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Editor's Note

Join me in celebrating the release of the second issue of the *Journal of African Community and Development* (JACAD). In releasing this issue, JACAD continues to keep its mission of publishing research works that enrich our understanding of past and contemporary Africa.

In this issue, scholars from the following higher institutions of learning in the United States and Nigeria shared their wealth of knowledge in the humanities and social sciences to analyze issues surrounding diaspora politics, security, oral poetry, religion, culture, literature, and colonial legacy: Eastern Kentucky University, Fayetteville State University, Ajayi Crowther University, Babcock University, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, University of Lagos, Imo State University, University of Calabar, Lagos State University of Education, and International College Ibe fun, Odogbolu.

Suitable for scholars, students, policymakers, and general readers eager to understand the issues dominating scholarship on Africa, the eight articles published in this issue will help us better comprehend how politics, culture, history, and religion intersect to shape modern Africa continually. JACAD encourages authors to submit their best research papers for publication in its open-access journal, thereby enjoying a wide readership. JACAD welcomes rigorous research methodologies and requires manuscripts that make original and compelling contributions to knowledge, with a focus on African studies from the precolonial period.

Many thanks to JACAD's editorial board, the editorial assistant, authors, external reviewers, and the Patience and Claudius Anyanwu Foundation for making this publication possible. We will continue to expect their support in the years ahead.

Ogechi E. Anyanwu

Richmond, Kentucky, USA.

Les Combattants: The Origins of a Congolese Diaspora Political Protest

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ABSTRACT: *Joseph Kabila's ascension to the presidency of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2001, following the assassination of his father, Laurent Kabila, coincided with an uptick in political activism among the Congolese diaspora in Western Europe and North America. Between 2004 and 2018, Congolese diaspora political groups and personalities staunchly opposed Joseph Kabila's regime through marches, petitions, boycotts, and even physical aggression against Congolese officials and Kabila's supporters. Over time, these various Congolese diaspora protest groups became known as "Les Combattants". This article examines how the recent political history of DRC led to the emergence of Les Combattants in the Congolese diaspora and the types of claims Les Combattants advanced against the Congolese state and the international community. Considering their geographic spread (in Western Europe and North America), the scope of their claims, and the longevity of their protest, this paper argues that Les Combattants' political resistance signaled a fundamental shift in the way Congolese diaspora political activists interact with the Congolese state.*

KEYWORDS: *Congolese Politics, African Diasporas, Political Resistance, Diaspora Political Mobilization*

INTRODUCTION

Often, research about the Congo overlooks the role the Congolese diaspora plays in Congolese politics. The increase in African Diasporas' political activism since the end of the Cold War suggests that studying African diasporas may reveal pertinent trends in African politics. This paper examines Les Combattants, a Congolese diaspora political resistance movement that emerged in the early 2000s, opposing President Joseph Kabila. Among other arguments, this paper asserts that not only does *Les Combattants'* activism shed light on contemporary Congolese politics, but more importantly, the intensity of *Les Combattants* activism is a relatively new phenomenon in Congolese diaspora politics.

Existing works have addressed how Congolese diasporas remember home (Kabwe and Segatti 2004); how they integrate into host countries (Garbin and Godin, 2013); and how they contribute to development projects in the Congo (Tshibambe, 2007). Garbin and Godin (2013), for example, argue that Congolese diaspora religious affiliations entrench religious differences and contribute to the fragmentation of Congolese diasporic spaces in the United Kingdom and in Belgium. The pertinence of Garbin and Godin's findings is that Congolese diaspora religious groups operate simultaneously as integrating and differentiating mechanisms. However, Garbin and Godin do not tell us whether and how religious affiliations contribute to the formulation of political actions or whether/how religious differences are mitigated or instrumentalized for unified political actions in the Congolese diaspora.

Other researchers have investigated Congolese diasporas' political and economic interactions with Congo. Tshibambe (2007) argues that by 2000, Congolese diasporas

had become more politically involved. Although Tshibambe explains that political support or opposition to the government has become more evident, he does not explain how Congolese diaspora actors construct and sustain a discourse of political engagement. Like Garbin and Godin (2013), Kabwe and Segatti (2004) find paradoxical perceptions of home in the Congolese diasporas. They argue that the notion of home conveys both a sense of immediacy and latency. Although Kabwe and Segatti suggest that there is an interpretive repertoire from which Congolese diasporas construct reality, they do not expound on how that constructed reality translates into political engagement. If the notion of home is ambivalent as Kabwe and Segatti argue, how do Congolese diasporas stabilize differences in their notions of home to build a potentially unifying political discourse?

Available Congolese literature does not satisfactorily inform us about the content of the Congolese diasporas' political engagement. We are not sufficiently informed on the nature of negotiations between different sections of the Congolese diaspora in the development of political actions. We also do not understand the type of political gains Congolese diaspora leaders seek. Moreover, Congolese literature does not sufficiently tell us how and whether host countries influence the diasporic action, or whether and how political parties in the Congo instrumentalize the Congolese diaspora. This article fills the gap by examining the origins of *Les Combattants'* political engagement to discern whether their discourse was primarily a displacement of Congolese politics or whether it indicated shifts in the Congolese diaspora political landscape.

Over the last decade, African diaspora groups have protested presidential electoral outcomes in the Gambia (Stohlman, 2011), Rwanda (Jambo ASBL, 2010), and Zimbabwe (Free and Fair Zimbabwe Elections, 2013). Still, scholars have not yet sufficiently examined the contents of these diasporic contentious political interactions. In studying *Les Combattants*, this paper wishes to clarify how Congolese diaspora political groups interacted with the Congo during Joseph Kabila's presidency (between 2001 and 2018). As a Congolese diaspora protest movement, *Les Combattants* stand out mainly because of the longevity of their protest and the spread of their movement across many geographic regions in Western Europe and North America (Boisselet, 2013).

Examining how Congolese at home and abroad attempt to influence politics is essential. Since the 1990s, socio-political instabilities (Stearns, 2022), the massive presence of Rwandan refugees in eastern Congo in 1994 (Autessere, 2010), the recurrent politico-military involvement of Rwanda and Uganda (Stearns, 2011), Western mining companies' interests in the Congo (Montague, 2002), and multiple Congolese insurgency movements (Rosen, 2012) have dramatically transformed the Congolese political landscape. It is, therefore, essential to examine *Les Combattants'* claims and the types of proposals they advance.

The study of any Congolese diaspora political group requires a clear understanding of the country's political history and the context in which the group emerged. For that

purpose, this paper outlines a brief historical background of Congolese migration to the West and retraces the origins of *Les Combattants*.

The author's interest in this topic emerged during a trip to Belgium in November 2011. The trip coincided with a riot over the 2011 Congolese presidential election; The author's observations of the riots inform parts of this paper. Later, between 2015 and 2018, the author conducted phone, Skype, WhatsApp, and in-person interviews with Congolese diaspora members in the United States, Canada, England, France, and Belgium. Thirty Congolese diaspora participants were interviewed, among whom twenty self-identified as members of *Les Combattants*. All participants were eighteen or older, and only five interviewees were females; the rest were males. Considering the risk Congolese dissidents faced under President Joseph Kabila's regime, participants were selected through snowball sampling, and pseudo-first names were used to protect their identities. However, when authorized, participants' full legal names were used.

CONGOLESE DIASPORAS AND *LES COMBATTANTS*: A RIOT IN BRUSSELS

I am a *combattante* résistante...I am resisting against people who came and told us; "we have come to liberate you from Mobutu's dictatorship." But today, they have become the destroyers of their [own] goal (Tina, a self-identified *Combattante* from Brussels, Belgium).¹

On the evening of December 16, 2011, Belgian police stormed the streets of Matongé, a predominantly African quarter in downtown Brussels. Coincidentally, I was visiting friends and relatives in Brussels when protests over the 2011 Congolese presidential elections turned into a full-blown riot. Rioters loitered on the streets and overturned cars; many among the rioters were arrested that evening.

Belgium, being a democratic country, it was not unusual for discontented groups to take their frustration to the streets. This riot was particularly remarkable; it began as a protest against the 2011 Congolese presidential elections. Furthermore, the riot involved Congolese immigrants who did not and could not vote in Congolese elections. Many protesters might have been *sans papiers* (undocumented), as they are known in France and Belgium (Chrisafis, 2010). Given the precarious existence of undocumented African immigrants in Europe, it was intriguing that some undocumented Congolese would brazenly break the law.

Amid the chaos, "rioters" threw eggs, water bottles, and soda cans at the police. Police retorted with water cannons, pepper spray, baton swings, and handcuffing maneuvers while arresting rioters. Although I had been following *Les Combattants* since 2009, this was my first opportunity to see them in action. Though *Les Combattants'*

¹ Interview with the author, May 18, 2017. Tina was once a political activist in the Congo.

protest was shocking, contentious politics were not a novelty in the history of diasporas. Diverse diaspora organizations have long utilized Western countries as a platform for political resistance against their home countries. In the 1980s for example, Venezuelan, Colombian, and other South American diasporas brought their political struggle to the American public. During the Apartheid regime, South African political opposition leaders took their battle to the streets of London and New York (Lichtenstein, 2007). For a long time, Haitian political dissidents used their position in exile to mobilize support from the US, France, and Canada.

Les Combattants' protest in December 2011 was particularly remarkable because it was the first time in the history of the Congo that diaspora activism reached such intensity. Never had members of the Congolese diaspora so blatantly challenged their government. To be sure, in the 1960s, exiled Congolese political dissidents voiced grievances against the Congolese government. For instance, in the 1960s and 1970s, a small number of Congolese lived in Belgium, and it was relatively easy for the Congolese government to track, co-opt, or assassinate dissidents. One memorable case involved the death of Pierre Kanyonga in Brussels in 1978 (Le Phare, 2013). In Brussels, Kanyonga co-founded the dissident political party Le Mouvement D'Action Pour La Résurrection du Congo (The Movement of Action for the Resurrection of the Congo, or MARC). In August 1978, ninety-one MARC leaders and associates were found guilty of treason by the Congolese government. Many among them were executed (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 1978). Pierre Kanyonga and other MARC's associates lived abroad and were condemned in absentia. Coincidentally, a few weeks after his condemnation, Pierre Kanyonga was found dead in Liege, Belgium, killed by a gunshot to the head. The Belgian authorities concluded that Kanyonga had died by accident (The New York Times, 1978); the coincidence was too strong for skeptics to believe the official account.

Moreover, earlier Congolese diaspora political resistance was a mere extension of Congolese domestic politics, fomented by leading Congolese political activists like Kanyonga. Often, those early Congolese diaspora political resistance movements wound down once their leader lost relevance due to cooptation, threats, or assassination. In comparison to earlier Congolese diaspora political resistance, *Les Combattants* stand out particularly due to the longevity, intensity, and geographic spread of their activism. Could *Les Combattants'* resistance indicate fundamental shifts in the Congolese diaspora's political interactions with the Congo?

THE CONGOLESE DIASPORA AND THE ORIGINS OF *LES COMBATTANTS*

From my observation of the December 2011 riot in Brussels, it appeared that *Les Combattants* spoke different Congolese languages and came from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Later, through research and observations of *Les Combattants'* online activism, I found that some of the rioters had been living in Europe since the 1970s and 1980s. In contrast, others defected from Kabila's government. The diversity of Congolese

involved in protests against Kabila's 2011 reelection in Brussels suggested that a strong discourse cemented a sense of collective purpose. What was the content of that discourse? How did *Les Combattants* manage to collapse internal disparities between Congolese groups to establish categorical differences or equivalences between them and the Congolese government? While these questions are important, a serious examination of *Les Combattants'* discourse requires that we consider the socio-historical context that led *Les Combattants* and other Congolese to emigrate to the West in the first place.

Like other African countries, the Congo's post-independence era is characterized by profound sequences of disenchantment (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002), economic instability (Nest, Grignon, and Kisangani, 2008), institutional failure (Packham, 1998), and armed conflicts (Turner, 2007). In the wake of the 1960s independence movements, many disfranchised African political actors, intellectuals, businesspeople, artists, and military officers left their countries. The peculiarity of the Congo is that in each decade following independence, successive political and economic turmoil pushed massive numbers of Congolese out of the country.

For instance, rebellions and socio-economic chaos characterized the 1960s. The brutal assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba unleashed waves of political violence and forced many Congolese into exile. The political uncertainties of the 1960s carried over to the 1970s. Political repression and poor economic policies of the 1970s forced Congolese to fend for themselves in neighboring countries, Western Europe, and North America. Consequently, squeezed between political oppression, inefficient economic policies, and armed conflicts, Congolese civilians and political dissidents have been leaving the country since the 1960s.

By the beginning of the 1980s, the remnants of the 1960s rebel movements, including Laurent Kabila, reorganized and attacked a few territories in the peripheral eastern regions of the Congo (Stearns, 2011). Unable to threaten the state, the 1980s insurgent groups gave Mobutu's regime even more leverage to hold on to power. In addition, the 1980s' structural adjustment policies, pushed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, imposed austerity measures on developing countries and encouraged even more emigration.

The end of the Cold War in 1989 led to an upsurge in democratic movements across African countries, coinciding with unprecedented regional instability and protracted armed conflicts. We recall that the 1990s was the decade of the Rwandan Genocide, the Burundian, Liberian, and Sierra Leonean civil wars, and the Congolese civil wars (dubbed the "African World War"). In the specific case of the Congo, the 1990s began with a series of popular uprisings in 1991 and 1992, during which large cities, including Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, and Kisangani (the three largest cities in the DRC), were looted.

The unstable economic and political environment of the 1980s paved the way for the 1996 rebellion that propelled Laurent Kabila to power. The year 1997 marked the end of thirty-two years of President Mobutu's repressive regime and the beginning of

generalized political violence in Congo. By the 2000s, the Congo had become a theater of multiple insurgencies involving Angolan, Ugandan, Rwandan, and Burundian troops, among others. Between 1998 and 2008, about 5.4 million Congolese died because of armed conflicts (IRC, 2008). In 2015, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that over 467,000 Congolese lived in refugee camps outside of the Congo (UNHCR, 2015). Due to multiple waves of political and economic instability from the 1960s to the 2000s, Congolese populations have felt a constant push and pull to leave the country: poor economic policies, political repression, protracted armed conflicts, and the promise of a better future abroad have led many Congolese to leave the country. While most Africans and Congolese who emigrate settle in other African countries, by the mid-2010s, over 150,000 Congolese had settled in Western Countries (Flahaux and Schoumaker, 2016). Over the years, Congolese have established diaspora networks in Europe, North America, and even Australia.

THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE, LAURENT KABILA, JOSEPH KABILA, AND *LES COMBATTANTS*

Do you know why I left the Congo? I left the Congo because after traveling in different parts of Congo, it occurred to me that the Congo no longer belongs to us. An observation of the people who occupy the highest positions in the country will reveal that those who are leading us are, for the most part Rwandans and Ugandans; their subordinates are Congolese (Simon, a *Combattant*, living in Brussels, Belgium)².

As a group of Congolese living abroad, *Les Combattants'* attempt to influence Congolese domestic politics could only be achieved through globalization tools and transnational networks. An examination of available literature and online resources, as well as interviews with some of *Les Combattants* and other Congolese in the US, Canada, France, and Belgium, suggests that many among *Les Combattants* left the Congo in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s³. The recent history of the Congo indicates that socio-political unraveling, spillovers of regional conflicts (especially the 1994 Rwandan genocide), outcomes of the 1980s' structural adjustment, and international political shifts following the end of the Cold War pushed massive numbers of Congolese out of the country. And because many African countries experienced domestic socio-political instability in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, they were unable to integrate all African immigrants and

² Telephone interview with the author, January 19, 2017.

³ Personal communication with *Les Combattants* members between, August 2015 and May 2018.

refugees into their societies effectively. Thus, instead of settling in African countries, many Africans, including Congolese, migrated to the West as political exiles, economic migrants, and resettled refugees.

Considering persistent instabilities in the recent history of Congo, it is fair to suggest that Congolese who migrated to the West since the 1960s, including *Les Combattants*, are largely conflict-induced diasporas. They are comprised of three main categories: 1) war victims, 2) economic refugees, and 3) political exiles. Hence, it is fitting to suggest that *Les Combattants* harbored grievances towards the Congolese state. Given the relatively low socio-political and economic cost of challenging repressive regimes from abroad, *Les Combattants* and other Congolese in the diaspora had the leverage to criticize President Kabila than Congolese who lived in Congo. For this reason, Congolese diaspora political entrepreneurs became even more vocal and defiant after the assassination of Laurent-Desire Kabila in 2001 and the subsequent inauguration of Joseph Kabila as president.

There is a through line between the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the Congolese 1996 rebellion, the assassination of Laurent Kabila, the ascension of Joseph Kabila to power, and the rise of *Les Combattants*. Scholars of the African Great Lakes region, such as Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002) and Stearn (2011), have argued that Rwanda and Uganda organized and funded the 1996 Congolese rebellion. As a strategy to address threats coming from Rwandan Hutu refugees based in Eastern Congo, Rwanda and Uganda assembled groupings of Congolese opposition and insurgent leaders, including Laurent Kabila, to form the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (AFDL). In October 1996, Rwanda, Uganda, and the AFDL attacked the Congo and began to dismantle Rwandan refugee camps in eastern Congo.

Though most Congolese were hopeful when the AFDL took power in May 1997, many resented the overwhelming presence of Rwandan and Ugandan troops in Congo. In August 1998, thirteen months after the ousting of President Mobutu, Rwanda and Uganda's alliance with AFDL fell apart, and the second Congolese civil war began. This time, however, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Chad aligned with Congo, while Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi sided with Congolese insurgent groups. The conflict was so confusing that in 2000, Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers fought each other in the town of Kisangani for six days. The patterns of alliance formation and defection among Congolese insurgent groups puzzled observers. Even more puzzling, on January 16, 2001, Laurent Kabila was assassinated in his palace in Kinshasa, allegedly by Rashidi Kasereka, his bodyguard. Kasereka was shot dead on the spot.

