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## **A PSYCHOANALYSIS OF INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN VÉRONIQUE TADJO'S *THE SHADOW OF IMANA***

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### **Abstract**

Poor management of intercultural conflict has always been the bane of growth and development in any multiethnic nation. This was attested by the Rwandan nation that was ravaged by genocide in 1994. As Véronique Tadjó travelled to Rwanda in 1998 to visit the sites of massacre and hear the voices of the victims, the horrors of the tragedy were documented in a blend of fact and fiction. Using her work, *The Shadow of Imana* as a background and the framework of the psychoanalytic theory, this paper examines the factors that engendered the intercultural conflict. It also analyses the brave psychological approaches adopted by the victims, the government, those involved directly or otherwise in managing intercultural conflict. It therefore informs on the urgency of tackling any brewing intercultural conflict in order to forestall the escalation of crises as was the case in Rwanda.

### **Introduction**

The tidal wave of genocide that decimated the small central African nation of Rwanda left the whole world reeling in shock. The 100 day civil war between April and June 1994 left in its wake a staggering toll of about 800,000 dead. The ethnic induced violence and brutality (the massacre of the minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus by the majority Hutus) tore the lives of the citizenry, damaged the lives of the survivors and seared forever the fragile memory of the nation.

As the nation took brave steps to recover from this horrific tragedy, Véronique Tadjó, on invitation by Fest Africa travelled to Rwanda in 1998 alongside nine African writers on a writing fellowship sponsored by Fondation de France to document the horrors of the genocide. The product of this journey is *The Shadow of Imana* (a translated version of her *L'Ombre d'Imana*) a travelogue in which the author Véronique Tadjó portrays, through the victims' stories and the sites visited, the horrors of the war and its aftermath. Rendered in a matter-of-fact, but poetic style, the text is rendered "in a very factual and sober manner, as if to find an antidote to the morbidity of the spectacle itself and to her visceral emotions" (Anyinefa, 2005, p.1). In other words, the writer portrays her encounter with the survivors whose lives were directly or otherwise forever affected by the tragedy. The translated version helps the Anglophone world to appreciate Véronique Tadjó's commitment.

Following from the above, this paper proposes a psychoanalytic approach to analysis of intercultural conflict in *The Shadow of Imana*. The emphasis of this discussion is hinged on the premise that Véronique Tadjó is a committed writer who seeks to warn us through this text laced with literary undertones and techniques of the disastrous consequences of conflict. This literary reportage resonates with Onukaogu and Onyerionwu (2009, p.28) who remind us that:

Literature can also teach moral lessons, dissuading its readers/audience from doing what is wrong and persuading them to do what is right. Many literary pieces are designed to train the mind...on the cultivation of virtues and the eschewing of vices. Literature can draw a clear distinction between good and bad; right and wrong; acceptable and unacceptable, and also has

the capacity to prove why positive character attributes should be emulated and negative ones condemned.

Véronique Tadjó weaves together fact and fiction as she lends her voice to history in its commitment to document for posterity.

The choice of psychoanalysis as a theory for this discussion is hinged on the appreciation of the role of psychoanalysis in the mental development and evaluation of psychoanalysis of the individual's psychological effect and reactions to events. Founded by Sigmund Freud, this theory believes that people could be cured by making conscious their unconscious thoughts and motivations, thus gaining insight (McLeod, 2014). McLeod (2014) further adds that psychoanalysis proposes the cure of repressed emotions by making the unconscious to be conscious. It is a sort of investigation of the mind ... especially the unconscious mind (AROPA, 2017). Psychoanalysis is not only a theory but also a therapy proposed by Freud in treating patients with mental disorders. However, our interest in psychoanalysis is on the theory which we believe aptly applies to the people who Tadjó encounters in the journey to Rwanda. These people were psychologically ruined, destabilised, hence the need for psychoanalysis to help the readers understand their frame of mind and management.

In addition, dictionary.com (2012) defines psychoanalysis as “a method of studying the mind and treating mental and emotional disorders based on revealing and investigating the role of the unconscious mind.” All the definitions above agree on one fundamentals of psychoanalysis which is “an understanding of transference, an interest in the psychoanalyst-patient relationship in the healing process” ([www.apsa.org](http://www.apsa.org)).

Another psychoanalyst who expanded on the Freudian theory is Jacques Lacan. Culler (1997, p.128) reminds us that:

Lacan describes the subject as an effect of language and emphasizes the crucial role in analysis of what Freud called transference, in which the analysand casts the analyst in the role of authority figure from the past... The truth of the patient's condition in this account, emerges not from the analyst's interpretation of the patient's discourse but from the way analyst and patient are caught up in replaying a crucial scenario from the patient's past.

This 'transference' or "falling in love with your analyst" is the scenario rightly played out by Tadjo in her encounter with the victims of the genocide, who opened up to her, revealing the innermost thoughts, enabling her to capture their anguish from the deep recesses of their heart. They (Tadjo and the victims) become active in the healing process.

Another vital aspect of Freud's theory is the notion of 'id', 'ego' and 'super ego' in the study of the psyche, otherwise named personality. According to McLeod (2016, p.1 ); "id is the impulsive (and unconscious) part of our psyche which responds directly and immediately to the instincts.... The id engages in primary process thinking which is primitive, illogical, irrational and fantasy oriented." The ego, on the other hand is the more realistic part which seeks to consider the rules of behaviour using reason. It tries to work out realistic ways of satisfying the id's demands by either compromising or postponing satisfaction to avoid negative consequences to the society (McLeod, 2016). Lastly, the super ego deals with the values, norms and morals of the society which are handed down by the parents and other agents of socialisation. Its function is to control the

id's impulses, especially those forbidden by the society such as aggression, sex and persuades the ego to seek moralistic goals more than realistic ones (McLeod, 2016). Made up of the conscience and the ideal self, the super ego can punish the ego by evoking feelings of guilt.

Having examined the concepts of the unconscious mind and the role it plays in determining the actions of the individual, it is imperative therefore to consider the concepts of conflict, intercultural conflict and intercultural conflict management.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

Conflict means disagreement or opposition. It is the inability to arrive at a common goal owing to incompatible interests. Ting-Toomey defines it as an intense disagreement between two interdependent parties over incompatible goals and the interference each perceives from the other in their effort to achieve those goals. Madumelu et al (2015) opine that conflict arises from the pursuit of divergent interests, goals and aspirations by individuals and groups in defined social and physical environments. Conflict is therefore, inevitable because it is found in every relationship and every form of human endeavour. Okpara, Chukwu and Nnamdi (2011) insist that human beings can never be free from conflict since it manifests in daily choices, decisions and interactions. They also cite Otite (2007) who maintains that conflict is inherent in all kinds of social, economic or political settings and in business management job.

Notwithstanding the above, conflict can swing both ways, either negative or positive. Okpara et al (2011) posit that conflict can be good or bad, constructive or destructive depending on how it is managed. It is positive when it brings change and innovations, creating healthy living and wealth. Conversely, it could escalate to crisis, deplete resources, demean ego and values, and affect people's psyche so that they act inhumanely. Evans (2016) opines that conflict

should be perceived as an opportunity for growth and an effective means of opening up among groups or individuals, though it can draw back productivity and give way to more conflicts requiring their management and resolution.

There are mainly four main types of conflict: interpersonal conflict, intrapersonal conflict, intragroup conflict and intergroup conflict. Interpersonal conflict refers to conflict between individuals while intrapersonal is the form of conflict that takes place within an individual. Intragroup conflict involves the conflict that occurs among individuals in a group, while intergroup on the other hand deals with conflict that exists between interest groups that depend on one another for satisfaction and the achievement of set goals (Okpara et al , 2011). They also identify mass conflict which occurs when people of a state or international community are involved in misunderstanding or conflicting interests that threaten the general well-being of the people. Okpara et al (2011) further identify the following forms of conflict to include: ethnic/communal conflict, religious conflict, political conflict, economic conflict, education conflict, agricultural conflict, etc.

Having therefore enumerated the above, the crux of this paper is to examine one of the natures of conflict which is ethnic/communal conflict which Ting-Toomey (1999) explains as intercultural conflict. Ting-Toomey (1999) defines it as “the perceived or actual incompatibility of values, norms, processes, or goals between a minimum of two cultural parties over content, identity, relational and procedural issues.” She further adds that some intercultural conflicts stem from deep-seated hatred, and centuries-old antagonism arising from long-standing historical grievances. Intercultural conflicts arise therefore from the conflicting parties bias(es), perceptions, prejudices and stereotypes which colour or distort the ability to achieve common goals and co-habit harmoniously. To this, Ting-Toomey (1999, p.1) adds that “individuals coming from two contrastive cultural

communities bring with them different value assumptions, expectations, verbal and non-verbal habits and interaction scripts that influence the conflict process”.

### **Conflict Management**

This is the process of reducing the negative effects of conflict while promoting its positive aspects. Constructive intercultural conflict management has been defined as the use of culture sensitive communication skills to manage the process of conflict productively and reach important goals of all parties involved. This, not only is proper utilization of the communicative tools (listening, speaking, reading and writing) a veritable asset in the management of conflict, but the conflicting parties cultural perspectives must be considered in the process of managing the conflict. In so doing, the needs of both parties will be acknowledged and addressed.

Again, Ting-Toomey (1999) emphasises that acknowledging our own ethnocentric biases and suspending our reactive evaluations are critical in managing the intercultural misattribution process. She further adds: “By withholding our gut-level negative judgements concerning unfamiliar behaviour, we are giving ourselves and others a chance to understand the cultural nuances that exist in a problematic situation.” An insight into Tadjó’s recordings of the victims’ experiences and proposals on managing the crisis is revealing of the victims’ unconscious application of intercultural management steps.

### **Factors that engender intercultural conflict: Insights from *The Shadow of Imana***

Chinua Achebe, one of the fathers of African literature begins his critically acclaimed memoir, *There was a country*, a personal reflection on the Nigeria-Biafra war, with the popular idiom drawn from an Igbo proverb, “a man who does not know where the rain began to beat him cannot say where he dried his body”. Obviously, conflict has become a recurrent phenomenon that is plaguing the



world and African continent in particular, therefore a good appraisal of some of the major factors that engender conflict can help to manage existing conflict and as well forestall future occurrence.

Indeed, no conflict happens in a vacuum, intercultural conflicts occur when a set of factors and conditions converge. Diverse ethnic groups carry various degrees of conflict potential, this is because ethnicity creates the divide and culture nurtures the mind and perception of the people. Firstly, going through the work of Veronique Tadjo, she points out that the feeling and the fear of the 'Other' is a major factor that engenders conflict. Psychologically, people become defensive as a means of protecting themselves, and offensive in order to avoid intimidation from the other. She remarks:

“And I am afraid when, in my country, I hear people talk of who belongs there and who doesn't. Creating division. Creating foreigners. Inventing the idea of rejection. How is ethnic identity learned? Where does this fear of the Other come from, bringing violence in its wake?”  
(37).

Such a situation is what facilitates a manifestation of emotional and psychological antagonisms among people. What creates the notion of the 'Other' is that we have neglected the underlying fact that we are all first and foremost human beings and by that we have our predefined identity before being distinguished by our peculiar cultures. The writer's use of the 'Other' connotes a feeling of separation from a common identity.

Culture in itself frames the context in which conflict occurs. Cultural and national identities are formed through formal and informal teaching and repetitions which inform the mind. If these actions are negative they in most cases tend to instigate hatred, resentment and fears leading to violence, crises and other forms of

conflict especially when nothing is done to reorient the affected individuals. Irobi (2005) opines that memories of past traumas have a way of magnifying people's anxieties as a result of historical memories of grievances that give rise to fear, hatred and consequently conflict.

Froduard, the young farmer turned murderer, one of those who spoke with the author Veronique Tadjó affirms to the fact that past memories of grievances was a major factor that indeed led to the conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis in Rwanda.:

“When the president was alive, he had said that we needed to get rid of traitors who had left the country for weapons training. And then when the president died, we were told that the Tutsis had killed him but that if they wanted to come here, they wouldn't find any of their accomplices alive. They wouldn't find anyone to help them kill the Hutus. We had to strike back, defend ourselves.”  
(104).

Since the Hutus were those in power, they assumed that the death of the president would have been caused by the Tutsis, and therefore for them this was a perfect excuse to begin the massacre.

Another factor we see from the work of Tadjó, that facilitated the conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis is the feeling of inequality. Wherever such feeling manifests, conflict is inevitable. History has it that during the colonial rule, the Tutsis were preferred and taken as the superior tribe because they looked more like the Europeans, with a lighter skin tone and sharper nose. It was John Hanning Speke, a British explorer who discovered Rwanda in the 1800's that came up with the stereotype of “tall, light, superior Tutsis and short, dark, inferior, Hutus”. As a result of this prejudice, the

Hutus have developed a deep hatred for the Tutsis and targeted them long before 1994.

Tadjo discovers that:

“One of the reasons for the persecution of the Tutsis comes from the theories suggested by European historians, Belgian in particular, who, towards the end of the nineteenth century, attributed to them [Tutsis] foreign origins. According to those historians the 'watussi' shepherds, whom they characterised as tall and slender, in contrast to the smaller Hutu farmers, were not originally natives of central Africa. Some thought they could have come from as far off as Tibet or Egypt. But the link with Ethiopia remains the most common claim.” (22)

According to Veronique there is no proof for this theory, yet this claim which initially was made as a form of flattery led to thousands of Tutsis being thrown into the Kagera river so that 'they can return to Ethiopia'. Sadly, the same Belgians, who had somewhat laid the foundation for this unwarranted genocide, together with the international community escaped the genocide leaving the people to destroy themselves. And amongst those who left were pastors in whose parishes and churches some of the would-be persecuted Tutsis sought refuge: “The Belgian priest was no longer there when the massacre took place” (13). Again, “...Here too, Belgian priests administered the parish: four Flemings and a Walloon. They left just before the massacre. (15)

Evidently, when the Hutus took over power after independence, they saw the Tutsis as a major enemy that must be wiped out. The feeling of superiority gives rise to hatred and hatred in turn birthed conflict. In order to formalise this hatred, the Hutus came up with their ten commandments in which they stated clearly that

every Hutu person must see the Tutsis as enemies who do not deserve anything but death. “They must constantly fight against Tutsi propaganda. – Hutus must stand firm and be vigilant towards their common enemy, the Tutsis.”(103)

Tadjo also explores the character of the ruling class, and the over ambitious nature of the political group as a major factor that fuelled the conflict between the Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority. She underscores the fact that those in authority saw the conflict as an opportunity to pillage the country. Josephine, one of the witnesses of the genocide gives us insight to this truth: “No, it wasn’t an ethnic war, because at the highest level they got together to pillage the country, to look after their own interests. Politicians never tell the truth. They stir up hatred. When the country is poor and the youth are unemployed, they can easily manipulate people by making others the cause of their troubles” (108). Tadjo like the other African writers who sees literature as a subversive weapon of societal change, and through their works expose the ills perpetrated in the postcolonial Africa, puts down her pen to preserving the memory of the Rwandan genocide. It is sad to note that the cry for independence which was a necessity predicted and sought for, to end the suffering and misery of the colonised people has not produced the desired result. That is why Henry Lopes in his novel *Le Pleurer-Rire*, made this challenging remark:

“Hier nos misères provenaient du Blanc qu’il  
fallait chasser pour que le bonheur vienne.  
Aujourd’hui les Oncles sont partis et la misère  
est toujours. Qui donc faut-il chasser? (23)

Yesterday our misery came from the white man  
who had to be hunted for happiness to come.

Today the Uncles are gone and misery is still on. Who should we hunt?

It is also worth noting that the disinterest of the outside world, especially the super powers and the United Nations contributed in no small measure to the escalation of the crisis leading to genocide. A journalist vituperates:

The world powers knew that massacres were being carried out in Rwanda, but they were slow to react to admit that what was going on was genocide. A military intervention force of modest proportions could have stopped the extremists and quickly put an end to their plans. Instead, the United Nations balked at playing their part. (p.33).

Propaganda through hate speeches, print media, the radio, and television also fed the insecurities and anger of the people, resulting in tension and psychological trauma. Ethnicized and “tribal” portrayals of Hutu and Tutsi in conflict dominated the international airwaves and television. They gave very trivial accounts of the complex experiences of Rwandans and their relationship with the rest of the world. These accounts created a colossal representation of the traumas that occurred, presenting the Tutsis as victims and the Hutus as perpetrators. Tadjou presented also the role women played as they also participated in the killing.

“Women who are murderers, perpetrators of genocide, women forced to kill, accused of having killed their husbands, their children, friends, neighbours, and strangers. Women who have helped men to rape, who sang to give them the courage to massacre, who betrayed, who pillaged, who decided to join the acts of cruelty.

With machetes, they killed other women,  
mutilated children, finished off men.” ( 101)

Tadjo is able to feel the impact of the genocide and also make it clearer for the reader to participate through her approach in which she identifies herself as an outsider and through the recounting of the individual conditions and the testimonies of the situation during and after the genocide. She makes the reader participate with her as she asks questions like “Are your fears more terrifying than mine?(...) What sacrifice would you be willing to make to preserve your humanity? Are you prepared for this incredible encounter with death distorted by cruelty?” (10) The author's use of the present tense narrative form helps to force the scene on the reader's mind.

The question we need to ask ourselves is, can this unfortunate event happen again - anywhere on the continent? And the answer is yes. All that is required is a country deeply divided along ethnic lines where justice is dispensed along these lines; where people are irresponsible for their speeches. The author emphasises the fact that what happened in Rwanda is a proof that the world is capable of genocide, and therefore finding a lasting solution is our collective responsibility. She insists that: “Rwanda is inside me, in you, in all of us. Rwanda is under our skin, in our blood, in our guts. In the very depths of our slumber, in our waking hearts. (38). Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imana* is not just a reportage of death and cruelty, but the author also reveals some proven healing strategies and as well a strong commitment to forgiveness. From her interactions with some of the survivors of the tragic period, the writer explores the inherent ability in man to rise above the traumas of conflict, and continue with a normal life. The effect of conflict usually leaves the survivors psychologically traumatised, as psychological trauma could be said to be the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter ones sense

of security, making one feel helpless. Traumatic experience often poses a threat to life or safety. Esther Mujawayo, emphasises:

« Mais le génocide n'a pas qu'une seule violence. Il n'a pas que la violence de la mort ou des tortures physiques. Il t'anéantit à l'intérieur de toi, il te fait ce que l'autre veut faire de toi: rien, même moins que rien. Même encore en vie, tu deviens inexistant. » (153) “But the genocide is not only one type of violence. It's not only the violence of death or physical torture. It destroys you from within, it makes of you what the other wants you to be: nothing, even less than nothing. Even while alive, you cease to exist.”

### **Conflict Management styles in *The Shadow of Imana***

It is instructive to note that before embarking on the journey to Rwanda, the writer Veronique Tadjó already has nursed intrapersonal conflict, as she would reveal in the opening statement of her work:

It had long been my dream to go to Rwanda. No, ‘dream’ is not the right word. I had long felt a need to exorcise Rwanda. To go to that place where those images we had seen on television had been filmed, images that had flashed across the world and had left an indelible horror in every heart. I did not want Rwanda to remain forever a nightmare, a primal fear. (p.1)

Tadjó was not immune to the tragedy that had befallen her fellow human being. Though the pain would never rise to the same degree as the actual victims, she empathised with the Rwandans and one of the ways of identifying with the people was a journey to the very heart of the incident to hear the casualties of the war. Of course, she does not hesitate to point out:

...what had happened there concerned us all. It was not one nation lost in the dark heart of Africa that was affected. To forget Rwanda after the sound and the fury was like being blind in one eye, voiceless, handicapped. It was to walk in darkness, feeling your way with outstretched arms to avoid colliding with the future.

Did Tadjó succeed in her quest to resolve her internal conflict? Yes. Initially, though, she admits that she has not fully recovered from Rwanda because Rwanda could not be fully exorcised. This she said because she points out that danger is ever-present and violence is everywhere. However, her contact with the people has enabled her to understand some of the issues surrounding the conflict, thereby enabling her to come to the conclusion and warn us that:

We need to understand, to analyse the mechanisms of hatred, the words that create division, the deeds that put the seal on treason, the actions that unleash terror. We need to understand. Our humanity is in peril.

From the authors account and her interaction with the survivors of the Rwandan genocide, Tadjó reveals the various measures that are taken by the survivors to get back on track and also forestall future occurrence.

According to Tidd, the experience of trauma, which is often described as a form of 'dying' by trauma survivors, takes on various guises: one of its manifestations is the multiplication of the self during which a victim "creates a second 'self' due to conflict in the 'original self'" (407-417). This strategy enables the victim to create a distance from the traumatising experience. This is seen from the character of



the woman whose son was killed her neighbour during the genocide. After the genocide, the same neighbour took care of the woman when she fell sick and later they became lovers to the chagrin of all around them. Here, we witness the demonstration of the Freudian theory because the woman's id, that is her desire to be with a companion is fulfilled. This logical action of hers is explained by her ego's justification that the same murderer nursed her back to life. The nursing helped to reshape her psyche. Mujawayo points out that for these women, although often paradoxically, being raped had saved them from being killed, they emerged from the horrors of the experience reluctantly, because they now had to live through a "hell worse than death" (*un enfer pire que la mort*, 197).

The author also reveals the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness through justice, and the need to learn and draw insight from the past as a guide to tackling the challenges of the present. The Lawyer from Kigali insists:

How can we ensure that this never happens again?  
What is needed are strong institutions, justice and national reconciliation. He repeats: justice is what is needed. A credible justice. If people do not recognize themselves in this justice, there will be no national reconciliation. (23)

In order to get credible justice there was need to resurrect some traditional modes of establishing justice. Reconciliation for a nation fundamentally divided drew on pre-colonial social practices which is the traditional community-based hearing mechanism called 'gacaca'. This system of justice was effective in addressing post-genocide civilian tension, in the sense that it permitted the local victims to publicly state their losses, and provided community restorative justice. The use of this traditional system of justice further authenticates and

affirms the African pre-colonial cultural, social and political practices as still very useful and efficient.

The Gacaca means a return to traditional justice. How did the ancestors judge? How did they mete out punishment? Traditional customs are being revived in the face of this emergency. Solutions for the present must be sought in the past. (97)

Recognizing the fact that the nation could not simply lock up perpetrators in expectation of a formal trial, the Gacaca courts imposed reparations at a community level and facilitated local unity and the reintegration of survivors. Again, this resonates with Freud's assertion, that the super ego, while drawing from the norms and morals of the society, seeks to control the excesses of the id while convincing the ego to moralistic goals over the realistic ones.

### **Conclusion**

From the author's perspective, her main purpose of going to Rwanda was to exorcise the horrors of the place she had heard so much about. Her journey and narrative style acted simultaneously as both therapeutic and exploratory. Tadjó declares: "I did not want Rwanda to remain forever a nightmare, a primal fear. (...) I needed to lance the abscess, lay bare the wound and bandage it." (3) She also bore witness to the brave efforts made by the Rwandan government, citizens, foreigners and interested parties in coming to terms with the tragedy by adopting many approaches to manage the conflict. As far as the author was concerned, discovering the horror that was in Rwanda, remains the foundation for the therapeutic process. And for those that experienced war, they also need psychological treatment for them to move on in life and remain human. Both the offender and the offended need to work on each other and self by forgiving self and the 'other' so as to forge a common front in waging war against any threat to peace, stability, unity, progress and development.

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## **CORRUPTION AND GOVERNANCE CRISES IN AYI KWEI ARMAH'S *THE BEAUTIFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN***

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### **Abstract**

*The attainment of independence and self-rule by any nation is to afford it the opportunity to benefit from the abundant human and natural resources it is endowed with. The Africans were not comfortable with the leadership and service of the colonial masters characterised by exploitation of resources, slavery, deceit, and other forms of negative tendencies. This gave rise to agitation for independent and self-rule by some African elites; hoping for better and satisfactory service for sustainable development until the late 1950's when the dream started manifesting. This paper examines the state of African continent after independence. It also examines the high level of corruption and governance crises in Africa perpetrated by our African leaders such that it derails the continent of progress and development. The paper identifies some of the major causes of governance crisis aligning to maladministration, ethno-religious crisis, political thuggery, terrorism and other leadership problems in our text of study. It further seeks for positive change to give the Africans a sense of belonging and compete with their counter-parts globally as it has all the needs for such competition and development.*

**Keyword:** Corruption, Governance, Resources, Development, Exploitation, Deceit.

## **Introduction**

Leadership has been described as the capacity to mobilise resources, especially human, towards the attainment of set goals. It is the ability to harness the best qualities of the individuals towards the common good. In doing this, the leaders must provide the enabling environment or be able to use the power of cohesion to distil those qualities in their followers that translate to national achievements. For the socio-economic and political development of a society, the possible approach for utilising the immense positive African factor is to provide a level playing field for development, unfortunately, this is lacking in African leaders.

Africa is in a painful state of suffering in the hands of its leaders. The continent is at the lowest point of its social and physical development. Though African leaders that emerged after independence are real Africans by identity but on the other hand, are like western in their fatherland. We can also say that western countries and their institutions, which try to model Africa to their desired image, have made themselves leaders of Africa through their African agents. Indeed, western leaders have contributed in ruining Africa. They support corrupt African leaders by accepting to save their looted funds and resources. Hagher states:

Yet African leaders must also accept the blame for the pain, anguish and death, which Africans suffer and continue to suffer. There is a view gaining popularity that, after all, Africa works as a rational entity where leaders maximize returns on the state of confusion, uncertainty and chaos which, political instability, societal divisions, violence, crime and bring. This view sees no hope for democracy, as leaders are merely patrons and followers clients (7).

