral self-image is damaged. People's perceptions and evaluations of others demonstrate the link between self-esteem and morality. Morality constantly exceeds expertise and, in some cases, interpersonal warmth in social judgement. This implies that morality also has a

significant impact on how individuals view and judge themselves (Thomas 268; Jordan et. al 1878).

Self-Esteem Theory and Nigerian Drama

Self-esteem and its depiction in Nigerian drama might be classified as a murky area, due to the scarcity of reviews on it in literary studies, particularly in Nigerian drama. A survey of the notion indicates that many works on self-esteem come from psychology, sociology, and empirical and theoretical perspectives, but none appear to come from the area of literary drama. This is attested to by Ezenwanebe, who notes "paucity of criticism in the field of drama" (14). However, a connection between the theory and Nigerian drama may be made by observing characters' behaviour patterns to demonstrate their self-esteem and how drama has depicted characters in such a manner.

Self-esteem states that there are similarities among individuals in a group that set them apart from other groups. It illustrates how self-esteem fosters psychological closeness within a group while also predisposing it to another group with a higher degree of self-esteem. This explains why groups within a society compete with one another to defend and enhance their own strengths. This explains why one group's superior feeling of self-worth may pose an identity threat to another (Martiny and Rubin 22). Dramatists have used their artistry to show characters in their most authentic form, especially since they are taken from society. Hence, Nigerian dramatists represent their characters to reflect their different cultures; they are portrayed as social beings, agents to cause social change; and they are portrayed to respond to stimuli.

Characters as Cultural Beings

A society is constructed around its culture, which has an impact on people's lives. Invariably, humans are defined by their culture, yet culture is also created by humans, and life in general is guided by it. Affirming this notion, Bahmani states that "The cultural cohesion in different civilizations affects human behaviour"(1). Adjustments and modifications are made to culture on a regular basis to meet human wants and aspirations. Human groupings achieve their particular successes through patterned ways of being, feeling, and doing, including their embodiment in objects. These are assumed to be the cornerstones of culture. Fischer explains that when defining culture, an emphasis must be placed on "sharedness" (30), because culture is anything that a group of people hold dear and have in common. Rohner explores two more distinctions in the notion of culture to further emphasise the idea that culture is shared by a group of individuals. The first difference is between culture as a set of actions and culture as a collection of meanings. Second, some scholars, known as realists, believe that culture has an independent reality, while others, known as nominalists, think that it is merely a subjective human construct (115).

Because culture evolves into a collection of behaviours, "behaviour scientists often use culture as an explanation of behaviour" (Cronk 36). Consequently, Nigerian playwrights are clearly conscious of their many distinct cultures; thus, they are unable to dissociate those cultures from the behaviour of the characters they create. Though it is argued by some academics who believe

that behaviour can be divorced from culture (Lindridge 1; Meneganzin and Currie 47; Muchon and de Rose 322), to them, culture focuses on abstract ideals, concepts, and worldviews in order to comprehend experience and create behaviour, which may not be represented in their observable. Hence, not all culture traits have an impact on behaviour; cultures are not static sets of ideas, values, and behaviours; rather, they vary with time. Irrespective of either of the standpoints, Nigerian dramatists have promoted and preserved culture by portraying characters as cultural in nature.

Characters as Social Beings

The first person to acknowledge that humans are social creatures by nature was Aristotle. According to him, society is given priority over the individual; any individual who does not participate in society is either a beast or a deity and is either unable to live a normal life or is self-sufficient enough to not need to. From then on, scholars describe the human species as a sociable animal, as social primates, because they live in organised social groups, engage in communication and interpersonal interaction, and plan their actions around their fellow creatures. One of the primary distinguishing traits of a social animal is the ability to live together in organised groups. To ensure collaboration, a strong set of social cognitive skills is required (Sakman 1).

