

## INTRIGUE AS A DRAMATIC DEVICE: AN INSTRUMENT OF CHARACTER DEFAMATION

**Dr. Obiageli Theresa Nsolibe**  
Department of Linguistics/Igbo  
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University  
Igbariam Campus  
Email: obynsolibe@yahoo.com

### **Abstract**

The study 'Intrigue as a dramatic device: an instrument of character defamation' deals with a form of guile to damage one's character. It is where a sort of harm is done to a person's character in such a way that the person doing the harm pretends not to know what he is doing. The researcher delves into this work because of the increase in destroying people's character that is prevalent in the present day society and the negative effect it is having on the target character in particular and the society at large. This work aims at showcasing ways whereby intrigue defame people's characters, since characters exhibit idiosyncrasies in action and language that show intended harm though in a guile manner. The study adopted the survey design. A total of four plays *Ome ihe jide ofo (OIJO)*, *Ajo obi (AO)*, from Nwaozuzu, female author and *Nwata rie awo (NRA)*, *Eriri mara ngwugwu (EMN)* from Onyekaoonu, male author. The study discovered that there are two essential components of intrigue as character defamation device: one is the exchange, that is, the framework of an intrigue and two is the objective and that is, the true aim of the participant. It is also observed that intrigue as device for character defamation are of three types- the direct, the indirect and the conspiracy. All have dire consequences. The study concludes that for more peaceful society, people should desist from intrigue and resort to dialogue to address issues and for correctional purposes.

### **Introduction**

Drama is one of the three genres of literature that has its own devices involved in its writing. It is a form of text that is performed in front of an audience or, can also be said to be a play written for theatre, television, radio, and film. As a genre of literature, it is represented in performance in plays, opera, mime, ballet, in theatre, and on television. Its written text contains dialogues, and stage directions. Generally speaking, all dramatic or theatrical productions have certain elements in common: the performer or performers, their acting in space (usually some sort of stage), and time (some limited duration of performance), and a producing process and organization (Baldwick, 2004).

Drama is a mode of fictional representation through dialogue and performance <https://literarydevices.net/drama/>. It is a composition in verse or prose presenting a story in pantomime or dialogue. Obstfeld (2002), said that dialogue in drama is very important because, it is one of the best literary forms through which dramatists can directly speak and x-ray themes of drama to their readers, or the audience, and they can receive instant feedback of audience. Drama is an important means of stimulating creativity in problem solving perceptions about the world.

An in-depth understanding of drama is made manifest when drama is looked at critically. Drama criticism is the comparison, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of dramatic works. Various reference works describe literary criticism as essentially an opinion, supported by evidence, relating to theme, style, setting, historical context, or political context. Drama as a genre of literature deals with people's way of life and as such both the theme, style, language, and other elements of drama portray the life of the people. This is why different races of the world have their drama and other literary genres and the genres like drama are named according to the people that own them. For instance, American drama, British drama, Chinese drama, Igbo drama, and others, portray their peoples' ways of life and what is happening in the society.

Drama creates an outlet for emotions, thoughts, and dreams that might not otherwise have means to be expressed. This means that communicating skill is of utmost importance in drama because, through communication, the message the playwright intends the audience to have is made manifest to them. It is through communication that the intriguer perpetrates his act of defaming the target's character which is his intention.

Drama has many types, such as comedy, tragedy, tragicomedy and melodrama. They all have the common characteristics. Common characteristics of drama include plot, characters, conflict, music and dialogue. An intriguer can use these types to defame character. **Comedy** is a type of drama that aims to make the audience laugh. Its tone is light and it mostly has a happy ending. **Tragedy** is a type of drama that involves murder, insanity, and pain. Main characters usually have some kind of weakness or defect that causes their downfall and the intriguer can capitalize on these weaknesses to perpetrate his evil act. **Tragicomedy** is a type of drama that combines the features of tragedy and comedy. It means that such play may be sad but will have a happy ending, or it may be serious with some elements of humour emerging throughout the whole play. The intriguer can use humour to put up his act of defamation, doing it in such a way that it will look as if he is just being humourous. **Melodrama** is the last one of the four types of drama. It is a kind of drama in which everything is hyperbolized. Usually, themes depicted in melodramas are simply ideas and without any unpredictable plot twists. Melodramas are mostly love stories with beautiful heroines, charming heroes and scary villains (Faulkner, 1999). The intriguer can also achieve his aim of defaming the character of his victim in a melodramatic way, that is, creating a scene out of something that is of little or no consequence.