It is observed that African leaders are always getting rich and more comfortable than their led, while high level of disorder, violence, crime, war and famine become pervasive daily. This, in effect, shows that Africa is modernising without development. If this is allowed to continue unchecked, Africa might become the ultimate destination for criminality and terrorism as a result of failure in leadership and governance characterised by corruption and other forms of social vices.

Corruption is a social problem that has drawn concern globally. Swamy, Lee and Azfer, assert that: Corruption in Africa is a problem of routine deviation from established standards and norms by public officials and parties with whom they interact (178). They also identified the types of corruption in Africa as bribery, private gain, and other benefits to non-existent workers and pensioners referred to as ghost workers. The dishonest and illegal behavior exhibited especially by people in authority for their personal gain is termed corruption. Furthermore, Agbaje, quoting the ICPC Act (Section 2), states that:

Corruption includes vices like bribery, fraud and other related offences. Also, corruption is the abuse or misuse of power or position of trust for personal or group benefit, monetary or otherwise.

Consequently, corruption is symptomatic of numerous difficulties within contemporary societies. This dangerous phenomenon usually involves two or more parties. Wraith and Simpkins asserts that: corruption is contagious. An analysis of the anti-graft/anti-corruption laws in Nigeria shows that corruption will continue in spite of the laws because the perpetrators do not fear any consequences. This is reflective of other parts of the countries in Africa. This phenomenon cuts across all segments of development such as award of contracts, promotion of staff, dispensation of justice, misuse of public offices,

embezzlement of public funds and other negative tendencies that hinder the progress and development of the continent.

The failure of our leaders in emancipating the workers and peasants from economic deprivation and the adoption of capitalist political – economic system also led to the emergence of a literature that protest against capitalism and offers socialism as the solution to the continents’ problems. Festus Iyayi, Kole Omotosho, Festus Iyayi, Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, Chinua Achebe and other literary writers have attempted to utilise literature as an instrument of change. They assert that the problem of Africa is that of the productive lower class. In essence, the dehumanising condition which majority of our people find themselves has been brought about by insecurity of our leaders due to leadership problem for selfish interests.

Killam, commenting on the leadership, social ills and moral decadence in our society, joined Achebe in saying that if one takes the example of Nigeria, which is the place he knows best, things had got to such a point politically that there was no other answer or way that you can resolve this impasse politically. The political machine is so abused that whichever way one passed it, it produces the same results and therefore another force that come in. The possibility of change is projected when the central character is capable of confronting and triumphing over obstacles. This approach to people’s ability to liberate themselves from oppressive forces of society is confined to all Africa writings.

Ayi Kwei Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is a clear example that handles such issue. The Man who is a symbol of virtue in a corrupt Ghanaian society is depicted assisting a corrupt minister to flee from the country during the coup, thereby aiding a corrupt leader to escape the wrath of the law. The man compromises his position as a beacon of hope in the society.



## **Corruption and Governance Crises in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born***

*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is one of the classic works that depicts the post independence or post colonial experience of most African countries. The use of Ghana is just a symbolic device to represent the African countries, as almost all African countries are bedeviled with this negative tendencies characterised by corruption, bad governance, and other social vices. The issue of corruption and bad governance are broadly discussed in the novel and should not be viewed as completely localised in Ghana but rather should be generally used as a minor reflection of the experiences of other African countries.

While some critics commended him for his literary approach, others like Frederksen (1987), Wright (1959), condemn him for his accusations of the prevailing values in post-colonial society. On the other hand, Achebe sees Armah as too pessimistic due to his extreme monopoly of the language. Despite all these controversies, Armah's quest for good governance and sustainable development and the equality of Africans are desirable. Armah's message to the public is resistance to all the obstacles that stand against the vision of Africans and also to liberate themselves to develop and prosper.

*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* captures the wide spread of corruption among Africans and attendant problems, this shows Armah's main perspective on harsh image of corruption and selfishness of both the leaders which hinders the African countries from development. Corruption still remains the major social, ethical and political economic challenge for which a lot of attention and emphasis has been focused. The novel is Armah's disillusionment with the post-colonial experience of Ghana and demonstrates the wasted hopes of Africans due to Nkrumah's misuse of power and wealth through corrupt activities.

Nkrumah and his corrupt government were overthrown in a military coup d'état. It is a period in Ghana's history and its atmosphere of disillusion and despair, its unlimited corruption that Armah portrayed in the text. The novel has a simple and straightforward plot that tells the story of "The Man" unnamed rail clerk and his relations with his wife and family, his fellow workers...(Killam 9).

This leader leads the British colony of the Gold coast to independence in 1957 which is the first African country to gain autonomy from the British control. Ghana, the home of the writer represents one of the African counties where corruption existed extensively and high level of fraud. The novel is Armah's means to illustrate the variety of issues that exist in African countries mainly the wide spread illegal practices by both the lead and the led (low class) themselves, that is, due to their ignorance or nonchalant attitude to ask for their rights. This made the leaders to loot, siphon and divert resources as much as possible (49). The novel is divided into three parts. The first part describes a day in the life of The Man and his encounters with various people such as the bus driver, his fellow railway workers, a timber merchant who attempts to bribe him and his wife Oyo, these various encounters are described at length. Everywhere The Man goes, he encounters moral, physical and spiritual corruption. For instance the bus driver steals from the company (49 – 50).

Part two of the novel traces the history of The Man's progress within a corrupt society. Ghana's post-colonial history is revealed as well as the birth, growth and death of Nkrumah's regime as depicted in the novel by the life span of the "Man Child" who goes through a life cycle of birth, death and growth in nine years of the period of Nkrumah's regime. Finally, the last part of the novel describes the events leading to the military coup that terminates the corrupt civilian

regime and the reactions of the public. This section also describes the escape of the corrupt minister Koomson.

In the *Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, African leaders are depicted as highly corrupt. In the novel, we see Koomson who represents the example of corrupt leaders. He exhibits how politicians steal public funds and other resources for the sake of enriching themselves at the detriment of the ordinary people in the society. Armah explores how Joe Koomson, the minister, uses his political status to collect wealth for himself. When “The Man” visited Koomson’s house with his wife, Oyo, when he enters the house, he couldn’t believe what he saw filled with high qualitative and expensive furniture.

Specifically, The Man was surprised at those things he saw in Koomson’s house, psychologically concluded that such properties can only be acquired through corrupt means. Furthermore, the mother of The Man’s wife was also carried away by the luxury and wealth that Koomson live in, and she states: ‘Aah, Koomson has done well, we must say it. He has done well for himself and his family’ (139). This is reflective of the ignorance of the masses who, rather criticizing and commending the ill-gotten. No minding the source of the wealth, but praising and commending him for acquiring such wealth. Development and progress have eluded Africa due to the political corruption and bad governance exhibited by African leaders, causing disappointment to the newly appointed government officials with little salaries as take home pay. Koomson who changed from a low class worker to the position of leader in the country is the depiction of the bad leadership that have exploited the masses through their loots.

Furthermore, Armah depicts the African politicians in such a way that they own and manipulate every bit of African resources. This can be seen from the visit of The Man and his family to Koomson’s house, when he (Koomson) ordered for drinks to be served to the

visitors. He says thus: “Atinga, bring the trolley and put the drinks. Put also ice and put glasses four” (140). This shows the luxury and avalanche of which the African leaders behave while the ordinary citizen could not afford an ordinary drinking water, not to mention such drinks such drinks. Also, the discussion with respect to the purchase of one boat for fishing business that can be bought for twelve thousand pounds, while the Man and co were amazed at the cost of the boat as Koomson shows no concern. He states: “Twelve thousand pounds, yes. But the money is not the difficult thing after all, the bank is ours and we can do anything” (136).

The above scenario shows how our African leaders control the banks not minding not minding the consequences. Government money is their money, not for projects and development. Armah explores as another form of corruption; he reveals the social life of Ghanaians that shows government leaders like Koomson, Zacharias Legos and Abednego Yamoah who enjoy life meaning characterised by possession of quality and expensive properties. This is arising from the embezzlement and looting of public funds and resources. The abuse of power is seen in the character of Koomson and his government officials while the character of conductor, boatman, watchman, clerk and drivers remain at a sorry.

Koomson is tempted with the fruits of office; The Man knows that he (Koomson) is successful as a result of public theft. He steals the money that belongs to the state coffers and abuses the public trust bestowed on him. He and his family enjoy luxurious life and in possession of expensive cars, houses, furniture and play a life, meaning British way of life while the followers are languishing in abject poverty. Even their daughters eats, walk and talk like Britons (17). Armah explores Koomson’s embezzlement of government funds through his physical appearances, such that he represents the neo-

colonial leaders who are fattened by the fruits of betrayal of their own people. The Man ironically says about him:

These were the socialists of Africa, fat, perfumed, soft with ancestral softness of chiefs who sold their people and are celestially happy with the fruits of the trade (131).

For our African people to become rich, one needs to be in government for easy accumulation of wealth. Every African leader sought only for himself and his family. They are the same people that accused the colonial masters of lip service and exploitation of our resources. The colonial masters gave us the independence and left, yet, our leaders are worst than them. They are preoccupied with abuse of power, deceit, breach of trust and other negative practices. Armah worried by their acts, states: “How long will Africa be cursed with its own leaders” (120). He feels sorry for Africa since it is being destroyed by its own people.

There are other corruption devices such as denial of social amenities, frustration of the downtrodden and denial other necessities of life. These and other issues formed the basis of corruption and bad governance in African. Armah uses various techniques such as satire, obscene language, filthy atmosphere, flash back characterization among others devices that enriched his work in exploring his message. He uses corrupt practices in order to illustrate his disgust and hatred to the government of Ghana during the post-colonial period and to achieve his goal. He also uses several techniques to explain in details the wide spread of corruption in the novel, the techniques are used to demonstrate the corrupt environment after independence. Some of these techniques include flashback, ellipsis, characterisation and other devices that enriched the work.

## Conclusion

*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* focuses on post-independence period of Ghanaian society; it is a symbolic of many African countries where corruption and bad governance remain a major problem at all levels, this attack is used by Armah to satirise and awaken the Africans, the population as a whole to see the truth and work hand in hand in the dismal of any evil issue that can affect the country. The work examines the issue of corruption and the total embrace by each member of the society who did not do their best to overcome this issue.

Armah mocks with great forcefulness and distorted language all that is rotten in the world of hypocritical people, lost opportunities and the enormous gap between the few with all the money and power, and the masses without anything at all. It depicts the sad surroundings of filth and corruption, but there are also moments of laughter in his observations. Good can be found in the vitality of his characters, which are prepared to search for something beyond that of everybody else. So, the paper answered the question raised before about Armah's main focus in the novel, that is, the writer's only and prominent intention is to reveal the facts that corruption caused to African societies.

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## **TRAUMA, REMINISCENCES AND THE MEMORY SYMBOL IN SELECTED CHARACTERS IN ABUBAKAR ADAM IBRAHIM'S *SEASON OF CRIMSON BLOSSOMS***

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### **Abstract**

*Literature captures and re-echoes reality and its intricacies in whatever society it is located. Thus, this essay investigates the relationship between Literature and Society using psychoanalytic literary criticism to examine Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's Season of Crimson Blossoms. The study adopts the Freudian strand of psychoanalysis, with much attention to the conscious and unconscious tenets, to explore what results to neurosis, obsession, depression, trauma amongst other psychoanalytic issues in the texts. The study is fore grounded on the premise that so far, the literary canon the writer of the text represents has underscored the psychological dimensions of their literatures. Hence, general attention is always appropriated to the socio-political, historical and other such motifs, other than the psychological. By ascribing central importance to the indices that Freudian psychoanalysis has a place in the criticism of the novel. The essay finds that issues that insinuate bigotry like, political, religious, social, and otherwise as seen in the text can be explored via an exploration of the inner recesses of the characters psyche and the elements that underlie them. Thus, the study concludes that humans should not be judged on the premises of their actions or inactions whether negative or positive, or from mere political, social and economic perspectives. Rather a journey into their psyche to ascertain experiences that inform their individual personalities should be key in figuring who/what these people are or become.*

**Keywords:** literature, society, psychoanalysis, character



## Introduction

This essay investigates the relationship between literature and society using the Freudian psychoanalytic criticism as an investigative mechanism. The essay enshrines the relationship between literature and society; where it asserts the cordial relationship betwixt the duo and further gives credence to embracing the psychological dimension of examining Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms* against the sociological amongst other factors. The credence ascribed to the psychological approach is in an attempt to distort the cemented dominant edge of interpreting literary works within the area based on realities that encapsulates the political, cultural, religious and socio-economic with an approach that proffers the interior/human mind and motivation ample space in deciphering meaning within the canon.

As contemporary Nigerian Fictional work that border on realities enshrined within the frames of politics, religion, violence, escapism, cultural differentiation and influence, sex amongst others. Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms* presents the heinous and cancerous realities within the Nigerian land space, which has left her in a state of abysmal dysfunctional retrogression. In essence, the essay examines and offers insight into the various ways people are driven by psychical conflicts and imbalances, which subscribes to the workings of the unconscious and conscious mind, even infantile repressive desires that surge up to constitute in people later in life, attitudinal changes that will affect them and their society in general. In account for why psychological repression gives a clear cut path to character representation in Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms*. Each of the characters is seen in a peculiar way showing the mark of a tragic past with a mixture of their own personal, unacknowledged stories of loss and pain, with lingering memories which are unwelcomed, yet unavoidable.

Since psychoanalytic criticism is a promising tool, for the exploration of human psyche/ character portraiture. In its examination of the key characters, the essay explicates in all sense the place and viability of the “conscious” and “unconscious” motivations as a model guide to understanding the workings of the interior of people/key characters, which is the crux behind Freud’s development of the theory. Thus, Dobie (56) shades light on the unconscious as hidden from the conscious mind and further compares it with that small portion of an iceberg that is visible above the surface of the water, with the unconscious likened to the powerful unseen mass below it. Pointedly, this essay aims to show how these repressed thoughts, feelings and ideas re-enact themselves from the unconscious of the characters to find outlet, take over and influence their behaviour.

In light of the foregoing, the Nigerian novel over the years has drawn attention due to its maturity into a wide field of discourse, following the robust development/globalization of the Nigerian State. As such writers of all kind write to capture these realities that border on politics, ethnicity, religion, violence, sex, disillusionment and so on. Principally, the readings have been largely on the sociological dimension, where critics have approached their criticisms from the social, political and sometimes historical perspectives. These studies are pertinent hence, they have been one way or the other immersed into understanding the dimensions of Abubakar’s work as a type of the Nigerian writer. Generally, there has been a dearth on the psychological dimension of the Nigerian novel. Responsively, so far, there has been no adoption of psychoanalytic criticism in the study of Abubakar Adam Ibrahim’s *Season of Crimson Blossoms*. As this may be accounted for, not only because of the recency of the novel, but mainly due to the fact that literary criticism of novels from Nigeria has been sketchy towards psychoanalytic criticism.

This study fills this gap by employing Freudian psychoanalysis in establishing the link between Literature and Society in response to issues that permeate the region represented and Nigeria at large. Thus, displaying the manner, the Nigerian novel reflects and reconstructs contemporary issues via a paradigmatic shift from the usual sociological approach, to a perspective that is psychological. Although, Abubakar is not the only novelist to capture the experiences he did about the region. However, in his creative effort, he illustrated the different stages of the experiences as well as the changes in his society/region through his treatment of a variety of issues with a great sense of balance and realism.

### **The psychoanalytic theory**

The study of human psyche and personality development in several endeavors, with reference to psychology, literature, art, philosophy, cultural and film studies theory. All have their emergence from Sigmund Freud and in other direction Alfred Adler and Carl Jung's psychoanalytic theory from the nineteenth century, which is referred to as, psychoanalysis in psychiatric practice and even in literature. Freud's fundamental contribution was to open up the entire realm of the unconscious to systematic study, and to provide a language and terminology in which the operations of the unconscious could be expressed. Thus, his influence on modern thoughts has remained fresh and constant due to its revisions, refinements and assimilations from/into the old framework. Aside, the theory of the unconscious, Freud also pays attention to these thoughts: the Oedipus and Electra complex, trauma, repression and so on, which this essay bothers on.

Freud expounds on the sexual origin of humans, where he uses a mother-child relationship as his model. To show how submerged repressed infantile incestuous desires could extend to symbolic manifestation of unconscious wishes in dreams, jokes, errors

and so on. Here he shows the significance of the “unconscious” to individual psychical development, where he opines that, a child’s dependence on its parents especially its mother for food, and protection/care does not stop at the biological. This, to him, is the first ‘dawning’ of sexuality and according to him is usually the first manifestation of “the unconscious”. The small boy will suck its mother’s breast for milk, but will soon discover later that this biologically essential activity is also pleasurable. Thus, the baby’s mouth is not just an organ of physical survival but an erotogenic layer the child might reactivate a few years later by sucking its thumb and later by kissing and ultimately a sexual desire for its mother follows.

According to Freud, this act of primary repression and the process of maturing into manhood is what he called Oedipus complex. Eagleton (2008:135) opines that:

The centrality of Freud’s Oedipus complex is the structure of relations by which we came to be men and women that we are. It is the point at which we are produced and constituted as subjects. It signals the transition from the pleasure to ‘reality principle’; from the enclosure of the family to society at large, from Nature to Culture...Moreover the Oedipus complex is for Freud the beginning of morality, conscience, law and all forms of social and religious authority.

For Freud’s Oedipal process, the human process comes with a split, which is torn between conscious and unconscious, with the unconscious always turning to plague the former. Undoubtedly Freud and his models of the human psyche still remains fundamentally the core of psychoanalytic criticism. It is on this basis that Bressler (2003:132) asserts that:

The foundation for all forms of psychoanalytic criticism irrefutably belongs to Freud and his theories and his techniques developed during his psychiatry practices. Whether any practicing psychoanalytic critic utilizes the ideas of Jung, Frye, Lacan or any other psychoanalyst, all must acknowledge Freud as the intellectual center of this form of criticism

Jacques Lacan is one of the psychoanalytic theorist who disagreed with Sigmund Freud in his postulations on the nature of the psyche, he attributes and expounds it on the basis of 'new linguistic and literary principle' thereby offering new insights into the understanding of psychoanalytic criticism. According to Lacan (1993) in Odiwo (2009:38):

The unconscious is not a chaotic mass of disparate material as might formerly have been thought, but an orderly network as complex as the structure of a language. What the psychoanalytic experience discovers in the unconscious is the whole structure of language.

According to Ian Watt (1957: 121), writers of novels that apply psychological precepts have shown their strength of the psychological in two ways:

Indirectly, by revealing the characters personality through his actions: or directly by specific analysis of the characters various states of mind. Both these methods of course can be and usually are combined and they are usually found in conjunction with a narrative structure designed to embody the characters development and to present

him with crucial moral choices which bring his whole personality into play.

In a similar sense, Sussman (1993:45) observes that:

the history of psychoanalysis may be regarded as a series of revisions undertaken in order to correct, modify and supplement the biases operative in the various sub-bodies of Freud's writing

This suggests that, despite heavy criticism of Freud's works, it still remains the core and starting point of psychoanalytic discourse. As his structure of the psyche and his insistence on the viability of the unconscious, are constructively imperative to the core of this essay. Moreover, psychoanalytic criticism provides a stimulating approach to literary analysis because it emphasizes that human beings are complex, yet understandable creatures' who often fail to note the influence of the unconscious on both their motivations and everyday actions. Furthermore, psychoanalytic criticism provides a stimulating approach to literary analysis based on its complexity. This is why Freud opines that, there is a relationship between the world of the writer and his writings, thus the writer's works reflect his most personal wishes and fantasies. It is in solidifying this claim that, Barry (1995:98) holds that:

The effects of psychoanalytic literary criticism at its very simplest can be the psychoanalysis of the author or of a particularly interesting character. In this directly therapeutic form, it is very similar to psychoanalysis itself. Closely following the analytic process discussed is Freud's Interpretation of Dreams (1950). But more complex variations are possible. The concept of psychoanalysis can be deployed with reference to the narrative or poetic structure itself, without requiring access to the

authorial psyche as the funding text of psychoanalysis themselves be treated as literature, and re-read from the light of their formal qualities in their theoretical context.

This implies that psychoanalytic literary criticism can be deployed in the study of an author's life in relation to his work or character in his novel. This further explains Freud's assertion of a cogent and cordial relationship between the world of the writer and his writings, as the writers works reflect his most personal wishes and fantasies, which he (Freud) calls psycho-biography.

**Trauma, Reminiscences and the Memory Symbol in selected characters of Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms***

Psychoanalytically, trauma generally plays out its symptoms as the remnants of certain (traumatic) experiences. This affectively toned experiences; Freud calls "*Psychic Traumata*". Apart from reminiscence and the memory symbols, trauma could also find outlets in hysterias, neurosis and especially hallucinations. Generally speaking, all these play out as the trauma victim remembers the painful experiences of the distant past. And because they are still strongly affected by them, they cannot escape from the past and neglect the present in its favor. Thus, with an understanding of trauma being characterized by the clarity of an abnormal clinging to the past, Ibrahim presents the character of Faiza as one that has been battered by her past, following her witnessing the brutal killing of her father and brother in one of the crises in Jos. She is further disappointed and pained by her mother's decision to get married as against her childish assumptions of her mother staying unmarried to cater for her and her sister. Worst of it, is her mother's choice of a husband, one whom in a bid to compare with her late father, she disregards and disdains, having considered him of a lesser social class per excellence. People

have a way of channeling their unmet desires to different direction(s), it could be love, hatred or what have you. For Faiza, she passes the pain of her father's death and the possible displacement of her desires with a great dislike, disdain and disregard for her step-father, thereby discarding her mother and how she feels. This informs her decision to leave with her Aunt Hajiya Binta. Pointedly, Faiza's contempt for the duo is embedded not in the pain and trauma of her loss alone, but in allegiance to her father's memory, thus:

This sentiment was inspired by her loyalty to her late father's memory, by the fact that he was gone forever and would have no further need of his wife (14).

Faiza, reminds her father every inch of his mother, which explains their closeness. Therefore, he lavishes her with an unconditional love like he would to his mother. Aside the natural flow of connection between fathers and their daughters, Faiza's father would always introduce her to everyone as his mother, thereby giving credence to the flow of the Freudian Electra complex in her;

When Faiza was still a child, her father would hoist her onto his shoulders and walk round the neighborhood, introducing her as his mother to everyone they met. When she got older, she would sit on the *dakali* at the front of the house, looking in the direction of the setting sun. Her father framed by the light of dusk, would hurry home from the Jos Main Market after he had closed his baby ware shop. On the occasion he travelled to Lagos to stock up, she would sit with the stuffed doll he had bought her and look longingly into the evening light... even when she was thirteen, her father still offered her choice pieces of meat from his soup while Jamilu fumed (80-81)



The line above shows the close knit relationship that Faiza enjoyed with her father, such that, she would rather enjoy every bit of her moment alone with her doll than being around her mother, each time he was away. The forceful termination of his life and her brothers by so-called religious bigots creates in her a vacuum that she would almost contend with all her life. Pained by their kind of death, the lingering memories leave her in a conundrum of trauma, which reminds her, of the sad event and bloods of her father and brother, at the sight of anything red. More so, in her trauma, she tries to recollect her brother's image but ends up bitter and disappointed by her inability to figure out his face, even in a sketch. The scene where Abida stumbles into Faiza's secret book explains a portion of her trauma:

She would not have thought much of it but for the words scribbled on the cover: Faiza Amin's secret book...there were sketches of figures wielding clubs standing over a person on the ground. The felled figure was a little more elaborate, with a distinct beard. She turned over the page and started reading what Faiza had written each time she had been hounded out of her tenuous sleep by the roaring shadows that prowled her dreams, and which are now manifesting in her wakefulness as well (78).

Just as Caruth (1995:92), explains earlier, traumatic events cause a rupture in the victims which leads to a belatedness of the memories of the event, because it is not fully experienced at the time it occurs. He further posits that, the delay in remembering the moment of the trauma isolates it from other normal memory. This leads to a trajectory repetition and with this belatedness of the traumatic events being unable to fit into the structure of time. The result is evident in frozen moments from normal memories. Following the assertions

above, it becomes imperative to say that, Faiza's apparent neurotic display is orchestrated by the trauma of the brutal murder of her father and brother, which she witnessed and in contention with the unfortunate event, tries to sketch her experiences in the manner of its occurrence. The trauma also extends its expression in her dreams and even in her isolation, that Hureira suspects a plaguing of djinn, not knowing that all she needs is someone who would understand her plight in the heat of its intensity. At some other instance, though Faiza is not entirely conforming when she and Abida steal glances of acknowledgement of Abida's peeking into her secret book. She however, gets a bit of relieve with the feeling of having someone who at least has a glimpse of what she feels and battles with thus: "It was a significant interlude in which trust and understanding were forged and Faiza felt closer to anyone than she had in years" (78). Furthermore, in her confirming to Abida "I want to write about beautiful things" (79) attests to her innate/earnest desire to run away from the trauma that haunts her, day in and out.