Joseph Kabila Becomes President in 2001

"...We are making the case that our country is occupied."⁴

Following Laurent Kabila's assassination in 2001, Joseph Kabila assumed power secretly. Joseph Kabila's ascendance to power brought some hope for peace negotiations (Quiring, 2003, and Herman and Peterson, 2010). At the time of Laurent Kabila's assassination, Joseph Kabila was the commander of the Congolese Terrestrial Forces. He had worked with his father since the early days of the 1996 rebellion and was familiar with the Ugandan and the Rwandan sides of the conflict. Unfortunately, Joseph Kabila's ascent to power did not change the tide in the Congolese crisis: millions of Congolese continued to be killed and displaced while local, national, and regional armed groups engaged in protracted armed conflicts (Autesserre, 2012). In addition, the United Nations Mission in the Congo (MONUC), which had been entrusted with overseeing and preserving peacekeeping operations since 1999, was failing (Khadiagala, 2006). On multiple occasions in northeastern Congo, for example, in cities such as Kisangani, Bunia, Goma, and Bukavu, Congolese people continued to be displaced or killed despite the MONUC peacekeepers' presence (Nest and Kisangani, 2008, and Stearns, 2011).

When Joseph Kabila ascended to power in 2001, three competing politico-military forces controlled the Congolese territory.⁵ The government, led by Joseph Kabila, controlled the south and a large part of the west. Two insurgent groups controlled the rest of the country: the Congolese Rally for Democracy-National (RCD-National) controlled the east, and the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Liberation Movement (RCD-ML), led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, controlled the north-east. Although Rwanda and Uganda were actively involved in the conflict, no severe international sanctions were levied against them. This is, for instance, how Remy, a 57-year-old *Combattante* from

⁴ Author's Skype conversation with Nicholas, a *Combattant* from Brussels, Belgium. January 19, 2017.

⁵ By 2001, the Congo experienced a plethora of insurgent movements. For instance in the north-east, in the Bunia area alone, Human Rights Watch (2005) reported that there were at least seven main armed groups, including the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), the National and Integrationist Front (FNI), the People's Armed Forces of Congo (FAPC), the Party for Unity and Safeguard for the Integrity of Congo (PUSIC), the Patriotic Forces Ituri (FRPI), the Congolese Rally for Democracy-National (RCD-National), and the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Liberation Movement (RCD-ML). Although Rwanda, Uganda, and even Kabila's government backed many of these armed factions (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002), such a rapid proliferation of insurgencies and their disastrous human and environmental implications increased indignation in Congolese diaspora communities.

Richmond, Virginia, illustrates *Les Combattants'* frustrations with the United States in relation to Rwanda's role in Congo.

The Clintons [President Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton] have contributed to the trouble in Congo. They have assisted Kagame and Museveni to impose a foreign power in the country. Congolese are not stupid; we know what is going on.⁶

Robert Mbelo, a *Combattant* from London, England, expressed a similar viewpoint when he told me during a Skype interview:

Rwandans are in the Congo for the profit of Western multinationals. They [Western multinationals] are the ones who are behind Rwandans... They [Rwandans] invaded us for no other reasons but for our natural resources.⁷

On the contrary, Uganda, particularly Rwanda, was acclaimed as a development and human rights model in the region. In 2009, President Paul Kagame received the Global Citizen Award from the Bill Clinton Foundation for his achievements in securing peace and economic progress (Nambi, 2009). Hence, when Joseph Kabila took power in 2001, paradoxes in domestic, regional, and international affairs weakened further prospects for peace and stability in Congo.

Joseph Kabila's undemocratic access to power and the international recognition and support he garnered at the beginning of his administration demonstrated that in Congo, the legitimacy of the presidency depended on external political arrangements beyond the will of the Congolese people. The apparent readiness with which Joseph Kabila was initially accepted in the West (see Quiring, 2003) led many Congolese in the diaspora to believe that there was an international conspiracy that gave Rwanda and Uganda a "green light" to invade, occupy, and exploit the Congo (Carayanis, 2006 and Bolya, 2012). As thousands of Congolese were killed, internally dispersed, or scattered around in refugee camps, rebel movements sponsored by Rwanda continued to operate in eastern Congo (Reyntjens, 2004). And powerful international actors continued to suppress evidence that associated Rwanda with killings in the Congo (Demart and

⁶ Phone interview with the author, June 3, 2017. Remy participated in conferences and different meetings organized by *Les Combattants* and other Congolese diaspora groups in Washington, D.C.

⁷ Personal communications with the author, June-September 2017. Robert Mbelo is a member of the Congolese diaspora living in London. Mbelo was a diplomat under Mobutu for many years. He self-identifies as a *Combattant*. He has published many of his opinions on different online outlets. Mbelo authorized the author to quote him on record.

Bodeux, 2013, and BBC, 2014). Meanwhile, Rwanda became the model of development and political reform in the region. Aware of this international schizophrenia, by the mid-2000s, Congolese diaspora groups took it to the streets of London, Paris, Washington, D.C., and Brussels to bring attention to the Congolese crisis and to protest the Congolese government and the international community's unwillingness to sanction Uganda and Rwanda.

By 2004, Congolese diaspora organizations and protest groups in Belgium, France, and England began adopting similar slogans and claims. Initially, different names were associated with Congolese diaspora protests, including *Bana Kongo* ("Congo's children" in Lingala), *Congolais Résistants* (Congolese Resisters), and *Congolais Patriotes* (Congolese Patriots). With time, *Les Combattants* became a prominent umbrella, representing Congolese diaspora groups protesting against Joseph Kabila and armed conflicts in the Congo (Bolya, 2012 and Demart and Bodeux, 2013).

Also, at the beginning of the 2000s, Honoré Ngbanda, an exiled Mobutu's official, began to write against Rwanda's "occupation" of Congo. Ngbanda (2004) argued that the Congo was under occupation and in danger of balkanization. In addition, Ngbanda and other Congolese in the diaspora claimed that Rwanda had expansionist interests in Congo (Bofala, 2017) rather than address security threats posed by Rwandan rebels⁸ Furthermore, many among the Congolese diaspora alleged that the international community and multinational mining companies condoned the aggression of the Congo by Rwanda and Uganda. In June 2005, the Alliance des Patriotes Pour La Refondation du Congo (the Alliance of Patriots for the Re-foundation of the Congo or APARECO)⁹ was founded in France under the leadership of Ngbanda. Very quickly, APARECO became an important voice for Congolese diaspora political activists, including *Les Combattants*.

Thus, *Les Combattants* emerged as a contestation against the Congolese government during Joseph Kabila's presidency (Boibhouvier, 2012). It is less likely that their political resistance would have evolved as it did had Joseph Kabila lost the 2006 presidential race. The outcomes of the 2006 presidential election emboldened the *Les Combattants* movement. Amid outcries of electoral irregularities, Joseph Kabila won the presidency. At the same time, Jean-Pierre Bemba, "*mwana mboka*" ("the son of the soil,"

⁸ The official reason as to why Rwanda and Uganda invaded the Congo in 1996 was the presence of Hutu Interahamwe in eastern Congo. Through the years, the Rwandan government has justified its military involvements in the Congo as an attempt to stop and prevent Hutu rebels' attacks from eastern Congo.

⁹ Since 2005, APARECO has spread in many parts of Europe, the US and even South Africa.

in Lingala)¹⁰ lost the elections despite his popularity, especially in Kinshasa (Carayanis, 2008). Although many international observers acknowledged multiple instances of electoral irregularities in 2006, Kabila found strong support in France, England, England, and Belgium (Stearns, 2011). By this time, many Congolese in the diaspora began questioning Kabila's citizenship. They argued that Kabila was a Rwandan subject at the services of Paul Kagame (Kazadi, 2015). Ultimately, the allegations of rigged presidential elections, the international silence about Rwanda and Uganda's recurrent military involvements in Congo, and the claim that Kabila was not a Congolese citizen helped to push *Les Combattants'* claims toward nationalistic fringes.

After losing his presidential bid, Jean-Pierre Bemba became a senator. However, Bemba's popularity and proven ability to organize an armed insurgency threatened the fragile Congolese peace. Coincidentally, in 2008, the International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted and arrested Jean-Pierre Bemba under the allegations that his troops had committed war crimes in the Central African Republic between 2002 and 2003. Bemba's troops had been assisting the crumbling regime of Ange-Félix Patassé in his fight against François Bozizé's insurgency. Eventually, Bozizé's insurgency prevailed and deposed Patassé while Bemba's troops returned home to fight their own battles.

Many Congolese in the diaspora were suspicious of the swiftness with which the ICC arrested Bemba. For instance, Robert Mbelo, the former diplomat turned *Combattant*, explained during a Skype conversation, "Bemba's arrest was illegal since he was a sitting senator whose diplomatic immunity was never lifted." Moreover, it seemed to *Les Combattants* and other observers that the ICC was selectively picking and choosing amongst so-called war criminals (mainly in Africa) yet giving a free pass to other suspects of war crimes such as Paul Kagame and the Rwandan Patriotic Front officials (see Carayanis, 2008).

ÉTIENNE TSHISEKEDI AND THE 2011 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

In 2011 we were expecting and hoping that Tshisekedi would win the elections, but they stole it from us. Kabila violated the constitution. Étienne Tshisekedi was the real winner...the elections were rigged, that is why Tshisekedi opposed the results (Fiston, a *Combattant*, residing in Baltimore, Maryland)¹¹.

¹⁰ In the 2006 presidential elections, Congolese who opposed Joseph Kabila referred to Jean-Pierre Bemba as "*mwana mboka*" as a way of questioning Kabila's citizenship and disqualifying his bid for the presidency.

¹¹ Interview with the author, March 28, 2016. A trained statistician, Fiston identifies as a *Combattant*, he left the Congo in 1998. Fiston lives now in Baltimore. MD.

To effectively appraise *Les Combattants'* post-electoral protest in 2011, we need to understand the role Étienne Tshisekedi played in Congolese politics. A long-time politician, in 1980 Tshisekedi co-founded the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), an opposition political party. Between the 1980s and 1990s, Tshisekedi became the main figure of the Congolese political opposition, but he also embodied the contradictions of Congolese politics. Tshisekedi was propelled into Congolese national politics in the early 1960s when Mobutu dissolved the government and placed *Le College des Commissaires Généraux*, a 35 members group, in charge of the country, as a step toward an eventual coup d'état. As one of the *Commissaires Généraux*, Tshisekedi was the Assistant *Commissaire Général* for the Justice Department. Being the second-highest ranking member of the Justice Department, Tshisekedi might have been involved in the arrest of Prime Minister Patrice Emery Lumumba (see Bustin, 2002; Mpisi, 2008; and De Witte, 2000). When Mobutu finally took power in 1965, Tshisekedi was an elected representative of the district of Kabinda in East Kasai. Between 1965 and 1980, Tshisekedi occupied diverse functions in Mobutu's regime: including General Director for the National School of Law, Minister of Interior, General Prosecutor, and Vice President of the National Assembly. In 1980, Tshisekedi and twelve other Congolese parliamentarians (ever since remembered as *Les Treize Parlementaires* in Congolese political history) wrote an open letter to Mobutu. *Les Treize Parlementaires* criticized Mobutu's regime and demanded that Zairian politics be opened to democratic participation (Mpunga, 2007 and Cros, 2017).

Following *Les Treize Parlementaires'* open letter to President Mobutu, Tshisekedi re-entered Congolese politics as a defender of democracy. Between 1980 and 1990, the UDPS challenged the only authorized political party, the Popular Revolutionary Movement (MPR). Despite many arrests and abuses Tshisekedi endured under Mobutu, the UDPS continued to operate covertly and overtly until Laurent Kabila took power on May 17, 1997.

Upon Laurent Kabila's ascent to power, Tshisekedi had nothing to oppose or contest, chiefly because Kabila had no administrative record to criticize. A year after the takeover, Laurent Kabila's coalition with Paul Kagame and Yoweri Museveni fell apart. Now Kabila had to fight enemies who were once his trusted backers. As Kabila secured military help from Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Libya, and Chad to fight the new Rwanda-Uganda-supported insurgencies at the beginning of the second Congolese civil war in 1998, Tshisekedi lost political relevance. Following the assassination of Laurent Kabila in 2001 and the subsequent bitter transition under Joseph Kabila, the Congo held a presidential election in 2006. Tshisekedi protested the 2006 presidential election and asked Congolese not to vote, citing allegations that the electoral processes were rigged (see Trefon 2011 and Cranayis, 2010). In 2006, amid controversial results, Kabila was elected president, defeating Jean-Pierre Bemba in the runoff.

CONCLUSION

Les Combattants' protests emerged as a response to President Kabila's government. By 2004, Congolese communities in London, Brussels, Paris, Montreal, Washington D.C., and elsewhere in the West began to denounce the Congolese government, Rwanda's activities in Congo, and the silence of the international community. However, operating from multiple Western countries and using various strategies, *Les Combattants* remained an amalgam of decentralized political networks (Cros, 2013). Though *Les Combattants'* ire was primarily directed at Joseph Kabila, this unprecedented political mobilization of Congolese in the Diasporas signaled important shifts in the interactions between the Congolese state and its diasporas. This shift is expressed when Fedo¹², a *Combattant* from Louisville, Kentucky, explained in February 2016:

I think the time has come. Whether Kabila leaves today or tomorrow, we are on a good trajectory; woe to whoever comes after Kabila. After Mobutu, we did not have this kind of [political] consciousness; all we wanted was for Mobutu to go. When Mobutu left, we stumbled.¹³

After everything we have seen in the last twenty years, now this is when the true post-Mobutu era begins. *Les Combattants'* strategies, including online activism, protests (Ilunga, 2013), lobbying (Demont, 2008), intimidation of Congolese officials and Kabila's sympathizers (France 24, 2012), as well as the boycotts of Congolese musicians in European venues (Ngandu, 2012), tell us that Congolese diaspora groups have found multiple mechanisms by which to challenge the Congolese state, mobilize Congolese abroad, and appeal to the goodwill of Western countries. If efficiently organized, Congolese diaspora activists could pressure the international community and successfully place policy demands on the Congolese government. The reverse is also possible. *Les Combattants'* political resistance shows that with some political will, it may be possible for the Congolese government to utilize Congolese diaspora activists as foreign policy instruments. Of course, this will require the Congolese state to mend its relationship with its diaspora.

Indeed, further research is needed to elucidate how these changes may impact future relations between the Congolese state and its diaspora. In fact, since the election of Félix Tshisekedi in 2018, Congolese diaspora political activists have continued to criticize the Congolese government, instability in eastern regions, and Rwanda's involvement in Congo. This may suggest that political activism within the Congolese diaspora will persist in the foreseeable future.

¹² Interview with the author, February 5, 2016.

¹³ Fedo refers to the idea that Laurent Kabila did not ascend to power by the will of the Congolese people.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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Colonial Legacy and Environmental Degradation in Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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ABSTRACT: *Over the years, Africa has been plagued by the effects of the atrocious impacts of colonialism on humans and the environment. This paper analyses how environmental degradation and colonial heritage themes are interwoven in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Nnedi Okorafor's Who Fears Death. These works highlight the enormous consequences of colonialism on African communities and their ecosystems despite their different chronological and cultural settings. Achebe's Things Fall Apart provides a historical perspective on how colonial intervention disrupted indigenous customs and ecological equilibrium. On the other hand, Okorafor's Who Fears Death explores the long-term effects of environmental degradation and colonial exploitation by projecting these themes into a hypothetical future. This article highlights the ongoing impact of colonialism on African landscapes and communities through a comparative analysis of these works, underscoring the need for a critical reevaluation of historical narratives and contemporary environmental policy. The paper adopted the Postcolonial Ecocriticism Theory, propounded by Graham Tuffin, to examine the intersection between colonialism, environment, and culture. The selected texts were subjected to critical, qualitative analysis, highlighting the impacts of colonialism on the environment and humans. The paper reveals how environmental degradation caused by colonialism influences people's social realities in Africa. Thus, the negative consequences of colonial legacies on the environment can be avoided when adequate measures are taken to promote environmental sustainability.*

KEYWORDS: *Colonial legacy, Environmental degradation, Postcolonial Ecocriticism.*

INTRODUCTION

The colonial legacy and its environmental impacts have become increasingly critical issues in Africa, necessitating urgent attention. Several factors contributed to the colonization of Africa by European powers, with one of the primary drivers being the Industrial Revolution. This period saw a rapid increase in production, outpacing the agricultural sector's ability to meet the growing demand for raw materials. Chinweizu (1978) highlights that Europe's embrace of industrial capitalism significantly heightened its demand for global resources. To meet these needs, European powers exploited African labor, often through coercive means, including forced labor. This exploitation not only supported European industries but also played a crucial role in generating wealth for colonial powers at the expense of African societies. In his seminal work *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), Walter Rodney provides a comprehensive historical analysis of Africa's pre-colonial and colonial periods, exploring how colonial powers drove economic exploitation and underdevelopment. Rodney argues that colonialism disrupted social structures, creating hierarchies that favored certain ethnic or racial groups.

European cultural influences were imposed, resulting in a profound clash between traditional African practices and Western values. Similarly, in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Chinua Achebe examined the disruptive consequences of colonialism on African societies, highlighting the cultural conflict between indigenous traditions and European imperialism. Colonialism's effects were not limited to the socio-economic and cultural realms; it also had profound psychological impacts.