All these types of drama mentioned above have elements of drama. Very often a dramatist creates his or her play around an idea- or set of ideas- that will be explored through the development of the drama. These ideas are the themes of the play. "Theme in a technical sense is the broad idea, message or moral of a story" (Obstfield, 2002). It is the big idea or point that is central to a story, which can often be summed up in a single word (for example, love, greed, death, intrigue, betrayal). Relating theme to drama, Cohen (1997, 97), defines it as, "The abstracted intellectual content of the play, the general point or truth about human beings that may be drawn from it". Theme can be clearly stated through dialogue or action, or can be inferred after watching the entire performance. It is the philosophy that forms the base of the story or a moral lesson that the characters learn. A play can have more than one theme and, it is possible to gain a new insight at each reading to discover a theme.

Themes are not always constantly present in a story or composition. Rather, they weave in and out, can disappear entirely, or appear surprisingly mid-read. This is because there are two types of themes- major and minor themes. Major themes are just as they sound, the more important and enduring themes of the narrative. Major themes are the most significant themes of the story, and often they are a part of the entire story. For instance, intrigue is a major theme in one of the texts under study (*OIJO*) because Ochediye from the beginning after eavesdropping on the discussion between Chief Oduenyi, her husband and his elders-in-council, plans to deprive Ubaji, her step son of his rightful throne when Chief Oduenyi, her husband dies. A book on hardship would have the major theme of suffering effect on humanity, whereas a book on romance would have the major theme of love. Therefore, major theme is an idea that a writer repeats in his literary work, making it the most significant idea in the work. A minor theme, on the other hand, refers to an idea that appears to a work briefly, giving way to another minor theme. They are less important and less enduring. They may appear for part of the narrative only to be replaced by another minor theme later in the narrative. They provide discussion points for a chapter or two, but do not color the entire story. A book on hardship may have minor themes such as lack of money and sickness. A book of romance may have minor themes such as infidelity, divorce and flirtation (<https://literaryterms.net> > theme/).

Drama has so many devices known as dramatic devices. A dramatic device is a convention used in drama as a substitute for reality that the audience accepts as real although they know them to be false. These techniques give the audience information they could not get from straightforward presentation of action (<https://www.filepicker.io/api/file/eUhtLPyQjOMWN7UvgaU7>). Such devices include: dramatic irony, nemesis, paradox, soliloquy. **Irony** occurs when the reader knows a secret, but the characters in a play or work of fiction do not. Therefore, the words or actions of a character carry a special meaning for the reader, but are understood differently by the character. **Nemesis** is applied to the justice that comes about when an evil act brings about its own punishment and poetic justice prevails. **Paradox** is a device used to attract the reader's attention. It is a statement which seems contradictory or, absurd, but well-founded and true at the same time. **Soliloquy** is a speech given by a character in a play when the speaker is alone. This is presented to inform the audience or readers of what is happening in the mind of a character and give information about the action of the play. **Pathetic fallacy** is a device used by writers whereby nature mirrors the political condition of society. Pathos is a situation that elicits pity from the audience. **Aside** is a speech made by an actor directly to the audience, but seemingly to himself. It is always a true reflection of the characters' thoughts. Its function is to reveal the character. **Tragedy** is a type of drama of human conflict which ends in defeat and suffering. Often the main character (dignified, noble) has a tragic flaw (weakness of character, wrong judgement) which leads to his or her destruction. Sometimes, the conflict is the focus beyond the control of the character- fate, evil in the world. **Foreshadow** is a hint or warning of things to come, making specific events in the plot seem more probable as they unfold. **Imagery** is using images to describe or compare something, so that the reader forms a picture in his or her mind. **Hamartia** is an ancient Greek theatre term meaning the error, frailty, mistaken judgement or misstep through which the fortunes of the hero of a tragedy are reversed. Hamartia must express itself through a definite action, or, failure to perform a definite action. Hamartia can result from bad judgement, a bad character, ignorance, inherited weakness, or accident. This error does not always result from an error in character (<https://schoolworkhelper.net/types-of-dramatic-devices/>). **Tragic Hero**- Tragedy is about waste, a waste of people and a waste of

unrealized potential. Ezenwata (*Ajo obi*), has high individual potential which is wasted by an individual weakness which greatly affects others. If Ezenwata's potential had been realized, he would have been a hero. Unrealized potential is the difference between a successful versus unsuccessful quest. "Intrigue is a complicated or, clandestine plot or scheme intended to affect some purpose by secret artifice; conspiracy; stratagem. It also refers to the plot of a play, poem or romance; the series of complications in which a writer involves their imaginary characters" (Lodge, 2012). This essay focuses on intrigue as a dramatic device that defames target characters.