As argued earlier, every neurotic character suffers a certain level of sublimation, which finds outlets through the characters hallucinations, hysteria, slips of tongue and even dreams. The psychological breakdown Faiza suffers from witnessing the brutal murder of her father and brother does not leave her traumatized alone but let's itself through all the aforementioned especially her dreams:

No... No!' faiza thrashed about, arguing with the shadows in her dreams, and kicked off the sheet. Hadiza, horrified, sat up, torn between bolting and waking the girl. Faiza now started whimpering like a beaten dog. Eventually, she curled up into a foetal position. Soon enough, she was almost quiet, her mild wheezing strumming the night like tender fingers on a guitar (18)

The lines above, obviously sends some clarifying signals to Faiza's contention with her trauma, Owing up to the fact that in her psyche, she lacks the capacity to deal with the reality of her past experience. In the long run, she suffers torment and oppression, through every means possible in a bid for the trauma to free itself. Again, Faiza's neurosis is not just buttressed in the trauma of the killings she has witnessed. But in her inability to recollect her brother Jamilu's true facial looks, all of which discharge themselves via her psychotic displays. She is however reminded of this experience; "Bright, red blood, warm and sticky, splashed across Faiza's face and dotted, in a fine spray, the shell-pink nightdress that her father had bought her" (84). the above covers for the brutal murder of her father and brother, by her Math's teacher Jacob James, who smiles at her jokes and those of her other classmates. But against his norm, his not smiling on the fateful day he came and made away with the lives of the two important men in her life, is an experience, she is not in so much hurry to discard. As she remembers every bit, that night's sad event, the memory of it emanates in yet another dream thus:

She dreamt in sepia. Like rust-tainted water running over the snapshots of her memories, submerging her dreams in a stream of reddish-brown. But when the blood spurted and flowed, it would always be in astonishing red. That night, the sounds too echoed in her head-the dull dump of metal chopping into flesh. Cracking femurs. Splitting skulls. The first agonized screams. The moans and grunts. And the thunderous silence of disbelief that followed. She woke up panting and was further startled by little Umami's frightened eyes peering into hers. (84)

Apart from the emergence of her painful experience in her dreams as a garner of momentum for outlets. Faiza abhors the fact of blood and anything red anywhere around her, because it catapults the past into

the present for her. One amongst so many of her experiences is in Hajiya Binta's wounded finger from the sewing machine,

She froze when she saw the blood. Binta wrapped her wounded fingers in a piece of cloth and turned away from her niece. When the stabbing burned its way to her brain, she fell to her knees. The women were torn between attending to the agonized woman on the floor and the dazed teenager, with sweat on her upper lip, trembling like the last leaf of a baobab caught in the chilly gust of harmattan (103)

This neurotic and psychotic exhibition does not end here, but translates into her having issues with eating stew. As its reddishness, reminds her of the past that she so dreads with everything in her. The lines below also succinctly capture Faiza's delirium with blood:

She lingered more and more in her tinted dreams and was astonished by the splash of red each time it came, leaving her gasping and panting in the night. Sometimes Faiza fled from the shadows in her dreams. Other times, she dared to chase them, quietly at first (226).

The aforementioned experience is pertinent to what inspires and informs the character of Faiza as projected in the text, due to a psychical imbalance from her past that, pins her down with so much gusto, each time it re-surfaces. Ibrahim, further presents Faiza as a character that is pained from her past, lonely and one that seeks to be heard. However, with no one listening to her and in a quest to escape from the realities of her pains, she takes to Kano films and literatures thus:

But beyond the distraction she craved from the romantic life portrayed in the films and literature of Kano, which was an escape from the haunting memory

of Jos living in the village will make her less appealing to men in the class of Ali Nuhu (14).

Faiza's escapist quest in films and literatures translates into a life of obsession with Ali Nuhu, the Kannywood star. She does not end it in, displaying his posters all over the corners of her room, door panel, and window panes and even note book covers. In readiness, she adorns and paints herself in a manner that will be appealing to the person of her obsession:

Thoughts of Ali Nuhu had not left room in her heart for the likes of the boy who could barely express himself in her presence...Sure. That is why his face is all over your room (76).

Pointedly, her obsession is in a bid to escape from the painful trauma of her past which steadily haunts her. Thus, she unconsciously slides into this obsessive terrain, discarding the fact of Ali Nuhu not knowing or loving her and of their separation based on their different locations. However, in the final analysis, when she eventually gets relief from her trauma, her obsession dies out with the speed of light:

And then her eyes fell on Ali Nuhu's face stuck in the corner of the mirror. She spent some time regarding it there for the first time. Without any ceremony or provocation, she proceeded to peel the sticker off the mirror and crumpled it in her palm. Then she devoted some time to taking down all the images of the film star in the room. She ripped them off the walls, off the wardrobe, the door panel and the covers of her notebooks. Where they stubbornly refused to come off, she tore the covers. It was this hunt that led her to her easel that had lain forgotten at the foot of the wardrobe ever since she passed her fine arts class...Faiza sat down on the couch in the

living room, her back board-straight, her legs folded into the lotus position like a Sufi mystic. She turned her face to the blank TV screen and, with the devotion of a spiritualist, proceeded to summon her brother's face with the sheer will of her mind (294)

To this end, Lacapra (2001:105) the trauma theorist's argues: even if representing trauma may indeed mean a relieving of events for victims, "it is a relatively safe haven compared with actual traumatization". He further, showcases two ways in which writing about trauma surfaces in a text, this he terms as the "acting out" and the "working through" of trauma. The "working through" process entails the survivor attempting to deal with the traumatic experience(s) and its effect on the individual. He further states that, the "working through" leads the person to recognize that they lived through an incomprehensible event that altered who they are, and are in turn, reemerging from the traumatic experience, changed.

The "acting out" process of trauma, he states further, is the survivors' inability to deal with the traumatic event(s), which results in a repetitive reliving of the past traumatic event. From the above perspective, it becomes clear that, the psychotic imbalances that explains the character of Faiza comes to a halt, with every sense of immediacy, when she comes to terms with the former, which aids her re-emergence from her trauma as a changed person. Having been able to speak with Ustaz Nura, she tears off, every of Ali Nuhu's posters that serves as a link between her and her obsession for him and in turn was able to sketch her brother Jamilu's face. Using the same mind, that, offered her, impossibility, as a way of asserting the mind and its unconscious motivations, as having the ability to wheel an individual to which ever direction it desires, pending on the turn it takes in its wheeling process.

Binta has never been interested in the cultural practices around her; therefore she is constantly at odds with them. She questions in her mind the aspect of the culture that denies a mother the God given right to call a child that opens up her womb by its God given name:

Binta was her first daughter and, as was customary, she rarely acknowledged or called her by her name lest she be deemed immodest. But each time Binta sneaked a look into her mother's eyes, she glimpsed, before it was blinked away, a clandestine love she wished she could grasp a savour. She would have given anything to hear the sound of her name on her mother's lips. Anything. (20-21)

This deprivation leaves Binta traumatized throughout her life. And against her wish, she faces the same ordeal as her mother. This trauma haunts Binta, until she sees herself envying the liberty with which the 21st century mothers address their first child. This liberty catapults Binta down memory lane, leaving her wishing she had done certain things differently;

There were things she wished she had done differently. Such as showing Yaro some affection, protecting him as every mother should do her child. And here she was, fifteen years after his death, seeking him in the eyes of the miscreant who had scaled her fence. That felon she had shielded because she saw the shadow of Yaro in his eyes. The son she had loved, but to whom she had been forbidden to show love (57).

This pain of Hajiya Binta haunts her, this far, its assertive and tenacious influences metamorphose into the imbalances that traumatized her. Therein, the sexual escapade between her and Reza, kick starts, though she never wished for it to happen. However, the

influences of her pained past overpowers and re-situate her past to the present:

She had not meant for it to happen, the heady events of that afternoon. At least not exactly the way they had. It all seemed like a blur now. She remembered him looking at the fading scar on her neck and saying how sorry he was. The little spark of concupiscence deep within her had burst into a flame...She knew then that, her search for Yaro in the eyes of a stranger had unshackled her long-suppressed desires and left the objectionable stench of fornication clinging to her (57-58)

Murphy Laura (2008) quoted earlier opines:

The term trauma as it is understood by psychoanalytic authors from Sigmund Freud to Cathy Caruth is characterized by a wound; However, the wound of the mind ... is not like the wound of the body, a simple healable event but rather an event that... is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly to be fully known and it is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again.

Following the wound of the mind, Hajiya Binta's wound imposes itself again. Unexpectedly, it produces the abominable sexual escapade with Reza, which was born out of the life of sexual deprivation and abuse she suffered from her late husband Zubairu (24). The trauma, of the societal denial of affection, and love that every mother should lavish on her first child, also plays a role in forming what she becomes. In these denials, her sexuality later thrives; first as an accident and then deliberately and helplessly she rides in her feat of sexual drive. This explains the re-emergence of all Binta repressed, such that, at the sight and touch of Reza (who



reminds her every bit of her late son), her legs go apart in a bid to let memories, trauma and the repressed thrive, thus; ...these memories were vivid. A strong arm around her, crushing her bosom. A strong body behind her. A bulging crotch pressed hard against her rear (24). Similarly, the lines' following also clarifies thus;

the images she had woken up with had excited and vexed her more than she would admit. And to think that this moistening of her long abandoned womanhood had apparently been provoked by someone who reminded her of Yaro was an added irritation (26)

Aside the trauma that births this illicit sexual escapade of Hajiya Binta, it becomes explicit that there is indeed an amazing and intriguing fact about the Freudian concept of Oedipus complex at play. Perhaps inversely this time, such that in the face of her full knowledge of the cultural, social and religious enclosure(s) she finds herself in, damns the consequences and would rather enjoy the best of every moment she gets with Reza.

Like Faiza and Binta, Reza is presented as a character that is driven by the trauma of a depressive life. His inability to confront his past with vigor is occasioned by the forceful truncation of his oedipal conflict with his mother. Reza is not just pained and angered over his mother's use of the door out of his life, but her belligerence which leaves him at the mercy of his step mother's depriving him of the real opportunity to life. Psychoanalytically, every neurotic feeling is marked by repression and trauma which would always find practical outlets, regardless of how strong the character poses to be. Thus, Reza fills in this blank:

Reza took his time puffing on the cigarette. Then he shook his head. I robbed this woman who reminded me of my mother. She had this gold tooth, you know, just like my mother, you understand. (38)

What this avers is the fact of Reza being haunted by this sense of his past, one that at a time he rejects following the repression of his personal pain and grievances over his mother. However, despite the pain of this neglect he suffered, he cannot help the gusto with which the memory of the encounter with his mother brings at intervals. These memories undoubtedly inform the relationship that ensues between him and Hajiya Binta. In spite of the age difference between the duo and a glowing gap of an average of thirty years, the bid to appease the repressive and traumatizing reminiscence of the memories, births their sexual spree. Furthermore, since experiences whether negative or positive makes people connected at some point. Abubakar, presents in the characters of Hajiya Binta and Reza negative experiences of pain, neglect, deprivation and others they both share, which re-ignites with a spark and rejuvenating memory at the slightest provocation.

### **Conclusion**

This essay, interrogated the relationship between literature and society, using psychoanalysis as a tool to examine the motivations and inner drive, in the characters represented in Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms*. Hence, the essay has in a manner affirmed the psychological stance of people. With emphasis on societal happenings, be it; religious, social, cultural, emotional, etc. as forming the crux for character formation and personality construction. Without mincing words, it captures the dynamics of the Nigerian space, giving credit to the writer and suggesting to writers what fiction connotes contemporarily. With obligation versus personal freedom, desire and death, the psychological dimension of this text cannot be entirely displaced, as it suggests a working of the psyche of individuals.

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## **DIALECTAL VARIATION: A CRITICAL STUDY OF UMUNZE IGBO**

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### ***Abstract***

*Dialects are the different varieties of a particular language. Umunze dialect is a subdivision of the Igbo standard form. Now, the youth and children of Umunze no longer speak the dialect like the older generation; therefore, the dialect is endangered. This study is a modest contribution to preserve the dialect as well as to give insight to Umunze language researchers to do more. The aim of this study is to compare Umunze dialect and the Standard Igbo in order to ascertain the areas of differences and similarities between the two. Also, the dialects are explored based on the vocabulary, grammar and phonology in order to see the areas of converges and differences between both so as to achieve mutual intelligibility between speakers. The researcher is a native speaker thus an intuitive knowledge of the dialect by the researcher is used to collect data and validated by other native speakers. The Wave and the Accommodation Theories are the theoretical basis in which this study hinged on. The findings are Umunze dialect has really changed over time; some words are no longer in use. The back vowel sound /ʊ/ is used in Umunze dialect to replace front vowel sounds /ɔ/, /a/ and ...../i/ in Standard Igbo. Also, the velar sound /gh/ in Umunze replaces the labio-dental voiced sound /f/ in Standard Igbo. Both dialects have so many other words in common but when two speakers come together, they use the Standard form for mutual intelligibility. Therefore, both dialects are the same language.*

**Keywords:** Umunze, dialect, language, Igbo

## Introduction

Human beings cannot do without language; this is because it is the very essence of man. Language is indispensable to humanity; if not our whole existence will become a mirage. The use of language makes living interesting. In other words, when two or more people come together, they use language to interact and entertain themselves. Also, when people use language, the most crucial thing is for them to understand each other, it does not matter the dialect they use as far as communication is achieved. In addition to this, no dialect or language is inferior to the other. We cannot but agree with Finegan (2008) in Talatu (2013:162) that, every language is a dialect, and every dialect is a language.

Therefore, the relationship between languages and their dialects are like the relationship between parents and their children. From the parents come the genes of their children, when you look at the children, you see their parents inside of them, though there may be differences here and there but not to say that they are not their parents. Languages are the parents while dialects are their children, there may be slight differences between the two but not to say that they are different languages, rather varieties of the same language.

Igbo language is one of the major languages spoken in Eastern Nigeria; Anozie (2003) in Igbokwe (2013) explains that the census of (2001/2002) placed the population of the Igbo to about 16million. It belongs to the Niger-Congo family. Igbo language qualified to be called a language with different varieties because it is selected, codified and standardised. The standard form is referred to as the Igbo Izugbe. It is the language of commerce, media, school and politics etc. Umunze is one of such dialects of Igbo language which this study sets out to explore, the differences and similarities with the standard form.

## **Conceptual Framework**

Different people use languages differently in their region. Within a region, there are varieties of the same language which are slightly different from the standard form. A variety may be different from the other varieties in its semantics, phonology, lexical or grammar, yet the varieties are members of the same language. The dialects that are closer understand each other more than those that are further apart. Osuagwu et al (1997:101) have this to say that “among major dialect areas or even within a dialect area, the varieties form a continuum: which means that each variety will resemble its neighbours on either side more closely than it resembles those further away”. Dialect continuum such as languages A and B, C and D and E and F which are closer resemble each other as well as each mutually intelligible with its neighbours while the extremes A and G are not mutually intelligible.

These differences within the same language do not make the varieties separate languages because of the mutual intelligibility that exist among them. It is said that the people speak different dialects of the same language. On the other hand, when members of the same region do not understand each other, they speak different languages. Therefore dialects that are different from each other are considered different languages .However, a language and a dialect can be considered as the same language based on the existence of the standard language or of a written form shared by a set of speakers. Petyt (1980:14) maintains that;

If two or more groups who differ in speech nevertheless regard the same form of speech (which may be different again) as a standard, or if they share a common written form, they tend to be regarded as speaking different dialects rather than different languages, whatever the degree of mutual intelligibility – provided only that the

standard of written form is not totally unrelated to one they speak”

In addition, people that are bound together with their cultural values can be regarded as having the same or different languages. However, language spoken as the standard form digresses as people move away from the central point. The change in language begins like dropping a pebble in water which its waves continues to go farther and farther until it covers the whole area. As it goes further away, it differs from the original form until it becomes totally different that they no longer understand each other. Communities which are closer to each other tend to speak alike with slight differences while those ones adjacent apart have lots of differences.

This study is a case of the same language with different varieties. Estes (2012:311) admits that there are variations within languages. These different types of dialect variation include regional, social class, gender, sex and ethnic etc. Each dialect is slightly different and same with the Standard form which makes it possible for mutual intelligibility to occur between speakers. The standard dialect is the acceptable variety for the region. Fasold (2012:380) refers to it as a ‘minimum standard’. It implies a scale of measurement. Finegan (2008) submits that a standard language is a language variety used by a group of people in their public discourse. However, the standard form has to be reached or exceeded for it to be acceptable. For a language to be used as a standard form, it must be selected, codified and standardised. Igbo Izugbe is the standard Igbo dialect. It is the language of education, government, media and commerce etc. In view of the above, students are expected to acquire the standard form in addition to their regional dialect so as to communicate effectively with others outside their domain. What people do according to Fowler (1974) in Osuagwu et al (1997:103) is “to switch between the two varieties as occasion demands. When they are in school or speaking to

outsiders, they use the standard dialect, whereas their regional dialect is employed within the family circles and among close friends for intimacy and solidarity''. This makes communication easier among members of the different dialects of the same language.

Umunze is one of the dialects of a standard form (Igbo Izugbe) in Igbo language. It is also a town in Anambra State. Umunze is the headquarters of Orumba South Local Government Area in Anambra State of Nigeria. The name was derived from the name of the originator Nze meaning the descendant of Nze. The villages of Umunze are Ugwunano, Lomu, Nsogwu, Ubaha, Ozara, Ururo and Amuda. They are known for their farming and trading. They hold their culture to a high esteem in that they celebrate New Yam Festival, traditional marriages and chieftaincy titles. The kingship is rotational among the villages and every male is eligible to contest. Umunze dialect includes the people of Isulo, Ezira, Eziagu, Ihite, Ogbunka, Owerre-Ezukala, Nawfija, Ajalli, Ufuma, Awa, Amaokpala, Nkerefi and Akpugo etc.

Osuagwu et al (1997:100) see dialect as a "variety that may differ in phonology, grammar and semantics or even in only one of them from other varieties of the same language''. It then implies that within a particular language, there are other varieties; even though they differ in phonology or grammar or semantics, the differences do not affect the mutual intelligibility of the speakers. Akindele and Adegbite agree with Osuagwu et al when they maintain that dialects are "varieties of a language defined in terms of its user''. They advocate that each dialect is set off from others in the language by complex set of features of pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary (McDavid 1968).

Petyt (1980:12) defines dialect as an "abstraction based on some set of features chosen in a way which is essentially arbitrary. Dialect on the other hand is used to describe differences in speech



associated with various social groups''. The regional dialect is geographically based, that is the area one is coming from determines the way one speaks. Regional dialect marks off the residents of one region from those of other regions. Petyt (1980) maintains that the term dialect refers strictly speaking to differences between kinds of languages which are differences of vocabulary and grammar as well as pronunciation. Wales (2001:105) avers that dialect refers "to a variety of language associated with the subsets of users in a geographical area''. A dialect involves different varieties of the same language used by a group of people in a particular region. It can be the rural dialect (umunze dialect, umuahia), the urban dialect that is, varieties of language spoken in town or urban areas (standard Igbo), those associated with a social group (social dialect) and those associated with a particular profession (occupational dialect).

According to Pei in Onah (2014: 156) a dialect is a "specific branch or form of a language spoken in a given geographical area differing sufficiently from the official standard or literary form in one or all levels of the language i.e pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and idiomatic use of words yet not different to be regarded as separate language''. Individuals use the standard dialect when in communion with people from other dialects for the purpose of mutual intelligibility. (Cheshire 1992, Downes 1994, Biber 1988) in Hudson (2001: 45) define dialects as "varieties according to user''. In a simplest form a dialect shows who you are and what you are. That's why we have Indian English, Australian English, South African English, Canadian and American English. Dialectal differences are as a result of geographical mobility, that is people moving from one place to another taking their dialects with them. Other factors include social class, sex and age etc. Speakers tend to use similar language to people who are in the same social group with them. Speakers of the

same sex speak alike; as well individuals of the same age groups relate the same.

It is worthy to note here that the dialectal variation also emanates as a result of the speaker's place of origin. In addition, the place the speaker grew up determines his/her dialectal variation; it may not be the person's place of origin. This accounts for the differences in pronunciation or grammar between speakers from Umunze community and those from the neighbouring villages such as Oko, Ekwulobia, Agulu and Igboukwu etc. Osuagwu et al (1997:101) maintain that where you come from in this context may mean "where you have lived in for a pretty long time and internalised the variety of the language spoken there or where you were born". Therefore, dialectal variations are differences that occur within different dialects of a particular language. There are differences and similarities in grammar, phonology and vocabulary of the people of Umunze and the standard form "Igbo Izugbe". This accounts for an easy identification of Umunze speakers whenever they speak within or outside Igbo region due to their grammar and accent. They make use of close vowel /u/ in place of other vowels, so it affects their tongues.

Egwuonwu (2017) analysed a study on Arondizuogu Dialect of the Igbo Language: A Descriptive Approach. The study aims at finding out the phonology and grammatical features that exist in the dialect variety. The dialect will equally compare with the standard variety in order to ascertain the areas of convergences and differences between them. The findings show that the dialect and the standard variety have few phonological differences, which do not affect mutual intelligibility. The dialect has nine phonetic vowel sounds unlike the standard variety which has eight vowels. The dialect does not have the voiced labia-dental fricative sound (v) and the voiceless palate-alveolar fricative /s/, though it has /h<sup>w</sup>/ and /t<sup>h</sup>/ sounds which summed the consonants in the dialect to twenty eight.

Onwekwe (2016) analysed a study on Ibeme as a dialect of Igbo: A Lexicostatistic. The study attempts to show that Ibeme is a distinct dialect. The study indicates from the lexicostatistics report, ethnographic description and some phonemic and morphological variations that Ibeme is a separate dialectal area. It is concluded that Ibeme is not a patois of Ngwa as claimed by previous study (Oluikpe). This present study examines a dialectal variation of Umunze people which is different from Egwuonwu and Onwekwe studies in that their works deal on Arondizuogu and Ibeme dialects of Igbo language respectively. This present study investigates the phonology, vocabulary and grammatical variations that occur in umunze dialect in relation to standard forms in order to ascertain the areas of differences and similarities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Wave and the Accommodation Theories are the theoretical basis in which this study hinged on. Bailey wave theory is a new version of the old theory by Johannes Schmidt in 1872. It accounts for resemblances between separate but geographical adjacent branches of Indo-European family of languages. He says that a linguistic change spread outward from some starting point like waves on a pond into which a pebble has been tossed. The result is that the geographical area is affected by different combination of isoglosses and so ends up with various languages and dialects with varying degrees of similarity. Bailey modern version is that wave of change moves, over a period of time, either through geographical space (as Schmidt has suggested) or through social space or both and may be slowed down by barriers of other kind such as age, sex class as well as physical geographical features. Wardhaugh (2010:222) states that the “wave theory makes claims about how people are affected by change”. Changes are transmitted by individuals at any time, a particular change will have certain speakers it will affect but will not reach others. Speaker C

whom a particular change has not yet reached will differ from speaker A (whom the change has passed) and from B (whom the change is just reaching and who sometimes reduces the same output as A sometimes the same as C. It accounts for interpersonal variation (between A and C) and intrapersonal variation (within B).

Accommodation Theory was developed by Howard Giles, a social psychologist and is based on conversational situation. It is the adjustment of one's speech or other communicative behaviour vis-à-vis the people with whom one is interacting. Trudgill (1986:39) explains Giles accommodation theory thus;

in face-to-face interaction, speakers accommodate each other linguistically by reducing the dissimilarities between their speech patterns and adopting features from each other's speech. If a speaker accommodates frequently enough to a particular accent or dialect, then the accommodation may in time become permanent, particularly if attitudinal factors are favourable.

The two main accommodation processes described by this theory are convergences and divergences. Giles (2001) in Abah (2016:292) explains that convergence refers to the "strategies through which individuals adapt to each other's communicative behaviours in order to reduce social differences while divergence refers to instances in which an interlocutor distances himself from the interlocutor". That is when people from different varieties of the same language come in contact with one another, they adjust their speech to accommodate one another thereby making understanding easier.

The study uses both theories to examine the differences and similarities between Umunze dialect and the standard form. It is seen when an Umunze speaker meets with a non Umunze speaker, they use the standard form, and thus accommodation theory comes into play.

Also, different dialects grow out of the same language like a pebble thrown into a pool of water, thus the origin of Umunze dialect.

### Methodology

An introspective method was used in the collection of data because the researcher is a native speaker. The researcher uses her intuitive knowledge in the collection of data. Three elderly men from Umunze between ages 60-70 were interviewed as well as to validate the data because they were seen to preserve the older forms of language under investigation.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

#### Phonology

It is the study of the sound system that occurs in a particular language.

Umunze Dialect	Standard Dialect	Meaning
1 Dụ	di	is
2Vụbụ	carried	
3 Ogheofe	soup	
4 chilekechineke	God	
5 ụhụahu	body	
6 ọkụkammemme	feast	
7) Ụchaọcha	clean	
8) GụnụGini	what	
9) Eketenkata	basket	
10) Ọ shị	Ọ si	he/she said

Umunze people use the close back vowel sound /ʊ / in place of the close front vowel sound /i/ in the word 'dụ/di (is), the voiced labio-dental consonant sound /v/ is used in place of the voiced bilabial consonant sound /b/ in 'vụ/buu' (carry), the velar sound /gh/ represents the labio-dental voiceless consonant sound /f/ in 'oghe/ofe' (soup) in fig 3, the voiced lateral consonant sound /l/ is used to represent thenasal syllable sound /n/ in the word 'chileke/chineke

(God) in fig 4 while the close back vowel sound /u/ takes the position of an open front vowel sound /a/ in the word 'uhu/ahu' (body). In fig 7, lip rounding half-close vowel sound /u/ replaces lip rounding open vowel sound /o/ in 'ucha/ocha, as well the vowel sound /u/ replaces the close lip unrounded vowel sound /i/ in 'gunu/gini. Palato-alveolar consonant sound /sh/ replaces an alveolar voiceless consonant sound /s/ in fig 10.