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Frantz Fanon critically analyzed the psychological and social consequences of colonialism in Africa, underscoring its dehumanizing effects on both colonizers and the colonized. These psychological scars and other colonial legacies continue to influence the postcolonial era. In addition to social and psychological impacts, colonialism has left lasting environmental consequences. The colonial exploitation of Africa's resources has contributed to contemporary issues such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, and ecological degradation. Ecological degradation, defined by Lester Brown (2003) as the depletion and deterioration of natural resources—including soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and water scarcity—is often a result of human activities and unsustainable development. Colonial methods of exploitation, such as infrastructure development, mining, deforestation, and monoculture, have had long-term environmental impacts in Africa.

Though colonialists may not have intentionally sought to cause environmental damage, the effects of their actions cannot be dismissed. As Rob Nixon argues in *Slow Violence* (2011), even well-meaning ecological preservation efforts by Western environmentalists have sometimes inadvertently harmed native ecosystems. The environmental challenges Africa faces today can, therefore, be traced back to the legacies of colonialism.

This paper employs postcolonial ecocriticism as a subfield within ecocriticism, drawing on Rob Nixon's principles of postcolonial ecocriticism. In his influential work *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), Nixon highlights the environmental challenges marginalized communities face, particularly in the Global South. He discusses the importance of environmental justice and the need to decolonize environmental thought, emphasizing that the impacts of environmental degradation and ecological violence are often slow, invisible, and disproportionately borne by vulnerable populations. Nixon calls for greater visibility of these issues in academic and social discourse.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Postcolonial ecocriticism emerged as a theoretical framework in the 20th century at the intersection of postcolonial studies and environmental literature. Its origins can be traced back to the global environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s, when scholars from formerly colonized nations began to publish works examining the enduring effects of colonialism. They developed critical analyses of the history, culture, literature, and discourse surrounding imperial powers, often European. This emerging field combines postcolonialism's critique of colonial regimes and transnational capitalism with ecocriticism's focus on the environment, land, and exploitation. Both fields are concerned with how social realities, such as colonialism, can be addressed and transformed through

literary and cultural criticism as fields rooted in the humanities and political activism. Postcolonialism and ecocriticism are centrally concerned with the material and social realities of their respective subjects. Postcolonial thinkers argue that human social issues must be addressed before focusing on environmental concerns related to non-human entities.

One key contributor to postcolonial ecocriticism is Ursula Heise, whose book *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (2008) examines how literature and other cultural forms shape our understanding of the environment. Heise emphasizes the global interconnectedness of ecological issues and argues that postcolonial literature offers alternative environmental perspectives, highlighting the significance of Indigenous knowledge and local ecological practices. Postcolonial ecocriticism also draws on ideas from prominent postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha. These scholars have examined the cultural and political implications of colonial and neocolonial power structures, providing a foundation for exploring how colonialism and its legacies continue to shape human-environment interactions. This theoretical approach underscores that colonization is not only a history of human societies but also one that profoundly alters the physical environment, including the movement of resources, animals, and plants. In some cases, eco critics have identified a link between ecocide and genocide, showing the radical transformations brought about by colonization. Postcolonial ecocriticism provides valuable insights into how current climate crises are intertwined with the historical narratives, material practices, and global systems established by colonialism and globalization.

THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF HUMAN ACTIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The concept of interconnectedness between human actions and the environment explores the complex relationships and mutual dependencies between human activities and the natural world. Like all humans, colonists interacted with the environment, and their actions had lasting effects, just as our current behaviors continue to shape the ecosystems we inhabit. This is central to ecocriticism, which examines the interactions between the environment and all it contains, underscoring the need for a reciprocal relationship in which humans and the environment rely on each other for survival. Scholars and activists have analyzed this topic from diverse perspectives, emphasizing how human activities impact ecosystems and how environmental changes, in turn, affect societal and economic structures.

Bill McKibben, a prominent environmentalist and author, has been instrumental in advancing the understanding of human-environment interconnectedness. In works such as *The End of Nature* (1989) and *Earth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet* (2010), McKibben examines how human activities, notably the burning of fossil fuels, contribute to climate change and alter ecosystems. He argues that humanity must rethink the notion of the environment as a separate entity, recognizing that humans have fundamentally transformed Earth's systems through their actions. McKibben advocates for sustainable practices and urges collective action to mitigate climate change's impacts. Rachel Carson, a pioneering biologist and writer, also exemplifies the interconnectedness of human actions and the environment. Her groundbreaking book *Silent Spring* (1962) addressed

the devastating consequences of pesticide use, such as DDT, on ecosystems and human health. Carson demonstrated how pollution and the disruption of natural ecosystems could have far-reaching effects on the environment and society. Her work catalyzed the modern environmental movement and led to the banning DDT in the United States, symbolizing the critical relationship between human actions and environmental stewardship.

Wangari Maathai, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and environmental activist, emphasized the link between human actions, land degradation, and social justice. Maathai promoted reforestation and sustainable land use in Kenya through her Green Belt Movement. She recognized that deforestation and the depletion of natural resources harmed the environment, exacerbating poverty and socio-economic inequalities. Maathai's work highlighted the interconnectedness of ecological conservation, community empowerment, and sustainable development, advocating for integrated approaches that account for human well-being's social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

Aldo Leopold, a pioneer of modern environmental ethics, also emphasized the interconnectedness of humans and the natural world. In his seminal work, *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), Leopold introduced the "land ethic" concept, calling for an ethical relationship between people and the land. He argued that humans are part of a larger ecological community, and that human well-being is inextricably linked to the health of the land. Leopold's work has had a lasting influence on environmental ethics and conservation practices, underscoring the importance of recognizing the interdependence of all life forms.

These scholars and activists have illuminated the profound interconnectedness between human actions and the environment through their writings and actions. Their contributions underscore the importance of a holistic approach to environmental stewardship, which acknowledges the intricate relationships between humans and the natural world. By understanding and respecting this interconnectedness, individuals and societies can work toward sustainable solutions that promote the well-being of both people and the planet.

COLONIALISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN NIGERIA

Scholarly opinions on colonialism and its effects vary, but many agree that it has left a profound and lasting impact on postcolonial societies. Researchers examine colonial rule's economic, social, and cultural consequences, addressing issues such as uneven development, identity formation, and institutional challenges. Criticisms also highlight the exploitation of resources, cultural imperialism, and the persistence of inequalities in postcolonial states.

In *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1987), Chinua Achebe argued that Nigeria's colonial legacy has significantly harmed the environment. He contended that the extractive resource exploitation introduced by colonial powers led to a decline in environmental quality. Smith (2021) conducted a comprehensive study on the ecological impacts of resource extraction, highlighting the significant consequences these activities have on ecosystems. The exploitation and extraction of natural resources, which include mining, logging, drilling, and fishing, involve removing raw materials from the environment to

meet human needs. Smith's research emphasizes that, if not managed sustainably, these processes can result in severe environmental degradation, habitat destruction, and the depletion of essential resources, thereby threatening ecological balance and long-term sustainability. In line with Achebe's observations, Jean-François Bayart, in *The State of Africa: Politics of the Belly* (1993), also noted that colonialism fostered a culture of corruption and patronage in many African countries, contributing to the mismanagement of natural resources and resulting in severe environmental degradation. Bayart further argued that the lack of democracy and transparency in many African states has made it difficult to hold leaders accountable for environmental governance. Nigeria's political instability since independence has made it challenging to address environmental issues effectively.

The exploitation and extraction of natural resources often result in the dispossession and displacement of people, mainly from their homes and farmlands. The societal changes brought about by colonialism have exacerbated these issues, leading to the displacement of individuals, cultural practices, and traditional ways of life. Cooke and Kothari (2001) have examined the challenges faced by indigenous peoples and local communities displaced by large-scale development projects, highlighting the economic, social, and cultural disruptions caused by forced eviction and inadequate compensation. Their research underscores how displacement undermines the social fabric of these communities. Literary examples, such as Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), offer a poignant illustration of dispossession and displacement. Tess and her family are driven from their home and livelihood due to their inability to cope with industrialization's rapidly changing economic and environmental conditions. Similarly, in the postcolonial era, many people lost their jobs, farms, and means of livelihood due to the changes initiated by industrialization and the legacy of colonialism. These examples demonstrate the profound impact of resource extraction and industrialization on communities, emphasizing the need for more equitable and sustainable practices.

Conversely, Nathan Andrews (2009) argued that Africa's environmental crises are not solely the result of colonialism but also the failure to implement effective policies for sustainable development. He critiqued Western aid programs for focusing on short-term solutions that fail to address the root causes of environmental degradation, which often stem from historical and contemporary issues. Similarly, Coleman, in *Nationalism and Development in Africa: Selected Essays* (1994), argued that the negative impacts of colonialism were not only the result of direct exploitation by colonial powers but also indirect factors such as population growth and urbanization—both of which were influenced by colonial structures. He also emphasized that the colonial legacy has created a dependency on Western technological and financial resources, making it difficult for African countries to develop sustainable solutions to their environmental problems. These varying perspectives reflect a shared understanding that colonialism has had enduring ecological, political, and socio-economic impacts. However, scholars interpret the extent and causes of these effects differently.

DATA ANALYSIS: COLONIAL LEGACY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S THINGS FALL APART

In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe explores the profound consequences of colonialism on Igbo society in Nigeria. The arrival of the colonial powers disrupts the existing social and cultural structures, eroding traditional practices and values. This disruption also extends to the relationship between the people and their environment. Achebe portrays the destructive nature of colonialism through the character of Mr Brown, a missionary who establishes a church in the community. Mr Brown's disregard for the traditional religious beliefs and practices of the Igbo people contributes to the rupture of their connection with the natural world. As the church's influence grows, the people abandon their traditional rituals and customs, including their reverence for nature. This shift further exacerbates the degradation of the environment as resource exploitation intensifies in the pursuit of colonial economic interests.

Additionally, Achebe emphasizes the detrimental effects of the colonial legacy on the mental and emotional well-being of the people. The protagonist, Okonkwo, embodies the internal conflict caused by the clash between traditional values and the imposed values of the colonizers. The pressure to adapt to the new ways enforced by the colonial powers leads to toxic masculinity that promotes violence and destruction. This poisonous masculinity further contributes to the degradation of the environment, highlighting the interconnectedness between the physical and psychological impacts of colonialism:

Okonkwo had just blown out the palm-oil lamp and stretched himself on his bamboo bed when he heard the ogene of the town crier piercing the still night air. Gome, gome, gome, gome, boomed the hollow metal. Then the crier gave his message, and at the end of it, beat his instrument again. And this was the message. Every man of Umuofia was asked to gather at the marketplace tomorrow morning. Okonkwo wondered what was amiss, for he knew certainly that something was amiss. He had discerned a clear overtone of tragedy in the crier's voice, and even now, he could still hear it as it grew dimmer and dimmer in the distance (Achebe 1958:12).

This illustrates how the environment can serve as a narrative device in literature, highlighting the interconnectedness between human society and the natural world. The sound of the ogene (clapperless forged iron bell) piercing the still night air and traveling through the environment reinforces the idea that everything is connected. Like other elements of nature, sound travels and affects everything in its path.

It highlights the potential for the environment to provide information and insight into the state of the community. Okonkwo discerns a clear overtone of tragedy in the crier's voice, suggesting something troubling is happening within the community. This highlights the significance of human connection to the environment and its role in signaling changes in the community. This reflects on the impact of human activity on the environment. The gathering of every man of Umuofia will likely cause physical damage to the local environment, such as increased foot traffic and soil erosion. This practice highlights the importance of sustainable practices that minimize the environmental impact of human activities.

The novel demonstrates how literature can use the environment as a narrative device to highlight interconnectedness, provide insight into the state of the community, and reflect on the impact of human activity on the environment. The narrative also underscores the importance of sustainable practices in protecting the environment and supporting human society. The text suggests that Okonkwo's unease may be related to the changing cultural and societal landscape of Umuofia, particularly the encroachment of Christianity and European beliefs on traditional practices:

More jars of palm wine, but he was always uneasy at large gatherings. Part of this uneasiness may stem from his fear of looking weak or soft, especially in front of his peers and fellow clansmen. Another aspect of Okonkwo's unease may result from his growing awareness that traditional practices, such as the Feast of the New Yam, were slowly losing their cultural significance and were being replaced by Christianity and European beliefs. (*Achebe 1958:37*)

Okonkwo is a proud and traditional leader in the Igbo village of Umuofia. He prides himself on upholding his people's customs and traditions, including the Feast of the New Yam, a ceremony celebrating the beginning of the harvesting season. This feast is a crucial cultural event that signifies the vitality and abundance of the land, and Okonkwo takes great pride in participating in it.

As the novel progresses, Okonkwo's unease at large gatherings becomes more pronounced. This uneasiness may stem from his fear of appearing weak or vulnerable in front of his peers and fellow clansmen. In a society that values strength and masculinity, Okonkwo feels pressure to uphold a particular image of himself as an influential and respected leader. He cannot afford to show any signs of weakness or doubt, as this could jeopardize his standing in the community. Okonkwo's unease may also be linked to the changing cultural landscape of Umuofia. As European missionaries began to spread their influence in the village, traditional practices like the Feast of the New Yam were slowly losing significance. Christianity and European beliefs are starting to replace the traditional beliefs and customs of the Igbo people, and Okonkwo struggles to come to terms with this shift.

From an ecocritical perspective, Okonkwo's unease can be seen as a manifestation of the broader environmental and cultural shifts occurring in Umuofia. The arrival of European missionaries and the spread of Christianity represent a disruption to the traditional way of life in the village. The encroachment of Western influences threatens the Igbo people's connection to the land and their traditional practices. Okonkwo's discomfort at large gatherings can be viewed as a reflection of the tension between the old ways and the new. He is caught between his loyalty to tradition and his awareness of the changing world around him. As the Feast of the New Yam loses its cultural significance and is replaced by Christian ceremonies, Okonkwo grapples with nostalgia and loss for the traditions that once defined his identity.

In this context, ecocriticism allows us to understand how environmental and cultural factors intersect in shaping Okonkwo's character and motivations. His unease at

large gatherings is not just a personal quirk but a symptom of more extensive societal changes impacting the natural and cultural landscape of Umuofia. The novel can be read as a commentary on the destructive effects of colonialism and the erosion of indigenous cultures in the face of Western influence. Through the character of Okonkwo, Achebe highlights the complexity of human relationships with the environment and the profound connection between cultural practices and the land. Okonkwo's unease at large gatherings is a microcosm of the broader social and environmental transformations in Umuofia. By examining his character through an ecocritical lens, we gain deeper insights into the novel's themes of tradition, change, and the impact of colonialism on both people and the environment.

The white man had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had also built a trading store, and for the first time, palm oil and kernel became things of great price, and much money flowed into Umuofia. (Achebe 1958:162)

The arrival of the white man brought new economic opportunities to Umuofia, such as the trading store, which changed the value of natural resources like palm oil and kernel. However, these new economic opportunities came at a considerable cost to the environment. The introduction of new crops and livestock and the expansion of the trading economy resulted in significant deforestation and land degradation as people cleared more land to cultivate crops and build new infrastructure. The changes in the environment and economy disrupted traditional ecological knowledge and practices, leading to cultural erosion and biodiversity loss. Furthermore, the introduction of the white man's religion had a profound impact on the social and cultural practices of Umuofia. The clash between traditional religious beliefs and the new religion introduced by the white man reflects the cultural imperialism that was common throughout the colonial period.

COLONIAL LEGACY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN NNEDI OKORAFOR'S *WHO FEARS DEATH*

In Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death*, the influence of colonialism is evident in the post-apocalyptic setting of the novel. The land is depicted as ravaged and barren, with few resources available to the people. Okorafor emphasizes the connection between colonialism, environmental degradation, and the exploitation of natural resources. The oppressive rule of the colonizers has led to the destruction of the environment, leaving the land's inhabitants to suffer the consequences. The character of Onyesonwu, a sorceress who fights against the oppressive regime, symbolizes resistance against colonial rule and environmental degradation. Okorafor highlights the importance of reclaiming one's cultural heritage and connection to the land through her journey. Onyesonwu's ability to commune with nature and tap into its power signifies the people's resilience and determination to heal the wounds of colonialism and environmental degradation.

Furthermore, Okorafor explores the impact of colonialism on gender dynamics and the mistreatment of women. The protagonist, Onyesonwu, is faced with discrimination and violence due to her mixed heritage, a result of the colonial legacy of rape and oppression. This reflects how the colonial past continues to shape and perpetuate social

inequalities, including the mistreatment of women. Okorafor raises awareness about the need for societal transformation to address the lasting impacts of colonialism and environmental degradation. Postcolonialism theory seeks to analyze the power dynamics of colonialism and its effects in postcolonial societies. It examines how the legacy of colonialism has shaped the cultures of formerly colonized countries and how it continues to influence their cultural, political, and economic systems. Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death* is a postcolonial novel that brings up several key themes of postcolonial theory. One of the critical themes of postcolonialism theory is the formation of hybrid identities in postcolonial societies. In the novel, the protagonist, Onyesonwu, is a hybrid of two cultures and experiences discrimination and oppression from both. She was born as a child of rape from a union between her Okeke mother and a Nuru father. She is also an Eshu, a supernatural being with magical powers that both groups fear and reject. Her hybrid identity threatens both groups' social power structure, making her an outcast. This theme highlights the complexity of forming identities in postcolonial societies and how it can create an imbalance of power between groups.