### **Intrigue as A Dramatic Device.**

Griffith (2010) avers that intrigue is a literary device where a character uses tricks to run down another character. In his own contribution, Atkin (1983) defines intrigue as the making of secret plans that are intended to harm other people. But, it is not in all cases that intrigue connotes negativity. At times it involves love and loving activities. We are going to discuss intrigue as a vice and not virtue in dramatic genre.

The concept 'intrigue' is charged with highly emotional connotations. The word intrigue is uttered by people with repugnance. Intrigue is mostly morally infamous and ugly. If one is unmasked as an intriguer, it is despicable. Intrigue is a tactical attack from a safe shelter, designed to harm its victim. Cunningly, and usually with the help of camouflage, intrigue is effected to settle interpersonal conflicts (<http://www.forum-gap.de/intrigueengl..htm>).

The main ruses of intrigue are dialectic deformation of information and the manipulation of human behavior, simplified by knowledge concerning typical reactions of the individual and his weakness. Dormant mistrust is easily aroused and the poison of artfully applied information works quickly (<http://www.forum-gap.de/intrigueengl..htm>). In *Ome ihe jide ofo (OIJ)*, Ochediye, cunningly instigates Ichie Nnanyelugo against Ubaji, the chosen king in the event of the death of the reigning King Oduenyi, the father of Ubaji. Ochediye manipulated Ichie Nnanyelugo into believing that, Ubaji plans to remove him from the position of prime minister once he is made the king of Umudem. Ochediye fully aware of Ichie Nnanyelugo's sensitivity to his position and, can do anything to retain it, manipulates his ire to effect a fatal outcome. Only Ichie Nnanyelugo can help her deny Ubaji, the chosen king his throne, in the event of king Oduenyi, his father's death. So, she cunningly instigates him by defaming Ubaji's character and to deny him his throne. Ochediye's motive is camouflaged and Ichie Nnanyelugo is not aware that he is about to become the victim of a ruse. Ochediye's dialectically calculated information, namely 'Ubaji's plan to remove him from his position as the prime minister once he is made the king', is the weapon whereby she wishes to achieve her aim. This malicious attack is a simply-conceived intrigue and clearly demonstrates its essence.

Three people are generally involved in an intrigue. However, it is conceivable that an intrigue is affected between two people, if the plotter is able to make use of the sub consciousness or subtle characteristics of a person. Consequently, this illustration shows how the wicked husband of Uduaku, Ochonganooko, (*EMN*), deceives the guileless Uduaku that, the journey they are embarking on is, to see a native doctor who, will give her medicine so that she will bear him a male child which they lack while actually, he is going to sell her to ritual killers. So, two people are involved in the above intrigue- the plotter (Ochonganooko), and the target (Uduaku).

Three basic forms of intrigue can be classified. If one is to differentiate according to modes of attacks used, these forms are: the indirect attack which is designed to make use of a third person, an intermediary, for the attack. This mode of aggression could be termed 'the billiard stroke' of the intriguer. The second mode of attack if applied is if the intriguer makes use of a weakness of his object, a soft spot, and a compromising situation, to attack directly (<http://www.forum-gap.de/intrigueengl..htm>). This is the 'thrust' as in *Ome ihe jide ofo* (*OIJO*). The intriguer plays up false information for all it's worth, after she had previously scheme it.

The third basic form of intrigue is the conspiracy, the alliance of several persons to attack someone, set up obstacles or to harm the target object in some other way (<http://www.forum-gap.de/intrigueengl..htm>). For instance, in the Old Testament, the Book of Judges (Chapter 16, Verses 5-19), the Philistines plot with Delilah, Sampson's mistress, to find out the source of Sampson's strength with, the promise of giving her one thousand one hundred (1100) shekels of silver in return.

Apart from these classifications of intrigue in its primary forms, there is another characteristic of differentiation recognizable to the victims. In the case of conspiracy, the attack is normally not immediately evident to the victims. In contrast, the victim of the attack is straightaway aware of the intentions of the intriguer if the latter makes use of defamatory vocabulary in public speeches to incite the audience against him. Faintly discernable is, the approbation of conciliatory but, hypocritical flattery, which is combined with contradictory statements (Horsley, 2010).

To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists of breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting. Bold deeds and heroic acts of courageous men and women adorned in glittering amour and wielding shining weapons in the defense of their realm and in the name of leaders live large in the minds of the young and naïve (Disreali, 1967). But behind the endless ranks of warriors and faithful are the true movers and shakers of the sector. The art of intrigue is a dance as much as it is also a battle. Its two essential components are: the exchange, the framework of an intrigue, and the objective, the true aim the participants, aside of perceived intentions (Disreali, 1967).