## Morphology

Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words.

**Prefixes:** They are affixes added at the beginning of a root.

Umunze Dialect	Standard Igbo	Meaning
11) o + gh + e = ogheo + fe = ofe		soup
12) i + gba = igba + se = ose		pepper
13) o + kpa = okpau + kwu = ukwu		leg
14) u + wo = uwo e + fe = efe		dress
15) n + gwa = ngwa o + ku = oku		fire
16) i + kpọ = ikpọ i + kwe = ikwe		mortar

The way prefixes are derived in both dialects are the same, even though they have different names for most words?

## Suffix

They are bound morphemes that are added at the end of a root word.

Umunze Dialect	Standard Igbo	English
17) Ka + a +	nu e + be + a	here
18) Le + e +	lele + e	see

In fig. 17, 'kaanu' is used in Umunze dialect in place of 'ebe a' (here), also in fig. 18, 'lee' which means (see) is almost reduplicated in Umunze as 'lee le'.

## Prefix and Suffix

It is a process of word formation by which both prefix and suffix are added to the base or root.

Umunze Dialect	Standard Igbo	Meaning
19) o + vu + u = ovuu	o + bu + u = obuu	c arrier
20) i + wu +ghu = iwughu	a + ba + cha = abacha	tapioca
21) e + ke + te = eketen	+ ka + ta = nkata	basket
22) n + di+ i = ndiike	+ du = kedu	how
23) n + ti+ i = ntii	i + kwe = ikwe	mortar

Fig 19, the labio-dental voiced consonant sound /v/ in Umunze is used to replace the bilabial voiced consonant sound /b/ in ovuu /obuu, in fig 22, the standard form has 'ke' as the verb root while 'du' is the suffix, therefore, there is no prefix unlike Umunze dialect which has a prefix, a nasal syllable sound /n/ added to 'di' as well as to a close front vowel /i/ to become 'ndii' (where, how, what).

### Reduplication

It is a process of repetition whereby the form of a prefix or suffix reflects certain phonological characteristics of the root.

Umunze Dialect	Standard Dialect	Meaning
24) Uduu uduu	osiso	fast/quickly
25) Ngwangwa	osiso	fast

'Uduu uduu' and 'ngwangwa' in Umunze mean the same thing in Standard Igbo 'osiso' (fast) but they are not reduplicated.

### Compounding

It is a process of joining two words together so as to form a whole.

Umunze Dialect	Standard Dialect	Meaning
26) Ibe + nneikwu + nnematernal		home
27) Nne + nnukwunne + ochie		grandmother

Both dialects derive compound words by joining two words together.

### Syntax

It is the rule that guides sentence formation.

Umunze Dialect	Standard Dialect	Meaning
28) Nkenuuyuya	Nke a buya	this one is it
29) ivuonui buonu	to observe a fast	

- |                    |                |                      |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 30) Ovuiṣu         | obuiṣu         | carrier of load      |
| 31) Ichetaohuya    | ichefuelaya    | did not remember it  |
| 32) Ma ohu obịara  | o bịara        | did she/he come?     |
| 33) Ọ dūmma        | o di mma       | is it good?          |
| 34) Gūnū mere      | Gini mere      | what happened?       |
| 35) Ndịiibeina-aga | Keduebeina-aga | where are you going? |
| 36) Ndūnaagū m     | Egwunaatū m    | I am afraid.         |

There is an extension of ‘nke a’ (one this) to ‘nkenu’, here ‘nu’ in Umunze dialect (UD) serves as the determiner that replaces an open vowel/a/ (this) in standard Igbo. Then the close vowel sound /u/ is added before ‘yu’ (is) which is ‘bu’ in Standard Igbo henceforth SI. Also, in fig 29 and 30, the voiced bilabial consonant sound /b/ in SI is replaced with labio-dental voiced sound /v/ in UD. Fig 31, ‘ohu’ in UD is used to replace ‘la’ (not) in SI. Fig 33 and 34, close back vowel sound /u/ in UD is used to replace the close front vowel sound /i/ in ‘di’ (is) and ‘gini’ (what) in SI.

### Vocabulary

Umunze Dialect	Standard Dialect	Meaning
37) Mmaekwu	mma	knife
38) eku-igwe	ngaji	spoon
39) oki-iburu	nwanyiluru di	married woman
40) ukwuoru	ọka	corn
41) abaka	ogemma	cutlass
42) ogwumabiri	ahia	daily market
43) mgbaduga	akpu	foo foo
44) utu	ọhūike	buttock
45) iwọọ/ mkpukpo	ọhia	bush
46) aguihehe	ikukummiri	wind
47) okwulanti	iyere	earring
48) akwukwa	igweosiite	tripod stand
49) akiekie	akibekee	coconut



50) ilon	noo	welcome
51) ngwa	oku	fire
52)gbuwam	cherem	wait for me
53)akwuchukwu	akwuoru	pineapple
54)nkuegbu	akupe	fan
55)ngwa	oku	fire
56) Abubarishi	ntutu	hair

In Umunze, ‘ekwu’ is added to ‘mma’ (knife) which is common to both of them. Others are completely different, however, when two speakers from different dialects interact, they will use the SI for mutual intelligibility.

### Similarities

#### Vocabulary

Umunze Dialect	Standard Form	Meaning
57) Oche	oche	chair
58) Nne/nna	nne/nna	mother/father
59) Nwata	nwata	child
60) Mmanu	mmanu	oil
61) enyo	enyo	mirrior

### Findings

The findings are; the front vowel sounds such as /i/ and /a/ are replaced with back vowel sound /u/ in some words, such as in ‘gụnụ/gini’, ‘dụ//di’ and ‘uhu/ahu’. Labio-dental voiced consonant sound /v/ in Umunze replaces the bilabial voiced consonant sound /b/ in SI, for example, ‘ovuu/obuu’. A lateral voiced consonant sound /l/ replaces the nasal syllable sound /n/ in ‘chileke/chineke’, a velar sound /gh/ in UD replaces the labio-dental voiceless consonant sound /f/ in SI, for example, ‘oghe/ofe’.

### Conclusion

Dialectal variations are the subdivisions that occur in a particular language. In other words, they are varieties of the same language. This

study explores those variations in Umunzedialectcompared with the Standard form in order to ascertain the differences and similarities so as to achieve mutual intelligibility between the speakers. There are few differences and more similarities between Umunze dialect and SI. In as much as there are those differences, UD is not a different language, rather a variety of a particular language because there is mutual intelligibility when speakers come together from different dialects. In other words, Umunze dialect is one of the varieties of the Standard Igbo known as the ‘Igbo Izugbe’.

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## **TRANSITIVITY IN THE POETRY OF OKIGBO AND OJAIDE AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR SECURITY AND NATIONAL COHESION**

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### **Abstract**

This paper investigates the "going-on" or happenings in the twentieth and twenty-first century Nigeria in relation to security and national cohesion. Okigbo's "Elegy for Alto" and Ojaide's "Four Pieces" were used for the study. The analysis was hinged on Systemic Functional Grammar approach. Data analysis of the two poems reveals that Nigerians in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries experienced economic, social, political and environmental insecurity which is among the challenges on national cohesion and positive nationhood. The paper among other things recommends that lessons and predictions from nationalistic poetry and other literary genres should be considered in national programmes.

Keywords: security, national cohesion, insecurity, poetry.

### **Introduction**

The syntax of transitivity has been found useful in the analysis of poetry discourses. It is a linguistic tool which exposes the inter connectivity of language and the ideology expressed in the literary genre it is applied (Ogunbemi, 2016). Transitivity is an aspect of clause analysis (i.e. clause as representation). As used and explained in Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), transitivity construes one of the metafunctions of the SFG, the ideational metafunction, which comprises two components: the experiential and the logical components. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.169), the experiential component is a configuration of a process,

participant(s) involved in it and any attendant circumstances. Put in another way, experiential analysis of clauses involves examining and explaining the flow of events or “going-on” which in SFG is modelled as **figure**: a figure of happening, doing, sensing, saying, being, behaving or having (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.170).

The syntax of transitivity is in the domain of clause and is realized through the verbal group also known as “process types” which unfolds through time and space and the participant directly involved in one way or the other. Exploring the system of transitivity in clauses includes explaining who says what, who does what, who feels what, who is who, who acts how, etc. Although “circumstance” (which involves the adverbials and prepositions) is not directly involved in the process types, “circumstance” is, however, necessary in the explication of meaning in transitivity.

In this study, the experiential component of the ideational metafunction is being employed to examine the poems of Christopher Okigbo and Tanure Ojaide written in twentieth and twenty-first centuries respectively. The analysis is based on the fact that one of the resources for any form of literary genre is the “happenings” or “going-on” in the artist’s milieu. Whether the “going-on” or happenings are in the form of behaving, sensing, acting, doing, feeling, being, becoming or belonging, etc, they usually form the theme of literary discourses of the writer’s time and space hence the need for clause analysis of literary genres.

### **Justification for Selection of Texts**

It is believed that Christopher Okigbo and Tanure Ojaide are nationalist poets who translate their ideologies or experiences in their country into poetry discourses. Okigbo’s poems discuss both private and social experiences especially his involvement and view on topics such as religion (both traditional and Christian), politics and other environmental matters. Okigbo’s poems, especially the latter parts of

his poetry collections (“Limits”, “Silences” and “Path of Thunder”) dwell so much on socio-political issues of the Nigerian nation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa and Ihechukwu (1985, p.194) refer “Path of Thunder” as a supreme example of poems that demonstrate African tradition of writing or what they call “healthy tradition.” These collections of poems enshrine Okigbo’s name in the cannon of African nationalist writers. From such nationalist works, readers are educated on the prevalent events in their society.

Ojaide on the other hand writes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition to love songs, he has also shown interest in socio-political activities of the nation especially as they concern the Niger Delta. (See *I want to Dance and other Poems*). Like Okigbo, Ojaide is regarded as a nationalist poet who sees the activity of his environment – ranging from eco-systems, religion, politics, economics, culture, etc. as major sources of inspiration especially in the collection, *I want to Dance and Other Poems*.

Okigbo’s “Elegy for Alto” and Ojaide’s “Four Pieces” are selected for study primarily because they discuss the happenings in the authors’ society; both poems discuss the socio-political activity of their milieu. Second, the poems were written in different generations. Subjecting the two poems to a clause analysis will help in comparing and contrasting the happenings or events of different period and consequently help in ascertaining levels of progress the nation has made in the themes discussed.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **Security and National Cohesion and Positive Nationhood**

Nwankwo (2011, p.158) defines security as “freedom or safety from all forms of harm or unpleasant experiences (e.g. death, hunger, ignorance, fear, poverty, unemployment, etc)”. Nwankwo adds that it is the duty of government as the managers of the nation to provide social, economic, and political as well as environmental

security to its citizens. But when this important task is neglected, the people would feel marginalised, insecure and disappointed. Ochoche (1997) cited in Udofia (2018, p.408) is of the view that "national security is about the protection and enhancement of values against those that seek to limit or destroy their realization." Udofia adds that security means development and without development there can be no security. According to the Committee on National Cohesion of Meru University of Science and Technology, Kenya, among the ways to achieve national cohesion is by instilling good governance, by engaging in peace keeping and conflict management which deal with security assurance and conflict transformation and only by so doing can the individual members of a country "have a sense as well as a feeling that they are members of the same country, community and institution" (Amos, 2016). This shows that sustainable national cohesion cannot be achieved when security of the people, of their environment and relationship is being bargained at the altar of politics.

Among the core values and features of positive nationhood are issues of security and national cohesion. Enhanced and well organized security system ensures that citizens' life, property, socio-economic and political engagements are not endangered or jeopardized; while national cohesion ensures that member citizens live and work together in every part of the country as well as be allowed to participate in national issues and programmes. Security is an integral part of positive nationhood. It signals peaceful co-existence as well as attracts foreign investment in diverse forms.

### **Poetry Genre**

Poetry as a genre of literature is one of the means of documenting the experiences of the past, present and future of a particular society. This is so because literature is a blend of experience and creativity (Isah and Oguche, 2017, p.177). Literature is a mixture of personal and group experiences; it describes places,

people and events which are close to human real experiences: expectations and disappointment, sorrows and joy, desires and wants, aspirations and inspirations, etc.

The poetry genre which is not as elaborate as the other two genres of literature (i.e. drama and prose), still performs the task of helping the people view their society and to know their areas of weaknesses or progress and how to salvage their battered image (Isah and Oguche, 2017). Nigeria is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural as well as multi-lingual. For Nigeria to function as a nation there is need to constantly reappraise/assess the ‘happenings’ and ‘going-ons’ in the country especially as they relate to issues of security and national cohesion which are core values that signal positive nationhood. Literary genres are among the important records that would help in achieving this task.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

“Elegy for Alto”

AND[conj] THE HORN[participant] may now paw [material process, probability] the air /howling goodbye ...

For the Eagles[participant] are [process, verbal] now [circumstance, temporal] in sight

Shadows /in the horizon[circumstance, visual location]

THE ROBBERS [participant, actor] are [process, verbal] here [circumstance, location] in black sudden steps of showers, [circumstance, manner] of caterpillars[circumstance, manner]

THE EAGLES [participant] have come [process, motion] again[circumstance]

The Eagles[participant] rain [material process, contact] down on us [circumstance]–



POLITICIANS[participant] are[verbal process] back[circumstance, frequency] in giant hidden steps of howitzers[circumstance, manner], of detonator

THE EAGLES[participant/actor] descend[material process, contact] on us[circumstance]  
Bayonets and cannons

THE ROBBERS[participant/actor] descend[material process/contact] on us[circumstance] to strip[ material process] us [participant/recipient] of our laughter, of our thunder –

THE EAGLES[participant] have chosen[material process] their game[goal],  
Taken[material process] our concubines[goal] –

POLITICIANS[participant] are[verbal] here[circumstance, spatial location] in this iron dance of mortars[circumstance/spatial location], of generators

THE EAGLES[participant] are[verbal] suddenly there[circumstance, remote location]  
New stars of iron dance

THE ROBBERS[participant] are [verbal]  
back[circumstance/frequency] in black hidden steps of  
detonator[circumstance, manner] –

Analyses of the different kinds of participants in “Elegy for Alto” reveal that there are four sets of participants: “the horn”, “the

Eagles", "the robbers" and "politicians." "The horn" which is the participant/theme of stanza one line one only appeared once; it is the announcer of an impending danger or arrival of alien visitors. The material process is marked [+probability] while "the air" the recipient participant refers to unspecified environment. The process in stanza two is a verbal process marked [+present, +plural] and the participant involved is also marked [+plural]. It includes circumstance of (spatial) location which indicates a definite space hence the persona can perceive their presence, i.e. "their shadow" and their (indefinite) number. But in stanza three, the participants are visible and describable: they are robbers in a definite environment, "here". "Here" refers to spatial location. Another circumstance (of manner and attribute) is identified: "in black sudden steps of showers, of caterpillars."

Stanza five contains a material process of contact which is different from other processes identified above. "Rain" has the feature [-countable] and naturally wets whatever it "descend[s] on". This shows that the contact "us" made with "the Eagles" is like when rain descends on something or someone and as the process is marked [+present], it means that the action is a present reality. Another material process of contact, "descend", is seen in stanzas seven and eight. "Descend" is a material process of doing involving contact and motion. And considering the verbal elements in the different circumstances, it is obvious that the contact is not a favourable one. For instance, in stanza seven, the circumstance indicates the presence of "bayonets" and "cannons" which are instruments of war. This shows that the arrival of "the Eagles" reported in stanzas two and four is not for peace. It further signals that the "descend the Eagles" made "on us" is an indicator of disunity, war and opposition. Similar to the Eagles' activities, is the activity of the Robbers whose goals are to destroy and dispossess "us" and "to strip us of our laughter, of our

thunder – .” The goal of the "Robbers" is therefore to loot, to rob them of their happiness or peace.

It is observed that these two sets of participants (i.e. the eagles and robbers) have similar motives and semantic feature: predation; they have the tendency to kill and dispossess other creatures of their food, goods or laughter and “thunder”. Even in stanza nine which contains a material process of “chosen” and “taken”, the goal is to dispossess the people of “our concubines.”

Another set of participant identified in “Elegy for Alto” is “Politicians.” In stanzas six and ten, the verbal process “are” is marked [+present tense]. The circumstance involved is that of location/frequency, “back” and manner and accompaniment: “in giant hidden steps, of howitzers, of detonators.” In stanza ten, there are two circumstances of location: a definite space and accompaniments, “here, in this iron dance of mortars, of generators”. This form of circumstance indicates that the politicians of the poet’s experience are not given any action even though they are part of the “iron dance”. There is no form of contact between them and the “us” except, of course, that their presence is being noticed in environment.

“Four Pieces”

When day broke [circumstance/temporal]

On the Niger[circumstance/spatial], the Delta[participant/theme]

Still[circumstance] disrobed[material process/transformation] and  
bleeding[process/behaviour]

The robbers[participant/actor] had neither removed[material process]  
all the loot[goal] nor sheathed [material process] daggers[goal]

But the cry of the wounded[participant/theme]

stifled[material process] by massive storms[circumstance]

Drew[material process] a column of silence[goal]

Her jewelry of honour[participant/theme]

sold[material process] to stave off[material process/infinitive]  
drought[goal]  
in their inland capital[circumstance/spatial]  
The Delta[participant/theme] bleeds[behavioural process];  
disrobed[material process]

The harmattan[participant/actor] breezed[process/motion]  
in[circumstance/spatial]  
with a scythe[circumstance/accompaniment], not[neg.] net or  
hook[circumstance/accompaniment/opposite]  
to fish[material process/infinitive] Delta rivers and creeks[goal].  
Within seven days of[circumstance/temporal/amount]  
its[participant/pronoun] prowling[material process]  
The water[participant/theme] turned[process/transformation]  
cold[goal]

E-e Ogoiso!  
Ogiso!  
E-e Ogiso

In the General's office[circumstance/spatial]  
A master plan[participant]  
To bridge[material process/infinitive] the entire length[goal]  
of the Niger River and creeks[circumstance]  
He[participant/pronoun] will conscript[material process]  
To nail[material process] their own coffins[goal]

In Ojaide's "Four Pieces" above, the persona begins with circumstance of time "When day broke" which refers to a beginning or an epoch or a new experience. Line two also begins with circumstance of location (spatial). The thematic signification of starting the narration with spatio-temporal devices is to foreground the location of occurrences. Still in stanza one line two, the

participant/theme involved is exposed: “Delta” which is assigned a material process of transformation, “disrobed” and of behaviour process of “bleeding” in line three. Line four introduced another set of participant, “the robbers” which is assigned the material process of “removing” their loot which is their goal.

The participant identified in line six makes reference to “ the Delta” of line two which is “disrobed” and is “bleeding.” Delta’s cry is being stifled, an act of oppression, and the goal is to silence it. Also, the participant (Her jewelry of honour) in line nine is synonymous with the Delta. Line seventeen contains a material process of doing (selling) and of prevention of “drought in the capital.” The last stanza contains a material and behavioural process that reiterate the present condition of the Delta: “bleeding” and the material process of being “disrobed.”

Stanza two begins with a behavioural process of motion and circumstance of location: “breezed in” involving a participant actor, “the harmattan”. Line two of stanza two is a continuation of the first clause; it describes circumstance of accompaniment, “with a scythe” instead of “a hook or net” to fish in Delta rivers and creeks. Although “scythe” is a kind of hook but it has a curved blade and is used for cutting grass and corn, Using a scythe to fish means that the actor’s intension is not to catch fish for food or economic reasons but to destroy them and consequently pollute the river with their blood.

Line four presents circumstance of extent, the number of days the participant actor prowled through or around Delta rivers and creeks which results in a process of transformation: Delta rivers and creeks become “blood-toned”. Prowling is a material process of movement used to describe hunting expedition or aimless movement to stave off boredom or anxiety. So prowling in the river is dangerous for fish and its environment (water). The above analysis shows that it took the actor(s) seven days to transform the Delta from economic

independent community to economic dependent one. The analysis shows that the people's means of livelihood is being endangered.

Stanza three begins with a spatial circumstance, "In the General's office". Line two introduces a participant/theme, "a master plan" which is involved in the process of transformation, "to bridge Delta rivers and creeks." The transformation process has the goal of either making Delta rivers and creeks accessible or to round up the region. Considering the process of operation in line five, it is obvious that the goal is to round up the creek and to subject the fishermen to "nail[ing] their own coffins."

From the above it is observed that the only process of doing assigned to Delta fishers is to nail their own coffins. A fisher is known by his vocation, fishing; but when the process changes from fishing to nailing coffins, it is obvious that the fishers are doomed as the process of nailing coffin connotes death.

### **Implication of "Elegy for Alto" and "Four Pieces" on Security and National Cohesion**

From the poems analysed, it is seen that in the milieu of "Elegy for Alto" the people are being threatened with instruments of war such as detonators, howitzers, mortars and generators. Chukwu (2009) reports that Okigbo's "Elegy for Alto" announces the approach of the Nigeria civil war which eventually claimed the poet's life. The three sets of participants/actors involved in the processes described in the poem have similar features and goals. First, they are in great number; their presence and manner of approaching the vicinity described and with war accompaniments spell danger to the people and their environment. Second, their goal, especially "the Eagles" and "the Robbers," is to dispossess the people of their "laughter, thunder and concubine."

Stanza eleven of "Elegy for Alto" is very significant for this study; it predicts the future:

THE EAGLES are suddenly there –

The circumstance of the above line makes reference to a remote location in time and space but still indicates the presence of "iron dance." The preceding stanza (i.e. stanza twelve) announces the return of "The Robbers" in hidden steps of detonators". So, even in the "new stars of iron dance," (i.e. in the milieu's new era and circumstance) "the robbers" are still present.

It would be recalled from Ojaide's "Four Pieces" that among the participants/actors are "the robbers" who have daggers and whose goal is to loot. What the above means is that Okigbo's prediction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is happening in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria. "Elegy for Alto" reports of dispossession of a people's "laughter" and "of our thunder" and "concubines." "Four Pieces" similarly reports of disrobing the Delta and selling off of "her jewelry of honour" causing Delta to bleed and cry, which also means that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a people is still being dispossessed of their laughter and honour as reported in Okigbo's 20<sup>th</sup> century "Elegy for Alto". "Four Pieces" dwells on unfavourable transformation of the Delta rivers and creeks which exposes the fishers to hunger, joblessness and other forms of social and environmental insecurity.

"Four Pieces" in stanza two reports of environmental insecurity in Delta. The participant/actor prowled Delta rivers and creeks with a scythe and within seven days of prowling, Delta rivers become blood-toned; the rivers become unsafe both for fish and the fishers. As the rivers are polluted, the people's vocation is doomed resulting in loss of employment which marshaled in poverty and psychological wreck. Stanza two of "Four Pieces" shows how Delta is being transformed from a growing economy to a stagnant community, from economic independent nation to economic dependent community and this happened within seven days the actor in the form of harmattan "breezed in."

“Elegy for Alto” talks about “broken images”, the use of “commandment and edicts”. “Four Pieces” talks about a plan “In the General’s office” in stanza three which also connotes the use of commandment and edicts. There is, therefore, no doubt that the managers of the affairs of the nation, in one way or the other, have a hand in the experiences reported in both “Elegy for Alto” and “Four Pieces”.

Amos (2016) at a workshop in Meru University of Science and Technology, Kenya identifies the following as indicators of a cohesive society:

- common vision and sense of belonging
- peaceful co-existence among all members
- appreciation and value for people’s diverse backgrounds and circumstances
- similar life opportunities for those from different backgrounds
- strong and positive relationships developed between people from different backgrounds.

From the poems analysed above, it is evident that none of these indicators are present in the milieu of the poems, rather, the narrators show how their environments are challenged by insecurity, deprivation, fear, regional destruction and marginalization which are indications that the issue of security and national cohesion is still being challenged in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria.

Stanza four of “Four Pieces” laments how people laugh at the regions even as they are enjoying proceeds from Delta. The persona laments:

We had no friends among the powers.  
They introduced a bill to move the lower  
Niger and creeks from the abode of abour  
to throw enough green over the desert dust



The narration above exemplifies the feeling of not being a part of the same nation as those in power. This exemplifies political insecurity. When other nations of the world are transforming their countries for socio-economic benefits, the managers of the milieu of “Four pieces” are transforming Delta creeks and river to the detriment of the people. It also shows an outcry of a people against the powers that shape the country to the detriment of the inhabitants. Similar lament is also noticed in “Elegy for Alto”:

THE GLIMPSE of a dream lies smouldering in a cave,

Together with the mortally wounded birds (Labyrinths ...  
p.72)

## **Conclusions**

From the discussions on “Elegy for Alto” and “Four Pieces,” Okigbo and Ojaide have shown that 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria are being challenged by issues of social, political, economic and environmental insecurity and lack of national cohesion. The analysis above reveals that many of the indicators of a cohesive nation are lacking in Nigeria hence the title “Four Pieces”. In “Elegy for Alto,” Okigbo identifies the robbers, the eagles and politicians as key participants/actors of the ugly experience in the 20<sup>th</sup> century while “Four Pieces” indicates “the robbers” as a key factor of Delta's degradation and pollution. Based on the insights provided in the two poems studied, it is observed that Nigeria is yet to grow a cohesive society. The poems show that the people's socio-economic and political engagements are endangered and are jeopardized within a twinkling of the eye. Such insecurity as exemplified in “Elegy for Alto” and “Four Pieces” is a serious threat to positive nationhood.