Another critical theme in postcolonialism theory is the representation of the colonised in literature and media. Okorafor reverses the traditional roles of the colonizer and the colonized in the novel. The Nuru people, who are portrayed as oppressors, are lighter-skinned and technologically advanced, while the Okeke people, who are oppressed, are darker-skinned and more in tune with nature. This is a subversion of the traditional colonial narrative, which portrays the Europeans as the advanced race and the colonized people as primitive and backward. Okorafor challenges this notion by presenting a society where the colonized are technologically advanced, and the colonizers are primitive and superstitious.

Environmental degradation caused by colonialism is another aspect of postcolonial theory explored in the novel. The expansion of palm tree farms resulted from colonialism and the destruction of natural habitats for the cultivation of cash crops. This has led to environmental degradation, which significantly impacts the livelihoods of the people who depend on the land. Introducing non-native species that disrupt the ecosystem's natural balance is another example of how colonizers' actions have led to environmental degradation. Okorafor uses the natural setting to reflect the impact of colonialism on the environment and the people who depend on it.

Additionally, language is another crucial theme of postcolonialism theory evident in the novel. The book is written in English, a language introduced by colonizers. However, Okorafor incorporates several African languages and dialects into the text, highlighting the importance of preserving Indigenous languages. This is a significant theme in postcolonial theory, as the loss of native languages directly results from colonialism.

Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death* addresses several themes of postcolonialism theory, including hybrid identity, representation, environmental degradation, and language. Okorafor challenges the traditional colonial narrative by reversing the roles of the colonizer and the colonized, showcasing the impact of colonialism on the environment and emphasizing the importance of preserving Indigenous languages. By addressing these themes, she highlights the complexities of postcolonial societies and encourages readers to reflect on the long-term impact of colonialism on formerly colonized countries.

What I can tell you is that the book and all that it touched and then all that touched what it touched and so on, everything ... began to shift. Not in the wilderness, that wouldn't have scared me. Someplace else. I dare say a pocket in time, a slit in time and space ... this kingdom, it will change after today. Read it in your Great Book. You won't notice that it has been rewritten. Not yet. But it has. Everything has. The curse of the Okeke is lifted. It never existed, sha. (Okorafor 2010:359)

Onyesonwu said the excerpt above and the statement "everything began to shift" implies a significant change beyond the physical realm. It suggests a shift in the cultural and ideological narrative imposed on the community by colonialism. The reference to the Great Book implies a religious and colonial influence, which has shaped the cultural narrative. The use of the terms "pocket in time" and "slit in time and space" emphasizes the rupture in the colonial narrative that has been imposed on this community, highlighting the need for reclamation of their history and cultural identity.

The mention of the curse of the Okeke being lifted emphasizes the impact of colonialism on cultural and spiritual beliefs. The curse may have been an aspect of the community's belief system demonized and suppressed by colonizers. Lifting this curse symbolizes the liberation of the indigenous people's cultural identity and reclaiming their spiritual practices. Furthermore, the phrase, "Read it in your Great Book," implies that the colonizers have delegitimized and questioned this community's beliefs and practices, emphasizing the power dynamics at play. The emphasis on rewriting history suggests a need to acknowledge and value the Indigenous perspective and their relationship with the environment.

This excerpt highlights the need for decolonizing environmental discourse and decision-making processes. Postcolonial ecocriticism emphasizes the importance of understanding colonialism's impact on cultural and ecological issues and prioritizing marginalized communities' voices in these conversations. The text suggests a shift in power dynamics and reclaiming the community's cultural identity, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and valuing Indigenous perspectives in environmental discourse.

Greeeeen! As I'd never seen it. As I'd never imagined it.... From horizon to horizon, the ground was alive with dense, high leafy trees.... My chest ached, but it was a good ache. It was an ache of ... home. This place was too far ever to get to. But maybe someday it would not be. Maybe someday. Its vastness made the violence and the hatred between the Okeke and Nuru seem small. On and on this place went.... What I remember most about it was the deep sense of hope it placed in my heart. If a forest, a true vast forest, still existed someplace, even if it was very far away, then all would not end badly. It meant there was life outside the Great Book. It was like being blessed, cleansed. (Okorafor 2010:286-87)

In this incident, the narrator's descriptions of the forest can be seen as a representation of a pre-colonial natural world that has been lost or damaged by colonialism. The narrator's longing for this forest and the sense of hope it elicits can also be interpreted as a desire to reclaim and restore the natural environment negatively impacted by colonialism. The reference to "the Great Book" can also be understood in this context. The Great Book can be interpreted as a symbol of Western civilization and its accompanying culture, which has been imposed on indigenous communities and their lands through colonialism. This imposition has often resulted in the degradation and exploitation of natural environments. However, the narrator's discovery of the forest suggests that there are still natural landscapes that colonialism has not destroyed.

The narrator's observation that the vastness of the forest makes the violence and hatred between the Okeke and Nuru seem small suggests that the forest has a unifying effect, bringing people together in the face of natural beauty and wonder. This observation also highlights the importance of recognizing the interconnectedness of human and natural systems and the need to preserve both in the postcolonial context. This story can be seen as a reflection on the impact of colonialism on natural environments and indigenous communities, as well as a call for the restoration and preservation of both. It also suggests that literature can be a powerful tool for critiquing and challenging the negative impacts of colonialism and that, in the face of violence and exploitation, hope can still be found in the resilience of nature.

CONCLUSION

This paper examines the portrayal of colonial legacy and environmental degradation in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death*. Both texts illustrate the intricate connection between these issues and their significant impact on societies and the natural environment. The characters in these novels represent resistance, resilience, and the urgent need for societal change. Through the depiction of colonialism's consequences and environmental degradation, these works provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by communities in the postcolonial era and demonstrate that colonial legacies persist and continue to shape environmental conditions. Ultimately, they underscore the importance of addressing the enduring impacts of colonialism and working towards sustainable and equitable futures.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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Oral Poems of Igbo People in Nigeria: Categories and Functions

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ABSTRACT: *The oral tradition of Igbo poetry is as old as the history of the Igbo people. They have anonymous authorship and are composed to depict and express the lives of those engaged in different human activities. They also express deep emotions and denote profound and didactic ideas. Oral forms of poetry have suffered neglect and are not formally documented, even though these oral poems reveal the great verbal mystery of their composers and convey profound philosophies of life. One, therefore, feels obliged to contribute to the development of Igbo oral poems. This paper revealed that there are many categories of Igbo oral poems and their functions, which include abuakwamozu (death poems) or abu iru uju (songs for general mourning), abu nwa (birth poems), and abu ofufe (worship poems), among others. This is survey research. The theory adopted was the New Historicisms. It was concluded that this research will help reawaken people's interest in oral poems, because these poems deeply reflect the Igbo people's way of life.*

KEYWORDS: *Igbo People, Nigeria, Oral Poems, Categories, Functions*

INTRODUCTION

Poetry is a universal form of artistic self-expression. Through it, man articulates his thoughts and feelings for public sharing and experience. Poetry is an elevated expression of thought or feeling in rhythmic language. According to Akparobaro(2007:204), "Poetry is the most propitious for the expression of mood, thoughts and emotions, in a conscious and psychologically satisfying form". Every society has its forms of poetry irrespective of its state of economic development. There are the determinations of cultural milieu, by the linguistic resources of the language in which they are performed, by the socio-geographical environment, and by the habits and occupation in terms of which everyday life is conducted. Initially, Igbo poetry was not written; instead, it was passed down orally from one generation to the next. The Igbo people are a group of people who reside in the eastern part of Nigeria. Their language is called the Igbo language. Emenanjo (1980:2) says that the Igbo poetry "is divided into two: the oral and modern/written Igbo poetry".

Oral poetry of African artistic sensibilities emanates from a primary vision of life. Oral poetry also includes chant, songs, and incantations, which are transferred from one person to another through word of mouth. The oral poetry is in oral form, transmitted and preserved through oral and performative skills of the presenters, with no awareness of script or print. Obviously, before the emergence of writing and the printing press,

human beings, especially the Igbo people, enjoyed their literature through oral means. Stories were passed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth. Okoh (2008:72), in Nnyigide (2014:64), says "that oral literature is transmitted orally and appreciated aurally from one generation to the other". It was observed that the two major devices that enable the early presenter to remember and memorize their poem were rhythm and rhyme. The traditional concept of poetry is that it consists of those utterances which are chanted, recited, or sung. Such utterance is prosaic, and the audience keeps the beat by clapping hands as the poet performs. An oral poem is short, repetitive, and has a central thematic image. The repetition can be words, a stanza, or an individual line. According to Okezie (2007:51), in oral poetry, "the poet composes as he performs so that there is no time-gap between composition and performance as in written language". Thus, the oral artist is the performer and composer simultaneously. Oral Poetry is occasional and purposeful, hence, there are songs for all occasions.

According to Akparobaro (2007:305), in oral poetry, "each poem has its own points of interest, relevance, and meaning in its environment. Each one expresses a specific idea formulated through local imagery, symbolism, animals, trees, spirits, households, and emotions such as love, grief, and sorrow, which form the fabric of people's lives. Oral poetry can be sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments such as guitar, gong, and lute. Its subject matter is often of a very personal nature and is usually expressed in a language full of emotion.

Genres of oral poetry vary from society to society, from environment to environment. There is, in a real sense, a socio-cultural context from which the evaluation of oral poetry must be based, and it is derived from the society in which these poetic forms emanate. Igbo oral poetry has evolved into modern written Igbo poetry. Unlike Igbo oral poetry, contemporary Igbo poetry is written on paper, making it easily accessible for purchase and reading. Modern Igbo poetry can be presented on natural phenomena, social, or political events. Some modern Igbo poetry could also be historical, philosophical, satirical, narrative, didactic, and hortatory. Oral and Modern poetry have some differences, including the fact that oral poetry is rendered from one person to another through word of mouth, while modern poetry is written in books. Oral poetry, because of its nature, can be easily forgotten. Still, modern or written poetry cannot be overlooked because it is written down, and the purpose of writing it down is for easy remembrance. Nwadike (1992:19) states that oral poetry is changeable; its form can be altered by the first person who renders it. When people learn that song, the mode of delivery begins to change; it will continue to change from the second person who sings the song to the third person, and so on. But modern poetry cannot be altered by anyone except the author in a subsequent edition. Oral poetry is invisible, but modern poetry is visible in the sense that you can see it and touch it.

NEW HISTORICISM

New historians have traditionally been concerned with determining what happened at a given time and place. They worked to establish the factual accuracy of the stories that make up the record of the human past so that they could verify, with as much certainty

as possible, that the account they rendered was a valid delineation of what had happened. According to Dobie (2009:175-176), maintaining an objective stance—a position of distance from the scene of action that would allow them to see and state the truth about people and events—was successful; they would, by extension, manage to capture the essence of an entire age. They could find the essence of a period, the worldview that would unlock the meaning of that period's Literature, art, politics, social behavior, and the rest. In examining the broad sweep of history, they viewed the narratives as being linked in a causal sequence that, it was assumed, would carry the world forward in a positive, progressive manner.

CATEGORIES OF IGBO ORAL POETRY

In the classification of Igbo oral poetry, many authors have classified it in their own ways. For example, according to Egundu and Nwoga(1971), they classified oral poetry into eight; they are as follows:praise poem(abu otito), innovation song(abu mkpokpu) recitation(ngugo) song (uri) folk poem (abu ifo), satiric poem(abu ikpe maobu nkocha) song of grief(abu akwariri) na abu nwa(birth poem). In the recommendation of the Igbo standardization committee (1985:30). In this book, oral poetry was classified into three, these classifications are based on their mode of delivery, occasion of delivery, and rhetorical mode". This study will be based on the classification made by Nwadike (1982:72), who classified oral poetry into twelve. They are folk poem (abu ifo), praise poem (abu otito), satiric poem(abu ikpe) , burial poem (abu akwamozu), birth poem (abu nwa) ,worship poem(abu ofufe), occupational poem (abu oru), social poem(abu oha),war poem (abu agha) philosophical poem (abu echiche miri emi),natural phenomenon poem(abu ekere) and love poem(abu ihunanya).

FOLK POEM (ABU IFO)

Folk poems are songs by a group of people with a community of interest. At the same time, music, according to Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary(10th edition)is the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity and having seen that these poems cannot be discussed outside music, because a true singer cannot compose without the sublime inspiration that comes from musical impulse. The folks who sing the song could be men, children, educated, illiterate, religious groups, cult members, etc. The music of every folk genre reflects its spirit, mood, or state of being, and has a fixed structure; it is easily memorized and reproduced on demand. Poems cover the entire life cycle in the traditional life of society, from birth to death. No wonder Egundu (2002:3) says in Okoye (2007:) "that we sing when we fight, we sing when we work, we sing when we love, we sing when we hate, we sing when a child is born, we sing when death occurs. They are also celebrated when we hunt, wrestle, get married, and so on. We equally have masquerade and moonlight poems. There are songs for every activity of life, both socially and culturally. At times, a particular song changes slightly, depending on the tradition and folk that produce it.

A thing that is very real about songs and oral literature is that during celebration, two parties must be involved. One is the audience that will observe and benefit from the performance, as shown below.

Nwa Nnunu Were Isi Kwe M Ekele

Nwa nnunu were isi kwe m ekele
 Nwa nnunu were isi kwe m ekele
 Nwa nnunu kwe nke m na-ekwu
 Nwa nnunu kedu ebe I na-eje?
 Nwa nnunu nye m ihe di n' akpa gi
 Nwa nnunu kwe kwe kwe
 Nwa nnunu kwee.

Translation

Small bird salute me with your head
 Small bird salute me with your head
 Small bird consent to what I am saying
 Small bird where are you going to?
 Small bird gives me what is in your pocket
 Small bird consent consent consent consent
 Small bird consent

PRAISE POEM (ABU OTITO)

A Praise poem is the expression of approval of one's achievements and qualities. Many media could be used when achieving this. One of which is song. Praise could be directed to something to herald his achievements or good qualities. According to The Mapanje (1993), Awoonor(1975)and Finnegan(1970) in Okoye(2009:38), "amongst other scholars assert that the purpose of praise poems or songs is to eulogize the characters and the achievements of chiefs and kings in their various courts and palaces to receive patronage". The people chiefly praised are those who make inclusive and impressive achievements in town, as well as the heroes of war. Praise songs could also be used for personal friends, wives, brothers, etc., as exemplified below.

Ogbukaagu

Sunday Nweke
 Ogbukaagu
 Ufodu gara ugwu Awusa ichu ego
 Ufodu gara obodo oyibo ichu ego
 Ma o nweghi ebe I gara
 I sin a ego di ebe niile
 Naani egbe ka I bu baa ohia
 Buru nchi na mgbada na-alota
 Buru adaka na ezi ohia na-alota

Anu ndi a I na-ere ka I ji enwe ego
 Ego I nwetere n'anu ndi a ka I ji chie ozo
 I gburu ehi asaa n'ozo
 Gbuo mkpi asaa
 Gbuo ebule asaa
 Sunday Ogbukaagu
 Ebe o bu na I gbuola agu
 Anyi ga-akpozi gi ogbu agu
 Sunday ogba n'ufe
 I na-egbu egbe na-eфе n'elu
 Ndi ike jere bata obodo anyi
 Egbe gi ana-agba ka ukpaka kara n'uguru
 Kawararam-kawararam!
 Sunday dike
 Ajo anu
 Nwa gaagaanogwu
 Egwu anyi na-ekele gi
 Ndi egwu Umuuto na-ekelegi.

Translation

Sunday Nweke

Sunday Ogbukaagu
 Some went to the north to make money
 Some went oversea to make money
 You refused going anywhere
 Saying that money is everywhere
 With only your gun you entered into the bush
 And came out with grass cutters and antelopes
 Chimpanzees and bush pigs
 From their sales you made your money
 From their sales you got your ozo tittle
 You slaughtered seven cows
 Slaughtered seven he-goats
 Slaughtered seven rams
 Sunday Ogbukaagu
 Now that you have killed a tiger
 We shall be calling you tiger-killer
 Because a hunter should not kill ten
 Tigers before he qualifies of a name
 Sunday, you killed flying birds while they are on air
 Your gun brings eagles down from the air
 Your gun hawks down from the air
 When armed robbers enter our town

Your gun cries like harmattan oil-bean pod
 Kawararam-kawararam!
 Sunday the great
 The people's lion
 The small wood that heats an oven
 Our songs greets you
 Umuuto dancing group greets you .By Okoye (2009:42-43)

The following is an example of a praise poem to praise goodness.

To Ngene, the River Goddess.
 Brass and parrot feathers
 On a velvet skin
 White cowry shells
 On back buttocks
 Her eyes sparkley in the forest
 Like the sun of the river
 She is wisdom of the forest
 She is wisdom of the river
 Where the doctor failed
 She cured with cool water.
 (By Akparobaro 2007:26).

SATIRE (ABU IKPE)

Like other oral poetry, there is no specific time when satire began; instead, it started when Igbo land existed. In Nigeria, these authors Emenanjo, Chinue Achebe, and Soyinka have practiced satire in their work. Emenanjo, in his poem called Uko n' Uju, satirizes Nigeria's wealth. Chinua Achebe, in his novel A Man of the People, satirizes the attitudes of those in power. In The Lion and the Jewel, Soyinka, through the character of Sidi, satirizes Bale by laughing at him. The reason for satire is to fight crime. Nwadike (2003:109) says, "in Igbo land, masquerades satirize, especially those that normally came out at night. In Umueshi, in Ideato Local Government Areas in Imo state, on the Umueshi day, their masquerade called 'Okorosha' criticizes all the atrocities people committed during the year. Mike Ejeagha, Seven seven, Oliver de coque, etc., also criticize people's attitudes in their poems. Proverbs, onomatopoeia, simile, etc., are used to bring out the beauty of the satire.