The structure of an intrigue always follows the same rules: an exchange comprises of six steps (from the setting up of an exchange to the resolution of the winning party and a conclusion after one party fully loses its composure), a complex intrigue unfolds over several exchanges and even intrigues after the accumulation of enough influence points (Anderson, 2013).

In Onyekaonwu's *Nwata rie awo* (*NRA*), Agwubike makes a speech in the gathering of his kinsmen where, they are deciding the case of Obioma, who is accused of poisoning Aworo, her husband's food. Agwubike in his speech in front of his kinsmen designed to denigrate his kinsmen's decision on the case, and after condemning statements on how his kinsmen gave verdict on the case, he finishes with the inciting statement: '*...ihe nwaanyi a mere bu aru ocha nke bu an ahuhu kwesiri ya bu igbu ya egbu ma o bu irefu ya erefu!*'. Aworo, can discern, of course, the guile, as the statement does not accord with the verdict to the supposed crime committed. In Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' Mark Anthony makes a funeral oration in front of the Roman citizens that is designed to denigrate Brutus and, after accusatory statements, he regularly finishes with: '*...but Brutus is an honourable man!*'. Brutus can discern, of course, the

guile, as the flattery does not accord with the committed murder. The audience, if not the protagonist, knows that a time bomb is ticking. Some intentions are very evident, yet some rider-moves are wrongly conceived.

Machinations are aligned like pearls on a string to titillate the audience. Intrigue is evident everywhere and it seems that the spectator is especially diverted and thrilled by this game. The selections of events allow the reader the opportunity, as with parables, to draw parallels from his experience. However, people seem to enjoy intrigue in dramas, comedies and sometimes in political life, but, it is very clear that intrigue is evil.

Intrigue is engulfing the society like a mushroom. Of what kind is the soil where the mushroom of intrigue is ruining the social body? What rotten stuff is the food for the mushroom? Evidently, not only an individual has a certain manner to manage conflicts by intrigue. It is also the conflict structure in the social body that is leading people on the rails of its patterns to certain machinations (Anderson, 2013). He continues by saying that such rails or tracks are the result of the frequency of conflicts, the escalation of conflicts, and a certain manner to taboo conflict in showing off well behaviour. Experienced people do not take a certain smile always as a basic friendly attitude. Intrigue is perpetrated to a character for the purposes of causing harm or damage to the character and or, to defame the character.

### **Intrigue as a Dramatic Device for Defaming Character**

**Defamation** according to Donagan (2017, 76) is, “The oral or written communication of a false statement about another that unjustly harms his reputation and usually constitutes a tort or crime”. It can also be defined as, the act of saying false things in order to make people have a bad opinion of someone or something. In some places, a true statement can be considered defamation. But to constitute defamation, a claim must generally be false and must have been made to someone other than the target of the communication. The communication can be in any form. It may be in the media such as in printed words or images, and it is called ‘libel’. It can also be communicated orally and this is called ‘slander’. Contributing Hall-Lipsy& Malanga (2017), say that defamation is a false statement someone makes about you, which they publish as a statement of fact, and which harms your personal and/or professional reputation or causes you other damages, including financial loss and emotional distress. When such a statement is directed to a person, it is seen as character defamation.

Defamation of character is the communicating of a false message in order to cause severe harm to another person’s reputation (Clifton, 1971). He goes on to say that there are three things that must be present in a statement to acclaim it to be defaming character: it must be proven that the accusation is false; it has to be intending harm; finally, it must be proven that harm actually resulted to the victim of defamation of character.

Intrigue can come in form of lying. “A lie is a statement made by one who does not believe it with the intention that someone else shall be led to believe it”(Insenberg 1973, 248). Contributing, Primoratz (1984, 54) defines lying as, “Making a statement believed to be false, with the intention of getting another to accept it as true”. So, to lie is to make a believed-false statement to another person with the intention that the other person believes that statement to be true. The most common wrong act that we carry out is lying. It is an unavoidable part of human

nature. “Lying as intrigue projects four necessary conditions; first, lying requires that a person makes a statement (statement condition). Second, lying requires that the person believes the statement to be false; that is, lying that the statement be untruthful (untruthfulness condition). Third, lying requires that the untruthful statement be made to another person (addressee condition). Fourth, lying requires that the person intended that that other person believe the untruthful statement to be true (intention to deceive the addressee condition)” (Chisholm and Feeham 1977, 150). For a statement to be an intrigue, it has to destroy the good, pure and true about the target character.