## Recommendations

Based on the information obtained from the analysis of Okigbo's "Elegy for Alto" and Ojaide's "Four Pieces" the study recommends as follows:

- Agents of transformation in whatever aspect of the economy should take into consideration the indicators and challenges of a cohesive society so that they would not do things that would deprive the people of their means of livelihood.
- Environmental security in the Niger Delta and beyond shall be looked into as a matter of urgency
- Lessons from literary works should be considered in any national programme especially the genres that are of nationalistic interest.

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## **A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF GENDERED DISCOURSE IN FEMI ODUGBEMI'S NIGERIAN TELEVISION SERIES *BATTLEGROUND***

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### ***Abstract***

*The interface between language and gender has for some time been a focal point of enquiry in sociolinguistics and pragmatics. While studies abound in the pure linguistic levels such as phonology, grammar, syntax and semantics, interest in gender discourse due to the development in and dynamics of human society has just started to grow with implications for sociolinguistic scholarship. This study examines contexts and the extents and constraints that gender exerts on language use in *Battleground*, a Nigerian television series on (NTA, DSTV, etc.) The series mainly focuses on the rich and their shenanigans in the context of modern Nigeria. Using conversational analysis as its theoretical framework, the study randomly selects eight episodes from the 2017/2018/2019 seasons as its data while adopting quantitative and qualitative mixed approach. Through a systematic analysis of the differences in the amount of talk, the amount of turns and distribution of such variable between male and female interactants in the series, the study establishes that Nigerian users of English are sexist and the society is still patriarchal, despite the gains made in recent times because of education and westernisation. The study concludes that language users should guard against sexism while gender discourse should be aimed at promoting gender equity, even if gender equality is utopian as the two sexes are practically not the same.*

keywords: sociolinguistics, gendered discourse, conversation analyses, turn-taking.

## Introduction

Sociolinguistics tries to establish the relationship between language use and social organization. Milroy and Milroy (1990:269) posit that “sociolinguistics is the study of language as it is used by the real speakers in social and situational contexts of use. It has been established that our speech has been conditioned by some sociolinguistic variables which affects our use of language. These variables include social context, age, gender, social status etc. Language and gender remain a significant research topic in sociolinguistics. As Wardhaugh (2001:309) states, “A major topic in sociolinguistics is the connection, if any, between the structures, vocabularies, and ways of using particular languages and the social roles of the men and women who speak these languages”. The topic has evoked serious discussion. And a large amount of scholars at home and abroad have contributed a lot to its study, such researches in this area include: Kramer(1974),Spender (1980), Maltz and Borker (1982),Holmes (1992),Tannen (1990; ed. 1993), Wodak (1993),Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), Lakoff (2004) Woofit (2005), Adejoke (2010), Sani (2016) etc. These are some of the gender- based researches in the field of language and linguistics. The major and common finding of these researches is that men and women behave differently when they communicate (many texts provide detailed list of such differences). For example, Eckert and McConnelGinet( 2003), Lakoff (2004) and Tannen (1990) posit that comparing men and women, there are differences in phonology, grammar and vocabulary and in the body stances and movements that accompany speech.

As a social variable, gender is based on the biological sex of the speakers. As such, gender is a relatively straightforward category in the sense that it is unproblematic to define, readily observable, and there is no doubt as to how the speakers should be categorized (in contrast to for example social class, which is notoriously difficult to

define). And there are only two gender categories: male and female. As a factor in sociolinguistic analysis however, gender is conceived as a social construction of sex (Eckert 1997, Cheshire 2002). Biological sex is the underlying basis for the differentiation of roles, norms and expectations that apply to men and women and it is these social and cultural factors that constitute gender. The differences in patterns of linguistic variation between men and women are then a function of gender and only indirectly a function of sex: speakers are typically classified in terms of their biological sex, but the findings are interpreted in terms of the social roles and self-image of men and women.

Gender is understood to be a social concept through which society defines masculinity or femininity, a series of characteristics and behaviour through which its members are socialized from infancy; thus, the values associated with femininity do not correspond to any (anatomical or hormonal) essence. They are constitutions with cultural and social basis which change overtime and are concerned in a variety of ways outside the western views of the cosmos.

Generally speaking, most of the studies on language and gender focus on the following three aspects: gender differences in language; sexism in language; causes for gender differences and sexism in language. Few of them are conducted in specific contexts like the Nigerian TV series *Battleground* a television series NTA, DSTV, etc.) which contains a large number of authentic and daily conversations between males and females, which can serve as a typical and representative data source of language and gender study. Besides, previous studies are carried out from the perspective of pragmatics and stylistics, but few from the perspective of sociolinguistics. The proposed research therefore will compensate for such insufficiency in the hope of obtaining some useful insights into and adding fresh ideas on language and gender study.

In this study, Conversational Analysis (CA) functions as the theoretical framework for it is quite suitable for the study of conversation and gender. Based on the previous studies on language and gender and CA, the researcher originally divides this analysis into two main parts: the analysis of the amount of talk and the analysis of turn-taking. The research answers these two questions; what are the differences between men and women in the amount of talk? : Are there differences in the amount of turns and their distribution of them?

### **Empirical Studies in Language and Gender**

The earliest research about language and gender can be traced back to as early as ancient Greek. At that time, many dramas witnessed gender differences in language. However, it was not until the early 20th century that language and gender attracted anthropologists' and linguists' attention. Though there is a trend to study language and gender, it has not become an independent linguistic topic until the 1960s, when feminist movement appeared and sociolinguistics advanced. In the 1770s, such well-known linguists as Lakoff, Trudgill, Zimmerman, West, Thorne and Henley made a great contribution to the study by exploring the social roots of gender differences in language. Gradually, researches and studies began to flourish. In the early 1980s, Bolinger and other linguists thought of gender differences in language as a kind of sexism.

One relevant research on language and gender which was conducted within the context of television is that of Sani(2016). The study through the analysis of the thematic structure in the linguistic Stylistic of male and female in news reporting established the existence of systematic linguistic stylistic gender variations in the news reportage of the correspondents of BBC, NTA and Channels TV; in terms of themes selections, sentence patterns, vocabulary expressions and the subject matter covered by male and female reporters. These systematic differences have considerable implications

on the target audience as established in the research and the choices made to assign the role of Theme and Rhemes to a sentence element, unravel different trends on news reportage of male and female reporters. Based on the recurrent preferences in the thematic structures of the selected dyad's corpus, the study concludes that these distinctions typify the male and female reportage in the three television stations of BBC, NTA and Channels TV. On the implication of such variations, the research found out that Female reportage is more fragile, tender, simple, more detailed, more comprehensive and non-confrontational even in the worst of situation and quite accommodating to viewers with more emotional out fore in whatever they are reporting. Conversely male are more direct, realistic, persuasive, idealistic and pre-emptive in their mode of reporting.

In spite of the above- mentioned achievements, there are also limitations. Most of the studies focus on linguistic levels. As a result, discussions on conversational levels are insufficient. Furthermore, a large number of studies are decontextualized. Therefore, the present research intends to deeply analyze language and gender in an actual context, especially the conversational structures in *Battleground*. Also most of the previous studies on language and gender emphasize on three aspects: gender differences in language; sexism in language; causes for gender differences and sexism in language. Based on this the proposed research adopts the conversational approach and tries to make a deep analysis of language and gender in *Battleground*, in the hope of contributing to the existing knowledge in the relevant studies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Conversation analysis (CA) is an approach to the study of social interaction, embracing both verbal and non-verbal conduct, in situations of everyday life. CA began with a focus on casual conversation, according to Harold (1967) its methods were subsequently adapted to embrace more task- and institution-centered



interactions, such as those occurring in doctors' offices, courts, law enforcement, helplines, educational settings, and the mass media. As a consequence, the term 'conversation analysis' has become something of a misnomer, but it has continued as a term for a distinctive and successful approach to the analysis of sociolinguistic interaction

Inspired by Harold Garfinkel's methodology Erving Goffman's conception of the interaction order, CA was developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s principally by the sociologist Harvey Sacks and his close associates Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. Goffman (1983). It is distinctive in that its primary focus is on the production of social actions in the context of sequences of actions, rather than messages or propositions. Today CA is an established method used in sociology, anthropology, linguistics, speech-communication and psychology. It is particularly influential in interactional sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and discursive psychology.

### **Turn-Taking**

The actions that make up conversations are implemented through turns at talk, and turn-taking is therefore a fundamental feature of conversational organization. The analysis of how turn-taking works focuses on two major issues: i) what are the primary units of turns? and ii) how are these units allocated between speakers.? The fundamental analysis of turn-taking was described in a paper widely known as the *Simplest Systematics* (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974).

1) Sacks et al. identify turn constructional units (TCUs) as the fundamental building blocks of turns. TCUs can be sentences, clauses, phrases or single words that can be recognized as units in their own right depending on context. A crucial feature of TCUs is that they are projectable: that is, a hearer can recognize what it will take for a unit to be complete. It is this projectability that enables the split-second

timing that is characteristic of ordinary human turn-taking. The completion point of a current TCU is a turn-transition place (or TRP).

2) In the Sacks et al model, the allocation of units between speakers is implemented through a hierarchically organized set of rules. At any given TRP:

i) If the current speaker selects a next one to speak at the end of current TCU (by name, gaze or contextual aspects of what is said), the selected speaker has the right and obligation to speak next.

ii) If the current speaker does not select a next speaker, other potential speakers have the right to self-select (the first starter gets the turn), and

iii) if options (i) and (ii) have not been implemented, current speaker may continue with another TCU. At the end of that TCU, the option system applies again.

The turn-taking model sketched here is designed to accommodate a wide range of turn-taking possibilities, varying numbers of conversational participants, and circumstances in which the length of turns, and of conversations, and of their topics is not in any way pre-specified in advance. The system is implemented by the parties to the conversation without external regulation (party administered), and on a local unit-by-unit basis. Designed to account for the fact that much conversation takes place without much silence or 'dead time' but also without significant amounts of overlapping talk, the described system has multiple consequences.

In recent years, conversational analysis serves as a new and important approach in the study of language and gender. It is regarded as an influential branch in the modern gender language field for it has broadened its scope into a variety of formal and informal settings, and connected gender with conversational features, such as the amount of talk and turns.

## Methodology

The data employ in this research is exclusively from the well-known TV, Nigerian series *Battleground*. The researcher randomly chooses eight episodes as the subject of study not only because it is popular with viewers, but also because it contains many daily conversations among men and women and for the sake of scientific and objective purposes. This makes it suitable for the study of language and gender.

In order to gain the exact and proper data, the researcher first downloads the 8 episodes of the series from the internet. Then they are played repeatedly via the media player. Meanwhile, relevant speeches and conversations between men and women are written down on paper for later observation and analysis. After all these, the data on language and gender in this series goes through the analysis procedures for a scientific and systematic study.

The methods used in the research can be classified as case study with the combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative approach uses tables and statistical figures to show the differences in the amount of talk and turns. The qualitative approach gives a systematic and content analysis of the data. The exact analysis procedure proceeds in the following way. Since the conversational analysis serves as the theoretical framework, a thorough analysis of language and gender in *Battleground* was conducted from two main aspects: the analysis of the amount of talk and the analysis of turn-taking. To be specific, the analysis of the amount of talk concentrates on the amount of words and sentences; the analysis of turn-taking focuses on the amount of turns and their distribution of them. In the process of analysis, statistic exploration was demonstrated in tables. Followed by qualitative analysis which was made to fully study gender differences in these two aspects in the

series. After the detailed analysis, the researcher arrives at a conclusion of the research by clarifying major findings.

### **The Battleground**

Battleground is produced by Femi Odugbemi. It is a Nigerian TV series which was first released on the first of May 2017. It is a Telenovela series which focuses on the rich and their shenanigans. The series which seems to have a cult following revolves around the controversial and extremely wealthy patriarch of the Bhadmus family. It tells the story of love, power and deceit as it takes viewers through this family's love for one another, which is put to test when an unfortunate series of events lead to greed and power struggles within their ranks. It is a family drama that traffics in relationships, betrayals, infidelity, politics and romance, despite its popularity no study has been carried out on Battleground to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Since language in such TV series is used as a tool of communication it is inevitably featured by gender. Additionally, the show contains many daily conversations among women and men. Thus, it is quite suitable for the study of language and gender.

The following is a thorough and detailed analysis of language and gender in the 8 selected episodes of *Battleground* which mainly focus on the amount of talk and turns, and their distribution of them.

### **Analysis of the Amount of Talk in the Battleground**

In general, amount of talk means how much a speaker speaks in a conversation. Its study concerning gender is to study which gender is more talkative. As it is widely acknowledged, women are more talkative. A large amount of previous studies has proven this belief. However, recent studies challenge it. Talbot (1998), in her book, *Language and Gender: An Introduction*, made the conclusion that men are more talkative under some occasions. Many other scholars further deepened the study and arrived at the same conclusion.

Then, how about the result in Battleground? Can the results of previous studies apply to this TV series? The researcher investigates this in the following paragraphs. She employs the common method which compares the total amount of words and sentences, and the average amount of them in both genders.

The table presents the findings of the amount of words and sentences in the eight episodes extracted from the Nigerian TV series *Battleground*.

**Table 2**

**Table of Amount of Talk**

TABLE OF AMOUNT OF TALK Items Gender	Word amount	Sentence amount	Average sentence length	Word ratio	Sentence ratio
Males	938	174	5.59	30.08%	58.8%
Females	2107	274	7.69	69.2%	61.2%
Total	3045	448	13.08	100%	100%

From the table above, it can be seen that among the 3045 words, there are 938 used by males, accounting for 30.8%, while 2107 were used by females, accounting for 69.2%. In terms of the number of sentences, females used the 2107 words to compose 274 sentences, taking up 61.2% of the total number. However, males only composed 174 sentences, taking up 38.8% of the total number. This clearly manifests that women speak far more than men in conversations. These findings contradict that of Mary M. Talbot (1998) that men, in a conversation between both genders, are relatively more talkative.

The conversation below is extracted from one the episode entitled: *Hadiza goes after her husband*. It happens between Chief Bhadmus and Hadiza.. The analysis can help us fully understand the conclusion above.

Example one:

Bhadmus: Hadiza I'm fed up with this trash I'll leave you.

Hadiza: I don't think that is a wise thing for you to do, where are you going to go? To stay in a hotel? If you live who will clear your name when MLA accuses you of embezzlement? Imagine the humiliation where will you start from at this old age? Your family will be embarrassed and they will call you an impotent failure. But if you stay, I will do all I can to clear your name and save your reputation. But I cannot choose for you until you make a choice, I'm the one who's leaving this house and I'll go and stay in the same hotel you stayed.

In this short conversation between Chief Bhadmus and Hadiza Bako, there are 119 words altogether, composing 8 sentences. Among the 119 words, the woman used 110, whose word ratio reaches as highly as 92.4%, far more than that of the man, only 7.6%. In terms of the sentence number, there are 7 composed by the woman, occupying 87.5% of the total number, while there is only 1 made by the man, occupying 12.5%. It is clearly shown that Hadiza spoke far more than Bhadmus. She appeared to be much more talkative in their short conversation.

Example two:

Chief: It must annoy you no end knowing that you can't get to me

Madam Commissioner: Who said I can't get to you? (laughter) one down, one more to go, you must be aware of Kola Bhadmus sister hmm? (Laughter) and you are our next.

Chief: Can that be a threat madam commissioner?

Madam Commissioner: Your days are numbered. I'll get to you if it is the last thing I do.

Chief: I love your commission. It seems you have not gotten round to the fact that I operate at a much higher level than you do.

Madam Commissioner: You can say whatever you want but this is not over.

In this short conversation, there are 10 sentences made up of 110 words. In these sentences, the woman takes up 6 and the man uses 4. However, the woman used 65 words, whose word ratio reaches 60%, far more than that of the man, which is only 40%. Obviously, the woman spoke more than the man.

Such examples which abound in *Battleground* can be easily found. They all show the differences in the amount of talk in conversations between males and females.

### **Analysis of Turn-taking**

Turn-taking is the fundamental rule to guarantee the smooth transition of a conversation. According to Levinson (2001), it means one participant A to another participant B; another participant B begins to talk and then stops. Its study concerning gender is to study which gender initiates or offers the turn, and which gender takes the turn floor for a longer time. In the proposed research, we focus on the latter.

It is agreed that men are inclined to take the turn for a longer time in a conversation between males and females. Is this true in *Battleground*? In the following section we will examine it. In *Battleground*, we see differences in the time of both genders taking the turn floor. The following table shows the amount and distribution of turns in conversations between males and females.

**Table 2: Table of Turns**

TABLE 2:				
TABLE TURNS Iter Gender	Turn number	Word number	Average length	Ratio
Males	126	938	16.72	52.3%
Females	115	2107	8.16	47.7%
Total	241	3045	12.63	100%

From the table, we can clearly see that men's turns reach as high as 126 in all the eight episodes, which take up 52.3% of all the turns. Compared with men's turns, women's turns occupy 47.7% of all the turns. In terms of average turn length, there is an obvious difference that a gap of 8.56 words between male talks and female talks. Thus, females speak far more than males in a turn even when they occupy limited turns. This finding justifies the earlier view of some scholars that men, in a conversation between both genders, occupy more turns floor.

The following is an example of conversation between two genders in Battleground. The analysis will enable us to have a better understanding of the amount of their turns distribution. It is extracted from an episode of the first season. The conversation happens between two women Hadiza and Jacinta and two men. In an episode entitled: *The prime enemy* where Hadiza (MrsBako) declares herself the new prime.

Hadiza: Hopiness has been blessed with new leadership it is a new day a new time a different era.

Male Speaker1: What is the meaning of this?



Male Speaker2: Speak respectfully you are now addressing the prime, Hopiness

Jacinta: Are you joking how? What happened? Was there an election?

Male Speaker1: Now listen carefully and at what you revealed, we should all stand out and give our respects ...

Male Speaker2: Stand for what? This thing you are pulling Mrs. Bako I want to know what it is and where you are going.

Male Speaker1: Have some respect! You are speaking to the prime

Jacinta: And the only prime I know is not Hadiza Bako.

Male Speaker2: now...

Hadiza: There was a time not too long ago when you should have been punished for your insolence Jacinta but I will let it lie today and give you time to adjust.

In these short conversations, there are altogether 10 turns, female gender occupying four each of them 2 turns respectively while the two males occupy 6 turns each occupying 3 respectively. This is also true in the above two examples that men, in a conversation between both genders, occupy more turns floor. A variety of examples of differences in the amount of turns and their distribution can be found in this TV series. Turns in conversation are basic units and they are worthy of being studied in a specific context.

To sum up, there are differences in the amount of talk and turns, and their distribution. It is safe to say that in some occasions women are more talkative even when in some occasions men hold more turn floors than women.

## **Conclusion**

This research studies language and gender in the Nigerian TV series *Battleground*. Eight randomly chosen episodes constitute the data for analysis. This paper is conducted leaning on the theoretical framework of conversational analysis. Precisely, the analysis of language and gender in this paper involves two main parts: the

analysis of the amount of talk and the analysis of turn-taking. It has made a thorough analysis of these two aspects in the specific context. Quantitative and qualitative examination, together with comparison and contrast method shows the differences in the amount of talk, turns and their distribution. The findings of this paper add to the budding of scholarship in language and gender study.

In terms of the amount of talk, the present research finds that women occupy a higher rate. Their words and sentences constituted up to 69.2% and 61.2% of the total in all eight episodes respectively, while men's only 30.8% and 38.8% respectively. The statistics show the fact that women are more talkative than men on some occasions even though they were accorded limited turns. Analysis of turn-taking concerning gender in the *Battleground* mainly centres on the amount of turns and their distribution. Among all the turns in the eight episodes, males occupy 52.3% while females 47.7%. Though the gap is small, it also demonstrates that men are inclined to take more turn when they engage in a conversation with women. The study establishes that Nigerian users of English are sexist and the society is still patriarchal when it comes to the distributions of turns in conversations in the *Battleground*, despite the gains made in recent times because of education and westernisation. The study concludes that language users should guard against sexism while gender discourse should aim at promoting gender equity, even if gender equality is utopian as the two sexes are practically not the same.

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## IMAGING HISTORICAL REALITIES IN ODI A OFEIMUN'S POETRY

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### **Abstract**

*Literature mirrors the social, economic and political realities of the society that produces it and Modern Nigerian Poetry is no exception. Modern Nigerian poetry has proven to be a useful tool in the documentation of happenings in its society. By historicising the socio-political traumas of the Nigerian people, Nigerian poets have exposed and criticized the dehumanization and degradation of its people. The paper studies three of Ofeimun's poetry collections: A Boiling Caracas (2008), Go Tell the Generals (2008) and I will ask questions with stones if they take my voice (2008), as historical documents with which Ofeimun x-rays varieties of evil bedeviling the Nigerian society. Ofeimun images the experiences of oppressed Nigerians during the era of military rule. Also, the disastrous effect of oil discovery and its exploration in the Niger Delta regions were condemned and revealed to be tyrannous. The study affirms the role poetry plays in enlightening its readers because to know your future is to know your past.*

Keywords: literature, poetry, Niger Delta, society.

### **Introduction**

Modern Nigerian poetry is highly committed to the socio-historical realities of the Nigerian state. From the pioneering works of Dennis Osadebay, the Euro-modernist efforts of Christopher Okigbo, Wole Soyinka, Gabriel Okara and J.P. Clark, to the contemporary vision of Tanure Ojaide, Niyi Osundare, Okinba Launko, Funso Aiyejina, Femi Fatoba and others, modern Nigerian poetry has proved

to be an art bearing a high level of social commitment. Modern Nigerian poetry, from its inception is a product of experience and expression of the socio-political and historical realities that impacted developments in Nigeria.

From colonial era to the present, modern Nigerian literature has faithfully followed and mirrored the historical transitions and experiences of Nigeria and her people. It is the utilitarian consciousness of modern Nigerian literature that informed Achebe's (1975) declaration that "art-for-art's sake is just another piece of deodorized dog-shit"; stressing that "art is, and was always in the service of man" (19). Irele (1988) recognizes the historical mood of modern African literature when he asserts:

There is such a direct correlation between the contemporary experience of Africa and modern African literature in European languages that the criticism devoted to this literature has inevitably come to be determined by this overriding historical factor. Given the fact that modern African literature is in every sense a product of the colonial situation—both as a reflection of the problems of living which this situation has posed for us and as an indication of the pervasive reach of the modes of expression the colonial impact has established among us—it was natural that this literature should have been analyzed and discussed in terms largely of its referential value. (152)

The above submission shows that Modern African literature recreates the historical experiences of the people. In literature, historical realities mean the artistic re-creation of historical events, moods and temper. Here, Ofeimun's poetry is seen as a vehicle that conveys indices of Nigerian history. Besides the resources of language, Ofeimun's poetry often mirrors the social, political, economic and

cultural contexts which produce it. Contemporary Nigerian poetry and in particular, Ofeimun's poetry has proved to be a reliable means through which we can recollect our past which is creatively documented in poetic-narration.

### **Theoretical framework**

New Historicism was a school of literary theory which consolidated critical theory into easier forms of practice for academic literary theorists, it came of age in the 1990s. Literature, Greenblatt (1982) claims "mirrors" the era's beliefs, but from a "safe distance." He explains that although the distinction between artistic production and the politics of the time exists, it is no longer intrinsic to the texts because they are "constantly redrawn by artists, audiences, and readers" (6). It involves an intensified willingness to read all of the textual traces of the past with the attention traditionally conferred only on literary texts.

### **Narrating Sociological and Environmental Tragedies in the Selected Poems**

Sociological and environmental tragedies in the Nigeria are narrated in the poetry of Ofeimun, with the aim of raising a conscious question on the value of humanity. The poeticism of these experiences helps to foreground the debasement or degeneration which the human value has been made to face right from the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

In "Memory II", Ofeimun laments the decades of plunder in the Niger Delta landscape. The Niger Delta question is a vexatious issue. Oil and gas from the Niger Delta region account for over ninety percent of Nigeria's export earnings, yet the region wallows in abject poverty, and its environment suffers degradation as a result of oil exploration activities. There are vast networks of aged and unsafe pipelines that crisscross neighborhood, farmlands and waters in the Niger Delta, and they threaten all forms of lives with their fragility. A deplorable case occurred in October 1998, when over 1,000 peasants

and other innocent souls perished in the pipeline vandalism inferno in Jesse, Delta State; and this tragedy is ranked as the worst oil-induced holocaust in the world (Darah 2006). Hence, Ofeimun laments:

We knew  
only after the explosions in our creeks  
we'd been sitting for centuries  
on soggy wealth that was also death.

We'd forgotten the songs  
of the madwoman of the creeks  
who said to look the last on crocodiles  
salamanders and iguanas  
like dinosaurs, in a blaze of oil

*(Go tell the Generals 23)*

Undoubtedly, these lines re-echo the decades of pillage in the Niger Delta area. It is a proof of Ofeimun's historical consciousness and social commitment. The destruction of Odi and Gbaramatu as well as the tragedy of Ogoni quickly come to mind. As a poet-historian, Ofeimun takes this idea to a crescendo in "Children of the Creek" which resounds the various protest movements birthed in the Niger Delta as a reaction to socio-political infidelity:

The children of the creeks  
cried for hands to raise  
the sky that loomed  
too close to the earth  
they prayed for the old days  
of timber and palm oil  
to return to the mangroves

...