It is culture that shapes norms as humans live in families, work in teams, view duty and purpose through religious communities, and bargain through business partnerships and political coalitions. Aronson states that one of the most fundamental behavioural traits of humans is the ability to form social connections and to live in social groups; this explains why humans are frequently referred to as social animals (10). Further speaking on why humans are described as social beings, Corsi notes Weber and Durkheim, who, in their research in the 1960s, tried to explain how people are social agents and not just objects of socialisation imposed by society. Their study focused on humans as social creatures by emphasising their agency in constructing society rather than just being passively impacted by it, making fundamental contributions to sociological theory and practice (441-447). The fact that humans are social agents implies that they interact with other agents through communication. They can also coordinate and work together to complete tasks.

According to the aforementioned arguments, Nigerian playwrights capitalise on the portrayal of society in their dramas through their characters, who interact with other members of society while living their best lives. The personalities cohabit in society and, to some extent, work together to succeed. This bolsters sociologists' claims that individuals inside social groupings interact with one another. People usually identify with the organisations they belong to, and these groups frequently inspire them to improve, preserve, or defend their social status (Citrin et al. 73).

Characters: Agents to Cause Social Change

Human life and existence are characterised by constant change. Throughout history, human activities have been constantly chronicled, and change is something that continues to happen as a result of the presence of humans. For a change to be deemed social, it must touch all aspects of a society or social group, not just the lives and behaviour of individual members. In this

view, social change is defined as collective and deep within a whole society or social group (Akujobi and Jack 493). Several factors have an impact on how characters progress toward social transformation. Social scientists have identified many variables that affect social and cultural development, and these include the complex relationships between the environment, technology, culture, personality, political, economic, religious, and demographic changes (Ekpenyong 15). The phrase "social change" refers to shifts in interpersonal relationships and interactions. Considering social interactions are the foundation of society, when social change happens, the system of social ties must also change.

Nigerian dramatists have shown through their characters that their works make a significant contribution to societal development. Nigerian drama has impacted political systems, exposed injustice, and moulded human civilizations, offering an in-depth look at human existence and creating connection to a fundamental level of passion and desire. Adimora-Ezeigbo confirms the importance of literature in effecting change while arguing against the essence of its role when she states that "it cannot change anything unless someone responds to the work and does something with it..."(5). Nigerian dramatists have shown their characters to be responsive to events going on around them, and are used to push for change in the world of the texts, which is the same change anticipated in the real world. Nigerian dramatists have portrayed their characters as catalysts for revolutionary change. Speaking of the work of second-generation playwrights like Osofisan, Omotosho, and Sowande, who are characterised as radical dramatists who are dissatisfied with the nationalistic nature of their forebears, Obafemi states that "their work deals urgently with contemporary social problems in Nigeria with the aim of raising mass awareness of a positive revolutionary alternative to the present decadence" (168).

Characters and Social Stimuli

In order to exist, humans must be able to recognise and react to stimuli. For the purpose of this research, stimuli in this regard will be described in relation to society as social stimuli. Hence, a stimulus is anything that can trigger a physical or behavioural change in society. Social stimulus would simply refer to a person, group, or event that has social significance and has the potential to have an impact on interpersonal relationships. Allport gives credence to the assertion that human beings react to social activities around them by defining behaviour as the "process of responding to a stimulus by an activity that is normally useful to life" and social stimuli as any action taken by an animal (human or non-human), whether it be a movement, attitude, gesture, or sound, that causes a reaction in another species (149). In addition, he shares his opinion that human beings respond to social stimuli because each person has certain structures, reflexes, emotions, behaviour, and traits that are essential to their conduct as a social unit. He adds that there are influences on the growth and development of these behavioural processes. In his work, he did not only investigate how individual traits are created through the effects of stimulus and response; he also discussed and looked at the stimuli and reactions themselves as they arise during social contact.