Lies when used as intrigue can threaten people’s self-worth by preventing them from seeing themselves as “good” people, and it can generally erode trust in society (Wiltermuth, Newman & Raj, 2015). Lies told to someone about another person to defame that person’s character by the intriguer can be for selfish interest. When desire for selfish interest motivates lying, the consequences are likely to be negative- not only for the person caught trying to deceive the other but, for the person the lie is targeted at and others. When people lie out of self-interest, their deceptive behavior may become damaging not only to the target character, but to the society at large. People lie about one to another so that the blame which is on their head shifts to that of the other person.

Consequence of lying as an intrigue is triple-barreled. This is because the intriguer, the person who is told the lie, and the person the lie is directed at are harmed in different ways. The person who is lied to suffers if he doesn’t find out because: (i) He can no longer make an informed choice about the issue concerned (ii) He is not fully informed about his possible course of action (iii) He may make a decision that he would not otherwise have made. He may suffer damage as a result of the lie. For instance, in Nwaozuzu (1991), Ichie Nnanyelugo who Ochediye told a lie about Ubaji, suffered death as the consequence of acting on the lie Ochediye told him. On the part of the person the lie is targeted at, he is harmed because the actions the person the lie is told are directed at him. The harm may be spiritual or physical. If the lie is spiritual, it may affect his psyche and his dealings with people. His dealings with people will show lack of ability to make free and informed choices because he now doubts his ability to assess truth and make decisions. If the harm is physical, it may affect his health. In Nwaozuzu (1991), Ubaji who the lie is told about, is made mad by Ochediye, the intriguer and, Ichie Nnanyelugo, the person the lie is told because, Ochediye, who told the lie did so for selfish reason. She wants Nkwonta, her biological son, to be made king instead of Ubaji, her step son as directed by her late husband, the king. The liar himself suffers because, the person lied to and the person lied about may seek revenge. For instance, the liar’s integrity is damaged. He may suffer physically. In Nwaozuzu (1991), Ochediye suffers death. She hanged herself as her plans to have her son made king back fired. The spirit of the late king her husband, Igwe Oduenyi, came and unseat Nkwonta by making him mad in the village square on the day of his presentation to the people of Umundem as their new king. This incident dethrones Nkwonta and the people of Umundem later enthrone Ubaji, the initially chosen heir to the throne, who is now well.

Ochediye.s lies against Ubaji is defaming Ubaji’s character so that, Ichie Nnanyelugo sees him as untrustworthy and selfish. Character defamation means an intentional false communication, either written or spoken, that harms a person’s reputation; decreases the respect, regard, or confidence in which a person is held; or induces disparaging, hostile, or disagreeable opinions or

feelings against a person (Ehrhardt, 1986). Lidsky (1996), contributing says that, defamation is not one tort, but two: libel and slander. He says that a libel is a written defamation or defamation published via any media such that the harm is made to endure, persist or be disseminated in the manner of the printed word. Slander he says is usually published orally or in a manner that is not likely to be preserved in a physical form or broadcast widely. Some elements trail defamation of character. Such elements include falsity, published, intent, and harm.

The first element of defamation is falsity. A statement must be made that is false. What was said or written against a person must be proved false. The second is publication. The statement must be published to someone other than the object of the statement. The publication must not be written. It can be orally done. Intent is next. The one who said or wrote the falsehood intended harm and this has to be made clear. Saying something bad casually about someone would not be classified as intending harm. But, going to a news reporter and sharing orally damaging falsehoods about another person, when the person sharing knows the information is false, is clearly intending harm. Finally, harm must actually result to the victim of defamation of character. In Nwaozuzu (1991), Ochediye made a false statement to Ichie Nnanyelugo to defame Ubaji's character. Her falsehood intended harm and Ubaji is harmed. Ubaji is made mad by the person the lie is told and this incident results in his intended throne taken by another. This is an emotional harm.