The children of the creeks

yelled in searching electrodes;  
as evergreen trees roasted  
in the haggle of loot-sharers  
who stalked the Delta  
for the very last overcoming  
of the Lower Niger

*(Go tell the Generals 25)*

In “Ken”, Ofeimun historicizes the dehumanization caused to lives as a result of the activities of the oil conglomerates. The horrible murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa by the Abacha dictatorial Government on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, 1995, recalls the history of injustices and dehumanization to the Niger Delta region. Ken Saro-Wiwa was a writer-activist who fought tirelessly for the survival of the Ogoni people. Saro-Wiwa personified the freedom of the Ogoni people; and by extension, the Niger Delta people. As such, his death is a great tragedy:

Now when they speak of the Niger Delta  
they will neither sleep nor cover  
they will meet the spirit of Ogoni  
a whistle locked in trees, rocks and waters  
unrolling forests from incarnate agony:  
to dress creeks with will that never withers  
hope that traverses every dispensation  
to arrive, generation after generation  
with an acid vow stronger than machine guns  
love of hearth tougher than blood oaths

*(Go tell the Generals 31)*

From the above poetic-narration, we are made to understand that Saro-Wiwa’s death is a manifestation of the various biocides perpetuated against the natives of the Delta by the Federal



Government and Oil Multinationals. Besides, the history surrounding the death of Ken Saro-Wiwa unmasks the brutality of Abacha's tyrannical government.

### **Narrating Socio-Political Failures and Injustices in the Selected Poems.**

Ofeimun gives a proof of his historical consciousness by engaging political history with his poetry. Through his poems, Nigerian socio-political history is narrated in an appealing manner. He narrates the sad experiences of socio-political alienation, revealing indices of hunger, enslavement, death and protest etc. Cases of post-independence betrayal, anger and disillusionment are clearly presented.

It is this historic-narration of the experiences of political unfairness that informed "To Beach" where the persona affirms:

Let there be dancing on the street!  
Said marchers for democracy of baboons!  
Tired of the parliament of monkeys  
Stomping as Putschists, streaking out  
From tree branch to bridgehead  
To lock court houses against judges

*(A Boiling Caracas 10)*

In "We Welcome You, General", Ofeimun recounts the bitterness and dehumanization perpetuated by military dictators in Nigeria. The history of military rule is that of violence and debasement of human values. The masses show their distastes to military dictatorship. Ofeimun reveals some of such protest movements:

"We welcome you, General", we marched  
Through the chatter of weaverbirds  
converging where hope, in imperfect supply,

put an auctioneer's label  
upon truths we all swore by;

we welcomed the reformers who walked  
taller than elephant grass, in beret and fatigues  
through happy crowds rented for one last dance  
to humor a scrambled decade of retrenched workers

'We welcome you General' we chanted;  
free to line the routes of passing tanks  
with flag-waving kindergarten on forced holidays  
we welcomed the generals with garrulous vowels  
longer than queues baiting essential commodities

in a graffiti of anger and anguish  
stretching from food stalls to bustops  
from sea-swelling Delta to Sahel-Stricken Yobe  
*(Go tell the Generals 2)*

The lines above are redolent of the military dictatorship of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida and General Sani Abacha. From 1985 until 1998 Nigeria was governed by two military dictators, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (1985- 1993) and Sani Abacha (1993-1998). This period was disastrous for Nigeria, as Babangida and Abacha helped to deepen and entrench patterns of corruption and human rights abuse which the country has not been able to escape from.

In the poem "We Welcome You, General"( *Go tell the Generals 2* ) , Ofeimun recreates the kind of suffocating, tensed and debased atmosphere created by military dictatorship in Nigeria. Similarly, in "Angels of the Lootyard", Ofeimun historicizes the

masses dissatisfaction with military and civilian dictatorships. The poem reveals issues of mal-administration, a major problem facing the Nigerian nation since independence.

One foot forward to a democracy of baboons  
one foot backward to a tyranny of angels  
secured by a campaign of ants  
whose megaphones goad silence  
for poets to forget their metaphors  
in groundings with party secretaries  
and Area Fathers

(*A Boiling Caracas* 12)

The preceding submission reveals the failure of civilian and military rule in Nigeria. The poet goes ahead to sound the history of injustice and deprivation suffered by the natives of the Delta, revealing the current amnesty program that is used to placate the angry militants in the Niger Delta region. This tenor is evident in the following lines: “To settle briefs in streets marches and demos/ They paid marchers to vacate shop floors/Factory yards and oil rigs” (*A Boiling Caracas* 12)

The poet who reflects on the history of failures in the Nigerian political leadership, laments: “Always, one foot forward/a second in regress” (13). Armed with the historical developments of the Nigerian socio-political space, Ofeimun expresses his distaste for the Nigerian political leadership. It is Ofeimun’s taste for history that informs his submission in “Bolivar Square” when he avers: “history tired of waiting, ogles repetition/right or wrong what does it matter” (*A Boiling Caracas* 2). Here, he expresses himself as an objective analyst who x-rays the history of the ugly and beautiful.

In “After the Coup”, Ofeimun laments the consequences of coup plotting in Nigeria usually leave the masses unhappy. The phrase

‘we the people’ signifies that Ofeimun is aligning himself with the masses, this is in line with him being a poet-activist. This implies that he and masses are usually the sufferers of the violent manifestations of coup d’état. Ofeimun bemoans:

‘we the people’,  
carried famously  
through gunsmoke by dawn broadcasts  
we hallow public squares to welcome Generals  
who bend stalk away  
-from the seeding rains of July,  
-the silo of tomorrow’s harvest,  
-the stock of fate in answered prayers

we are those who have no grace to fall from

...

We journey towards maps  
bled by Generals in tanks  
in a hero-hood of the forgotten...

Brasher than the robber’s blood  
Of self-satisfied power

*(Go tell the General 3)*

It is the characteristic tense and chaotic atmosphere that pervaded military rule in Nigeria that informed the poem, “Scandal”, which Ofeimun deploys to mirror military violence and coup plotting in Nigeria. According to Ofeimun, the military rule has not brought any reasonable benefit to Nigeria, but severe ruin to her integrity and people. Ofeimun narrates:

Forget the season when the hero of our moon  
was brigand of the highway  
displacing Generals from news-lines

let's give the devil his due-  
and forget the vagabond in power  
who made an art of scandal and a scandal of oaths  
outflanking bigots of the crescent and the cross

*(I will ask questions with stones if they take my voice, 16)*

Correspondingly, in “Martial Music”, Ofeimun reveals the apparent adulation of the head of state. Lamentably, he is ignorantly adored by the poor and vulnerable masses:

The procession return to festival Road  
astride the endless challenge of sirens  
freedom waving for the General  
the last hegemon and denizen of chance  
riding the drumbeats to end all coups  
on Festival Road

*(Go tell the Generals, 9)*

The above lines echo the ugly history of military tyranny by Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB). It narrates the march on Festival Road in Abuja. The foolishness of the hapless masses who engaged in conventional exaltation of the Generals is lamentable. Again in “SCANDAL”, Ofeimun narrates the scandalous actions of the soldiers as follows:

forget the days and forget the nights  
forget how we vowed but could smash no evil  
forget the Orgy of Rapists  
who overcame the National Day  
forget those tirades over-took-law-making  
and overtook standing armies held down  
with the eloquence of bribes

*(I will ask questions with stones if they take my voice, 16)*

In “The Prophet”, Ofeimun treats socio-political, religious and economic degeneration as apparent in the Nigerian society. In retrospect, Ofeimun lampoons religious hypocrisy and political betrayals. He intones:

times when we had prophets without skills for lying  
and the nights were longer than our years  
and the paraffin lanterns did no last  
the length of a blinked eyelid  
and the groundnut farmers lost  
their pyramids to oil Sheikhs  
who brought the salvation of deceits;

...

and the canoe-men haggling for palm oil in the creeks  
returned to the day of the Merchant Princes  
exiled to the Seychelles

*(I will ask questions with stones if they take my voice, 18)*

The expression, “prophet without skills for lying”, does not merely convey the uprightness of our moral past, but underscores the current religious hypocrites otherwise called political pastors that are rampant in the contemporary Nigerian society. Bearing a good knowledge of the past, Ofeimun makes a biting comment on the high level of immoral degeneration in our socio-political and religious life, such that deceit now reigns.

In “The New Science”, Ofeimun employs varieties of maritime imagery to parody the World Bank economic control. This poem also conveys the trepidation and injustices faced by the Niger Delta in the process of extracting the oil:

In the name of the market, they need  
A people without the indiscipline of the river  
that enters the sea in a delta; they said,

a river must hold together against the creek;

...

they needed a people who will grow in acceptance  
and prostrate in the name of the market  
to the primitive fate of black gold flowing  
into deserts of foreign bank accounts

*(I will ask questions with stones if they take my voice 20)*

This poem serves as an eye-opener to the betrayals and tricks that pervade the business of the multinational oil companies. A similar historic temper runs through “Bola Ige” which recalls the Nigerian lawyer and politician, Bola Ige, assassinated on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2001. His death re-echoes the tyrannical nature of Nigerian leaders, who are ready to exterminate anybody that questions their atrocities or refuses to dine with them. Thus, any leftist that goes against their evil manifestation is silenced with the gun. It is this politics of thuggery that Ofeimun laments by remembering Bola Ige:

If you step across the threshold  
the earth will swallow you,  
dragon buds and petals will open,  
fangs-ready, filament clawing  
and tongues lolling determinedly  
to suck you into scented corruption and abuse

*(Go tell the Generals 43)*

## Conclusion

This paper concludes that these collections of Ofeimun’s poetry is committed to exposing the Nigerian experience. It does this by historicising, with great craftsmanship, two major eras in Nigerian history: the Niger Delta oil era and the military era. The poet employs his creative imagination to capture the series of inhuman activities carried out in the Niger Delta which includes, among others, the

destruction of the ecological system, deaths caused by pipeline inferno and the deliberate killing of Ken Saro Wiwa and seven others. It also historicizes the despondencies of military dictatorships in Nigeria from the 1980s to the 1990s. The dictatorships of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida and late General Sani Abacha brought untold hardship to Nigerians. The effects of military dictatorship still resonate in Nigeria as it is yet to recover from the dispossession, suppression and oppression that came with those regimes. The poet chronicles these experiences with the intention of highlighting some of the reasons behind the degradation of human life in Nigeria.

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## STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE IN TONI MORRISON'S *PARADISE*

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### **Abstract**

*Stylistics is a discipline that is found in both language and literature. It is a platform that is used in the analysis of a text via the instrument of language. The aim of this paper is to analyse the use of different types of sentences by Toni Morrison in Paradise. A sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. It is a basic unit of English grammar. This study adopts Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) as highlighted by Halliday (1985 and 1994) as the theoretical base of the work. The theory is suited for this work because it specifically looks at language as a whole system of choices existing in complex structural relations. This study uses the qualitative and quantitative methods of analyses to analyse the selected lexico-syntactic features of Morrison's selected work. The findings of this study among others reveal that, Morrison uses more simple sentences than compound and complex sentences in her novel.*

**Keywords:** Stylistics, Sentence, Emergence and Development, Style, Lexico-syntactic,

### **Introduction**

A sentence is the basic unit of English grammar. It consists of a subject and a predicate. A sentence can contain many elements but there must always be a verb. The other elements that may be found in a sentence besides subject and verb are objects, adverbials or adjectivals. Tomori (1977:19) is of the opinion that:

The sentence is one of the most difficult linguistic terms to define; this is partly due to the fact that an all-inclusive definition of any concept is almost impossible

to achieve, and partly because it is virtually impossible to combine the distinctive features of a written and a spoken sentence in the same definition.

However, despite this difficulty, some scholars have defined the sentence using many variables. Francis (1958) emphasizes on phonic substance of a sentence when he argues that “a sentence is as much of the uninterrupted utterance of a single speaker as is included either between the beginning of the utterance and the pause which ends a sentence-final contour or between two such pauses” (cited in Tomori 1977). In addition, Bloomfield (1933) lays emphasis on grammatical independence of the sentence when he asserts that, “each sentence is an independent linguistic form, not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic form” (cited in Tomori 1977). What these definitions have in common is that a sentence can be defined using many variables but bearing in mind its independent nature.

Stylistics is a discipline that is found at the intersection of literary criticism and linguistics. Its application can be used in the study of journalism, popular texts, religious works, advertising, non-fiction, popular culture, politics, etc. According to Paul (2004: 3) “The preferred object of study in stylistics is literature, whether that be institutionally sanctioned 'literature' as high art or more popular 'non-canonical' forms of writing”. In addition, Paul (2004:2) further postulates that “stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language”. As a conceptual field of discourse, stylistics tries to establish and explain the different choices people make in the use of language in their writings. This is a common feature which is discernible in the search for dialogue, grammar, the use of active and passive voice, the distribution of sentences, i.e. simple, compound or complex, the use of registers and other language devices that depict the style of the writer.

Ullman (1971:133) is of the opinion that “Stylistics is not a mere branch of linguistics, but, a parallel discipline which investigates the same phenomena from its own point of view”. Stylistics therefore, is “that part of linguistics which concentrates on variation in the use of language often but not exclusively, with special attention to the most conscious and complex use of language in literature”, Turner (1973:7). In view of this, the present study analyses how Toni Morrison used different types of sentences in her narration. What are the unique stylistic techniques at the lexico-syntactic level employed by Morrison in expressing the myriad of problems, social and cultural differences as well as difficulties and racial tendencies exhibited in the selected work? It is based on these very crucial aspects of communication between the characters that this study anchors the analysis of data.

### **About the book**

*Paradise* (1997) is a book set in Ruby a fictional township in Oklahoma in the 1970s. The novel depicts a community’s struggle between its past, present and what the future holds. After the American Civil War, many African-Americans migrated to the West of the country in search of better living conditions. However, besides looking for a better life, they were also trying to isolate themselves from white segregation.

The characters in the novel try to create a community free from evils that are prevalent in the outside world. They want a community that is like paradise. But, the utopian community they desire could not be achieved because of the human capacity to wrought evil. Moreover, their sought –after community can only be achieved if human beings are perfect. The clamor for racial purity, unity, harmony and love, though desirable in any society, is sometimes a mirage that can only be wished. This is attested by how the community falls apart by disallowing American Indians, whites and light-skinned African-Americans into their midst and also their

inability to come to terms with what they mean by love. Does love mean what happens between a man and a woman? Or is it between a woman and a woman? How do women view a patriarchal society? The inability of the people in Ruby to come to terms with this leads to the creation of two different worlds in the book: the town of Ruby led by the men and the Convent which serves as a sanctuary for women who run away from men and cherish the freedom they have as well as challenge the patriarchal dominance in the society. With this development, it is only a matter of time before the inevitable happen. The men from Ruby decide to launch an attack against the five women (one is white) in the Convent because they represent what the people resent, that is, white people and light-skinned blacks. The men enter the Convent and “shoot the white girl first. With the rest [of the women] they can take their time.” (p. 3). With these developments, *Paradise* encapsulates a community that portrays good and evil, righteousness, uprightness, love and hatred, violence and wickedness. It is a community polarized between greed, jealousy, lies, murder, adultery and above all a search for freedom and emancipation.

### **Emergence and Development of Stylistics**

The concept of style as a field of study is not a recent phenomenon. It has been in existence from ancient times. Ancient scholars like Aristotle, Cicero, Demetrius and Quintilian consider style as indispensable to thought (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 2013). Rhetoric has a profound influence on styles and that is why prominent Greeco-Roman orators always feature in the discourse of styles. Arnold (1974:2 quoted in Babajide 2000) argues that: “The standard of speech which Cicero set in Latin oratory and which Augustine set in Latin preaching were the rhetorical models of Europe for a thousand years after their own times”.

Consequently, stylistics which is widely seen as an offshoot of rhetoric for more than two millennia was the exclusive preserve for

training educated men (Stockwell, 2000). Stylistics overlaps (Babajide 2000) with elocution in classical rhetoric because it uses style to achieve appropriate effect. In addition, Babajide (2000:122) further remarks that:

Elocution is the third of the five stages that are involved in the development of an oration; and, in fact, it is the essence of any discourse-spoken or written-because it is concerned with the style of speaking persuasively and effectively. It is reasonable to claim that stylistics as a discipline emanated from the elocution of classical rhetoric. This is well established in the fact that it is extremely difficult to talk about style without necessarily traversing the threshold of rhetoric. The two phenomena are so intertwined that we constantly run into the definition of the one while defining the other.

Rhetoric as a discipline has dual purposes. It is involved with linguistic form as well as appropriateness of form in a given context. The context is specifically aligned to the spoken form, even though rhetoric was also extended to forms of writing (Alan 1974 quoted in Babajide 2000). From the time of Aristotle up to the Renaissance period, different devices of style were documented. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2000):

The essayist or orator is expected to frame his ideas with the help of model sentences and prescribed kinds of “figures” suitable to his mode of discourse. Modern stylistics uses the tools of formal linguistic analysis coupled with the methods of literary criticism; its goal is to try to isolate characteristic uses and functions of language and rhetoric rather than advance normative or prescriptive rules and patterns.

However, the notion of style as espoused above contrasts with the ideas developed by stylisticians like Charles Bally (1865-1947), the Swiss philologist, and Leo Spitzer (1887-1960), the Austrian literary critic. The use of style in language according to them:

...arises from the possibility of choice among alternative forms of expression, as for example, between “children,” “kids,” “youngsters,” and “youths,” each of which has a different evocative value. This theory emphasizes the relation between style and linguistics, as does the theory of Edward Sapir, who talked about literature that is form-based (Algernon Charles Swinburne, Paul Verlaine, Horace, Catullus, Virgil, and much of Latin literature) and literature that is content-based (Homer, Plato, Dante, William Shakespeare) and the near untranslatability of the former (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2000).

In 1909, Charles Bally published his seminal work **Traité de stylistique** française which facilitated the adoption of stylistics as a separate discipline to assess literary work. This was meant to complement Ferdinand De Saussure’s concept of linguistics (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2000). Saussure’s linguistics according to Bally (1909) is inadequate to “describe the language of personal expression”. However, the development of stylistics according to Fowler (1980) can be attributed to “three direct influences: Anglo-American literary criticism; the emerging field of linguistics; and European, especially French, structuralism”.

New criticism is a term coined from the title of a book written by John Crowe Ransom *The New Criticism* (1941). It refers to the post-World War 1 literary critical theory of the Anglo-American. Prominent scholars and seminal works of this school of thought include I. A. Richards (*Practical Criticism*, 1929), William Empson (*Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 1930), and T. S. Eliot’s critical essays “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1917) and “Hamlet and His Problems” (1919), (Griffith 1990). Other prominent figures of New Criticism include

Cleanth Brooks, R. P. Blackmur, Robert Penn Warren, and W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. The fundamental technique used by the proponents of this theory is subjecting a text to close analytic reading. The main thrust of the theory therefore, is that a work of art has an independent meaning without resort to anything outside the text. According to Griffith (1990:139):

The New Critics break dramatically with the nineteenth-century emphasis on historical and biographical background. They hold that understanding and appreciating a work of literature need have no connection with the author's intention, with the author's life, or with the social and historical circumstances that may have influenced the author. Everything the reader needs to understand and appreciate a work is in the work itself.

Consequently, the New Critical style espouses that in analysing a passage of prose, poetry or any given text, careful scrutiny of the passage is required. This will entail identifying elements like rhyme, meter, plot, characterization, setting, paradox, ambiguity, irony, etc. All these features will assist the reader to know the theme and also establish the unity of the work. These postulations by Griffith readily come handy when considered in relation to this study which focuses on the stylistic analysis of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and *Paradise*. To make a thorough stylistic analysis of the works, it is expedient to examine as well as highlight the various linguistic devices employed therein.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research adopts Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) as the theoretical base of the work. This model of grammar was propounded by Halliday (1985 and 1994). He was in the forefront amongst scholars who were regarded as followers of J. R. Firth. They

steered the theoretical perspective away from its earlier position of ‘scale and category’ to what came to be known as ‘systemic functional’. The term ‘systemic’ emanates from the claim that language has a network of systems. According to Farinde et al. (2015: 89):

The model looks at language as a whole system of choices existing in complex structural relations. By this, it means a system in which the choice of one thing dictates the choice of another. In the model, the notion of ‘constituency’ is vital to the analysis of grammatical structures.

Similarly, Eggins (1994: 37) postulates further the idea of constituency that “constituency simply means that things are made up of or built out of other things”. In essence, this refers to the relationship between structural elements that combine to make a meaningful sentence.

To achieve a grammatical analysis of a sentence, Halliday (1994: 17) argues that “When we take into account wordings of more than minimal length and complexity, there is the need for constituency analysis since some more structures are involved. This could be done through the use of constituency bracketing and functional labelling/tree diagramming.

### **Methodology/ Research Instrument**

#### **Sources of Data**

The main data for this study is derived from Morrison’s, *Paradise*. The data selected include the types of sentences and their functions in the novel. *Paradise* is a book that is set in Ruby in the 1970s. The themes centre along love, purity and uprightness. It is a struggle between America’s past, present and what the future envisages.

#### **Sample and sampling technique**



This research adopted a simple random sampling technique in the analysis of the data. This technique was used in order to avert many problems which include: many and different types of sentences and sentence word order. Consequently, data was selected in the following way: *Paradise* has chapters and data was selected from all the chapters.

### **Method of Data Collection**

This research selected Morrison's *Paradise* out of her many works because the novel is about America's reconstruction after the abolition of slave trade. We sourced the data for this study the selected text using a non-probability sampling technique. Sentences formed the basis of a novel. Morrison's work has different types of sentences. The random sampling technique is used in the selection of types of sentences because it is very difficult to analyse the whole work bearing in mind the thousands of sentences in the novel.

### **Analytic Procedure**

#### **Analytic Procedure**

In this research, the qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis are used to analyse the utterances in the selected text. According to Xavier (2012) and Brick and Green (2007), these type analysis is about conversations, interviews and reflections as well as numerical and statistical explanations.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The analysis of *Paradise* focused on the types of sentences used by Morrison. The study used the SFG model of analysis propounded by Halliday (1985 and 1994). The work also used the Functional labeling/Tree diagramming to analyse the types of sentences used by the writer in *Paradise*.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

The study analyses the lexico-syntactic features of Toni Morrison's selected novels using qualitative and quantitative methods.

Qualitative method is mainly concerned with conversations, interviews and reflections whereas quantitative method deals with numerical and statistical explanations.

The Functional labeling/ Tree diagramming is used in examining the structural elements of sentences that Morrison used in *Paradise*. This is the best way to explain the how the various constituting elements are used to produce a meaningful whole. In Systemic Functional Grammar, the clause is made up of the following elements:

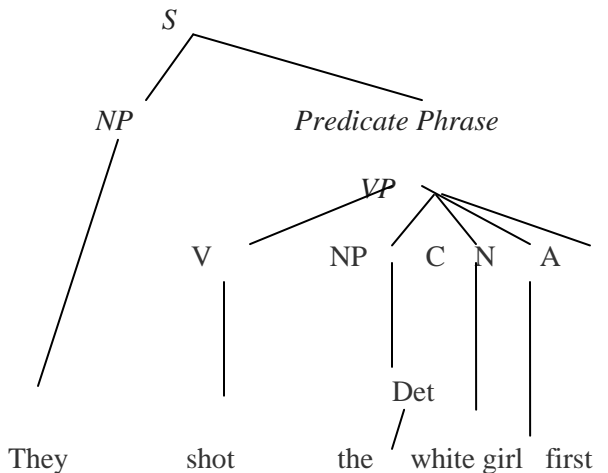
Subject (S); Predicator (P); Complement (C) and Adjunct (A).

### **Use of simple sentences in *Paradise***

A simple sentence is also called a clause. It contains a subject and a predicate. A simple sentence can convey a statement (declarative), question (interrogative), command or exclamation.

1. "They shot the white girl first" (p. 3).
2. "He carried the equipment box through the dining-room" (p. 53)
3. "You can't stay here by yourself"(p. 97).
4. "I feel better now"(p. 177).
5. "I can't help you"(p. 239).

*This sentence can be analysed using the Functional Labelling/ Tree Diagramming in the following way:*



*In Systemic Functional Grammar, the clause can either be alpha (α) or beta (β). The alpha clause refers to a clause that can stand alone and make sense while the beta clause cannot and has to rely on the alpha clause for its meaning. All the simple sentences above are alpha clauses (see the analysis on complex sentences for information on beta clause).*

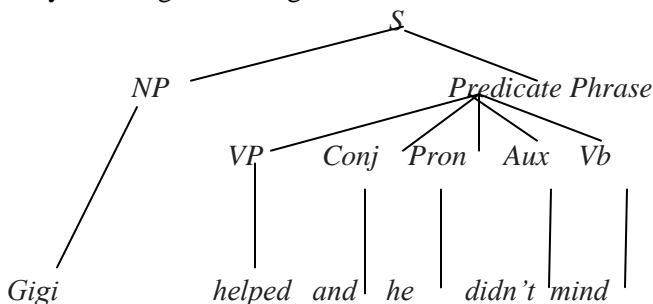
#### *Use of Compound Sentences in Paradise*

*A compound sentence consists of two or more clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction. A compound sentence with more than two clauses can be separated like a list and the last clause joined by a coordinating conjunction.*

1. "They are nine, over twice the number of the women they are obliged to stampede or kill and they have the paraphernalia for either requirement: rope, a palm leaf cross, handcuffs, mace and sunglasses, along with clean, handsome guns" (3).
2. "Gigi helped him and he didn't mind" (p. 67).