In drama, playwrights activate a conscious state in the audience, or readers. Through engagement with a dramatic work, the audience or readers interpret and judge motives and are moved to react to the events presented to them, which in turn prompts the transformation

intended by the playwright. Characters in Nigerian drama have been presented as sensitive people who pay close attention to what is going on around them and act accordingly. Characters have been portrayed as reacting to their social environment in the same way a stimulus is registered by a sensory receptor to evoke a reflex via stimulus transduction. The fight-or-flight reaction is an example of how external stimuli can cause systemic responses throughout the body in physiology, and this is similarly depicted in literature. Social influences are exerted through the dramatic work to evoke response mechanisms in the audience. The social cues present in the dramatic works are simply to evoke responses that may alter, reroute, or amplify a course of action. Hence, stimuli as presented in literature through characters will be reactions to social issues for many reasons, including an indication of ensuing danger. The social influence exerted on the audience or readers by drama works becomes the social stimulus aimed at the audience or readers, to which they respond. This influence has been primarily created by Nigerian playwrights through the characters they present.

Habib Yakoob's Background
Yakoob Habib was born in 1972 in Okene, Kogi State, in the north-central part of Nigeria. He had his first degree in mass communication from Bayero University, Kano. For over a decade, he worked as a journalist before moving into public relations. He is a public relations specialist with writing, speaking, and listening skills. He has a PhD. in media arts and a special interest in research and writing. His drama, *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die,* is a political comedy exposing how a nation's democracy is eroded as a result of political corruption. It focuses on politicians who are using any measure required to gain political power. The "Ugly Ones" are those who consistently reappear and subvert the concept of democracy.

The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die – A Synopsis
Following six years of national asylum in the US, Chief and Mrs. Jude Oscar return to Nigeria. Jude's plan is to live a quiet life. However, he is persuaded by Esam to go into politics and run on the PPP platform with little difficulty because his return falls during the period when the nation is getting ready for the presidential election. Inside the two political parties, the Peoples Progressive Party's (PPP) camp as well as the NCP's, the parties participate in bribery, brazen fighting, arson, enormous rigging, and other forms of misconduct during the primaries. The political financiers, will stop at nothing to ensure that their candidates win. Jude, Ezekiel, and Dansa are only a few of the people who have enriched themselves immensely by ruling and plundering the nation's funds. Either they run for office themselves or they must support other candidates. These group of political crooks and rampant looters are the enemies of the country that "the country has ever produced since independence," and they want to return and take control of us once more. These people are known as "the ugly ones who have refused to die."

Felix who represents the youth in Nigerian politics is not making things better by letting the elderly politicians bully and influence them. The women in the text lack political will, affection, and mutual trust, they are also not in any way better than the men. Jude eventually emerges as the PPP's flag bearer, while Ezekiel receives the NCP ticket amid threats and deception. Nevertheless, the military's ascent to power ends the democratic process; thus, their victory is fleeting. When it appears that Jude is unwilling to fulfil his end of the bargain, Esam

extends an invitation to the armed forces to take over. Consequently, the military becomes the tool used by influential politicians to remove their rivals from government. Some individuals are fortunate enough to escape, but others are not. Jude gets apprehended by the authorities while attempting to flee the nation while dressing as a woman. But, in order to keep his dark history as a jail breaker and rapist hidden from the public, Ezekiel was compelled to step aside for Hajiya Billy, one of the few contenders who opposed others and advocated for an equitable and fair campaign.

Processes of Self-esteem in *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die*
Processes of self-esteem analysed in this section are the self-perception, self-verification, feeling of esteem and self-evaluation and morality that in turn affect character's identity to explain character motivation.