There is deceit in form of intrigue as a dramatic device of character defamation. Deception is the act or statement which misleads, hides the truth, or promotes a belief, concept, or idea that is not true. It is often done for personal gain or advantage (Buller, D. B.; Burgoon, J. K. 1996). They also say that deception can involve dissimulation, propaganda, and sleight of hand, as well as distraction, camouflage, or concealment. Deception is a major relational transgression that often leads to feelings of betrayal and distrust between relational partners which violates relational rules with dire consequences. In *EMN*, Uduaku deceives the husband by presenting another person's male child to him as his own to stop him from marrying another wife. In retaliation, Ochonganooko deceives his wife, Uduaku, into believing that he has forgiven her for deceiving him. He tells his wife that, they will visit a powerful native doctor who, will make her have a male child for him while, he all the time plans to sell her off to ritual killers. Uduaku is warned in her third pregnancy by Ochonganooko, her husband, that if she gives birth to another female child, that, he will get a second wife who will bear him a male child. Uduaku, in the bid to solve this problem of lack of a male child, plans with the nurse in the hospital to help her change her female child at birth with a male child from another person who may have a male child on the day of her delivery. This they did and Uduaku presents a male child to her husband. But after many years, their secret leaks and the owner of the male child comes and collects his son and returns the female child to Ochonganooko and, all hell is let loose. Uduaku pleads for forgiveness and her husband pretends to have forgiven her to make her think that all is well again, only for him to sell her to ritual killers when they went on their journey. Uduaku's deceit harms Ochonganooko, her husband emotionally because, he is made to understand that he is still lacking a male child and this threatens his lineage continuity. Consequently, Uduaku's character is defamed because she is exposed as a deceit. Ochonganooko is also seen as a deceit and this defames his character. This is shown when one of the ritual killers he sells his wife Uduaku to, turns out to be Uduaku's father who, on finding out that Uduaku is his daughter, decides to take her back to her husband. This action by the ritual killer exposes the lie Ochonganooko told his



people that his wife drowned in the river. Uduaku is harmed emotionally because the trauma she passed through in the hands of the ritual killers before being rescued by her father.

Malice is also another intrigue that can be used in drama to defame character. According to Elder (2002), he says that malice is a mischief or a desire to inflict injury, harm, or suffering on another, either because of a hostile impulse or out of deep-seated meanness. Malice can either be expressed or implied. Malice is expressed when there is manifested a deliberate intention to unlawfully harm someone. Malice is implied when the circumstances attending the harm shows an abandoned and malignant heart. So, malice is a statement made with reckless disregard for truth. For a statement to show malice, awareness of falsity is required. Lie told on purpose with the intention to hurt which is malice is seen in Ochediye's lie told to Ichie Nnanyelugo against Ubaji in *OIJO*. The lie is told to harm Ubaji by defaming his character and depriving him of his throne. This shows that Ochediye harbours malice for Ubaji who is her step-son. She has this malice for Ubaji because she says that the throne should be handed over to her biological son that she worked for the family wealth with the husband and not Ubaji's late mother. Another example is when Ann who has a shoe store to boost her business and draw customers to her shop, decides to create a website, naming her shoe store 'Ada's Footwear' (Ada also happens to be a town councilor who uses her political role to draw business). Ann's website alleges that Ada's shoes are made by child labour in Okigwe. Soon the whole town has heard that Ada's Footwear uses child labour to make their shoes. Consequently, Ada's business suffers as she loses her customers, and her person suffers as she is voted off the town council. Ann's internet lies have defamed Ada's business and work, causing harm to both her person, work and her business.

There are other ways intrigue can be used to defame character in drama. One such way is through indirect means like innuendo. Innuendo is a special meaning behind ordinary words. According to Kervyn, N., Bergsieker, H. B., Fiske, S. E. (2007), they say that innuendo is the tendency for individuals to draw negative inferences from positive descriptions that omit one of the two fundamental dimensions of social perceptions, warmth and competence. Words which seem innocent used in one way could have a special meaning in another. For example, you might say a man 'spent three years living in Kirikiri' For people living outside Nigeria, this might seem innocent. But people from Nigeria know that the country's main prison is Kirikiri prison in Lagos. So, the innuendo is that the man was a prisoner. In *NRA*, Otikpo's comment to Aworo, his friend, insinuates that Aworo is very fertile but to outsiders and not to his wife. This comment comes when Otikpo, is advising Aworo, his friend to go and find out why Odinchefu his wife has not been able to bear him a child. Otikpo's innuendo goes thus: *I gaa n'uzo, I na-amusisiri ndi ozo nze na okoro ma I choghi iga choputa ihe afo nwunye gi ji ere wawawa*. (When you go outside, you are impregnating women and they are delivering men, but you don't want to go and find out why your wife is childless). The statement shows that Aworo is stupid and useless who cares less about his lineage continuity.