In satire, the name of the person being criticized is often hidden, but the examples provided by the critic will reveal who they are referring to. Example

Nigeria jaga jaga a

Nigeria jaga jaga a
 Everything scatters scatter
 Poor man de suffer suffer

Kpozaa kpozaa
 Gun shot on the air
 Armed robber came to your house
 He no take money
 He went straight to your bedside
 Kpozaa
 Six feet down the ground
 Which armed robber no want money
 Which armed robber no want jolly
 Na political armed robber be that
 Na wetin de kill Nigeria o

Nigeria jaga jaga a
 Everything scather scather
 Poor man de suffer suffer
 Kpozaa kpozaa
 Gun shot on the air

Africa!
 If you love your land
 Africa!
 Is our motherland
 We de grow
 We de grow
 They steal them all

NEPA is irregular
 419 for Nigeria
 Agege to Ikeja na hundred naira
 Fuel scarcity na popular
 Action firm for Nigeria. By Okoye (2007)

The six stanzas harp on the nation's ills. The first and fourth stanzas, which are the refrains, fired the first shot at corruption in Nigeria.

BIRTH SONG (ABU NWA)

When a new child arrives, friends and relations troop in to welcome him or her. Throughout the period of rest by the mother (omugwo) friends and well-wishers would be visiting with gifts, both to the child and the mother. The period of rest lasts for about two or three months, depending on the town or locality. According to Okoye (2007:169) "omugwo is to enable the nursing mother to regain the blood lost during birth. After omugwo comes the outing ceremony (child outing). In child-outing, relations, well-wishers, groups and association are invited to join in the ceremony. During the cerebation, happiness is expressed through oral poetry. The songs, dances, and chants

offer a glimpse into the world of women in relation to childbirth. Children may join in the dance. The women dance in a circle or individually, while others stand or sit and sing.

According to Ogbalu (1974: viii) "the birth poems also contain advice as to childcare, duties of mother and father, thanks to God, rejoicing for the blessing on the family and village". All are filled with expressions of a happy mood and are accompanied by musical instruments such as the udu, ichaka, and ogene. For instance;

Erimeri

Erimeri di anyi mma Erimeri o-o
 Erimeri di anyi mma Erimeri o-o
 Onwu egbula nwaanyi n'afọ ime
 Erimeri di anyi mma Erimeri o-o Okezie (2007:77)

Translation

We like feasting
 Feasting o-o
 We like feasting
 Feasting o-o
 May woman not die in pregnancy?

LULLABY

Lullaby is a birth poem. This genre of children's song is sung by mothers and nurses to coax their babies to sleep. Lullaby or 'egwu okuko nwa' (cradle song or song for babysitting) is very popular amongst the Igbo people inhabiting the southeast, south west, and south geo-political zones of Nigeria is a form of baby-talk because, it is the adults or persons, much older than the

Lullaby

Kwusi Akwa Kwusi Akwa
 kwusi akwa

 kwusi akwa
 Kwusi akwa ka nne gi lota
 kwusi akwa
 Kwusi akwa ka nna gi lota
 kwusi akwa
 Zutara gi nwa ite nwa oma
 kwusi akwa
 Zutara gi nwa ite nwa oma
 kwusi akwa
 Were ya siere nwoke nri
 kwusi akwa
 Were ya siere nwanyi nri
 kwusi akwa

Nwoke si na nri ajoka
kwusi akwa
Nwanyi si na nri amaka
kwusi akwa
Nwoke buru tufuo
kwusi akwa
Nwanyi gbaje tuturu
kwusi akwa
Umunununu racha aka
kwusi akwa
Uno nje megbuo ha
kwusi akwa
Leekwa ya ka odi n'ite
kwusi akwa
Ori ihe nwa ijiji be kwa ya n'onu
kwusi akwa
Ori ihe nwa ijiji be kwa ya n'onu
kwusi akwa

Translation

Stop crying so that your mother will come back
stop Crying
Stop crying so that your father will come back
stop Crying
She will buy beautiful pot for you
stop Crying
He will buy beautiful pot for you
stop Crying
Which will be used to cook for man
stop Crying
Which will be used to cook for woman
stop Crying
Man said that food is bad
top Crying
Woman said that food is delicious
stop Crying
The man threw away food
stop Crying
The woman went and picked the food
stop Crying
Little birds have something to eat
stop Crying

O kuwara n'ike
Okuwara na gbo-o

Translation

The mirror is broken, it is broken
Beautiful mirror is broken
It is broken by force
It is broken too soon.

This song indicates the grief at the suddenness of death especially of young people on whose service depend on the development and progress of their friends, families and communities. The mourners feel the exist of the dead is too premature, hence it is said that death has come by force to snatch the person from life.

OCCUPATIONAL POEM (ABU ORU)

people sing different song while doing their work. In occupational poem, each poem will tell you the nature of the work that is taking place. The type of work may be hunting, harvesting of farm products, etcetera.

The following is the example of a poem by a hunter who saw an animal

Edi (Poem 1)

Edi oo! Edi oo! Edi oo!
Gbuonu ya n'azu ulo Elendu oo
(By Okebalama, 1986:4)

Translation

Bush pig o-o
Bush pig o-o
Kill it at the of Elendu

This type of poem is for the pounding of palm fruit by a group of people.

Okoroida (poem 2)

Enyi m Okoroida
Enyi m Okoroida
A si m gi suwa akwu
I naghi asuli akwu
Asi gi riwe nri
Ike adinu gi

Okoroida
Okoroida
Okoroida
Okoroida
Okoroida
Okoroida
Okoroida

By Okebalama

(1986) .

Translation

My friend Okoroida
I told you to pound Okoroida
You are lazy Okoroida

When I told you to eat Okoroida
Then you will be hardworking Okoroida
For farming purpose, this song can be used for digging ridges.

Ede mara mma(poem3)

Onye na-ako ede
Ede mara mma
Okuko
Ada na ako ede
Ede mara mma
Okuko.

Translation

Who is planting cocoyam
Cocoyam is good
Ada is planting cocoyam
Cocoyam is good

WAR POEM (ABU AGHA)

In the olden days, in Igbo land, this song is singing when people are going to war can also be rendered when they won a war. In some places like Bende and Ohafia, this song is sing at the burial ceremony of a hero.

Examples of this poem are.

Poem1 Onye akpala agu aka n'odu
Ma odi ndu ma o nwuru anwu
Onye akpala nwa agu aka n'odu.

Translation

Do not touch lions' tail
Whether it is dead or alive

Poem 2 Nzogbu Nzogbu!-Enyi mba enyi

Nzogbu nwoke-Enyi mba enyi
Nzogbu nwaanyi-Enyi mba enyi
Kwenu nzogbu- Enyi mba enyi
Ihe ayi jiri ka mba-Nzogbu
Ihe ayi jiri ka mba-Nzogbu
Zogbuo onye ukwu-Enyi mba enyi
Nzogbu!Nzogbu!-Enyi mba enyi
Okoro rewe-Enyi mba enyi
Ayi ezi ya ibe ya-Enyi mba enyi
Agbogho rewe-Enyi mba enyi
Ayi ezi ya ibe ya-Enyi mba enyi
Nzogbu Nzogbu-Enyi mba,enyi

Translation

Trample!Trample!	-The elephants of the town, elephant
Trample on the man	-The elephant of the town, elephant
Trample on the woman	-The elephant of the town, elephant
Greater than others	-The elephant of the town, elephant
Trample on the big/adult	-The elephant of the town, elephant
Small/young	-The elephant of the town, elephant
If the young man boasts	-The elephant of the town, elephant
If the maiden boasts,	-The elephant of the town, elephant
Fellow maidens	-The elephant of the town, elephant
Trample!Trample!	-The elephant of the town, elephant.

LOVE POEM (ABU LHUNANYA)

Love or erotic poetry is common among the people of Ewe in Ghana takes place at night especially moonlight nights. Young men and women fall in love during the performance. According to Okezie(2007) "in some parts of Igboland, young men and women sing and dance on moonlight nights. They take a lot of liberty in songs that border on the bawdy and ribald. Such songs help to eliminate embarrassment and bashfulness from young people by open reference to the love act". They also establish rapport between love ones through flirtatious reference to the girl's beauty by extolling and exaggerating her virtues and those of her lineage.

Mekwa onye di mma enyi o-e

Mekwa onye di mma enyi o-e
 Chika,mekwa onye di mma enyi
 Chika, mekwa onye di mma enyi
 Ada,mekwa onye di mma enyi
 Ada,mekwa onye di mma enyi
 Ina eme enyi,mekwa onye di nma enyi maka olulu

Translation

Be friend a good person o-e	
Be friend a good person o-e	
	Chika, be friend a good person
Chika, be friend a good person	
Ada,be friend a good person	
Ada,be friend a good person	

In this poem Okezie(2007:83) says "that single girls are advised to be careful in the choice of boyfriends. They should make good choice in case the relationship results in marriage". This poem is also a warning to the girls to ensure that her boyfriend is financially capable of taking care of her if they have to marry.

SOCIAL POEM ABU OHA)

Social poems are those in which the poet renders the poem, and the people respond by saying the chorus. Marriage songs, and title poems fall into this category.

Marriage poem (Abu Alumalu)

These are poems which are usually sings by girls when they rejoice with the bride and bridegroom. The girls lead the bride to her life's abode which is her husband's place. Ogbalu (1974: viii) says "the girls sing from the house of the bride's parents, walking all the way carrying gifts and presents, to the bridegroom's house". There they sing, eat and drink, dance and rejoice the whole evening or night. The songs include pieces of advice to the new couple, consolation to the bride's parent for losing their daughters and congratulations to the family of the bridegroom for winning such a precious gem. Example

Chinye ya kii
Chinye ya kii
Na O lotala
Chinye ya kii
Chinye ya kii
Na O lotala

Translation

Give her the key
Give her the key
She has returned
Give her the key
Give her the key
She has returned

The above poem is celebrated when the married girl first steps into her husband's house. The song signifies that the true owner of the house has arrived, and not only will the doors be unlocked for her, but all the keys of the house will be handed to her immediately.

TITLE POEM (ABU ECHICHI)

These are poems of praise used during title taking ceremonies. They praise the man, his wife and family, including the Umunna and village. The poems are usually pompous and pretentions- usual flatteries. For instance,

Eze ozo eze ozo
I lee
Eze ozo na nwunye ya
I lee
Gburu ehi nye m odu ya
I lee
Si mu na-eri mu na-agu
I lee

Eriwe m aguwa m
 Egwu ozo egwu ozo kwala jamayam
 Egwu ozo egwu ozo kwala jamayam
 O buru mmadu ise kwalajamayam
 O buru mmadu iri kwalajamayam. By Ogbalu(1974:154)

WORSHIP POEM (ABU OFUFE)

This form of poem is towards the purpose of bringing about a derived state of affairs. The subject of the worship may be believed to have some magical power. The poem may be recited along with the performance of the ritual. The poet's which may be to procure a cure for an illness, to overcome an enemy and to achieve success in some endeavor. The subject of the worship may be God, god or goddess. The following is the example of a worship poem to God.

I bu chi n'eligwe
 I bu chi n' uwaa
 I bu chi n'ebe niile
 Uwa so tuuru

Translation

You are God in heaven
 You are God on earth
 . You are God everywhere
 Even where the world ends.

The following is the example of praise poem to praise goddess
 To Ngene, the River Goddess.

Brass and parrot feathers
 On a velvet skin
 White cowry shells
 On back buttocks
 Her eyes sparkley in the forest
 Like the sun of the river
 She is wisdom of the forest
 She is wisdom of the river
 Where the doctor failed
 She cured with cool water.
 (By Akparobaro 2007:26).

PHILOSOPHICAL POEM (ABU ECHICHE MIRI EMI)

Philosophical poem searches for knowledge especially the nature and meaning of existence, the study of the principles underlying actions and behaviors of men. Okediadi (2004:257) "noted that philosophical poems provoke feeling and deep thoughts". Example;

Onwu

Onwu olee ebe ike gi di?
Olee ebe I bi?
Gini mere na I dighi ana ego?

Translation

Death

Death where is your power?
Where do you live?
Why is it that you do not take money?

As noted above, this poem described nature and their influence on human beings.

NATURAL PHENOMENON POEM (ABU EKERE)

In this poet, one think about other creatures created by God in order to show appreciation, fear, hate and uncertainty. Examples of these creatures are; sleep (ura), moon (onwa), water (mmiri) etc. For instance

URA

Ura bu nwanne onwu
Ha abuo achoghi mmeghari abuo
Ha achoghi isape anya
Ha achoghi oke oru
Ha abuo na-anapu uche

Ura na-aghori mmadu
Na- ewepu uche na nsogbu
O na-azunye mmadu ugboala
Na-achotara mmadu odi ya n'obi
N'ikpeazu, porokoto aburu ihe efu. By Anozie(2007:72)

Translation

Sleep

Sleep related to death
Both of them does not like body movement
They do not like eye opening
They do not like stress
Both of them makes people to be absent minded

Sleep is a deceiver
You removed people's mind in problems
You bought cars for people
You find concubine for someone

At last, everything is false.

In this poem, the poet described what will happen to someone while sleeping.

CONCLUSION

Every society has its form of poetry irrespective of its stages in economic development. But poetic forms are not determining a priori, theoretically. They are the determinations of a cultural milieu, by the linguistic resources of the language in which they are performed, by socio-cultural forms of life, by the socio-geographical environment, and by the habits and occupations in terms of which everyday life is conducted other words, genres of oral poetry vary from society to society, from environment to environment. They are in a real sense socio-culturally bound. From this perspective, critical standards for the evaluation of Africa oral poetry must be based upon and derived from the society in which these poetic forms emanate. There is no single classification that is generally accepted in Igbo oral poetry, for example, a praise poem can fall into different categories, and different authors can place any poem anywhere in the classification of Igbo oral poetry.

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Crisis at the Confluence: Religion, Humanity, and Conflict in Sudan

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines the complex intersection of religion, conflict, and humanitarian crisis in Sudan, highlighting the devastating impact on civilians, particularly vulnerable and marginalized populations. Through a critical analysis of historical, political, and socio-religious factors, the paper investigates the roots of the crisis, including the legacy of colonialism, Islamist governance, and ethnic tensions. The findings reveal widespread human rights abuses, forced displacement, and sectarian violence, exacerbated by international inaction and fragmented humanitarian responses. The study argues that, addressing the crisis in the Sudan requires a nuanced understanding of her complex religious landscape, inclusive dialogue, and coordinated international intervention. In conclusion, the paper suggests mitigation strategies that include the urgent need for a focus on promoting inter-faith understanding, strengthening humanitarian laws, and supporting locally led peace initiatives.*

KEYWORDS: *Animism; Sudanization policy; Sharia; viper's nest; Arabization; Plebiscite; Referendum; Multinationals; Muslim Hegemony.*

INTRODUCTION

The conflict in Darfur is an ongoing and unending one. It has now degenerated into a contest between the "Janjaweed", a government-supported militia recruited from local Arab tribes, and the non-Arab peoples of the North African region. Most of the Arabs are mainly black, going by a narrow definition of the term. Thus, many scholars tend to rely more on the distinction between Arab and non-Arab in their analysis of the conflict. The mere fact that about 70% of the Sudanese live in the North, as opposed to 25% (Animists) and 5% Christians who live in the South, tends to legitimize the north-south dichotomy. In the same vein, the Muslim and non-Muslim (Christian and Animists) competition argument can be made.

However, some other scholars attribute the cause of the conflict mainly to the competition between sedentary farmers and nomadic cattle herders for control of scarce resources – arable farming land and water resources. Others see it as one driven by racial motivation. The conflict in the Sudan is a very complex one. There are colonial, racial, religious, and regional dimensions to it. The gravity of the conflict has led many humanitarian agencies and international organizations to characterize it as "ethnic cleansing" or "genocide." According to the United Nations' estimates, about 180,000 people have died in the past 2 years of the conflict, while more than 1.8 million people have been permanently displaced, with a large portion of that number having fled to neighboring Chad.

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<https://pacafng.org/jacad/>

This paper discusses the religious dimensions of the current conflict in the Darfur region of the Sudan. It also traces the historical background of Sudan's colonial status as a condominium under British and Egyptian control from 1898 to 1956, when it was granted political independence. Further analyses focuses on the British "Northernization" policy (also referred to as the "Sudanization" policy) before Sudan's independence in 1956, and how this policy handed over political, economic and bureaucratic power to Northern Arab Muslim descendants (Jellaba) who pursued mechanized farming policy in the Sudan after consolidating economic, political and bureaucratic power in the contemporary Sudan; how this power grabbing practice has been used to displace and oppress Southern pastoralists, Christians and animists; and how the predominantly Muslim north used religious-oriented laws, indoctrination, institutional discrimination and violence to persecute and marginalize minority Christians in the south.

Furthermore, this study explores the Islamic/ Sharia policies of General Abboud (1958 -1964); Col. Mohammed Jaa'far Nimeiri (1969 – 1985) and the challenge posed by Col. John Garang; Sadiq al-Mahdi (1985 – 1989); and Omar Hassan Al-Bashir (1993 – Present). Next, the consequence of the sudden death of Col. John Garang in a helicopter crash on the fragile power-sharing peace agreement signed in January 2004, and its aftermath, are analyzed. Next, the study explores the Bush policy in the Sudan that operated under the auspices of the IGAD group and observes that the withdrawal of the Sudan from the Machakos Protocol dealt a devastating blow to the American initiative. The paper concludes that the Obama administration was not able to involve American troops in Sudan over Darfur, unless on limited basis like instituting and enforcing a no-fly zone policy either unilaterally or under the auspices of the United Nations or NATO; and how domestic political and economic constraints, including the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Israeli invasion of Gaza and the India-Pakistan conflict over the terrorist attacks in Mumbai dictate America's limited involvement in Darfur.

