

مفهوم تأثير الفراشة في مسرحية تجاوز الحد لبولا اغباي

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The Concept of the Butterfly Effect in Bola Agbaje's *Gone Too Far*

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المخلص:

أثار تعامل النيجيريين اليومي مع المهاجرين الآخرين أو مع المواطنين البريطانيين عموماً، قضايا تتعلق بكيفية الوصول الى التوازن بين المعايير والقيم والمعتقدات والأعمال المتوارثة أو المكتسبة، والتي تُحدد في نهاية المطاف الهوية الحقيقية للفرد. إن ارتباط بولا أغباجي الوثيق بتراثها الثقافي النيجيري وفخرها الكبير بلغتها اليوروبية مكنها من إيصال صوتها الى الجيل الجديد وابعادهم عن الشتات. فهي تؤكد على ضرورة عدم انعزال الأفراد عن الآخرين، بل عليهم دعم بعضهم بعضاً، وهذا ما يمنحهم شعوراً بالانتماء. يهدف البحث إلى تحليل كيفية توظيف بولا أغباجي لمفهوم "تأثير الفراشة"، حيث تُحدث الخيارات والتفاعلات الصغيرة بين الشخصيات تحولاتٍ جوهريّة في العلاقات وفهم الذات، مما يُبرز الطبيعة المعقدة والهشة في نفس الوقت للهوية داخل مجتمعات الشتات. يُثبت البحث بالنتيجة أن "تأثير الفراشة" تم توظيفه ببراعة في مسرحية "تجاوز الحد" من خلال التفاعل بين البيئة الاجتماعية للشخصيات وبين جذورها الثقافية وتكشف التفاعلات على المستوى الجزئي بين الشخصيات الرئيسية عن التوترات

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العميقة لتلك الشخصيات وأثرها على المستوى الكلي والتي تقوض بالنتيجة البناء الاجتماعي متعدد الثقافات كما في مسرحية "تجاوز الحد".

Abstract:

Nigerians' day-to-day interactions with other immigrants or with British citizens in general, raised issues related to how to balance each one's transmitted or created norms, values, beliefs, and actions that later on decide the actual identity of the individual. Bola Agbaje's strong attachment to her Nigerian cultural heritage and her being so proud of her Yoruba language empower her to give voice to the new generation and be away from Diaspora. She dictates that the individuals cannot isolate themselves from others, they have to support each other and that will give them their sense of belonging. The aim of the research is to analyze how Bola Agbaje employs the concept of the butterfly effect where small choices and interactions among the characters precipitate significant shifts in relationships and self-perception; illustrating the complex and fragile nature of identity within diasporic communities. Ultimately, the research proves that the butterfly effects are skillfully woven in *Gone Too Far* through the interplay between the characters' social milieu and their cultural roots. The micro – level interactions among the main characters expose the deep rooted macro-level tensions among them that undermine the multi cultural social construction presented in *Gone Too Far*.

I: Introduction: Bola Agbaje's Nigerian-British Heritage

Bola Agbaje (1981-) was born in London to a Nigerian parent. Living in Nigeria at the age of 6 to 8 and moving then to south London, led her to experience a bicultural identity. Caught between two cultures, Agbaje experienced a challenge of belonging. She suffered a conflict between her Nigerian culture and the complexities she has passed through to be a black British citizen. Nigerian Parents are especially facing the difficulties to discipline the life style of their children as described by Fredous Gambo who says:

[I]n Nigerian households, a major critique of parenting communication styles is the necessity of continually seeking the permissions of a patriarchal and hierarchical family structure. When families immigrate, parents and children alike must navigate learning to communicate in the new culture while also seeking to preserve their culture of origin. (Gambo II)



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However, Nigerian parenting style can create confusion and misunderstandings among the family members living in Britain. Nigerians' day-to-day interactions with other immigrants or with British citizens in general, raised issues related to how to balance each one's transmitted or created norms, values, beliefs, and actions that later on decide the actual identity of the individual. Thus, adapting to a new culture will be highly demanding as it will vex the conception of who we are into who we will be? A state that the adolescents mostly might face when experiencing an intercultural contact. Such a state is widely reflected in literature, especially when the writer him/herself is personally experiencing such a sense of diaspora like Agbaje herself, as is stated by Asamoah:

Writing as she does with sharp and clear observation, particularly of urban youth culture, Agbaje provides an accurate voice for the third generation of Africans in the diaspora, even though she belongs to the second generation and works within an arena dominated by second generation African diasporic, largely male, dramatists."(124-5)

Agbaje's awareness of her cultural heritage empowers her to give voice to the new generation away from Diaspora to help them be more aware of their true self. She says: "my heritage has an effect on what I write about. I am proud to be Nigerian and my upbringing influences my work both consciously and subconsciously." (Agbaje qtd. in Asamoah 125). Basically, language is the media that an individual use to transmit his/her cultural heritage, and Agbaje's employment of her Yoruba language is a proof of her intention to identify her cultural orientation and to give a space to the blacks within the white British community, as observed by Aiden Yeh who demonstrates:

In the threat of a loss of identity in the face of modernisation or globalisation, which seems to suggest a homogenisation of sorts, language and culture become the contesting forces that write back and speak back. These acts of identity are about securing and retaining power - power to speak for and against, power to wield economic influence and clout, power to claim space for one's self, community and nation.(slide 33)

Thus, culture's relationship to Yoruba language cannot be ignored. Family according to Yoruba culture includes not only immediate members but an expansive extended family network, emphasizing communal ties and social hierarchy within kinship groups. Respect is



expressed through specific terms based on age and relation, which guide how individuals address each other to maintain social respect and harmony. Eventually, preserving Yoruba tradition will enhance not only the familial bonds, but the whole community. It will implant in the coming generation their sense of belonging, especially those living abroad. The family system in traditional Yoruba society is unique and preserving it helps in maintaining the individual's sense of belonging. According to the Nigerians, their Yoruba heritage will determine the existence of a functional or dysfunctional family system. The basic unit in this system extend the family itself into the family household, or what the Yoruba culture termed as *Ebi*. It " means members of a family residing in one household. This is why each individual is identified by the public not with any of his/her direct parents, but with the household that he/she resides with" (Shitta-Bey 81).

However, in such a system there should be a head of a household (Olori Ebi) whom the family members should listen to. The Olori Ebi, a gender neutral term where s/he imposes order on the household as stated by Fadipe who explains:

It is the duty of the baale (the Olori Ebi) to preserve peace and order within his compound, a duty he probably owes, in the first place, to the members of the compound, and only secondarily to the large community... It is his duty to see that the members of his compound are of mutual benefit to each other and interact with a minimum of friction (106)

Ultimately, according to the Yoruba traditional culture, the individuals cannot isolate themselves from others, they have to support each other and that will give them their sense of belonging and be proud for their Nigerian origin. Bola Agbaje's conception of the individual can be interpreted according to this understanding. She tries to unveil the truth concerning the blacks in the Diaspora in her attempt to amend the stereotyped image implanted in the mind of both the whites as well as the blacks. Thus, a new culture might emerge to help young Nigerian confronting two different cultures to better understand themselves. She says as an answer to the interviewer *Sam Umukoro* who asks her "Why wasn't it 'cool' being Nigerian, were there stereotypes and what kind?":

Yes, there were stereotypes. Images of Africans growing up were always about poverty, and about helping a starving African, you see those kinds



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of adverts till today. While growing up, those were the only images of Africa we saw, you go to school you are called African and all sorts of names, and it was hard being a kid growing up then. (2-3)

She affirms the fact that her generation was living in Diaspora and was suffering to find identity in a multicultural society whereas today's generation is no more ashamed to have a Nigerian name or to be proud of their heritage. They have already, in one way or the other; learned, shared, imbibed the transmitted culture and have well been integrated into it. Because of writers like Agbaje and the role of media things get better and today's generation adapted themselves to the existence of two cultures. Knowing their identity, they can finally live their own life. For her, family is the core of the social institution. However Nwanmuoh and et.al. assert that:

When the family operates as a cooperative team, maintains strong kinship bonds, adapts flexibly to roles, and upholds cultural values, it serves as a lifelong buffer against stressful transitions. Kinship care, a valued aspect of extended families, is associated with positive outcomes for children" (83).