3. “In any case, they weren’t much help, but she enjoyed the waves of raw horniness slapping her back as she walked off down the street” (p. 67).

“She knelt and emptied the sack” (p. 92) has two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction. This sentence can be structurally analysed using a tree diagram:



*In Systemic Functional Grammar a compound sentence has two alpha clauses, that is, two independent clauses.*

$\alpha$                        $\alpha$   
*Gigi helped and he didn't mind*

*In addition, there are also variations in the structural elements of the clause in the above sentence, for example:*

*The first clause contains 2 structural elements of the clause:*

*S      P*  
*Gigi helped*

*Whereas, the second clause contains 3 structural elements of the clause:*

*S      P      C*  
*He/ didn't mind.*

*Use of Complex Sentence in Paradise*

*A complex sentence has one main clause and one or more subordinate or dependent clause (s). The subordinate or dependent clause relies on the main clause for its meaning and the two clauses are joined by a coordinating conjunction, for example:*

1. “The house he lives in is big, comfortable, and this town is resplendent compared to his birthplace, which had gone from feet to belly in fifty years” (p. 5).
2. “Bowed her head, closed her eyes, but when she faced him with a quiet “Amen,” he felt as though his relationship with the God he spoke to was vague or too new, while hers was superior, ancient and completely sealed” (p. 62).

The following sentence has two beta clauses and one alpha clause:

$\beta$   $\beta$

$a$

“Bowed her head, closed her eyes,/ but when she faced him with a quiet “Amen,”/ he felt as though his relationship with the God he spoke to was vague or too new, while hers was superior, ancient and completely sealed” (p. 62),

The analysis also shows that the beta clauses have different functions:

“Bowed her head, closed her eyes” is an adverbial clause of manner, followed by a coordinating conjunction (but) while “...when she faced him with a quiet “Amen” is a relative clause.

Table 6: Frequency of use of Sentence Types

TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Simple sentence	5	50
Compound sentence	3	30
Complex sentence	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above table simple sentence has the highest percentage of 50% followed by compound sentence with 30% while complex sentence has 20%.

## **FINDINGS**

*The random sampling technique used to analyse the data shows that 10 different types of sentences were examined.* Morrison uses different types of sentences like simple, compound, and complex in her narration. This style shows that Morrison is not so rigid as to adopt one type of sentence. It also indicates the diversity of the characters use of language. The syntactic analysis reveals that, in *Paradise*, simple sentence has the highest frequency of occurrence which is 5 or 50%, followed by compound sentence with 3 or 30% and complex sentence with 2 or 20%.

## **Conclusion**

Stylistics is a discipline that conveniently shelters language and literature. The discipline has afforded many analysts the platform to analyse the use of language in texts. The development of Stylistics from ancient times to the present, has afforded stylisticians the opportunity to critically examine and critique works of art be it a novel, drama or poetry. In addition, the discipline has also paved way to highlight the style of various writers, poets and playwrights.

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## **GENDER CRISIS: FEMINISM VERSUS WOMANISM IN TESS ONWUEME'S *TELL IT TO WOMEN***

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### **Abstract**

*Most critics see women and their relationship with their spouses and the entire society as a fair description of their status through the ages, while some feminist writers query this natural dichotomy between the man and the woman, others, especially within the African feminist group, are influenced by this mythological justification by the Bible. They seem to suggest too, that even the domestic division of labour practiced in African culture based on sex and gender was ordained by God and therefore to change this would be to antagonize the creator. This has been the major problem of African feminist activities. There has been a strong disagreement within this sphere, while some believe in the western approach toward solving the woman emancipation problem; others see the approach as not workable in the African region. Thus, this disagreement among our feminist scholars has brought about the multifaceted approach to the women question in Africa and indeed Nigeria. While in the Western world, there is the agreement among feminist scholars that women are subjugated, marginalised and need to be liberated, most of our African scholars now advocate the womanist approach to women liberation, they are still engaged in a battle of deciding whether our women are really deprived, they argue that the strength of a woman lies in her womanhood and therefore should not be tampered with. To them, African women are only attending to their naturally ordained responsibilities of womanhood and motherhood.*



*In view of the foregoing, this paper shall explore the feminist and womanist tendencies in the selected text and in effect, the traditionalism and modernism dichotomy reflected in the text.*

**Key Words:** *gender, feminism, womanism, traditionalism, modernism*

## **Introduction**

The culture of Africa is varied and manifold, consisting of a mixture of tribes that each have their own unique characteristics. It is a product of the diverse populations that today inhabit the continent of Africa and the African Diaspora. African culture is expressed in its arts and crafts, folklore and religion, clothing, cuisine, music and languages. Africa is so full of culture, with it not only changing from one country to another, but within a single country, many cultures can be discovered. Even though African cultures are widely diverse, it also when closely studied, seen to have many similarities.

Intra-gender politics and class inequality has always been a prevailing and challenging issue in the sociopolitical African society. The nature of African society is indisputably that of a multiethnic setting where people have different beliefs and cultures. Africa is primarily a traditional society that places high premium on tradition and customs as well as parental authority; all of which rule the possibility of the power of the individual especially the female to make a choice. Although traditional societies in pre-colonial times had spheres of power and influence for women in closely-knit organizations that helped them maintain a voice, African women are often adversely affected by the grid of patriarchal power and dominance. It is not surprising therefore that in recent times; African literature has been enriched by the voices of women writers expressing their concerns. Generally their output has been feministic in portraying the female characters' various reactions to a subsuming life. It is seen from their various discourses that feminism is not found only among the city-

dwellers and educated women but also among the rural women. Male chauvinism seems to make no distinction as both category of women come under the masculine yoke. The only difference is that the educated women are able to free themselves from this masculine yoke quickly because of economic empowerment education bestows on them.

So with women education came exposure and awareness and the inevitable reaction. Thus, feminism as the reaction is an assertion of being, rights and status. Through colonialism the beacon of light of women's western education and exposure propelled the African women to the outer wider world and recognition of the commonality of women's subjugation world-wide. Thus, African women joined women in other nations in their quest for right, opportunity, relevance and recognition.

## **Gender**

Gender segregation and unequal treatment given to the female gender in respect to the male gender has many causes. The term gender has been used to refer to social, cultural and psychological aspects of masculinity and femininity. Gender is also known as the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a person. Gender is defined by Scott in Zinsser (1993:54) as

Constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, the knowledge that establishes meaning for bodily difference.....

This extract emphasizes the social differences between female and male and it is this difference that prevents women and men from participating equally in social, political, economic and cultural life. Stanley (quoted in Jackson & Scott, 2002:31) states that gender refers to culturally ascribed notions about "femininity" and "masculinity".

Gender is used as basic category, and once people decide what you are, they interpret everything you do in the light of that. People make gender attributions; they decide whether someone is male or female when they see them. These gender attributions form the foundation of understanding other components of gender such as gender role (behaving like a female or male) and gender identity (feeling like a female or male).

Gender stereotypes also play a role in social inequality. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) gender is embedded so thoroughly in social institutions, community actions, social beliefs and people's desires, that it appears to society as completely natural. Thus, simply knowing that an individual is female implies that the person will have certain physical characteristics ( soft voice, dainty, graceful actions, and certain psychological traits- nurturing, dependent, weak, emotional) and will engage in particular kinds of activities (child care, cooking, gardening).

Sex is related to gender. Some people even confuse sex and gender or sometimes they are used interchangeably. Sex refers to the physical, biological components of masculinity and femininity ( Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:153). Sex marks a social division; it serves to allow social recognition and identification of those who are dominators and those who are dominated. Patriarchy is very important in the discussion of gender issues. Patriarchy is a social system in which males hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. In the domain of the family, fathers or father-figures hold authority over women and children. Some patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage. Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, and economic organization of a range of different cultures.

Pilcher and Whelehan (2004:93) say that patriarchy literally means “rule by the male head of a social unit” (a family or tribe) in her theory of patriarchy, Walby (1990) defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. She identifies six structures of patriarchy: household production, paid work, the state, male violence, sexuality and culture. Male domination is very pervasive in African society. Women are regarded as inferior; the female is not regarded as a “whole” being, she is viewed as unfinished, physically mutilated and emotionally dependent. On the other hand, men are designed to be dominant. Hence, gender inequality is linked to the relationship of power between the sexes. Typical of KoKo in the play, *Tell It To Women*.

Koko: (Authoritatively.) Yemoja, if you are my wife, turn right back now and follow me! (58)

Koko: what has become of you women? You are certainly beginning to overreach yourselves or maybe you are drunk? But it is not for me to take you. That will be left for the Elders.... I am only here to take my wife. (59)

Ajie: Step aside and let me talk to these women in the only language they understand...force! (61)

Sherifat: ... a wife deserves to be treated like a daughter and not something that you possess, reject or crush whenever you will. Why should anyone lose her rights because she becomes a wife? (62)

The African woman was never culturally defined as a housewife. She was employed and contributed to the economic support of the family. Since economic prowess was the key to social and political accession

in the traditional African culture, irrespective of sex, men and women complemented each other's efforts in economic acquisition by dint of hard and sincere work.

### **Feminism**

The term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism involves political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference, as well as a movement that advocates gender equality for women and campaigns for women's rights and interests. Although the terms "feminism" and "feminist" did not gain widespread use until the 1970s, they were already being used in the public parlance much earlier; for instance, Katherine Hepburn speaks of the "feminist movement" in the 1942 film *Woman of the Year*.

### **Feminist Theories**

**Feminism** could be described as the organized movement which supports and promotes equality for men and women in political, economic and social issues. The feminists believe that women are oppressed simply because of their sex and they quickly cite the ideology of patriarchy as reason for their belief. Many descriptions are made about feminism and they all depend on a number of factors ranging from beliefs, history and culture. The theories advanced in feminism are as many as the feminists' scholars themselves. I will briefly go through some of them to help us identify the preoccupations of the feminists of the developed world.

### **Radical Feminism**

Mary Daly is said to be the advocate of this group. It advocates a total change of the cultural structure, eliminating the domination by men completely. They seek to free both the men and the women from rigid gender roles that society has imposed upon them. The radical feminism is sub- divided into two; radical liberation feminism- which

emphasizes that there production role of the woman limits her capacity to contribute to the society. This group prefers that the woman should essentially be androgynous. To achieve this they recommend artificial means of reproduction so that less time is devoted to pregnancy giving way for worthwhile things. They believe that abortion should be allowed and also promote the use of contraceptives. The Radical-Cultural feminists see sex and penetration by the male as male domination. They believe women should encompass their femininity. They see a link between sex, female subordination, rape and other abuses. They also believe men control production through a technical means.

**Liberal Feminism** is another stand of which Betty Freidan is the major advocate. This group is of the view that both men and women are created equal by God therefore, they deserve equal rights. They believe women have the same capacity as their male counterparts and should be given the same opportunities in political and economic spheres. As a matter of fact, this feminist group is responsible for the legislations that support women welfare, reforms, education and health.

**Socialist Feminism** theory is championed by Alison Jaggar. They see a link between class structure and the oppression of women. They see that women production in the domestic sphere is not valued by the western society because women do not produce a tangible tradable commodity. This according to them gives the men the upper hand over the women. This group also totally condemns ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy.

There's also **Cultural Feminism** which has Carol Gilliganas the major advocate. This group believes in making the best of what is biologically endowed with women. To them, a woman is inherently more kind and gentle. They also believe that if women ruled the world would be a better place. While the men value independence, hierarchy

competition and dominion, the women uphold interdependence, cooperation, joy and trust.

**Ecofeminism** - Van Dana Shiva, the propagandist of this theory believes there is a link between the women and nature. Men look forward to conquering both women and the environment to have complete power. To them there is a deep connection that men cannot understand between the environment and women, hence terms like Mother Nature, Mother Earth.

It can be seen from the cursory look at these perspectives on feminism in the Western world that the arguments advanced by the western feminists group are all geared towards the issue of empowerment and the liberation of the women from oppression even though they use different approaches. They unanimously agree in the treatment of their objectives that really the western women need liberation from the men. It is only the approach that differ and this is because they all target different issues but all working for liberation of women.

### **An Overview of the African Feminist Theories**

Most notable among the African feminism theories are **womanism** and **motherism**. The term womanism is said to have been coined by an African- American poet and novelist, Alice Walker who sees womanism as deeply rooted in black women's history, in racial and gender oppression. According to Rosemary Asen (30), the term was taken from the southern black folk expression of 'you acting womanish' as a mother admonishes the female children. To Alice, womanish means mature, responsible, courageous and confident behaviors of adult females as opposed to frivolous behavior of girlish females. Womanism is thus summed up to be growing up and being in charge. H.F. Chidammadiz as cited by Rosemary states; Womanism is not apprehensive of womanhood, wifehood or motherhood, the womanist appreciates the natural design of femininity as a given

factand aims to promote and preserve the pride of being a female human being (31).Womanism is the result of the black African-American women's agitation to emancipate themselves from the double enslavement of both their white male owners and their black male spouses. The black African -American women initiated this movement to address their peculiar state of subordination. Sometimes the approach of this group is at variance with the core western feminism. It also has a touch of Africanness. The theory of womanism is centered on the precincts that the biological attribute of the female necessitates her being apportioned some duties and roles in the society. It is however controversial in its acceptability. While selected womanist activists believe a woman is unjustly treated and subjugated because she is defenseless in a society which upholds arbitrary laws, others agree otherwise, that men and women are not created the same, that nature has biologically defined roles for each sex and one sex certainly is more gifted in some areas than another. Therefore to say a woman is dehumanized because she performs dutiful functions would be to refute the idea that men and women have different sex-anatomies.

It can be readily seen that the African womanist theorists have disagreed among themselves. While one group see discrimination of women, the other sees only the performance of legally, religiously and socially assigned roles of women.Womanist emphasizes women's commitment to their motherhood and the fact that marriage and children are the key to their womanhood. Traditional culture often plays a prominent role in oppressing women; traditional African culture in many ways still discourages equality between the sexes. African womanism therefore can be said to be an offshoot of the communality of traditional African societies that insists on the complementarity of the sexes, it views the African concept of power in a new and different light from the borrowed Western feminist vision



that has come to form the fundamental ideological stronghold of the women elite.

In essence, womanism as an ideology portrays the awareness of African women who recognize their interests and needs, and are diplomatically and gender-aware struggling to attain them while not losing sight of their vocation as mother and the welfare of their families (husband and children) and communities. This philosophy is fully encapsulated in the principles of Africana womanism.

### **Africana womanism**

Africana womanism fundamental foundation is built on traditional values. Some of the traditional values forefront the role of African mothers as leaders in the struggle to regain, reconstruct, and create a cultural integrity that espouses principles of reciprocity, balance, harmony, justice, truth, righteousness and order. Thus, Africana womanism centers on some key components or characteristics such as: Self-Naming, Self-Definition, Family-Centeredness, Wholeness, Role Flexibility, Adaptability, Authenticity, Black Female Sisterhood, Struggling with males against oppression, Male Compatibility, Recognition, Ambition, Nurturing, Strengthen, Respect, Respect for Elders, Mothering and Spirituality. Each of the characteristics listed above have a specific meanings that collectively establish a basis for Africana Womanism. The first principle Self-Naming discusses the importance of self-identifying as an African woman in society. Self-naming is the period of recognizing the need for an Africana movement with its own name. The second principle Self-Definition, begins to describe realities that African women face. Self-definition explores gender inequalities and stereotypes in the modern patriarchy—Self-naming and self-definition are the first two couple of characteristics of Africana womanism. The principle of family-centeredness focuses on the entire black family unit. The interest in the success of the black community as a whole maintains a

sense of wholeness. The principle of Wholeness describes the importance of self-sufficiency that an African woman must have in order to upkeep her household. Wholeness also stresses the required self-esteem that emanates from within an African woman who must be strong for not only herself, but for her family and community as a whole. Completeness, going hand in hand with Wholeness, is defined as the unbroken unity that an African woman is responsible for upholding inside the home and out. The Role Flexibility principle acknowledges and discusses the fact that the Black woman has never been a subjugate. African women are active in the workforce, take part in leadership opportunities presented, and do not need to be domestic. In history, Black women have experienced flexible gender roles meaning that Black women not only had experience working outside of home along with men but all within the home.

The third and last clustering of characteristics are strength, male compatibility, respect, recognition, respect for elders, ambition, mothering, nurturing, and spirituality. This principle of Strength is often the one that is attacked by non-Africana oppressors because their goal is to force submission upon the powerful group that is Africana women. Therefore, the principle of male compatibility is based upon mutually beneficial relationships between a well-respected African woman and a supportive, like-minded, man. Respect and recognition go together; that is necessary for a healthy respect for Africana womanists and it helps them relate to others. Respect and recognition also contributes to the self-love and admiration, and respect for elders or older members in the Black community. To dissect both principles a bit further, Respect refers to reverence an African woman has for herself, absent of the colonized standards. Determining one's worth, while ignoring politics, is a crucial to becoming a confident African woman. The pillar of Recognition refers to the acknowledgement of humanity, capability, and power of Black women. Recognition plays

a large role in keeping communal peace and ensuring the Black women's effectiveness in the struggle for equality<sup>4</sup>

The principles that outline the caring nature of the Africana womanist are defined in Respect for Elders; this is an extension of the historical African tradition of ancestral reverence. Ancestral reverence is the habitual act of caring for elders, and eventual ancestors, within a community or society. Once the elders become ancestors, they will be responsible for providing wisdom and guidance which is highly valued. The Nurturer and Motherer are both described a call for all community members to play an active role in the rearing of the community and propaganda of the race through care. It is an African woman's duty to not only care and nourish her family, but to provide the care and nourishment for her race as a whole. By fostering and guiding fellow women, the Africana Movement is advanced. The initiative taken to further the public's appreciation and education about the Africana Movement exemplifies the principle of Ambition.

The final principle is Spirituality, which stresses the importance of the reverence for traditional African spiritual systems.

These spiritual systems call for a collection of the principles including Ancestral Reverence, Oneness with oneself, and with nature as well. Africana womanist are also very spiritual and believe in a higher power and their mothering and nurturing is tradition.

**Motherism:** Motherism arises as an African alternative to the female model of motherhood. The traditional mother role of women is recognizable in many African female symbols. Hence, motherism as an African feminist theory sees the relationship of a woman in terms of reproduction and child-care. The relationship in the family and duties of mother in the home is the main focus of this theory. Most Africans see the child's up-bringing as the sole responsibility of the woman (no matter how highly or lowly positioned she could be). The man is not, or must not be charged with changing the babies' napkin or even

simply baby- sitting the child for a few minutes as the woman is already attending to some womanish chores. Here, too, involves two different schools of thought. The first believes that women should not be solely charged, with the responsibility of child care, that the men should equally be involved since they too are parents. Moreover they donot see any biological inhibitions in bringing up and caring for the child. The second group sees no part a man can play since women are biologically endowed with certain characteristic such as breast milk. They see the women having an edge over the men by virtue of carrying the child in their womb for nine months.

This alone, according to them brings and strengthens the ties between mother and child closeness. Acholonu who is the loudest voice of the Afro-centric feminism called motherism believes that women are not marginalized by men as claimed by western writers and some African feminists. According to her, western writers often fail to recognize that the African society is made up of diverse cultures within its diverse regions. What is practiced by one region could be the opposite in another. To buttress this she says: It is difficult if not impossible to make generalizations about the woman's place in Africa. This is because African ethnic groups or cultural groups are indeed nations unto themselves, each possessing its own traditions and customs which set it apart from the rest. Acholonu argues strongly that what affects development in African society is not gender related but economic power. She sums up that a rich and educated woman who is outspoken, hardworking and fearless can hardly be looked down upon by any member of the society. The question is what is the population of the group so described by Acholonu? Again how much influence do they exert on their societies and does the existence of this group change the fact of the marginalization of women?

## **Osonye Tess Onwueme**

Osonye Tess Onwueme is an award winning Nigerian author of many plays. She is one of Africa foremost women writer engaging with the social problems of the continent and championing the cause of women. Since leaving Nigeria for the United States, she seems to have acquired a deeper orientation of the concept and theory of feminism, especially feminism as praxis. The totality of her plays since *A Hen too Soon* explains clearly the place of time, location and culture and the artistic growth that every good writer experiences. The early sign of the renounced writer's feminism is seen in her works *The Broken Calabash* and *The Reign of Wazobia*); while *Tell it to Women* and *Then She Said It* reflect the concept of African womanism.

### **Tell It To Women**

Tess Onwueme in the play under analysis seems to be supportive of these cultural women who are seen and perceived as not "educated enough to understand true empowerment. That is not to say that Tess detests the western idea of feminism, rather she advocates a better architectural design to suit the cultural woman and not that total dependence on the western approach. This ideology is strongly felt in, *Go Tell It to Women*, The play is about two different classes of women; the modern and the traditional woman. The modern woman is represented in the play by Ruth and Daisy who have other females around them who equally pledge fellowship to their struggle. The traditional woman is represented by the women of Idu, championed by Adaku, Yemoja and Sherifat who in turn represent the opposing force of the rural woman.

In the play, some city women visit Idu, a rural community to incorporate the rural women into the Better Life Programme they have planned for them (rural women). Initially, the urban women faced a stiff opposition but are later accepted by the rural folks. To strengthen

their acceptance of the project between the Idu women and their city counterparts, the urban women asked the rural women to send some representatives to accompany them to the city for further logistics. Yemoja is chosen to follow the urban leaders who are Ruth and Daisy. In the city, Yemoja is joined by Sherifat; Daisy's mother-in-law. To their own dismay, both rural women are ill-treated. They realize that the progressive ideas which the urban women preached in the village with so much reverence, the issues of ideal matrimony, respect for culture and tradition and motherhood were all false. The two rural women discover that the urban women's obsession and preaching about feminism and emancipation are all without substance as they themselves do not have normal domestic lives. For example, Daisy is having a lesbian relationship with Ruth, which according to the rural woman's perception is an abuse to womanity at large. Again, Daisy also refuses to take proper care of her daughter, Bose (also seen as anti-motherism). She behaves unruly to Okei, who is her husband. The rural woman sees no honour in unruly behaviour as being a characteristic of emancipation. Consequently, the Better life programme becomes threatened as the rural women come to realize that their urban counterparts do not really have their interests at heart. They demand for a life of their own since their experiences with the urban folk in the city made them understand what true empowerment is. The result is that the rural women insist on negotiating their own development themselves, believing in themselves as capable beings who will bring change to their region.

### **Traditionalism and Modernism**

Conflict between tradition and modernity is often times argue from the favorite premise of male supremacist ideology. Most people mistake emancipation programmes for rebellious activities. To them a woman who struggles to free herself from the claws of slavery is actually initiating a rebellion. They believe the woman intends to

sabotage the government of the male ruling class. It is possible to affirm that such impressions created on their minds is actually created by some so-called feminists like the characters of Ruth and Daisy in Tess Onwueme's *Go Tell It To Women*, who seek earnestly to replace the African values with European structures and tradition. This hurried endorsement of foreign values adapted by these two modernised women seriously conflicts with African tradition and culture. The play dramatizes the preparation for the launching of the Better Life for Rural Women programme initiated by a group of urban (elite) women who see themselves as 'torch-bearers of global sisterhood' (feminism). The primary aim is to: break boundaries of confinement and compartmentalization of our potentiality in the oppressive, despotic and tyrannical hegemony of patriarchy imposed on women these many years (27).

Represented conspicuously by Daisy, Director of Women Affairs in government and Ruth, an unmarried feminist scholar whose promotion to the rank of full professor of feminist studies is solely dependent on the success of the launching, the preparations begin to have cracks from the outset of Yemoja's sojourn with the elite women in the capital city. As the one meant to be the 'eye' of the rural women of Idu, Yemoja soon discovers that the plaque given to her in the village is only meant to lure her to the city to serve their (Daisy and Ruth) selfish purposes. This becomes clearer when Daisy maps out her boundaries of operation in the house. Both Daisy and Ruth treat Yemoja as a slave, making her realize the social hiatus between them.

Besides, the lesbian relationship between Daisy and Ruth, practised in the very home where Daisy's precocious daughter of ten years is growing up, also draws curious attention to the new modern concept of sisterhood and 'queendom' dominated only by 'sheroes' where tradition such as marriage is seen as 'an unforgivable insult' to

women. Thus, mentored by Ruth, Daisy's marriage to Okei begins to crumble as they both now despise family life, a borrowed doctrine to which the playwright's persona, Adaku, appropriately responds:

That is our new disease: Oyibo! And now the family head must be turned upside down and men must hand over power to women. Wives must lie on top of their husbands for women to show power and live a better life? I do not... I cannot understand the whole message! I even hear that in Oyibo land now, men marry men and women marry women... (38).

Interestingly, the certificated women meet their waterloo during the aborted launching where, to their chagrin, the rural women led by Adaku and Yemoja, and even joined by Daisy's precocious daughter, openly denounce this 'new modernism disease' in a grand celebrative dance of womanhood and motherhood, depicting the traditional core value of African woman.