DEMOGRAPHY AND GOVERNMENT

The Sudan is the largest country in Africa. It has a population of about 40 million. Located in North Africa, it is a poor country with an external debt of \$ 21 billion (2004 estimates). It shares its borders with Egypt, Chad, Libya, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), and Uganda. Therefore, the porous nature of the Sudan gives us some insight into the kinds of transnational problems it will encounter and the sources of its problems – arms smuggling, currency trafficking, trafficking in humans, international terrorism, etc. No wonder Osama Bin Laden settled there before his departure to Afghanistan. Its environment is equally harsh, characterized by periodic drought, soil erosion, dust storms, and the threats of desertification.

According to the Federal Research Division, U.S. Library of Congress (2004), the Sudanese ethnic groups include Blacks who make up about 52%, Arabs/39%,

and others/ 9% (including foreigners). With respect to religion, 70% are Sunni Muslims, most of whom live in the North. Those with indigenous beliefs (Animists) make up about 25%. These traditional African religious followers primarily worship rocks, shrines, and other sacred objects. Christians who make up about 5% of the population mainly reside in the South and Khartoum, the state capital. The official language of the Sudan is Arabic. This is the language of the courts, business, legislation, education, official broadcasts, and the banks. English is Lingua Franca (language of conversation.) The Sudan gained its independence from Egypt and Great Britain (UK) on January 1, 1956. Before this date, it was a condominium, a territory jointly governed by two or more states. The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, as it was previously referred to, remained under the joint control of Great Britain and Egypt between 1889 and 1956.

In the words of Gerhard von Glahn (1996), "condominiums", under international law are not regarded as members of the community of nations; play no active part in international relations, have no governments of their own, and do not possess any vestige of national sovereignty. The regime of the Sudan has always revolved around one or a mixture of military, theocracy/ Sharia styles, which espouse an Islamic platform. One of the majority political parties in the Sudan is the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. This is the party in which Col. John Garang was a leading member. The others are the Ummar Party of Sadi al-Mahdi, the Democratic Unionist Party, and the Democratic Alliance Party.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In 1898, a coalition of British and Egyptian forces overthrew the Mahdist from power and conquered the Sudan. Thereafter, Britain and Egypt set up a condominium with a capitalist orientation. Before the Sudan's independence in 1956, Britain pursued a policy of "Sudanization". This policy of "Sudanization" is used interchangeably with the policy of "Northernization." This policy saw British colonial administrators replaced by northerners (Sunni Muslims) who comprised the majority population at the time of handover of power to indigenous Sudanese.

The Center for African Alternatives, United Kingdom, estimates that out of 800 administrative posts, only four were allocated to Southerners. Control of the economy and administration thus came under the perpetual grip and control of the Muslim North. In response to this regional imbalance and marginalization, a coup was staged by Southerners at the military garrison at Torit in 1955. This incident, in effect, marked the beginning of the "Anyanya" separatist movement that fought the Sudan's civil war for almost two decades. It should be noted that Anyanya was a southern Sudanese separatist movement that emerged during the period between 1955 and 1972 to create a free and self-determined South Sudan that would free the people of Southern Sudan from what they viewed as "Arab Colonialism" to assert their cultural, religious, and linguistic identity.

As post-independence power resided with the "Jellaba" (descendants of Arab traders), history had it that during the slave trade era, the Jellaba, who were

Arab Muslims from the North, were responsible for enslaving black Africans in the south. This historic cleavage and resentment gave impetus to fierce southern resistance to Islam and the embrace of Christianity as an alternative. Southerners in the Sudan saw Christianity as being on their side in the struggle against Northern oppression. Hence, the traditional chiefs in the South did everything in their power to fight against the encroachment of Islam. They saw the penetration of Islam in the South as an attempt by their arch enemies (Arabs) to subjugate them and as a threat to their survival. Eventually, the resistance and fight against Islam took on a new meaning, embracing Christian Missionary activities and the use of English instead of Arabic, the official language, as a medium of instruction and communication by choice.

With the consolidation of economic and bureaucratic power, the Jellaba moved away from the pump-irrigation system of agriculture (cotton schemes) of the 1950s to large-scale mechanized farming of economic crops: sesame, cotton, groundnuts, millet, maize, and cotton from the eastern Sudan into the Darfur region. Large-scale private schemes took over great stretches of traditional farmlands and herding routes, and displaced millions of small producers. Large areas of forests were also forcibly acquired, without compensation, thereby clearing the way for large agricultural schemes and settlements, which displaced nomads from the best or most desirable areas of their traditional pastures. This greed for land grabbing, with all impunity, dealt a lasting blow to traditional peasant farming. The subsequent destruction of peasant and pastoral societies forced the poor southern farmers to wander into the cities and thus helped to swell the number of urban poor.

As the displaced southern peasants migrated into the cities, they were treated as undesirables- beggars and criminals. Brutal acts against the traditional cultivators and pastoralists were swift. Victims of famine and drought who moved into "wet zones" for survival were intercepted by the army. These helpless, poor, and displaced peasant farmers had no choice but to move into towns and cities, relief centers, to beg, do petty jobs, hope on charity and handouts, and in some cases, steal or engage in prostitution to survive. Worse still, homeless victims of the displacement called "Shamasa" were rounded up in police raids called "Kasha." These raids were the collective aftereffects of the Islamic/ Sharia policies of the regimes of General Abdoud (1958), Colonel Mohammed Jaa 'fer Nimeiri (1983), and Sadiq-al-Mahdi (1985).

TOWARD AN ISLAMIC HEGEMONY

The Sudan may be accurately described as a complex and multi-religious society. Yet, Islam remains dominant over other minority religions, mainly practiced by the black southern Sudanese who refuse to recognize the supremacy of Islam. Ethnic and religious diversity has generated a fierce resistance in the form of civil war against the Islamic state of the Sudan. Indeed, the self-government statute of 1953, as well as Sudan's constitution, which was promulgated in April 1973,

guaranteed freedom of religion. But, in practice, it is a different story as the minority religions are disadvantaged.

Based on strict enforcement of dress codes, the compulsory study of the Quran, and discrimination against non-Arab speaking Sudanese, Islamic fundamentalists, under the aegis of the National Islamic Front (NIF), have advanced the cause of Islam through educational institutions and government. The effort at "Islamization" of the Sudan is most dramatic and equally felt in the South, where Muslims are in the minority but can practice their religion without regard to other minority religions through the support of government institutions and policy. This has been done through the codification of Islamic law known as Sharia. Under Sharia, it is a crime to break Islamic codes.

Strict application of Sharia also makes it a crime to practice other religions outside Islam. There are reports that in certain occasions, non-Muslim judges have been moved from the South to areas of the country where they have been assigned low-level assignments such as traffic court duties. In contrast, several new judges with strong affiliation to the NIF have not only retained their jobs, but have been transferred to high visible judicial appointments, even though they have little or no legal education.

In actuality, the constitution and other enabling legislation have been manipulated by the Sudanese authorities to confer supremacy to Islam to the detriment of other inferior religions. According to the U.S. Department of State (1994), the constitution of the Sudan states that "all persons shall enjoy the freedom of faith and the right to perform religious rites within the limits of morality, public order, and health as required by law."

The Sudanese Criminal Act of 1991 incorporated Sharia (also spelled Shari'ah) into the criminal code of the Sudan. The Act also makes the abandonment of or defection from Islam punishable by flogging and, where possible, by death. Under the provisions of this edict, Islamic sects are allowed to perform religious rites and crusades designed to convert prisoners and possibly the Sudanese Christians to Islam. Even abandoned and/ or missing children whose parents' whereabouts are unknown are considered Muslims and can only be adopted by Muslims. Other provisions of the act consist of the administration of harsh penalties for alcohol production, consumption, and abuse, and strict conformity of women to proper attire and apparel in public places. There is also a prohibition against certain strands of interfaith marriages. For example, a male Muslim may be allowed to marry a non-Muslim, but a marriage between a Christian male and a Muslim female is forbidden.

The Missionary Societies Act of 1957 requires the immediate registration of all churches in the Sudan. Under the provisions of the Act, all non-governmental agencies are required to register with the Ministry of Social Planning, which has the discretion to reject or accept any application and registration statuses of any churches that want to operate in the Sudan. The Minister in charge of Social Planning can, under the provisions of the decree, dissolve any churches whose

registration applications are denied within 90 days of such rejection. This is another device whereby the Islamic-dominated state of the Sudan exerts control and influence over minority religions and practices.

The Missionary Societies Act of 1957 posed a stumbling block to an unfettered worship of diverse religions by non-Muslims. Under the provisions of the Act, the government of the Sudan could deny Christian and other non-Muslim faiths permits to build new churches. Additionally, under the guise of this law, stringent requirements for licensing missionary groups to operate in the country, as well as the issuance of work permits for foreign missionaries, have been relaxed. Based on the provisions of the Act, the Sudanese government has been able to indoctrinate military trainees, pressure prisoners to embrace Islam for the benefit of a general amnesty, and, in some instances, withhold food assistance, welfare services, and humanitarian aid to non-Muslims unless they convert to Islam. The revocation of the missionary Act of 1962 in the fall of 1994 by executive order did not make any difference, as the Act was only in the book as a mere slogan. But the free exercise of religion in the Sudan is just rhetorical because it is not enforced, despite its existence in the books.

Religious indoctrination became a common practice in the Sudan. African Christians and Animist children, who are overwhelmingly the inhabitants of the Southern Sudan, are targets of ongoing ethnic and cultural cleansing by the Islamic government of Sudan. According to the 1995 survey by the Catholic World Report, the Sudanese government has engaged in a practice of snatching the Sudanese Christian children from public places and then detaining them in government camps.

Contrary to the official Sudanese government claim that the camps are designed to provide food, shelter, and vocational training to vagrant children, the camps are known to have forced the children from their parents to military camps, where they are given military training, indoctrinated, and persuaded to convert to Islam, assume Muslim names, and quote and study the Koran daily. Violence against women became a common occurrence. The News Network International, in its 1993 and 1994 reports, chronicled several incidents of violence against Christians in the Sudan. Included in the reports are cases in which Muslim fighters in the war theaters (War zones) rape and torture Christian southerners. In other cases, government agents withhold medical care, food, clothing, and other services from refugees, mostly southern animists and other members of minority religions, unless they convert to Islam. Other practices include the burning down of non-Islamic churches in predominantly Christian areas of the Southern Sudan, stoning of Christians without fear of retribution, and assaulting catholic nuns, priests, and pastors.

Other examples of severe persecution suffered by Christians at the hands of the Islamic-dominated State are in the areas of employment and housing discrimination. There is overwhelming evidence that black Christian school leavers are unable to secure employment, as opposed to their Muslim counterparts, who

receive multiple job offers upon graduation. In some other situations, the Sudanese Christians, more than Muslims, are subjected to more rental scrutiny and discrimination as most Muslim landlords, especially in choice areas of Khartoum, the capital city, refuse to rent to them or even ask for years of rent in advance.

POST-INDEPENDENCE REGIMES AND POLICIES

After independence on January 1, 1956, General Abboud (1958 – 1964) seized power and ruled the Sudan from 1958 to 1966. He pursued the policy of “Arabization” and was deposed in 1964. The Sudan then experienced a period of instability between 1966 and 1968, as its search for a peaceful and stable regime became elusive. In its place were a series of caretaker, transitional, or provisional governments with no good handle of things, until Col. Jaa Nimeiri (1969 – 1985) seized power in 1969 and declared an Islamic state with its policies based on Sharia/ Islamic Law. This law was characterized by amputations, stoning, and public floggings for breaking the law by fornication and stealing. Pressure from resistance movements in the South forced Nimeiri to the negotiating table.

Hence, the Addis Ababa Accord was negotiated. The agreement was named after the Ethiopian Capital, Addis Ababa, which served as its venue. The accord gave regional autonomy to the South to end the civil war. However, Nimeiri betrayed this accord when he redrew the southern borders to include the Bentiu region, where oil was found in the North in 1983. Under Nimeiri, several failed mutinies took place. The most notable was the one at the garrison of Bor, in which the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), led by Col. John Garang, found expression. Col. John Garang believed in a national constitutional conference to agree on a secular and democratic constitution for the Sudan. Col. Garang was killed in a plane crash as the Vice President of a Unity Government.

Sadiq al-Mahdi (1985-1989) succeeded Nimeiri as the leader of the Ummah party and Prime Minister. Al-Mardi signed the Koka Dam agreement in Ethiopia in March 1986. The agreement outlined the formula and framework for a lasting peace in Sudan, including the convening of a constitutional conference. However, Mahdi abandoned the Koka Dam agreement and pursued the military option against the Southern resistance. In January 2004, John Garang and Bashir signed a power-sharing peace agreement in Kenya. The agreement culminated in John Garang being sworn in as Vice President of the Sudan. Following the death of Garang in a helicopter crash in August 2005, another Southern rebel commander and close confidant of Garang, Salva Kiir Mayardit, was chosen as Garang’s successor.

In 1993, Omar Hassan Al-Bashir assumed leadership of the Sudan. As the current President of the Sudan, Al-Bashir imposed Sharia and the harsh new Criminal Act. Upon ascending the throne, he immediately declared a state of national emergency and suspended the constitution. He is now reeling from the disturbances caused by the sudden and suspicious death of Col. Garang, his first

and former Vice President in a Unity government. With the selection of Salva Mayardit as the successor of the late Col. Garang, and Al-Bashir's new Vice President, Sudan's experiment in nation-building and political consolidation continues.

CONTEMPORARY SUDANESE- AMERICAN RELATIONS

The Clinton Administration did not perceive Khartoum as a friend of the United States, especially after the American representative to the United Nations, Madeline Albright, referred to the Sudan as a "viper's nest" of terrorism in May 1996. Thereafter, the United States relocated its embassy to Nairobi, Kenya, after its closure in Khartoum in February 1996. Other unfriendly events followed, including Washington's imposition of sanctions after the National Islamic Front (NIF) led a coup in 1989. In August 1993, the United States placed the Sudan on the list of states that officially sponsor terrorism and supported the United Nations sanctions on the Sudan in April 1996. Although these actions instituted under the Clinton Administration did not completely weaken the Sudan, they nevertheless contributed to the increased isolationism of Khartoum. The climax of the hostility toward the United States became paramount in August 1998, when the Clinton Administration mistakenly bombed the El Shifa Pharmaceutical manufacturing plant in Khartoum. The United States had claimed that the plant was involved in the manufacture of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

The trouble in the Sudan poses a special strategic foreign policy challenge to American foreign policy. In fact, the report by Francis M. Deng and J. Stephen Morrison (2001) enumerates some of the reasons why the resolution of conflict in Sudan matters to U.S. foreign policy makers. Some of the reasons highlighted by the authors is the moral outrage raised by the war in the Sudan which has not only claimed millions of innocent lives but has displaced millions of persons, destroyed the physical and moral fabrics of this Islamic society, as well as destroyed humanitarian relief sites and networks, promoted slavery, violence, torture and violence and the massive abduction of women and children into perpetual servitude. Furthermore, the support of terrorism by the regime during the 1990s not only threatened American interests and personnel overseas but became the source of regional instability which serves as haven that make for fertile ground for terrorist recruitment and operations that threaten the security of North Africa, the Middle East and the trouble region of the horn of Africa, including American friends and allies such as Egypt, Kenya and Morocco.

Also, with the increased prospect of Sudan emerging as a significant oil producer and exporter, because of new exploration and finds, the potential for increased mass civilian displacements and human rights abuses is likely to grow. A destabilization of the Sudan is expected to trigger the intervention of new emerging regional and global powers such as China, Malaysia, India, and Canada, with a growing appetite for oil energy, as well as other emerging powers such as Sweden, France, Qatar, and Australia whose energy corporations and other

multinationals need the interventions of their nations of origin for protection. On the other hand, if, with the assistance of the United States and other Western countries, the conflict in the Sudan is amicably resolved, earnings from Sudan's oil may be diverted from fueling conflicts to nation-building. Eventually, this new development will make the Sudan a new source of oil supply to the United States. This result is long-awaited by the international community because anything short of this outcome will be undesirable and unacceptable, given the realities on the ground, with respect to the Sudan: increased oil output revenues have become the new elements that have changed the asymmetry of power, by shifting the balance of military power in favor of the government of Khartoum. With the increased potential of the Sudanese national government to wage war against the opposition, the tendency towards a quagmire appears real.

Finally, as Deng and Morrison noted, there are global implications to the way the religious conflagrations in Sudan are handled, given the fact that many non-Islamic nations of the world, such as the United States and France, have large Islamic populations. Also, several African states remain highly sensitive to religious and racial policies and trends in the Sudan. As the researchers noted, "the Sudan can provide either a constructive link between Africa and the Middle East or a point of confrontation that has destabilizing consequences for both regions." The researchers believe that the United States has the capacity to bring about a lasting solution to the problem in the Sudan based on the fact that the Sudan will likely boast of the United States as a significant strategic and business ally as well as to maintain the flow of humanitarian assistance estimated to be over \$100 million a year that is given by the United States to the Sudan. The question, in their honest opinion, on how to achieve this lofty goal, is not necessarily on capability but strategy. In the end, Deng and Morrison posited the following framework as the basis for the United States to achieve a lasting settlement to the Sudanese problem:

- a. Focus American foreign policy solely on how to end the war in the Sudan.
- b. Rely extensively on multilateral diplomatic talks/framework involving states that have oil interests and corporations engaged in the Sudan, such as Norway, the UK, and Sudan's neighbors.
- c. Build the new initiative on the previous agreement by the Sudanese government and the opposition to the declaration of principles as the basis of diplomacy.
- d. Insist on an interim agreement that guarantees a "one Sudan, and two Systems" formula that ensures a single Sudan with two viable self-governing democratic regions of the North and South.
- e. Employ inducements and pressures (carrot and stick) as instruments of persuading both sides (the national government and southern opposition) to commit in good faith and to participate in peace negotiations.
- f. Plan for a viable self-governing South, including the identification of future commitments and sources of external support, such as the United Nations, World

Bank, European Union, United Nations Development Program, and United States Agency for International Development.