Self-Perception
As revealed in the text, Jude, the main character, steals public funds and then takes off to the United States. His return to the country after six years is intended to be spent low-key before he is lured into politics. Despite his past, he perceives and views himself in a positive light, as seen below:

> **JUDE:**   Look… but … I still believe and insist that politics in Nigeria is a
>   nightmare and therefore unhealthy for an honourable man like me.
>   (12)

When being introduced to politics by Esam after his comeback, Jude's wife, Esther, frowns, reminding him of his past record, which would pose a threat to his success. In spite of this, Jude, the main character believes in himself and with the help of Esam who confirms to him that winning the election would only be by corruption, Jude is bent on achieving his goals as noted below:

> **ESTHER:**   What did I hear you say, Jude? …Politics? Have you forgotten
>   what happened to you shortly before you left the country the other
>   time? (13)
>
> **JUDE:**   …I want to put that behind me for now.(14)
> **ESAM:**   …Tell me sir; is it on credibility or ability to deliver? Which do
>   you have? (33)
> **JUDE:**   With this amount you have collected, all I need is a win. How you
>   do it, is not my business… (34)

The fact that Jude's self-perception of himself is strong, his perception which involves cognitive appraisals of himself, being intact, helps him in staying focused on pursuing his goals. Esam's comment and Esther's reservation on his political career are enough to kill his political

interest, instead of that happening to him, he is resolute to do anything for the sake of politics. This act confirms the positive perception of himself, with traits of confidence and competence.

Other characters like Felix, Joe, and Bala in the text display a different level of self-perception different from that of Jude. For these men, self-esteem is "to stand up and hold our principles" (21). They also see themselves in good light but in contrast to Jude's view of life. Since self-esteem is associated with personal ideas about individual abilities and social connections, everyone is free to develop himself or herself at will. That some characters within the text does not approve of other characters' actions does not in any way deter such characters from achieving, rather, the consequence of those actions is what has brought about realisations in the character who, at the end, attempts for a change. Jude, with characters of his kind, sees themselves contesting for political posts and winning the primaries. This establishes that people with similar esteem will come together to form a group.

This early portrayal of Jude's character in the text encourages the reader to attribute a different self-esteem to him, but as he connects with a like-minded Esam, who lures him to politics, his true nature is revealed. Jude displays a feeling of love for himself to achieve his goals irrespective of his past; rather than loathe his questionable character, he describes himself as "an honourable man" (12). He also perceives himself, claiming to have qualities and skill to lead, as seen thus:

> **JUDE:** …I declare solemnly my interest to join politics and contest keenly for the presidency of this beloved nation, Nigeria.(14)

Another main character, Hajiya Billy, reveals perception of herself when she prides in her ability to oust the men considered corrupt in the drama. She notes the fraud perpetrated in the election that brought in the corrupt leaders and is bent on relieving them of the ill-gotten post, as shown:

> **BILLY:** …I won't relent, I shall forever protest the validity of the election (61).

Further confirming Hajiya Billy's perception of herself, Dansa, a corrupt political ally, identifies her self-esteem when he notes:

> **DANSA:** How optimistic you women ever are! It's most audacious of you (62)

The reason for Hajiya Billy to take this step along with some other characters in the drama confirms she perceives herself differently, and this significantly impacts her behaviour towards what she identifies as wrong. Self-perception is again established in the text through more characters, like Felix. In the text, Felix's self-perception allows him to view himself and others in manners that impact his judgement, mood, and behaviour. Felix, a young forty-two years old politician perceives Jude noting:

FELIX: …I am disturbed by this chronic looter, a common thief on his way to buying our consciences…this man you have embraced him as your hero, stole millions of naira in his days as Works and Housing Minister and ran abroad…the same man is back again, seeking for number one position of the same country he has pauperized…(29)

This accounts for the reason he (Felix) withstands Jude, whom he describes as an unscrupulous politician. Each of these characters confirm the presence of esteem through the satisfaction they derive from themselves, their abilities, skills, and decisions. Consequently, Joe and Felix, through their perception and assessment of politicians, attribute the attainment of leadership roles to how cunning the participants strive to be. This reflection leads them to socially compare the results the political participants get and confirm that only those who go their way to satisfy esteem needs achieve their desired goals.