In African tradition, members of the same sex are not even envisaged or imagined to have asexual relationship with each other. The two women's mode of operation in the feminist movement is actually called to question. The two characters in the fictional world of *Go Tell It to Women* are the main impediments to their development project. Another point which can be observed is the fact that feminist writers in Africa are yet to come to terms and agree that the woman is truly oppressed and therefore needs empowerment and liberation. This lack of belief is made manifest in the portrayal of the city women who display unacceptable attitudes towards their husbands to their rural counterpart's horror. The rural women also condemn the attitude of the urban women claiming that they too, without the city women and their foreign ideas, can be agents of change in their own regions. Here, Tess is addressing the conflict between traditionalism and modernism on



African soil. The African feminist activists and scholars can salvage the situation through are fined intra-cultural projection of the woman question, not necessarily assimilating the western idea of these concepts on African soil like Ajie in the play said:

...Our women have always had freedom...freedom to do anything within the norms and values of our world; I do to see anything in this inventing modern ways to run the family in a world they have already set adrift (381).

The 'norms and values' referred to in Ajie's speech have been the greatest undoing of the African woman as they are all embedded in the tradition. Thus, the story enlightens the audience about the dichotomy of traditionalism versus modernism and the ways in which different cultures interact. It ends by revealing the true meaning of culture; the real quality in a society that arises from a passion for what is excellent in arts, manners, and customs.

KOKO: (Turning to Ruth and Daisy) You women will be our ruin! You home wreckers! You ruin the women that you convert to your ways. You uproot them. Women you ruin everything of value to us! You travel to all these strange lands, import new diseases, infect our women and wreck our homes in the name of what? Transformation?...Your grandmothers were great mothers. They held the foundation of our world. But you women of today are nothing but the chaff of mothers! You fake motherhood! You mock motherhood...(63-64).

Overall, the play discusses the role of women within this Nigerian village and largely examines the conflict of whether it is better to advance with the rest of the world, or to hold on to the traditions that truly make a society independent and beautiful. On the other hand, *Tell It To Women*, is a statement on how the women of

the village are always being told to do or be something. Whether it is by Daisy and Ruth or by their husbands, the women never really find their own voice until the very end. Throughout much of the story, we see the women being treated like servants and as subhuman to Daisy and Ruth, the village men, and western civilization as a whole.

## **Conclusion**

Feminism in Africa is contradicted by writers and activists who are yet to ascertain the reality of the standard for judging the disempowerment of the African woman. Until the question is unanimously answered the African feminism issue will remain multifocal. For example, in identifying with these different standards of judgment Mabel quoting Philomena C. steady says: The most important factors with regard to the woman traditional society is her role as mother and the centrality of this role as a whole ... the importance of motherhood and the evaluation of the child bearing capacity by African women is probably the most fundamental difference between the African women and the her western counterpart in their common struggle to end discrimination against women.

The idea that African feminism has not been vibrant is a problem that really has to be looked into. Nevertheless the need for a unifocal struggle for the emancipation of women cannot be overemphasized. The motherist however argues that the greatest power of the woman is her reproductive power and that any attempt to reduce from it would indeed amount to disempowerment. This is a position that is clearly against one of the theories of feminism in the developed world. The African feminists therefore should fashion out programmes and direct their theories toward lifting up the woman from her already pitiable position. The opposite can however be encouraged if they truly believe that theories of motherism and womanism can best achieve it.

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## LES RÉALITES SOCIOPOLITIQUES AU NIGÉRIA À TRAVERS AINSI VA LA VIE DE FEMI OSOFISAN

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### Résumé

*Cette étude vise à démontrer la manière dont s'articulent les réalités sociopolitiques, en occurrence la crise économique, dans un texte fictionnel. L'étude basée sur une approche littéraire dite postcoloniale met en lumière la réalisation d'un texte fictionnel à partir des événements réels et vécus dans l'œuvre de Femi Osofisan intitulé Ainsi va la vie. Dans cette étude, la transposition en fiction des réalités sociopolitiques est considérée comme le trait le plus frappant de l'œuvre choisie, un trait qui permet de créer des nouvelles interprétations de ces histoires racontées. Les analyses détaillées des transpositions et des allusions effectuées par l'auteur permettent non seulement d'examiner les textes littéraires proprement dits mais aussi de considérer les faits sociaux, religieux, politique, esthétique et éthique qui sont présents dans les textes ainsi que leur signification dans les prises de position des auteurs vis-à-vis des problèmes de violence confrontant leurs peuples. En fait, le texte littéraire étudié démontre la corruption chez les dirigeants, la crise économique, la fraude, la trahison, la tricherie électorale parmi les autres.*

**Mots-clés :** Les réalités sociopolitique, l'approche littéraires, la corruption, la transposition.

### Introduction

Chaque écrivain écrit pour une raison et sa raison est dévoilée très souvent dans son style et ses thèmes (Mufutau. 4). Il existe tant

d'écrivains en Afrique contemporaine qui utilisent leurs écritures pour toucher et influencer la vie quotidienne. La plupart du temps, ils exposent les maux et les vices qui détruisent le continent. Femi Osofisan, un nigérian, fait partie de ces écrivains engagés qui dénoncent le néocolonialisme. C'est-à-dire, il dénonce la domination de l'homme noir par ses propres frères. A travers ses écritures, il montre les vices et les problèmes qui affrontent le Nigéria, voire l'Afrique dans son intégralité. Il expose ces problèmes sur la forme des réalités sociopolitiques et économiques. Ces problèmes incluent la corruption chez les dirigeants, le coup et le contre coup d'Etat, l'infidélité, l'injustice, la crise économique, la souffrance chez les citoyens, la fraude, l'escroquerie, la trahison l'emprisonnement des innocents, la tricherie électorale et beaucoup d'autres vices.

Beaucoup sont les créations littéraires de Femi Osofisan à travers lesquelles il critique la situation socioéconomique et politique du Nigéria, un pays très riche en ressources naturelles mais où la famine et la souffrance dominant. Comme ses compatriotes de l'ancienne génération comme Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Cyprien Ekwensi, ainsi de suite la nouvelle génération comme Adichie Chimamanda, Peace Chiwendu, Ovu Basil, Joseph Christopher, Femi Osofisan s'engagent activement dans la lutte pour conscientiser les citoyens. Malgré qu'il écrivît en anglais, près que tous ses œuvres littéraires sont traduites dans plusieurs langue, y inclut le français, comme la pièce que nous allons étudier. Le texte original est intitulé « *Such is life* » et traduit en français comme « *Ainsi va la vie* ». Donc, notre objectif dans ce travail est d'étudier comment Femi Osofisan a présenté les réalités sociopolitiques dans la société Nigériane.

### **Cadre théorique**

Notre étude est axée sur les questions qui relèvent directement des agressions sociopolitiques dans les états africains indépendants car celles-ci apparaissent comme la nouvelle matière romanesque qui

prolonge ce qui semble aujourd'hui une tradition dans la littérature africaine, à savoir l'engagement de l'écrivain et la dénonciation des violences sociopolitiques. Les thèmes abordés par certains écrivains africains inscrivent leurs œuvres dans une problématique dite postcoloniale. Il convient dès lors de s'attarder sur cette notion que Diop juge incontournable quant à l'analyse de la littérature francophone. Elle est apparue dans la critique littéraire francophone ces dernières décennies et était empruntée au contexte anglophone. Sa fiction témoigne des drames sociaux et politiques des Etats des indépendances.

Selon la définition qu'en donnent Asheroft, Griffith et Tiffin, coauteurs de *The empire writes back*, le terme évoque les relations d'agression des territoires dans les empires occidentaux, plus précisément les questions politiques, économiques et culturelles qui ont émergé pendant la colonisation et qui sont aujourd'hui contestées par les auteurs des pays issus de la colonisation. La définition anglophone de Bill Asholf citée par Childs et Williams sous-tend la notion de cultural studies qui évoque une continuité du processus de l'occupation des territoires par les puissances occidentales :

*We use post-colonialism, however, to cover all the culture affected by imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day. This because there's a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process of occupation initiated by the European empirical aggression (3).*

Nous constatons d'emblée la référence faite à une relation bipolaire placée sous le signe de l'agression et de la domination. Nous pourrions ainsi qualifier la violence qui s'exprime dans les œuvres des auteurs africains de la nouvelle génération comme étant une violence postcoloniale. L'étude que nous en faisons postule essentiellement une

analyse de sa fonction littéraire voire politique et ontologique. Le postcolonialisme est en cours de définition dans la critique francophone. Il désigne alors la littérature de l'ensemble des territoires anciennement colonisés à travers un rapport de continuité qui, après l'indépendance, traite des mêmes problématiques que la période coloniale. En littérature, le postcolonialisme réfère une démarche critique convoquée dans les études les plus significatives réalisées ces dernières années. Ainsi Diop s'attarde sur la fonction politique de la violence postcoloniale. Quant à Jean Marc Moura, il lui donne une connotation langagière liée à des situations marquées par le multilinguisme comme fondateur d'une nouvelle logique textuelle. Garnier introduit la notion de territoire comme lecture spatiale de l'œuvre postcoloniale.

En ce qui concerne la fiction littéraire, le terme engage une écriture de la violence à travers trois thèmes majeurs ; la dérision politique, l'audace de l'écriture et les mythes ancestraux revisités comme réponse ontologique à une situation politique marquée par le chaos et le désordre.

### **Analyse du corpus**

La pièce *Ainsi va la vie* d'Osofisan Femi est une création littéraire qui n'est pas toute à faire fictive. C'est une œuvre qui aborde les réalités contemporaines. Les personnages, les scènes et les thèmes témoignent que le dramaturge a tiré son inspiration d'un événement réel qui a témoigné ou qu'il a entendu. Le nom de sa bande dans la pièce 'la bande petronaira' est une caricature de la situation nigériane de son époque car la pièce a été écrite après la période connue comme « Oil Bum » 'miracle pétrolier' qui n'a pas duré. Le nom 'petronaira' est une combinaison de deux mots 'petrol' et 'naira', ce qui signifie l'argent venant de la vente du pétrole.

Après cette chute inattendue de prix du pétrole dans le marché mondiale, le Nigéria s'est retrouvé dans la pénurie et le chagrin, dont



on voit l'introduction du programme d'Ajustement Structurel (P.A.S). Selon le dramaturge dans son mot d'introduction à la pièce :

Programme d'Ajustement Structurel était une formule économique autrefois imposée aux pays en voie de développement par la Banque Mondiale jusqu'au moment où il fut évident que c'était en fait un poison en vue de détruire encore plus les économies déjà affaiblies. Au Nigéria, sous le régime militaire du General Ibrahim Babangida, l'adoption du PAS malgré que beaucoup s'y opposait, a accéléré la chute du pays, de la fabuleuse période 'du miracle pétrolier' à celle de 'la misère pétrolière' pendant laquelle la pauvreté s'est répandue de manière tragique, particulièrement parmi les plus défavorisés (p.5).

C'est cette souffrance introduite par la crise économique qui constitue la première partie de la réalité socioéconomique que nous allons discuter dans ce chapitre.

### **La crise économique**

La crise économique telle qu'elle soit présentée dans la pièce *Ainsi va la vie* de Femi Osofisan est une conséquence issue des décisions des leaders du pays qui ne pensent qu'à s'enrichir. Les choses ont devenues très difficiles jusqu'à ce qu'on ne peut plus le pain quotidien. Chinwe, la servante du Professeur Juokwu a dit à son amant :

Chinwe : Mecri, merci beaucoup ! Je pense que tu es fou !... Je ne veux pas perdre emploi, tu m'entends ! Pas en ces jours de la crise économique ! Je ne peux jamais oublier la souffrance que j'ai enduré avant d'obtenir ce boulot, et je ne veux certainement pas y retourner ! (p.12)

Si c'est difficile de trouver un travail de domestique dans un pays est ainsi, c'est vraiment la souffrance et le chagrin qui vivent les peuples. Lors d'une discussion entre Obioma et Akubundu concernant l'infidélité de leur époux et la possibilité du divorce, on apprend que le pays expérimente une crise économique. Madame Obioma suggère à Monsieur Akubundu de chasser sa femme et puis de rembourser la dot :

Akubundu : Ah... pour moi, nous voyez... la dot de ma femme, je l'ai investie dans l'achat d'action...

Obioma : Et alors ? Vous pouvez les revendre

Akubundu : Pas en ce moment-ci ! Les actions valent présentement moins de soixante pourcent de la somme à laquelle nous les avons achetées ! Les revendre maintenant signifierait subir une perte !... Non ! Je ne peux pas perdre de deux côtés !

Obioma : Donc, vous n'allez pas les vendre ?

Akunundu : Oui Madame, je ne peux pas les vendre ! Je ne vois pas pourquoi je dois perdre de l'argent juste parce que votre époux et ma femme ont passé un bon temps ensemble derrière mon dos ! Cela n'a pas de sens particulièrement dans cette crise économique ! Non et aucun politicien ne ferait une chose pareille.  
(P.139)

On continue à vivre la même expérience de la crise économique au Nigéria. Avec son pétrole et sa démographie galopante ce grand pays d'Afrique de l'ouest est le plus riche du continent en termes de produit intérieur brut, et c'est aussi celui où le logement est le plus cher, le salaire minimum l'un des plus bas. Le Nigeria concentre le plus grand

nombre de pauvres au monde d'après les évaluations de la Banque mondiale. Ce triste record a été aggravé par la récente crise économique. La récession de 2016 consécutive à la chute des cours du baril a fait bondir le chômage, il a triplé en trois ans: un actif sur 4 est aujourd'hui sans emploi. La crise a aussi déchaîné l'inflation, dévorant le pouvoir d'achat des ménages.

A cause de la crise économique, les Professeurs aux universités nigérianes ne sont plus sérieux avec l'enseignement et la recherche. Ils se lancent dans les autres affaires. Quand sa femme le soupçonne pour l'infidélité, la conversion ci-dessous s'est déroulée :

Obioma : (Sarcastique), Oh si, bien sûr que si ! Toi, un professeur

en médecine, t'occupant des 'service commerciaux'

Juokwu : Mais nous avons déjà parlé de tout ceci ! C'est ce que l'éducation est devenue en ces jours du PAS-Service Commerciaux ! Avec nos fonds de la part du gouvernement en déclin, quel autre moyen avons-nous pour pouvoir payer les salaires, ou faire tourner les départements ?

Obioma : Donc, tu es maintenant devenu un vendeur ?

Juokwu : Tout le monde ! C'est la loi du moment ! Sinon nous périssons ! Regarde, je n'ai pas à le répéter ! Nous les professeurs d'université sommes une espèce en voie de disparition ! Nous avons choisi cette carrière quand le gouvernement était plus attentionné, et les enseignants avaient de la dignité. Mais ce n'est plus le cas. Personne ne se soucie plus de la connaissance ou de la noblesse. Ils disent que c'est les jours du PAS, ainsi nous devons tous nous livrer au pillage du butin national ! Les professeurs n'ont plus qu'à brûler leurs bouquins et devenir entrepreneurs. Notre département

le plus précieux à l'université est maintenant 'Les service Commerciaux'. (Pp. 17-18)

On vient d'apprendre que l'école n'a plus de valeur à cause de la crise économique. Les professeurs préfèrent se jeter dans les commerciaux au lieu de mourir dans la famine. Voilà la raison pour laquelle dans nos jours, nous avons les professeurs qui imposent toutes sortes de matérielles pédagogiques qui n'ont rien à faire avec les matières qu'ils enseignent aux étudiants. Ces documents sont vendus très cher aux étudiants. Il y a aussi certains qui prennent de l'argent auprès des étudiants pour leur donner des bonnes notes. On dira que c'est la crise économique qui sera blâmée.

### **La corruption**

Mushtaq H. Khan (1996) dit que la corruption est un acte qui s'écarte des règles de conduite formelles régissant les actes d'une personne en position d'autorité publique pour des motifs personnels tels que la richesse, le pouvoir ou le statut. Sa définition est importante dans la mesure où elle localise et corrige la corruption au sein des structures politiques et économiques sur lesquelles repose la société.

Femi Odekunle (97) nous donne une typologie succincte de la corruption. Il la divise en cinq grandes sous-divisions. C'est évidemment un résumé de la typologie de la corruption de l'Organisation des Nations Unies:

political corruption (political office-holders to retain political power); economic / commercial (businessmen and contractors); administrative / professional (casual and deliberate criminal acts by top administrative and professional personnel); organized corruption (large-scale and complex criminal activity by groups of elites), and working class corruption (artisans, messengers).

Il est évident qu'aucune énumération des techniques de corruption ne peut être complètement exhaustive car les praticiens développent

constamment de nouvelles tactiques et stratégies pour leur entreprise infâme. Mais la liste est suffisante pour notre but ici. La corruption, à tous les niveaux de gouvernance au Nigéria, a atteint un taux si alarmant que les gouvernements successifs l'utilisent et continuent de l'utiliser comme une arme puissante pour accumuler des richesses et fidéliser leurs partisans politiques, et pour victimiser ou embarrasser leurs opposants, ou considérés comme des obstacles à leur ambition politique.

Les autres causes de corruption sont l'état de désintégration sociale provoqué par la guerre civile nigériane, le manque de services sociaux essentiels, le chômage et le sous-emploi, la pression démographique, l'instabilité politique et l'application inéquitable de la loi. Mais quelle que soit la justification donnée pour être corrompue, la corruption restera une aberration et un malaise social, et ses praticiens continueront à être considérés comme corrompus.

La situation actuelle au Nigéria est telle que tout le monde dans la société, en particulier l'artiste, pense qu'il est urgent d'agir, avant qu'il ne soit trop tard. C'est sans doute la raison pour laquelle notre dramaturge, Femi Osofisan dans le corpus dit :

Si certains sont opprimée et d'autres grands, les secrets n'est pas loin. Les sages sont dans les grosses voitures et seuls les fous mangent dans les poubelles ! La pauvreté est collée à vos talons et il n'est pas possible de régler vos factures. Cherchez un parti qui bat campagne, un parti dirigée par un riche fou, vends ta conscience en faisant du bruit et tu seras de ceux qui roulent de grosses voitures. (p.9)

Le dramaturge lamente le taux élevé de la corruption, surtout parmi la classe politique. Ces politiciens roulent en grandes voitures climatisées tandis que les citoyens qui les ont élus meurent de la famine. Ils se serrent la main avec la pauvreté, ils se combattent pour faire des campagnes en faveur des politiciens. La seule solution pour

sortir de cette condition c'est de vendre leur conscience et se lancent dans la corruption comme les politiciens pour pouvoir devenir riche.

Il n'y a pas de travail au pays. On ne peut pas trouver un travail sauf s'il a des contacts. Ce n'est plus une question d'être qualifié, mais de qui tu connais. Notre dramaturge exprime sa colère dans ces mots :

S'il n'y a pas d'emploi nulle part, fais usage de ton cerveau, mon ami et ne désespère pas. Produits un disque, ou écris un livre inutile, dédie-le à un riche fou. Ensuite fais du bruit pour le lancement. Tu as trouvé la réponse à la crise (p.9)

On témoigne aux mêmes réalités dans la société nigériane d'aujourd'hui. Les jeunes ne veulent plus travailler. C'est l'escroquerie (yahoo Yahoo) qui règnent. Les autres se sont lancées dans la musique. Ils chantent toutes sortes de choses, même les choses qui n'ont pas de sens juste pour avoir l'argent. Le pays est vraiment dur.

### **L'infidélité**

L'infidélité rend une femme ou un homme irresponsable parce qu'il n'aura jamais le temps de prendre soin de ses enfants, de s'occuper de son époux/épouse et de faire tâches ménagères à la maison comme faire la cuisine, laver les habilles des enfants, laver ses enfants, fournir les besoins financières de ses enfants. Etc. La victime passe tout son temps hors de la maison avec son amant(e) dans un restaurant, une discothèque, un hôtel, une auberge ou une boîte de nuit. Obioma, nous fait comprendre que :

Obioma : Oh les hommes ont des bouches sucrées. Quand ils veulent faire un 'décollage', ils sont très habiles dans le mensonge et des experts dans la fausseté !

La Bande : Les femmes à la maison dorment clames or l'époux est sorti furtivement pour rencontrer une autre femme. Oh que la vie est belle pour nos hommes.

- Obioma : Oh les mots des époux volent doux. Quand ils veulent prendre un envol, ils connaissent l'art du mensonge pour tromper la vigilance de leurs chères épouses.
- La Bande : Et les filles décollent comme des avions pour convoyer les hommes d'un port à l'autre. Alors l'épouse à la maison est la marionnette des blagues, parce qu'elle ne se plaint jamais.
- Obioma : Mais une épouse a finalement déchiffré le code employé par les hommes pour nous décevoir toutes : nous sommes faits de chairs, 'l'huile de Minuit'...
- La Bande : Le repos de midi, l'Allocation de brousse, la couverture réchauffant, les expressions similaires sont les bijoux, les pseudonymes exotiques dont nos époux font usage envers leurs courtisanes !
- Obioma : Eh bien, tous ces vols doivent prendre fin, les atterrissages, et décollages, quoique ce soit ! Finis les sourires et la confiance. Vous nous avez transformé en amazones ! (PP.25-26)

Lorsqu'une personne est accusée d'infidélité, cette personne réagit toujours mal. Les querelles surgissent et sont souvent suivies de langages acharnés. Juokwu en conseillant son ami Iberibe avoue :

La vie nous réserve parfois des surprises, mon cher ami. Qui peut dire jusqu'à quel point le destin peut nous conduire, une fois il est fixé ? Tu sais la faiblesse de la chair ! Je ne vais pas te mentir, mon ami, mais je suis aussi vulnérable comme tout autre personne ! Oui, je l'avoue entres hommes. Je ne peux m'empêcher, pauvre moi. Seulement que, bien sûr, je prends des précautions minutieuses chaque fois que je suis pris par la tentation (s'approche de lui). D'ailleurs, ceci est un secret, il y a, en ce moment

même, une jeune dame quelque part avec qui je suis...et tu sais ce que je veux dire ! p.59

Voici la confession d'un professeur titulaire, qui admit l'infidélité. Il admet qu'il a une jeune femme, Amaka, mariée à un businessman, Akubundu qui habite à Ikeja (p.60). Ils se sont rencontrés à la cérémonie d'accueil organisée par la direction. La dame l'a invité à un dîner et c'est ainsi que l'infidélité a commencé.

Juowku explique en détail sa technique pour faire endormir sa femme Obioma afin de pouvoir sortir la nuit :

(En tapant la tête) Cerveaux, mon mai ! Des techniques ! Oh tu oublies que je suis un Professeur en médecine ! j'ai ma propre technique, donc plusieurs années d'avance sur les vieilles méthodes de Johnson. Il était juste un amateur, malgré tout son ego. Un primitif ! un crétin ! Oh désolé, ... tu vois, je n'ai pas besoin de m'inquiéter à propos de la vigilance de mon épouse, je la ferai dormir ! Par la merveilleuse méthode de la science ! (p. 60)

Pour réaliser sa merveilleuse méthode de la science, Juokwu fait assoir sa femme Obioma sur le sofa, il la regarde dans ses yeux avec confiance et assurance. Il lui avoue son amour et sa fidélité. Et la femme finit en l'admettant en disant « C'est vrai, Juokwu, tu m'aimes réellement » p.66 et elle sera emportée par le sommeil. C'est la technique de K.O de minuit de Juokwu « p.66 ». Une fois qu'Obioma est emportée par le sommeil, Juokwu sort s'amuser avec sa copine Amaka qui a déjà envoyé une lettre :

Mon chouchou, le clown qui se prend pour mon époux a dû voyager d'urgence cet après-midi pour Kano. Selon lui, pour une réunion avec ses partenaires politiques... je serais donc seule à la maison ce soir...



J'ai demandé aux servantes de prendre congé pour ce soir... Donc, viens. Je t'attendrais à 9 heures ! p.64.

La vie familiale est construite sur la confiance. Mais si cette confiance est ébranlée, voire trahie, si une femme doute son mari, à cause de l'infidélité, il lui sera par la suite très difficile d'avoir foi en quelqu'un d'autre. Tout comme cela entamera sérieusement sa propre confiance en lui. Ce manque de confiance change le comportement et le maniérisme de l'individu.

### **Conclusion**

On sait que le théâtre a été sensible aux réalités sociopolitiques de son époque. Une sorte de tribunal où les problèmes économiques, sociaux, religieux et politiques de la société sont exposés, évalués et jugés pour créer une société meilleure, le théâtre, ce sont les dramaturges et, en fait, tous les artistes de talent sont tous des avant-gardes du changement social dans leurs capacités respectives - garder un œil attentif et une oreille attentive sur les événements de la société. Au Nigéria, par exemple, la quasi-totalité des auteurs dramatiques de la nouvelle génération s'intéressent aux problèmes d'ordre social et politique de notre époque. La pertinence de toute pièce dépend de sa capacité à traiter les problèmes urgents de la société. Par conséquent, le dramaturge radical n'est qu'un répondant à de telles questions d'essence sociale. Si un dramaturge nigérian, écrivant pour un public nigérian aujourd'hui, choisit de jouer à la tribune face aux nombreuses injustices perceptibles dans notre société immédiate, ce ne sera que de l'inhumanité pour l'homme, un péché contre soi-même et contre la nation. C'est peut-être pour cette raison que, selon Achebe, dit que tout écrivain qui tente d'éviter les grandes questions sociales et politiques de son temps finiront par être complètement dénué de pertinence pour sa société.

Femi Osofisan, l'un des pionniers du mouvement radical théâtral au Nigeria, estime que si nous nous prévenions assez souvent et assez douloureusement de la réalité qui nous entourait, si nous refusions de bander nos points sensibles de la vérité, nous pouvons atteindre une prise de conscience nouvelle et positive. Donc à travers ses créations littéraires, il dénonce les maux, la corruption et l'injustice qui détruisent notre vie sociopolitique au Nigéria.

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