- g. Assign priority in the negotiations to confidence-building measures such as cease fire, troop pullback, external monitors, north-south boundary demarcation, revenue-sharing formula for water rights, oil and mineral wealth, civilian and human rights observers, definition of residual central government powers, and peacekeepers.
- h. Resume whole operation of the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum
- i. Enter bilateral negotiation with Khartoum on terrorism
- j. Impose an international arms embargo on all parties to the conflict.
- k. Push for the lifting of UN Security Council sanctions once the requisite conditions for their lifting have been met.

The opportunities to implement the recommendations of the report by Deng and Morrison (2001) came in September 2001, thanks to the September 11th Terrorist attacks. Before this time, between 1991 and 1996, Sudan, under the leadership of President Omar al-Bashir's Sudan National Islamic Front, had provided a haven to Osama bin Laden. Even after the American military attacks against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan, the government of the Sudan, in October 2001, issued a statement criticizing American military actions in Afghanistan.

From henceforth, the Sudan became a central preoccupation of American foreign policy under the Bush administration. This resulted in the appointment of Senator John Danforth as Special Envoy for peace in the Sudan in September 2001. His mandate was to explore the possibility of a constructive role for the United States in the peace process in the Sudan. Danforth perceived quite early that the war in Sudan was at an impasse and was therefore unwinnable. Thus, in his initial official statement, Danforth recognized the importance of the multilateral approach and framework for a lasting peace in Sudan. This, in essence, was construed as a tacit official endorsement of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) framework, which the Clinton Administration had endorsed.

Danforth had stated that "the effectiveness of American efforts for peace in the Sudan would depend on our communication and cooperation with other interested countries, including the European Union and countries neighboring Sudan, especially Egypt and Kenya." Pursuant to Danforth's official visit to the Sudan region, and in consultation with all the stakeholders, Danforth proposed four confidence-building measures to help sustain a viable peace process in Sudan. They included: (a) a ceasefire in the Nuba region to facilitate humanitarian relief efforts (b) the creation of Eminent Person Group to investigate slavery in the Sudan (c) the creation of "Days of Tranquility" to administer immunizations as well as provide relief assistance, and (d) an end to air bombing raids and attacks on defenseless civilians.

There have been several previous peace efforts designed to settle the Sudanese problem. They include: the Juba conference of 1947, the Khartoum

Round Table Conference of 1965, The Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, The Koka Dam Declaration, The Carter Center Initiative, The Abuja peace process (1992 - 1993), The Egyptian- Libya Initiative of 2000, and the IGAD peace process which commenced in 2000 and appears to have been the most effective in narrowing down the differences between Khartoum and the Sudan People Liberation Movement/ Army (SPLM/A).

Nevertheless, IGAD fell short of resolving the Conflict in the Sudan because of certain salient factors. It was not until 1993 that the Heads of State of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) got involved. Their mediation attempts, with the participation and cooperation of the government of the Sudan and the SPLM/A, culminated in the signing of a series of six agreements that included: (1) The Protocol of Machakos, which was signed in Machakos, Kenya, on 20 July 2002. The agreement set forth the principles of governance, the structure of government, issues of self-determination, and religion. (2) The Protocol on Security Arrangement signed in Naivasha, Kenya on 25 September 2003. (3) The Protocol on Wealth-Sharing was signed in Naivasha, Kenya, on 7 January 2004. (4) The Protocol on Power-Sharing, signed in Naivasha, Kenya on 26 May 2004. (5) The Protocol on the Resolution of Conflict in Southern Kordofan/ Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile States, signed in Naivasha, Kenya, on 26 May 2004. (6) The Protocol on the Resolution of Conflict in Abyei, signed in Naivasha, Kenya, on 26 May 2004.

With the above peace outlines, the IGAD process appeared to have secured the agreement of the principal parties to the conflict, including the SPLM/SPLA and the Government of the Sudan. Yet, some controversial areas of dispute remain unresolved on substantive and technical details. One of those areas of disagreement pertains to the Southern border of the Sudan, where there are disputed areas between the North and South. Here, there are located, marginalized groups within the northern Sudan who have been loyal supporters as well as fighters alongside the SPLM/SPLA for several years in the conflict. The disputed areas include the Abyei district in southern Kordofan, the Chali-yabus portion of Southern Blue Nile, the Hofrat en Nahas which forms part and parcel of the Southern Sudan as well as the southern Bank of the Bahr el Arab/ Kiir River.

For historical and cultural reasons, there is a strong argument that the Nuba Mountains and South Blue Nile are different and therefore could not be lumped as an integral part of the Southern Sudan. Thus, there is a strong case made that the inhabitants of these territories be given the choice to determine whether they should be part of South Kordofan or Bahr el Ghazal through a democratic process of plebiscite/ referendum. Another contentious technical issue confronting the IGAD peace talks concerned the issue of self-determination for the Southern Sudan. Specific issues subject to resolution include: the terms and conditions under which the South could remain an integral part of a united Sudan or not. Under what territorial status it could become – a federal state, autonomous region, a confederation, an independent sovereign state or a federal state.

Some of the territorial issues confronting the IGAD group have been the position of Egypt, a member of the IGAD Partner Forum and a strong ally of the United States and the West as well as a key player in the Middle East conflict. According to the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), Egypt has taken several strong positions on the Sudan question. First, about the Nile River, Egypt has tried to maintain Arab solidarity. Hence, it has tried to make sure that it has friendly countries throughout the Nile basin, and thus was not eager to have an independent southern Sudan that could not keep or honor the existing Nile River Agreement which it enjoys with the Sudan.

Next, Egypt has been very reluctant to agree to any settlement that would result in the dismemberment or dissolution of a fellow Arab State. Not only is the policy a contravention of Arab League treaty, of which it is a key member and signatory. Any support for the self-determination/ independence of the Southern Sudan not only contravenes Arab solidarity but violates the ethos of the Arab League at a time when Arab Unity is important given the Arab Israeli conflicts and American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Furthermore, Egypt is not only an ally of the Sudan, but they share affinity as Moslem countries as well as share a common border.

The Egyptian position on the Sudan therefore raises some issues for American foreign policy toward the Sudan. One question is whether it is prudent for the United States to work in opposition to Egyptian policy given Egypt's crucial role as an ally of Israel, as well as its importance in helping resolve the Iraqi and Afghan conflicts where the United States is embroiled in a quagmire and looking for a way out.

The sole reasons for the withdrawal of the government of the Sudan from the IGAD peace talks and its eventual collapse were contained in a press release by the SPLM/A News Agency on September 3, 2002, in Nairobi, Kenya and signed by Samson Kwaje, the Commissioner for Information and Official Spokesperson for the SPLM/SPLA. According to the press release, the justification submitted by the Sudan to the IGAD group/ Secretariat for withdrawal, which of course, it disputed, by accusing Khartoum of not only an attempt to evade issues, but a pretext to abandon the talks entirely, included:

- (1) That the confederal nature of power-sharing arrangement pushed by the SPLM/SPLA was not in conformity with the Machakos Protocol.
- (2) That the IGAD group was wrong to allow the three areas of Abyei, Southern Blue Nile (Funj region) and Southern Kordofan (Nuba mountains) to be included in power sharing talks, because that was beyond the jurisdiction of IGAD, and that such areas should be under Islamic law.
- (3) SPLM's insistence that Khartoum remains neutral of Islamic law during the interim/ transitional period.
- (4) That the atmosphere surrounding the Machakos talks was not conducive given the escalation of military activities by the SPLM/SPLA forces.

With the official withdrawal of the national government of Sudan from the Machakos Protocol, which was signed on July 20, 2002, the international efforts towards a permanent settlement of the Sudanese conflict came to a grinding halt.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary history of the conflict in the Darfur region of the Sudan is nothing short of a convoluted mix of religious, cultural, historical and ethnic tensions that have made peace elusive or perhaps, complicated the prospect for a lasting peace. The Sudan was a condominium under the control of Britain and Egypt between 1898 and 1956. Before granting independence to the Sudan in 1956, the British transferred political, economic and bureaucratic power to Muslims in the north. This policy of Sudanization or Northernization in effect marginalized the South, with predominant Christian and animist presence. The consolidation of post-independence power enabled the Jellaba (descendants of Arab traders) to use this power to make a transition from traditional/ primitive irrigation to mechanized farming. This created the motivation for Arab farmers to confiscate arable farmlands belonging to Christians and animists in the South.

The displaced rural farmers and herds people who were displaced were again victims of Islamic/ Sharia law in the cities as they struggled for survival. For example, the displaced peasant farmers who engaged in prostitution and other petty crimes because of land acquisition policies of the "Jellaba" were rounded up in police raids called "kasha." Even the victims of famine and drought who moved into wet zones were not spared. To people in the Southern Sudan, Islamic religion and Northern Arabs are their twin natural enemies. Hence, Christianity in all its manifestation became their natural ally. Marginalization of Southern Christians and Animists eventually became the cornerstone of the regime policies of General Abboud, Col. Mohammed Jaa' far Nimeiri, Sadiq al-Mahdi and presently, Omar Hassan Al-Bashir.

Resistance to Islam by the South and the call for a secular and democratic constitution for the Sudan became the Platform of the Sudan people's Liberation Army (SPLA) headed by Col. John Garang. With SPLA fight against southern marginalization, and resistance to Northern/ Muslim hegemony, the national government has consistently been forced to the negotiating table. Each time, the negotiation has culminated in an agreement; and each time, the national government has reneged on its binding contract whenever it served its parochial interests. In other cases, the powers of the state have been used to confer supremacy to Islam at the expense of Christian and animist religions practiced primarily by non-Moslems of the southern Sudan. Examples are not far-fetched. For example, the government of the Sudan has relied on the provisions of the Missionary Societies Registration Act of 1957 to force all churches to register with the Ministry of Social Planning, as well as dissolve any church whose registration

application is denied. This is one instrument with which the Islamic Republic of the Sudan exerts its control over non-Moslem religions and practices.

Furthermore, the government of the Sudan has used the Missionary Societies Act of 1962 to deny Christian and other non-Moslem churches permits to grow and expand, as well as use licensing requirements and work permits to restrict the activities of non-Moslem churches and personnel. Also, the government has used indoctrination and the manipulation of welfare benefits to lure Christians and other people into converting to Islam. In 1983, Nimeiri redrew southern borders to carve out Bentiu region of the south, where oil was found in the North. This move contravened the Addis Ababa accord which he signed. The Addis Ababa accord gave regional autonomy to the south as a pre-condition for ending the civil war.

Moreover, Sadiq al-Mahdi who signed the Koka Dam agreement in March 1986 in Ethiopia back-pedaled on it, when he chose to prosecute the war against the south, instead of honoring the Koka Dam agreement, which set the groundwork for peace with the south, including the convening of a constitutional conference. Even, the imposition of Sharia and the suspension of the constitution by Omar Hassan Al-Bashir when he took overpower in 1993 were all policies consistent with the British policy of "Arabization" (Northernization). The Sudanese withdrawal from the IGAD peace talks, and more specifically, Machakos protocol was a blow to the peace process in the Sudan.

The administration of President George Bush Jr. was unable to make any serious progress on the Sudan in its waning days. The new United States President Barack Obama, who was sworn into Office on January 20, 2009, could not promote, continue as well as honor the footprints of the IGAD Group on the Sudan. However, going with the clues of the Obama foreign policy doctrine, which he espoused during the presidential primary election debates, interviews, and selected speeches, one would predict that his administration would support the IGAD donor group in raising necessary funds for humanitarian aid to Darfur. Furthermore, his administration would be expected to not only lead in contributing funds for Darfur but will support the immediate deployment of an international force to dismantle the Sudanese militias to protect civilians as well as facilitate an orderly delivery of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in Darfur. However, the chance for an outright American intervention and occupation of the Sudan was far-fetched given the dire economic situation in America. The American financial position is complicated by domestic politics, including the pressures of the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, not even to mention the international crisis generated by Israeli interventions in Lebanon as well as the crisis between India and Pakistan because of terrorist attacks in Mumbai on November 27, 2008, as well as the consequent Israeli invasion of Gaza. The remaining mitigation strategy for resolving the Sudanese existential religious and humanitarian challenges should

be increased emphasis and focus on promoting inter-faith understanding, strengthening humanitarian laws, and supporting locally led peace initiatives.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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Reflections on Critical Security Studies: A Schismatic Historical Analysis

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ABSTRACT: *The article provides a narrative of the label's antecedents and its development, which has remained incomplete since the early 1990s. It provides a partial history of a label. Besides, it is partial both in that it is not and cannot be complete, in that it is partial in the way all other history is partial. 'Critical security studies' is the label. Thus, the primary claims of the main divisions set out: constructivism, critical theory, and post-structuralism, which have emerged with the literature to which the label has been applied. Invariably, the article advocates that Critical Security Studies need to foster an 'ethos of critique' in the study of security, as well as the fact that the study is an excellent example of that habitual character and disposition of individuals, groups, races, etc., or moral significance directed towards Critical Security Studies.*

KEYWORDS: *Reflection, Critical Security, Constructivism, Critical Theory, and Post-structuralism*

INTRODUCTION

The study provides a partial history of the label. However, it is partial in the context that it is not, and cannot be, complete, and in that one is not only the author of, but also a participant in the historical process. Thus, it is partial in the way all other history may be partial if the historian did not consider objectivity. The label in this context refers to 'Critical Security Studies'. Indeed, it is a label that has one of its origins in a conference held at York University in Canada in 1994. Invariably, it has been fought over as a label, rather more than it has been applied. However, it does not denote a coherent set of views, an 'approach' to security; rather, it indicates a desire.

In terms of some form of critique, it is a desire to move beyond the strictures of security as it was studied and practiced in the Cold War, and in particular, a desire to make that move. Undoubtedly, this is a desire articulated in the first line of the first book, titled 'Critical Security Studies': 'This book emerged out of a desire to contribute to the development of a self-consciously critical perspective within security studies' (Williams and Krause 1997: p. vii). Thus, the silhouette of security studies against which Critical Security Studies was directed has been captured by one of the proponents of the traditional approach:

Security studies may be defined as the study of the threat, use, and control of military force. It explores the conditions that make the use of force more likely, the ways that the use of force affects individuals, states, and societies, and the specific policies that states adopt in order to prepare for, prevent or engage in war. (Walt 1991:212).

This article traces the events that occurred as scholars brainstormed ideas for a self-consciously critical security study. In this regard, it outlines the major fault lines that have emerged among those initially motivated by this shared desire. The signs that have driven these fault lines were not extraneous but rather represent disagreements about the nature of critique, as well as different forms of critical security study. Furthermore, while the article delineates the sects into which critical desire has cleaved, it also sets out a range of answers to the question of what critical security studies might be. It is pertinent to note that a study on the schismatic history started in 1994.

CRITICAL SECURITY STUDIES

A definition of Critical Security Studies has remained complex and controversial among scholars. Notwithstanding the avalanche of controversies in definition, some scholars have made a concerted effort to define critical security studies. Thus, our appending of the term essential to security studies is meant to imply more of an orientation toward the discipline than a precise theoretical label, and we adopt a small-c definition of critical.... Perhaps the most straightforward way to convey our sense of how critical should be understood in this context is Robert Cox's distinction between problem-solving and critical theory: the former takes "prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized ... as the given framework for action, while the latter calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how they might be in the process of changing". Our approach to security studies... 'thus begins from an analysis of the claims that make the discipline possible-not just its claims about the world, but also its underlying epistemology and ontology, which prescribe what it means to make sensible claims about the world' (William and Krause, 1997: pp x-xi).

Furthermore, an emerging school of "critical security studies (CSS) challenges conventional security studies by applying postpositivist perspectives, such as critical theory and poststructuralism. Much of this work deals with the social construction of security. Still, CSS mostly has the intent (known from poststructuralism as well as from constructivism in international relations) of showing that change is possible because things are socially constituted. (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998: 34-35). Critical security studies deal with the social construction of security. The rhetorical nature of "threat discourses is examined and criticized... Critical security studies consider not only threats as a construction, but the objects of security as well... Critical security studies...have an emancipatory goal: (Erikson, 1999:318).

Critical security studies is a subfield within the academic discipline of international politics concerned with the essential pursuit of security knowledge.

Critical knowledge implies understandings that attempt to stand outside prevailing structures, processes, ideologies, and orthodoxies, while recognizing that all conceptualizations of security derive from political/theoretical /historical perspectives. Critical theorizing does not claim objectivity but instead seeks to provide deeper understandings of oppressive attitudes and behavior with a view to developing promising ideas by which human society might overcome structural and contingent human wrongs. Security is conceived comprehensively embracing theories and practices relating to multiple referents, multiple types of threat, and multiple levels of analysis' (Booth 2007:30).

Despondently, perhaps, this all too human penchant to fragment into infinitesimal and more exclusive and exclusionary clubs affects academic movements every bit as much as it does religious and political. Moreover, any society of ideas is a potential source and expression of power. Accordingly, it provides the intellectual resources around which to mobilize people as well as resources of all sorts. Indeed, the chapter will show the division into which Critical Security Studies has expeditiously fallen, one of the shared commitments of the work it will explore is to the political power of ideas. Thus, in and through the ideas that make it meaningful, the social world is produced, which are themselves inexorably social. The proximate and likely consequence of this observation is that the study of the social world is inextricably bound up with the world it studies; it is part of the productive set of ideas that make the world.