3.2.2 Self-Verification

Self-esteem, when assessed through self-verification, proved it is not fixed; it is changeable and quantifiable, which allows it to be tested and built upon. This is confirmed when Jude states, when questioned about joining the "dreadful game called politics,

> We all have our little whims dear; sometimes a man can never really know
> why he does certain things at certain times (56).

Self-verification has it that people want others to see them as they see themselves and therefore will actively strive to have others perceive them in ways that confirm their stable self-views. The constant reassurance of confirmation of an individual's self-concept allows characters to always verify through others to be sure their esteem is balanced. As a result, individuals use various strategies to create self-verifying social situations. Jude, through self-verification, assesses himself based on the information he obtains from society and in turn use it to build his esteem. For example, from his experiences, Joe, a spectator in the political party, believes that:

> People don't win elections in Nigeria on the basis of principles and honesty.
> In fact, they even lose them for those qualities… elections have become mere
> forum for electing the best crooks (37).

The statement above serves as motivation for personalities like Jude's who need such words to confirm their social stance in terms of their esteem and perception.

Furthermore, when self-verification is taking place, people enter alliances that are likely to validate their self-views. This is confirmed in the text when Jude joins a party of "political crooks," as revealed in the extract:

JUDE: I like to be grouped among the unserious ones

> **ESAM:**   You have no choice, Chief. (54)

Also in the business, Jude visited General Dansa, a corrupt, former military president, who describes his leaving the military to run democratic businesses as "leaving the past full of cankerworms" (59), to assist his (Jude) political ambition. For Jude, being in the company of his like minds establishes his esteem and confidence. Having confirmed through self-verification he is in the right circle, it becomes a harmless act to publicly discuss and reveal his true nature as stated in the extract below:

> **JUDE:**   Modern day elections are not necessarily won on basis of credibility or merit; at least not in Africa. As skeletons, brother; surely we all keep them. What we may yet know is who among us is richest in them. (*They all laugh childishly*). (60)

3.2.3 Feelings of Esteem
A feeling of esteem is attained after an individual has achieved or succeeded in significant things; this makes them feel accepted and respected by others and gives them a positive self-concept, which leads to high self-esteem. A feeling of esteem is transient because life itself is not static. Once an attainment is reached, feelings of esteem rise, and should it be otherwise, feelings of esteem fall. In the text, the feeling of esteem for Jude is short-lived because his crooked ways are soon abruptly ended by the moves of the likes of Felix, Joe, and Hajiya Billy. The bigger blow for Joe is finding out that Esam, his partner in crime, who lures him into politics, has not only swindled him but has given him away to the military officials. In disguise as a female to evade arrest when his house is being rounded up, he is found out and arrested (75).

3.2.4 Self-Evaluation and Morality
Self-evaluation and morality are seen to be inextricably linked to self-esteem. While self-evaluation is the act of critically assessing oneself through observation and rating to determine one's competency and overall performance, moral self-esteem relates to how essential morality is to a person's self-image. That is, how a person is worried about the principles of wrong and right action. The text's judgement of self-evaluation and morality by characters such as Jude demonstrates that his moral viewpoint differs from others'. What is proper for him is to achieve political positions by all means necessary; even when he is mocked. His self-esteem and appraisal acted as a buffer against unfavourable criticism of him. For the likes of Esam, the evaluation of himself as moral becomes evident after he assessing the political terrain that is obviously soon to be taken over by "crooked politicians,". For him, the right thing to do is to play along, to later expose the corrupt Democrats warming up to take over government from the military rulers. For Hajiya Billy, Felix, and Joe, self-evaluation and morality is established in their act to defend their conscience and see to it that the nation is rescued from predators.