Another way to use intrigue in character defamation in drama is through ridicule. Ridicule is making fun or jest of a person. This can be as dangerous as to accuse him of some wrong-doing. Obadare (2009), says that ridicule is the subjection of someone or something to contemptuous and dismissive language or behavior. Ridicule can be said to be to laugh at someone in an unkind way, making game of a person in a jeering way either jokingly and good-humoredly, or

unkindly with the intention of humiliating him (Chriss, 2007). It also implies a deliberate, often malicious belittling of someone with the intent of humiliating him. Ochediye in *OIJO*, ridicules Orié, the intending wife to Ubaji, the chosen heir to the throne who, she and Ichie Nnanyelugo, the Prime Minister made mad to pave way for her own biological son to become king. This is the way Ochediye ridicules Orié: *Ee e---oke nwaanyi. E mesia ya bia buru.* (Ee e---strong woman. Let her come and become). Ochediye makes this statement of ridicule in response to the information Nkwonta, her son gives her as to the happy reaction from Orié when Ubaji told her of his intention of making her his wife soon. Ochediye's statement shows that she has no intention of allowing Orié to be married to Ubaji. In *NRA*, Obioma's statement ridicules Anene, her suitor, who wants to pay her bride prize that, he is not man enough to be her husband. Obioma states the ridicule thus: *Akuko! Mmanya onye ka o na-ebute? Di buru maka nke Anene, anoro m anughi di. Onye ga-eri awo, ga-eri nke mara abuba. E ji anya ama oka chara acha.* (Story! Whose wine is he bringing? If husband is that of Anene, I will remain unmarried. If one wants to eat toad, he should eat the fat one. We know them by their fruits).

Burlesque is another type of intrigue that is used in drama for character defamation. Burlesque is an absurd or comically exaggerated imitation of something intended to cause laughter by caricaturing the manner or spirit of serious works, or by ludicrous treatment of their subjects. It is a performance or farce that depends on exaggeration for its humour (Abrams, 1999). Therefore, the onus of burlesque lies in outlandish exaggeration and mockery. It is a composition that imitates or misrepresents somebody's style, usually in a humorous way. The purpose of burlesque is to imitate the manner or the subject matter of a "serious" work through a comic inversion. In burlesque, the serious is treated lightly and the frivolous seriously; genuine emotion is sentimentalized, and trivial emotions are elevated to dignified plane. Burlesque is satirical, humorous and defamatory. Burlesque can address social issues, politics, religion, or even just make the audience laugh about irrelevant subjects that they wouldn't normally think about as funny. For instance, Gbenga Adebayo, one of the most popular jokesters and radio presenters in western Nigeria, told his listeners a joke about what happened when the late former president, General Sani Abacha arrived at the gates of Heaven. According to the comedian, Abacha was summarily informed that his place was in Hell: As he made his way to his new abode, the late victims of his terror in Nigeria followed in hot pursuit and furiously rained blows on him. Abacha started running to avoid his pursuers and eventually found a place to hide. While in hiding, he found a phone booth and quickly called Nigeria to ask from one of his assistants how Nigeria was faring under his successor, 'Salami' (chatty abbreviation of Adulsalam). When he was told that everywhere was peaceful, and that there had been no arrests of political opponents, no assassinations, etcetera, he exclaimed, 'kai (exclamation common to northerners), Salami don spoil Nigeria!' (Abdulsala has messed up Nigeria). He also asked after prominent pro-democracy activists, only to be told that they were home, hale and hearty, in response to which he exclaimed, 'Shege, (another exclamation, often denoting amazement and/or helplessness), Salami don spoil Nigeria!' Those who listened to this broadcast invariably quivered with laughter, clearly enjoying Adebayo's caricaturing of Abacha's tyrannical era. This is burlesque in political sphere and it is made to defame Abacha's character.

### Summary and Conclusion

This study "Intrigue, A Dramatic Device: An Instrument of Character Defamation" deals with what drama is and what other scholars said about drama. The study also x-rays different types

of drama such as: comedy, tragicomedy, tragedy and melodrama. The work avers that drama has elements and themes which are the idea or ideas (major and minor) that can be explored using dramatic devices. These dramatic devices include: dramatic irony, nemesis, paradox, soliloquy, pathetic fallacy, aside, tragedy, foreshadow, imagery, hamartia, tragic hero and intrigue. The work also looks at intrigue in depth both the definition and forms such as lying, deceit, malice, innuendo, ridicule and burlesque.

Devices used in the mode of attack in intrigue are of three forms- the direct, the indirect and the conspiracy, while the two essential components of intrigue are noticeable—the exchange, that is the framework of an intrigue and, the objective, that is the true aim of the participant. All these have consequences which are triple barreled, affecting both, the intriguer, the person who is told the lie, and the person who the lie is told about, all of which are harmed in one way or the other. In conclusion, the essay is motivated by the desire to x-ray the fact that intrigue is a dramatic device which is a very potent tool of character defamation in dramatic works. It buttresses the point that intrigue is mostly seen as vice and not virtue and, it has been a part of dramatic works right from time. Intrigue as a dramatic device comes in many different forms but suffice it to say that it must contain a lie where a character (intriguer) uses trick to run down another character to settle interpersonal conflict. These devices found in the dramatic works of other cultures are also found in Igbo dramatic works. Therefore, Igbo dramatic works can favourably compete with the dramatic works of other cultures.