Eventually, the dynamics of Yoruba tradition is motivated and benefited by the family system not only economically, but by promoting unity, strengthening family bond, proper upbringing with values and sense of responsibility, maintaining social cohesion, and breeding a feeling of oneness. This is affirmed by Babatunde who says:

Yoruba tradition stresses that the parents are the first teachers of their children, instructing them in the 'proper' way of relating to their elders and people of the same age group. In the communal atmosphere of the traditional family, parents of children who behave in approved ways are approved as successful; parents whose children misbehave are shamed and advised to 'put their houses in order'. (8)

Morality, specifically respect for authority and elders, is highly esteemed in African traditional cultures. African societies are socially bound that hardly could any activity take place without community participation. In the light of this, family in African society is an organized institution that strengthens and cements cordiality and sense of belonging to its inhabitants.



However, though Agbaje lived in Nigeria for a brief time, between ages 6 and 8, her family belongs to the Yoruba ethnic group which gave her the Yoruba roots that she successfully absorbed and made use of. She succeeds in reviving the heritage of her people in the mind of the new generation so that they will no more be ashamed of their roots in a multicultural society like Britain or any foreign country. Thus, aiming to put Nigerian culture on stage, Agbaje is conscious of and sightful enough about the small, seemingly insignificant moments in an individual's life that might lead to profound consequences. Interconnectivity is woven through the clash between the characters' cultural context and their historical background. Her characters' identity conflict themselves can be interpreted as butterfly effects since cultural disparities will be evolved into creating new personal and social implications.

II. The Concept of The Butterfly Effect or The Sensitive Dependence on Initial Conditions:

Though the concept of the butterfly effect; that is drawn from the chaos theory, is basically connected to predicting the weather, it has a significant relationship with literature, especially in plays and narratives connected to youth culture. The concept of the butterfly effect illustrates how small, seemingly insignificant actions or decisions can activate large, often unpredicted consequences that shape characters' lives and social dynamics. Bola Agbaje exemplifies the butterfly effect by showing how small choices and interactions among the characters precipitate significant shifts in relationships and self-perception, ultimately illustrating the complex and fragile nature of identity within diasporic communities.

The identification of this concept is credited to the meteorologist and mathematician Edward Lorenz (1917–2008). According to the article entitled "The Butterfly Effect: How Tiny Actions Unleash Global Consequences" Lorenz

theorized that weather prediction models are inaccurate because knowing the precise starting conditions is impossible, and a tiny change can throw off the results. Lorenz began to use the butterfly analogy to make the concept understandable to non-scientific audiences. (3)

In his search for the primary source of **unpredictability in weather**, Lorenz concludes that due to the butterfly effects, it is impossible to



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accurately predict the weather and that "[e]rrors in observing small-scale weather features, such as imprecisely recording locations of individual clouds, could turn into errors on a larger scale within a day". (Dizikes 5) Nevertheless, the butterfly effect, Lorenz explains, is a double edge concept since its effect could be positive as well as negative. In a paper presented in 1972, he says: " If the flap of a butterfly's wings can be instrumental in generating a tornado, it can equally well be instrumental in preventing a tornado" (qtd. in Dizikes 6)

Such a conception invites the individual to consider every choice, action and reaction in life; no matter how small it is, since its potential will influence others or lead to a genuine change in the future. The Bookey summary of Andrews Andy's book *The Butterfly Effect* demonstrates that:

At its core, the butterfly effect is a reflection on the interconnectedness of all things. It's the notion that even the tiniest decisions and actions we make can ripple out into the broader world, influencing events and circumstances far beyond our immediate perception. This profound idea is rooted in the belief that nothing occurs in isolation; every action, no matter how insignificant it may seem, contributes to the larger tapestry of life. (7) Understanding the concept of the butterfly effect is influential in envisioning the actions in Agbaje's *Gone Too Far* through a broader lens since each choice her characters make will be part of a process that shape the overall image of their future life. Agbaje intends to revive her Nigerian heritage to help in reshaping or amending the stereotyped image already there not only in the white people's mind, but deep into the mindset of the Nigerians themselves, especially the young generation. In her *Gone Too Far*, Agbaje aims to approach life through embracing the fact that even minor or simple contribution will lead to a positive change that may exceed the personal into the larger societal structures. Such an understanding is clearly stated in Bookey's "The Butterfly Effect by Andrews Andy" which explains that:



In embracing the butterfly effect in our decision-making, we are called to be vigilant about the small daily actions that make up our lives. They hold the power to create significant positive changes, not just within our immediate circle but in the wider world. By making mindful choices, anticipating consequences, and consistently aiming to perform positive deeds, we leverage the butterfly effect to its greatest advantage, fostering a more caring, connected, and conscientious world. (18-19)

Ultimately, Agbaje proves herself to be understanding and wise enough to reach a realization of the interconnectedness of the effect of an individual's legacy upon the lives of others and that the small persistent efforts one can produce will have an everlasting and genuine change. Thus, she intends to turn this effect into a positive change to help the new generation stand on a solid ground within the multicultural society they are living in.

III: Agbaje's Bicultural Perspective and the Butterfly Effect in *Gone Too Far*:

Gone Too Far was first premiered at the Royal Court in 2007. The play's focus is basically on the third generation of British Africans who are experiencing despotic life due to a clash in culture in Britain where they now reside. Two Nigerian brothers; Yemi (sixteen) and Ikudayisi (eighteen) years old are themselves suffering a disparity in their cultural heritage and struggle to cope in a Caribbean dominated minority community in Britain. A struggle, asserts McLeod, that is attributed to the fact that,

[c]hildren born to migrant peoples in Britain may lay claim to British citizenship, but their sense of identity and subjectivity borne from living in a diaspora community can be influenced by the 'past migration history' of their parents or their grandparents that makes them forge emotional, cultural and imaginative bonds with more than just one nation. (237)

Ikudayisi, like Agbaje herself, is closely attached to his Nigerian culture. Unlike Yemi, he was born and raised there and can speak Yoruba language. Yemi is the rebel, the one who is living in diaspora due to his distance from his Nigerian origin. However, the disparity between them is clearly illustrated by Agbaje during her first description of them. Ikudayisi is described as an old fashioned: "He is wearing jeans and a T-shirt, which represent a fashion trend a few months behind the current times", (Agbaje 3) to be compared with Yemi who seems to be fully





conformed with the current British fashion. He is "better dressed than Ikudayisi and is up to fashion in the clothing department" (Agbaje 4). Such a variety is furnishing the setting and will lead to a series of actions that constitute the butterfly effect leading into a cultural compromise, an aim that Agbaje aspires to reach in her attempt to help the young generation in Britain find themselves anew. As mentioned earlier, the family in Africa is the center of discipline to the whole family members and respect is the main part in this discipline. Thus, the mother (Mum) is practicing her authority at the very beginning of the play. She is submitting her two sons; Yemi and Ikudayisi, to her authority as a sort of punishment for certain misbehavior done by them. However, from the very beginning they react differently due to their different cultural upbringing. Ikudayisi shows more respect and obedience to his mother's authority, while Yemi is more rebellious through his continuous breaking to the duration of his penalty by playing games. Ikudayisi's role, as Yemi's elder brother and the one responsible to discipline his younger brother, is clearly shown in urging him to be committed to the type of punishment their mother imposed upon them. A role that he will keep on performing throughout the play as part of his responsibility towards one of his family members. He says addressing Yemi: "Do you know the punishment you are doing, it is not the one she told you to do." (Agbaje 4) Mum, on the other hand, associates Yemi's misbehavior to his being raised away from his homeland, Nigeria; a matter that alludes to the first flap of the butterfly that will lead Yemi to be exposed to the drastic effects of this flap. She declares addressing Yemi: "Mum (off) — you have no respect. It not your fault, it not your fault. It's my own, I have spoilt you too much. When I should have taken you to Nigeria, to boarding school, I let you stay here and now look at you." (Agbaje 6) Moreover, even when Mum asks Yemi to accompany his elder brother to join him to the shop to buy milk for her, Ikudayisi obeys her while Yemi keeps on protesting causing his mother to reproach him and force him to go. She says:

Mum Yemi, don't start-oh, don't start. Do you think 'm stupid, do you think I'm stupid? When I send you by yourself, you will just go and galavant on the street. I said he is going with you. He is going! Always you, always you, giving me problems. I'm too young to die-oh. You better go and buy me milk now, and you better come back quick quick. (Agbaje 7)

Thus, the gap between mother and son is evident in their speech due to the cultural diversity between the two generations living in a foreign country. Yemi's rebellious mood and his mentality will escalate and

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accelerate his falling into trouble. He and his elder bother finally set towards the shop to buy milk, yet this simple act leads to a series of unexpected consequences like a cultural misunderstanding as well as identity crisis.

To start with, both the shopkeeper and Yemi suffer from marginalization . The latter denied access to the shop just because he is wearing hoodie. This butterfly simple flap will raise issues predominant in a racial state like the UK where immigrants are negatively stereotyped. The hoodie is not just a piece of clothes to the black youth, but it is woven into the fabric of black identity. It "is a quiet rebellion: a soft shield in a loud world, and a symbol of agency in a society that too often tries to define them before they even speak."(Successful Black Parenting 1)

As for the Muslim Bangladeshi shopkeeper, he is trying to conform to the social norms and be away from the stereotyped image of Muslims as terrorists, a role that is explained clear enough through Agbaje's description of him as "wearing an England shirt and a headscarf. There are also England flags hanging all around the shop" (Agbaje 7). Yet still he keeps the two identities on equal scale. He is playing Islamic music; a reference to his origin and culture. Yemi, on the other hand, is sensitive to racial oppression due to his dark skin. The hoodie he is wearing causes a threat to others, while the Muslim has to endure the society's accusations of being a terrorist. However, due to their being under the oppression umbrella, both are sensitive enough to the slighted flap that might lead to drastic changes in their life; an act that will either help them totally conform to the new culture or stick to their own and be themselves. Yemi tries to make it clear to the Shopkeeper that both of them are suffering from misunderstanding due to their origin. He says:

Don't get it twisted, blud. Man, oh man, don't care where you're from. What I'm saying is I know you feel oppressed and dat when mans tell you, you can't wear your head ting in certain places. It the same like me! Bare people going around thinking you're gonna do dem something when all we wanna do is get on with our life. I understand you, blud! (Agbaje 10)

He wants to reach into a mutual agreement, but events escalate leading the shopkeeper not only to prevent Yemi from getting inside the shop, but to close the shop for fear of violence. In an attempt to let the shopkeeper understand Yemi's point of view, the latter accuses the Muslim as hiding a bomb since Muslims are stereotyped as being terrorists, the same way Africans are stereotyped as being inferior and trouble makers. The Muslim answers: "I LOVE THIS COUNTRY. I NO TERRORIST. NO





BOMB IN MY SHOP, NO BOMB IN MY SHOP"(Agbaje11). Nevertheless, Ikudayisi's cultural Nigerian upbringing comprehends situations differently. He is empowered by his Nigerian roots that keep his mind open to others' opinions without losing his self confidence. He is not vexed with the multicultural society and the tiny flaps he is facing there of which Yemi is so sensitive to. Ikudayisi keeps on reminding Yemi that the shopkeeper's reaction is not because of Yemi's black skin, it is because of the hoodie he is wearing and that "It's not worth it" (Agbaje 12). The elder brother is trying to lead his younger brother and teach him when and where he should pick up his battle; "You have to pick your battles well. Taking your hood off is nothing. You could have put it back on when we have finished." (Agbaje 12) However, Yemi is still out of discipline and mistrusts the priorities of his elder brother, thus more butterfly effects are to be expected. Agbaje, through her character Ikudayisi, sets openly her question addressing those who are concerned. She comes across the fact that stands as the simple flap which leads into the eventual drastic effects. Ikudayisi asks Yemi: "Why, are you ashamed of being Nigerian? You can't change what you are." (Agbaje 16) A question that will foreshadow the coming troubles.