3.3 Role of Self-Esteem on the Main Characters in *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die*

Self-esteem has a substantial impact on the development of personality since it shapes opinions, emotions, and actions. Hence, self-perception, self-verification, self-evaluation, morals, and feelings of esteem are all directly impacted by one's level of self-esteem. Cast and Burke note that the role of self-esteem in characters can be understood as an outcome, motive, and buffer (1060). By these, the academics explain that self-esteem is a product of (outcome) and a required component of the self-verification process that happens within groups, hence supporting both the individual and the ingroup. Verification of role identities boosts a person's worth- and efficacy-based self-esteem. Self-verification builds self-esteem, which protects (buffers) against negative feelings during disruptions, allowing for continued engagement and continuity in structural arrangements. The self-esteem produced by verification motivates members of the ingroup to create and maintain relationships that verify identity.

As seen in the text, Jude, in his ingroup, the Peoples Progressive Party (PPP), self-verifies his esteem to be sure he is accepted. By so doing, he gains the acceptance of members who share similar opinions with him within his group, and this serves as a factor that holds the group together. His worth is also constantly verified by Esam, who advertises him to all members in order for him to gain their approval (28). The self-esteem Jude has built up from the acceptance he gets helps him minimise the effect of disapproval he gets from Felix within the ingroup (29).

Self-esteem helped the likes of Jude, Dansa, and Ezekiel buffer against the negative effects their counterparts would have had on them while they continued to push forward, as seen thus:

> **JUDE:** Oh! Chief Dansa! (Laughs derisively) It is remarkable the way we all try to run away from the past.
> **DANSA:** It is the only thing left for us for all our past is full of cankerworms.
> **JUDE:** But I wonder if we shall ever successfully break away from that period.
> **DANSA:** Why not! We should never give up, brother. I've heard an old fool say that without our past we can never forge ahead.(59)

Finally, the need for self-esteem, which is fostered in part by self-verification, helps to stabilise the different groups by motivating members to develop and sustain connections that validates their identities.

4.0 Conclusion and Discussion of Findings

The findings align with previous studies that have found that 50% of human personalities and emotions of esteem are inherited, with the remaining 50% resulting from our surroundings (Bleidorn et al. 231; Horsburgh et. al. 105; Svedberg et. al. 425). As revealed in the text through the employment of self-esteem theory, an individual's behaviour is developed from social influences, which are psychological. Psychological influences like self-verification, self-perception, and a feeling of self-worth impacted Jude, who perceives himself as a worthy leader despite his past dirty records of embezzlement. The psychological influence of self-perception

under self-esteem served as a compass to direct his actions in the bid to attain power and remain relevant in the political terrain.

From the text, the role of self-esteem confirms that individuals will continue to see themselves in a positive light and evoke feelings of self-confidence within themselves. In the text, Jude flees to the United States after stealing state funds. Having developed the confidence to return to Nigeria, his esteem also soars. Even when he faces criticism, he sees himself in a good light. The fact that Jude's self-evaluation, which includes cognitive judgements of himself, was intact, indicated the strength of his self-esteem, and that helps him stay focused on his goals. Other characters in the drama, like Felix, Joe, and Bala, also demonstrate varying degrees of self-esteem. For these men, self-esteem means simply "standing up and holding good principles" (*The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die* 21).

The outcome of the individual's character revealed that self-esteem can be employed to attain desired goals, and it is a source of strength even in the face of criticism. Hajiya Billy demonstrates a sense of self-esteem when she takes delight in her abilities to evict the corrupt political mates in the drama. She notices the electoral fraud that brought in unscrupulous politicians and is determined to relieve them of their ill-gotten posts. This is achievable for her through the powerful display of her perception, verification, evaluation, and morality.

The findings further revealed that characters pursuit to maintain their esteem becomes a motivator for influencing societal behaviours. Through the self-esteem theory, a deeper understanding of the characters' behaviour and motivations in their group relationships was revealed. Revelations of the inner influences led to negative or positive attitudes within groups. The analysis of the drama text confirmed that Nigerian drama, like her sister genres, is capable of discussing trending issues concerning identity. Hence, through it, it is established that self-esteem is an important factor in understanding character behaviour in society.

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