## References

- Abrams, M. H. (1999). *A glossary of literary term: Seventh edition*. TX: Harcourt brace College Publishers
- Anderson, W. (2013). *Creating Matters: Reflections on Art, Business, and Life (so far): 1<sup>st</sup> Edition*. Nashville: Create Space Independent Publishing platform. Retrieved at <https://schoolworkhelper.net/types-of-dramatic-devices/>.
- Atkhin, C. (1983). “Effects of Realistic TV Violence vs. Fictional Violence on Aggression” *Journal of mass communication*. Q. 60, 615-621.
- Baldwick, C. (2004). *The concise Oxford dictionary of literary terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Butter, D. B & Burgoon, J. K. (1996) “International Deception Theory” *Journal of Communication Theory*. 6(3): 203-242.
- Chisholm, R. M. & Feeham, T. D. (1977) “The Intent to Deceive” *Journal of Philosophy*. 74:143-159.
- Chriss J. (2007). *Social control: An introduction*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Clifton, O. (1971). *Defamation and public officials: The evolving law of libel*. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Cohen, G. A. (2002). “Deeper into Bullshit in Contours of Agency: Essays on Themes” from Harry Frankfurt (eds.) S. Buss, & L Overton Cambridge: MIT Press. 321-339.
- Disraeli, B. (1967). In Ashley Montague: *The anatomy of swearing*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Donagan, T.(1977) *A theory of morality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dramatic Devices: Retrieved at <https://www.filepicker.io/api/file/eUhtLPyQjOMWN7UvgaU7/>
- Ehrhardt, C. W. (1986) *Reputation and character in defamation action*. 64 WASH U. L. Q. 867 Available at: [https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law\\_lawreview/vol\\_64/1553/9](https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_lawreview/vol_64/1553/9).

- Elder, D. A. (2002) *Establishing constitutional malice for defamation and privacy/false*. Louisville: Thomas, & Mercer.
- Faulkner, W. (1999). In M. Thomas Inge *Conversations with William Faulkner*. Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press
- Griffiths, P. J. (2004). *Lying: An Augustinian theology of duplicity*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.
- Hall-Lipsy E. & Malanga, S. (2017). *Defamation lawsuit: Academic sword or shield?* Britain: Macmillan Publishers.
- Horsley, P. (2010). *In all about the Journal*. Colorado: Shamblah Publications.
- Insenberg, A, (1973). "Deontology and Ethics of Lying" in *Aesthetics and theory of criticism: Selected essays of Arnold Insenberg*. Chicago; University of Chicago Press
- Intrigue: Retrieved at <http://www.forum-gap.de/intrigueengl.htm>
- Kervyn, N., Bergsieker, H. B., Fiske, S. E. (1998). "The Innuendo Effect: Hearing the Positive but, Interfering the Negative" in *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. 24:1251-1263
- Lidsky, L. (1996) *Defamation, reputation and the myth of the community*. Missouri: University of Missouri, school of Law Scholarship Repository. Faculty Publications.
- Literary Terms: Retrieved at <https://literaryterms.net> > theme
- Literary Devices: Retrieved at <https://literarydevices.net/drama/>
- Lodge, H. C. (2012). In David Welky *America between the wars, 1919-1941: A documentary reader*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Nelson, T. (1979) *The Holy Bible: The New King James Version*. National Publishing Company.
- Nwaozuzu, G. I. (1991). *Ome ihe jide ofo*. Lagos: Macmillan.
- Nwaozuzu, G. I. (1998). *Ajo obi*. Awka: Format Publishers.
- Obsterfeld, R. (2002). *Fiction first aid: Instant remedies for novels, stories and scripts*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books.
- Onyekaonwu, G. O. (1980). *Nwata rie awo*. Onitsha: UPL.
- Onyekaonwu, G. O. (1985). *Eri mara ngwugwu*. Ibadan: UP.
- Primoratz, I. (1984). "Lying and the Method of Ethics" *International Studies in Philosophy*, 16: 35-57.
- Shakespeare, W. (1623) *Julius Caesar*. Rome: First Folio.
- Wiltermuth, S. Newman, D. & Raj. M (2015). "The Consequences of Dishonesty" *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. 53: 107-117.