Two female characters; Armani and Paris, are introduced, the first is already advocating an aggressive attitude towards Yemi. The two girls meet Ikudayisi for the first time and Armani expresses her astonishment to realize that Yemi is an African: "I never knew you was African" (Agbaje 17). Such a racist reaction agitates Yemi who interprets such a comment as an insult and a chain of events will start in the process. However, her comment exposes the way how Yemi conforms to the British lifestyle and how he absorbs their youth culture. Yemi starts urging Armani to answer his question: "What does an African look like? What is it you're tryna say?" (Agbaje 17) . The girl answers by attributing an ugly feature to the Africans and expresses a social prejudice against them when she describes them as having "big lips and big nose" (Agbaje 18).

Yemi's crisis over his identity is exposed due to Armani's insult that uproots him from his origin as a Nigerian. According to the youth culture in London; fashion, accent, and looks are influencing factors in deciding who belongs or not. At the time being, Yemi is living in diaspora, he wants to distance himself from the blacks' markers in his attempt to find for himself an identity among his peers. Armani's comments threaten the fragile identity Yemi is trying to assume, away from his Nigerian origin, a matter that escalates the aggressive attitude of both characters. Armani is just like Yemi, she hides her Jamaican origin in her attempt to conform.



However, Ikudayisi; as an elder brother who stands as the head of the household (Olori Ebi) to Yemi, is there and his role will lead Yemi's later understanding of identity. Armani, on the other hand, is herself discovering her Jamacian heritage, and is not fully belonging yet. She is from a mixed – race background. Her father, who is absent from her life, is Jamaican black and her mother is white British. Like Yemi, she suffers a cultural confusion not knowing where truly to belong. She is even more aggressive than Yemi in her attempt to reconcile her inner turmoil with the social order she is living within and her endeavors to protect herself emotionally. In a debate with her friend Paris, the latter asserts Armani's lack of knowledge to which side she should belong to, she declares:

Paris . Especially you! You don't know what to identify yourself with. Should you be on the white side, should you be on the black side — you don't know. You try and act like you're blacker than anybody else, but then you contradict yourself cos you go on like it's a bad thing for me to look black, or anyone else at that. (Agbaje 40)

Such a declaration will lead into a more aggressive attitude from Armani since it triggers a deeper identity crisis and a sense of insecurity inside her. Though seems to be trivial details, their emotional and psychological effect is effective enough to expose Armani's sense of cultural fragmentation. However, both characters; Armani and Yemi, are in need of a head of a household to force them back to their real self through understanding, not through judgment. However, Armani fails to find the one who helps her reach into a secure zone, while Yemi will be lucky enough to find the person who will help him often redirect his trajectory in life and get rid of the pressure of cultural performance he confines himself within.

As an elder brother, who has a respect to family traditions in Nigeria, Ikudayisi is again criticizing Yemi's misbehavior and now towards an old lady, an act that stands as the initial flap. Such a micro event will lead the action into a broader consequences. According to the old woman, the social structure envisions the two black boys as being a threat to her security. The stage direction makes it clear from the very beginning. "An Old Lady enters with some shopping bags. She is halfway across when she notices Yemi and Ikudayisi. She stops in her tracks and contemplates turning back, but is too afraid to move. Ikudayisi Before, you can use Yoruba on her" (Agbaje 26). However, each one of the two boys will behave according to the social norms he has been raised with. Ikudayisi, the one who truly belongs, is operating under the Yoruba cultural norms that are based on respect especially to the elders. Offering the old lady a



seat to have rest. A very simple and spontaneous attitude done by him, but is faced with a scared woman who already have a negative stereotypical image of black boys as being aggressive. She says: "Stay away from me! STAY AWAY! She picks up her bag but is too frightened to move." (Agbaje 28). Though Ikadaysis's polite behavior is drastically opposed by Yemi, yet Agbaje intends to emphasize this scene to accentuate the importance of Nigerian's culture in shaping their identity whom the young generation, like Yemi, has little knowledge of. To Yemi, being hard to such people is the shield that will protect him from the psychological pain of being a rejected person in his society, so he consistently advocates a protesting attitude to revolt against those who are trying to marginalize black people as the Other. Ludmila Martanovschi asserts in the article entitled "The Right Choice": Introducing Black Youth's Struggle as Protest in Katori Hall's *Hurt Village* and Bola Agbaje's *Gone Too Far*!" that:

While aware of the prejudices Londoners have about black youth and fully capable of avoiding misunderstanding, Yemi chooses confrontation in order to assert his dissatisfaction with the world and affirm his aggressive masculinity, revolutionary attitude and anti-discrimination stance. (104)

However, detached from his Nigerian's roots, Yemi's fragmented sense of identity still persists, to be compared with his brother. The latter is of the view that being nice to everyone pays off, while his naivety angers Yemi who believes he is street smart and understands the issue of racism in the UK. The brothers clash due to their cultural differences, and this ultimately places a strain upon the bond Ikudayisi wants to build with his brother."(*Gone Too Far*! 1) [

Agbaje escalates the tension between the two brothers even further to expose Yemi's real problem, which is the same one for the many young Nigerians living in London. These young people need to be governed by familial higher authority and to return to their roots to free themselves from the self – cage they imprisoned themselves within. Ikudayisi makes it clear when he says advising his younger brother: "How can you be free when you deny your own heritage? You don't like your name, you are ashamed of your language. If you are so free you won't care what people think about Nigerian and you will just be what you are" (Agbaje 46). To further emphasize the importance of elders in the lives of the younger generation, Agbaje introduces Blazer, another image of Ikudisayisi who is even more influential in capturing Yemi's sense of belonging. Blazer acts as a catalyst in shifting Yemi's passive attitude towards his Nigerian roots into an active defender of his culture later on. Blazer's words and



attitude are by themselves the butterfly effect that reunite the two brothers again together. Yemi is in need of an authoritative figure from the same social milieu - a respected person who proudly and openly embraces his Nigerian heritage and earns others' respect at the same time. He is described in the article entitled "Gone Too Far! by Bola Agbaje" as having

an impactful character all round, not only in terms of his entrance onto stage, but also with the impact he has on Yemi and Ikudayisi. Blazer's Nigerian pride and assurance inspires Yemi to think differently, and leaves Ikudayisi beaming with pride.(1)

Yemi's identity crisis starts to resolve the moment he hears Blazer speaks Yoruba language and seems so proud to be Nigerian. The latter also asserts the importance of respect as part of Nigerian culture that distinguishes them from others. He reproaches Yemi for showing disrespect to his elder brother, he says: "Don't talk to your brother like dat, man. I swear he said he is older than you" (Agbaje 50). Agbaje's message is clearly conveyed through Blazer's speech. She emphasizes the importance of respect as a fundamental trait in Nigerian culture. She underscores the urgent need for the new generation to embrace such a trait that help them shaping who they truly are. Blazer asserts Agbaje's standpoint when he tells Yemi:

You see me, yeah, on the street I get bare respect, but don't get it twisted, it never came easy. I had to earn that shit. From when I learnt at home to show my family respect I came out on the road and showed mans respect. It like a chain reaction. You give respect to get respect, you get me? (Agbaje 51)

Blazer proceeds in explaining the importance of Nigerian traditions to Yemi focusing on the strong family ties that distinguish them, a speech that though seems common, but stands as the butterfly effect that transforms Yemi's understanding of belonging to a unique culture. Agbaje's voice is crystal clear through Blazer's final advice to Yemi: "I'm not saying to you, go around testing people. You just need to learn how to stand your ground, but keep it real at the same time. It's not a bad thing to be African. Be proud to be different." (Agbaje 53)

Agbaje's message to the younger generation and her insistence on a return to the Nigerian culture is further emphasized through the names she has chosen to her characters in *Gone Too Far* that reflect the spiritual effect upon their holders. Ikudayisi's name, for instance, conveys a distinctive and indirect message that Agbaje wants the Nigerians abroad to conceive and adopt as a lifestyle to be followed. Ikudayisi explains to Yemi that



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"Nigerians believes names hold power" (Agbaje 56). His name, according to the Nigerians' culture means " 'Death spared me'", he says. Yemi believes it is a warrior name, but Ikudayisi explains that "[i]t means that when Mum was having me she may have had some complications — you know, cos she had me young, and death spared me. I survived!" (Agbaje 57). The interpretation of the name aligns with Agbaje's message of self-preservation, that is clear through Ikudayisi's speech. It tells that the individuals should pick up their battle, should engage only in struggles that lead to their survival and personal fulfillment and to avoid the reckless and risky ones. Ikudayisi is accidentally exposed to danger when he bumps into Flamer while searching for Yemi in the evening and causes the latter's trainer to have dirt on it. However, though he apologises immediately to him, Flamer escalates the simple butterfly flapping into an unpredictable chain of violence leading Ikudayisi into the verge of losing his own life. Accordingly, Flamer avenges himself by robbing Ikudayisi's trainers under threat, which in fact belong to Yemi. However, the latter, obsessed with self pride decides to fight Flamer and regain his trainers back despite his elder brother's advice to pick up his battles in life since there are so many valuable things to fight for in life than these trainers:

I told, I told you, it's not important. Do you think I have never had to make choices? I told you I was once like you. Is it the first time I got robbed? No/ In Nigeria it happens all the time — even the police have robbed in broad daylight. I used to put up a fight but I told you, you soon realize thing like this is not important. As long as I'm alive, I'm happy. Friends in Nigerian have died over nonsense like this. I want to enjoy my life — those are the changes I have made. Don't waste your life away like this.(Agbaje 74)

Once more, Yemi's pride and misbehavior lead to an escalating drastic events. He mistakenly accuses Razer for robbing the trainers though Ikudayisi tells him that he is innocent. Yemi starts fighting and "As Razer gets distracted Yemi goes for the knife. They get into a scrap and Yemi gains control over it". (Agbaje 78). Agbaje's answer to Yemi and the younger black generation is grounded in the notion of solidarity, a value that explicitly conveyed through the elder and caring brother's speech to Yemi:

I didn't come from Nigeria to be a part of this. We are all BLACK! WE ARE ALL BLACK AND YOU ARE ACTING LIKE WE ARE ALL DIVIDED! It needs to stop now. We need to stop this nonsense. Why are we always fighting each other? Why can't we just get along? I just want

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everyone to get along. Yemi, you tell me you are free, be free to make the right choice. Don't go down the wrong road. It's your choice, make the right choice. GIVE ME THE KNIFE. (Agbaje 79)

Thus, the challenge revolves around how to be free and pick up the wise choices in life to survive and build a worth living life. Still, Yemi needs a heavy shock to comprehend the unpredictable and hazardous consequences triggered by the flapping of the butterfly. The action turns to be even more perilous when "*in the process the knife falls and Razer picks it up again*" (Agbaje 79). The latter wants to leave when Yemi prevents him and Ikudayisi "*tries to stop him and as he gets in between his arm gets cut by the knife.*"(79). Ultimately, Yemi grasps Agbaje's lesson (WE ARE ALL BLACK) and acknowledges the vital role of family and one's cultural roots in empowering the individual to live a meaningful life wherever s/he might reside. Meanwhile, Yemi embraces his Nigerian roots with renewed pride and he starts celebrating his newfound identity by singing:

Green white green on my chest,
I'm proud to be a Nigerian!
Green white green on my chest,
I'm proud to be a Nigerian!
Proud to be a Ni-ge-ri-an!
Proud to be a Ni-ge-ri-an! (Agbaje 82)

To conclude, Agbaje is cognizant and insightful enough in her exploration of the minor, seemingly insignificant moments in an individual's life that though are perceived to be trivial, may lead to profound social implications. The butterfly effects are skillfully woven in *Gone Too Far* through the interplay between the characters' social milieu and their cultural roots. The characters' identity crisis and their sense of belonging can only be resolved when the individuals empower themselves with the solidarity among family members as well as a return to their cultural roots. The micro – level interactions among Ikudayisi, Brazer, and Yemi expose the deep rooted macro-level tensions that undermine the multi cultural social construction presented in *Gone Too Far*. Still, Agbaje maintains an optimistic attitude believing that the pillars the younger generations can stand on are basically; solidarity, familial bonds, and self-worth. These pillars will have a transformative effects in generating a lasting sense of belonging amid the diverse sociocultural setting.

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