In the period under survey, the focus on the threat, use, and control of military force imposed a series of significant strictures on the study of security. Thus, military forces are indeed the preserve of the states, and consequently, there is a normative assumption that they should be the preserve of states, notwithstanding that they are not. What is more, our standard definition of the state is an institution that has a monopoly on the legitimate means of violence. In other words, by studying the threat, use, and control of the military force, security studies the privileges of the position of the state. Undoubtedly, the state is the primary referent object of security; therefore, such an approach implies that the state is the primary object to be secured.

Whatever the case may be, the various scholars who followed the desire towards a Critical security study were perturbed by all three of these basic assumptions underlying the conventional research of security. First, they wondered whether our concern needed to be only about the state and its security. What of the security of people living within the states? In fact, the standard assumption of security studies is that the people are secure if the state is secure, however, those drawn towards Critical Security Studies wondered about those times when this was not the practice: when states ignored the security of some of their

people, when they actively oppressed some of their people, or when the state lacked the capacity to provide security for its people. They were led to wonder whether we should be thinking about referent objects besides the state.

Therefore, once you question the referent object of security, you must also ask about the nature and scope of security and, thus, of security studies. However, not everyone who questioned the referent object and the nature and scope of security would be drawn to the desire for a critical security study. Security studies, as it has been practiced, provided intellectual and, ultimately, moral support to the most powerful institution in contemporary politics: the state. Against this background, those drawn to critical security studies sought a different security politics and a different security scholarship.

THE TORONTO CONFERENCE

The Toronto Conference was held in May 1994, with the title "Strategies in Conflict: Critical Approaches to Security Studies," at York University in Toronto. A variety of scholars, from both junior and senior, with an interest in security as well as concern for the direction of security studies in the early post-Cold War period. At Toronto, during deliberations at the conference that they captioned 'Critical Security Studies', started to be applied to the intellectual project that attracted participants from far and near, to the conference. It was used as the title of the book, edited by Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, that the Conference produced: *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (1997).

Thus, the conference and book were an expression of the desire for self-consciously critical perspectives on security. Still, they both worked extremely hard to avoid articulating a single perspective in response to that desire. 'Our appending of the term critical to security studies is meant to imply more an orientation toward the discipline than a precise theoretical label...' (Williams and Krause 1997:pp.x-xi). Therefore, the book served to launch the phraseology of Critical Security Studies as well as discussed some of how Critical Security Studies has come to be defined.

Krause and Williams, in their contribution to that volume, aimed to set out the scope of a critical security study, and it has served as a cornerstone in the further development of Critical Security Studies. As noted earlier, they started their case for Critical Security Studies by considering the traditional conception of security. They questioned, and the referent object of security: who or what is to be secured? Accordingly, the conventional answer to this question is that the referent object is the state: security refers to protecting the state from external threats, and the people residing within the state's territory are considered secured to the degree that the state is secured.

In fact, when scholars discuss the breadth of the early desire for Critical Security Studies, they will often make almost immediate reference to Mohammed Ayoob's contribution: 'Defining Security: A Subaltern Realist Perspective' (Ayoob 1997). He dwelt on the preliminary challenges of Krause and Williams and, therefore, queried the assumed nature of the state in traditional security studies. Ayoob argues that the state in conventional security studies is the state of the advanced, industrial North. He seeks to expand that notion of security to account for the security concerns of the majority of the world's states, concerns that 'mirror the major security concerns evinced by most Western European State makers during the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries' (Ayoob 1997:121-122). With the critical security studies text, a range of scholars responded to this invitation in a variety of ways, laying the foundations for the variation in critical security studies.

Aside from the foregoing, the year after Critical Security Studies had appeared, Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde published *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1998). This book was intended to serve as a relatively comprehensive statement of what has come to be known as 'Securitization Studies', or the Copenhagen School. (Bill McSweeney 1996). The book *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* is built around two significant conceptual developments in the study of security: Barry Buzan's notion of sectoral analysis of security, as well as Ole Wæver's concept of 'securitization.' Although both ideas have aided in informing the broad church of Critical Security Studies, it is the notion of 'Securitization' that has been the more theoretically important. Perhaps 'securitization' is the most significant conceptual development to have explicitly emerged within security studies in response to the epistemological challenge noted by Krause and Williams.

The Copenhagen School has sought to distance itself from Critical Security Studies, despite this influence on Critical Security Studies. Thus, in part, this is a function of an incoherence inherent in the approach between the sectoral analysis of security and the concept of securitization. As it had developed before merging into the Copenhagen School, the sectoral approach draws primarily on objectivist epistemology, while securitization opens the possibility of the radical openness of social life. Put differently, the epistemological underpinnings of the concept of securitization do not cohere with those of the sectoral analysis of security. In yet another genre, it is the epistemology of securitization, nonetheless, that coheres with the desire for a critical security study. As could be gleaned in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, the authors argue that Critical Security Studies is informed by poststructuralism and constructivism and, as such, is open to the possibility of social change. They suggest that the Copenhagen approach, by contrast, recognizes the social construction of social life; however, it contends that construction in the security realm is sufficiently stable over the long run that it can be treated as

objective. Moreover, they resolve the incoherence by assuming long-term stability and enabling a largely positivist epistemology (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998: 34-35).

Therefore, the categorical separation of the Copenhagen School from Critical Security Studies did more than announce that Copenhagen is *sui generis*. Undoubtedly, one function of the text has been to create 'Critical Security Studies' as something more concrete and less heterogeneous than it was initially. Indeed, the Copenhagen authors discuss Critical Security Studies as 'an emerging school', and they shorten it to CSS. As stated above, they ascribe two specific theoretical positions to this emerging school: poststructuralism and constructivism. Against this background, this text, then, marks an important epoch in the creation of Critical Security Studies as something other than an orientation towards the discipline, as well as effects conceptual exclusions that are the subject of contestation, not least by scholars at Aberystwyth University, who have considerable institutional claim to the Critical Security Studies label. In fact, the most aggressive attempt, somewhat ironic, to produce a coherent approach for critical security studies has been made from a position excluded mainly by the Copenhagen School's characterization of Critical Security Studies as being informed by constructivism and Poststructuralism.

At this juncture, the attempt has been focused on scholars based in Aberystwyth University (indeed, Steve Smith (2005) calls it the Welsh School), and has found its most complete expression to date in two recent volumes: *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (2005) and *Theory of World Security* (2007). Central to both books is the work of Ken Booth, who edited the first and wrote the second. Indeed, the theory of World Security is intended to be a definitive statement of Booth's thirty-year research program leading to a critical theory of security. (Booth 2007: pp. xvii-xviii).

Booth, in these texts, explicitly argued that not everyone who considers themselves to be working within Critical Security Studies will accept his orientation to a critical security theory. In fact, he argues that the formulation of a singular 'critical security theory' is the second stage of Critical Security work. Therefore, Booth's intervention is an unapologetic desire for fragmentation. Therefore, as he contended: "There are times when definite lines have to be drawn" (Booth 2005a: 260); rejecting the broad church in favor of a single tradition aimed at giving rise to a coherent theory of security, he distances himself sharply from Krause and Williams of Critical Security Studies.

Elaborating on a critical security theory in 2005, Booth followed his Aberystwyth colleague Richard Wyn Jones, who had drawn on the Frankfurt School tradition to think about security theory in his 1999 book *Security, Strategy, and Critical Theory*.

Undoubtedly, both view the Frankfurt School tradition as essential to developing a critical theory for security studies. In *World Politics and Critical Security Studies*, Booth throws his net slightly wider than Frankfurt in identifying the tradition, adding Gramscian, Marxist, and Critical International Relations, with pride of place to the work of the Frankfurt School. Put differently, Booth drew on the range of post-Marxist social theory, particularly as it has been drawn into International Relations, with pride of place to the work of the Frankfurt School in general and Jürgen Habermas in particular.

With 2007's *Theory of World Security*, Booth's critical theory of Security was expanded. In this respect, he took an explicitly eclectic approach to theory building, engaging in *Perlenfischerie* (Pearl Fishing), following the term of Hannah Arendt. He drew from the post-Marxist oyster bed in 2005; his first set of pearls remains the same, and he is still with the Frankfurt School, the first among them. Thus, he adds a second, lesser set of ideas: world order, peace studies, feminism, historical sociology, and social idealism.

Yet, Ken Booth's antipathy to post-structural approaches to International Relations in general and security studies, in particular, manifests a common and virulent reaction. In addition to obscurantist, relativist, and faux radical approaches labeled post-structural have been called prolix and self-indulgent (Walt 1991) and accused of having no research program (Keohane 1988). Poststructuralists deny the form of foundations for knowledge claims that dominate the security studies debate. As can be imagined, this has led to much hostility toward post-structuralism... (S. Smith (2005: 49). As with its politics, the post-structural conception of critique is difficult for many to accept because, again, it is not straightforward. Nonetheless, it does not allow for finite claims and finished projects, and as students of society, we are trained to provide 'findings' and test them in a settled fashion.

In the same genre, neither Bradley Klein nor David Campbell, nor indeed several others, often also included in a post-structural security studies list, like James Der Derian, R.B.J. Walker, Cynthia Wæver, or even Michael, applies the label 'Critical Security Studies' to his work. All of them are surely and avowedly engaged in critical scholarship- fostering an ethos of critique- and much of their work is centrally concerned with security. For instance, Michael Dillon (1996) has written an extended political philosophy of security out of the tradition of French social theory, and his more recent work explores Foucault's notions of biopolitics in relation to the post-9/11 security strategies of the United States and other Western Powers (Dillon 2006; Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero 2008; Dillon and Neal 2008).

CONCLUSION

The issue of 'security' has taken on a greatly renewed significance since the Toronto conference of 1994; the Copenhagen School on Securitization Studies or distinctions; and the conceptual exclusions by scholars at Aberystwyth University, who have a considerable institutional claim to the Critical Security Label. Soviet American rivalry, during the Cold War, and the ever-present possibility of nuclear war aggravated an urgency to question security issues.

In the United States, after the events of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Security immediately regained its urgency. On the other hand, in the context of a war on terrorism, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, annual updates of anti-terror legislation, and other factors had led to the reorganization of government to provide 'homeland security, as well as issues of well-articulated and extraordinary measures on security'. In conclusion, therefore, in our present age, the issue of security is of paramount importance, and civilized states recognize it. Most states now encourage courses taught in Universities on Critical Security Studies and strategic know-how.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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A Socio-Pragmatic Investigation of Sound Communication in Ejagham Culture

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examines the intricate nature of sounds in the Ejagham culture, identifies the sources of these sounds, and explores how they serve as a means of forewarning and communicating events and situations within the Ejagham socio-cultural context. Sounds are everywhere and are nested in the sociocultural experience of a society. No society exists without sounds, and they serve as communication tools, helping humans learn to interact and understand their cultural and natural environment. This paper adopts the interdisciplinary approach of sound studies to drive its analysis. The paper employed a survey method approach in data collection, utilizing oral interviews and participant observation. Thirty participants were selected using the purposive Sampling technique. 10 females and 20 males. Other participants' demographic information includes traditionalists, farmers, traditional rulers, and the elites. The findings of this work revealed that different sounds heard in an Ejagham socio-cultural context are very significant and hold within them a socio-cultural interpretation that reflects the understanding of the world around the people who perceived them. The findings show that the sounds include birds, animals, and traditional instruments. The Ejagham people interpret these sounds as representations of events and happenings around them. These sounds, therefore, are used as a system of communication independent of speech. This article aims to highlight the uniqueness of Ejagham sound ecology and the crucial role these sounds play in communication within Ejagham society.*

KEYWORDS: *Communication, Ejagham, Sound, Environment, and Ethnography.*

INTRODUCTION

The Ejagham people are found in the southeastern region of Nigeria and the southwestern region of Cameroon. In eight Local Government Areas of Cross River State, including Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Odukpani, Ikom, Ogoja, Etung, Akpabuyo, and Calabar Municipality, and are also found in large numbers in southern Cameroon. The Ejagham occupy a fascinating landscape of savanna rainforest, rivers, and uplands, bringing them closer to nature. This natural habitat exposes the Ejagham people to different types of sound produced by humans, instruments, nature, especially birds and animals. The

different types of Sound in Ejagham culture are believed to communicate specific information interpreted and understood by people, and they serve as communication tools. The Ejagham people are a traditional group known for their unique cultural practices, which include the mgbe (leopard), nsibidi ideograms, and annim female society, among other aspects of their culture. The population is estimated at about 222,000 according to the 2006 census.

Communication is generally defined as the imparting of information (Webster's, 2001). It can also be seen as the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, by speech, signals, writing, or behavior (American Heritage, 2000). Communication can be Linguistic, meaning communication through language, which is the system of arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols America Heritage, 2000). When a person is using language, he/she is using a rule-governed communication system to represent his /her thoughts and feelings to members of his /her community that share his /her language (Valli, 2000). Non-linguistic communication, on the other hand, is the imparting of information without using language (Vicars,2001).

Consequently, Sound from Non-Linguistic acoustics has both communicative and cultural implications. Newman and Sacks (2023) contended that over the past decades, sound studies scholars have drawn heightened attention to show how sound shapes both the everyday behavior of man and how exceptional sound is a critical route for constructing relationships between the individual, the society, and the wider world. Sound is said to have manifold manifestations as a social force and formation; its diversity in the African context is a subject of a multidisciplinary approach (Newman & Sacks,2023). Cobussen (2013) argued that the world is not for the beholding, but it is for hearing; it is eligible, but audible. They further explain why, "science has always desired to monitor, measure, abstract and contrast meaning, forgetting that life is full of noise... work noise, noise of man, noise of beast, noise bought, and noise sold or prohibited, nothing essential happens in the absence of noise." The fact is that noise affects and relates to industry, social justice, technology, nature, and the urban environment, and is culturally constructed(Graper,2023).

Many studies have been devoted to sound, approaching their investigation from a specific corner and interest. We are surrounded by sound every day, and this constitutes a domain of research interest across various disciplines. For instance, the debate about noise places the sonic environment at the center of the question about cityness and has aroused the interest of Joella Bitter's paper, which attempts to explore the knowledge of the repertoire of how human Non-Linguistic acoustics is crucial to communication, specifically in the Ejagham cultural setting. The present study, however, attempts a socio-cultural exploration of acoustic sound in Ejagham cosmology and how the people interact with sound as a means of communication.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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<https://pacafng.org/jacad/>

This paper adopts the interdisciplinary approach of sound studies as its theoretical basis to drive its analysis. Sound studies is a multidisciplinary approach that deals with sounds from numerous perspectives (Worthington & Bodie, 2020). Sound studies touch on important themes such as noise and silence, media and reproducibility, listening, voice and disability, culture, community, and the meaning of sounds across cultures (Stern, 2012). Due to its complexity, the study of sound and acoustics can be fully understood from different perspectives. Its multidimensional approach (including historical and cultural context) (Thompson, 2020) explores the various aspects of sounds as well as their impact on society. Every sound heard matters and carries a culturally significant symbolic load (Hugh & Rice, 2024), and there is no such thing as absolute noise.

The sound study, in its initial stage, has been restricted in scope, focusing on the emergence of the concept of sound in Western modernity, with an emphasis on the development of sound technologies. However, in recent years, the scope of inquiry has been broadening to cover areas such as music, anthropology, and sound art, among others. Many studies on sound were centered on the idea of "soundscape", architectural acoustics, nature sounds, deafness, loudness, and voices, especially, in Johnathan Stern's (2023) book, "Audible past", Jacques Attali's "Noise: The political economy of Music"(1985) and R. Murray Schaefer's "The turning of the world"(1977). Coubussen (2013) and LaBelle (2007) studied the sound in relation to life and society. The current Study adopted this approach to offer insight into the role of sound in the Ejagham cultural context as an attempt to understand the source and the communicative relevance of the sound.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted among native speakers of Ejagham found in a contiguous area covering the Southwest region of the Republic of Cameroon and the South-South region of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In Nigeria, the people are predominantly found in eight Local Government Areas of Cross River state. These include Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Calabar Municipality, Etung, Ogaja, Ikom and Odokpani Local Government Areas. The study adopted the qualitative design method to gather data for the research since the research is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research typically relies on four methods for gathering information, which include participating in the setting, observing directly, conducting in-depth interviews, and analyzing existing materials or documents. For this study, the researchers employed participant observation and conducted in-depth interviews with selected Ejagham individuals. The researchers held in-depth interviews with 30 interviewees spanning both sexes and ages. The interviews were structured in a nature-based approach to achieve the aim of the study. Additionally, the researchers interacted freely with native Ejagham speakers to observe their use of sounds in conveying messages within their culture.

RESULT/ DISCUSSION

The research explores two sources of sound in Ejagham culture that play a key role in communication. However, Sound in the Ejagham culture can be produced from different sources, but the study concerns itself with instruments, animals, and birds. From instruments such as òfírikó (the traditional flute), èyúk (the wooden gong), òkám (drum, including various sizes of drums), and ngùn (a dain gun), each of these instruments produces a sound that conveys specific information to the people. Ejagham people adjudge the sounds made by certain birds in many instances to communicate specific information, and the information encoded in the sound allows the individual to be alert and take precautions or take a particular action. The implication of this sound interpretation is that it keeps people informed about events that are about to happen. Some of the animal sounds that have cultural implications in Ejagham society are the èkúknkók (cock crow). In the Ejagham socio-cultural context, the crow of a cock is used to determine the time of the day, primarily, at 5 A.M, it signals the dawn of the day. It serves as a traditional alarm of the community. The crow of the cock at odd hours, for instance, 9 or 10 P.M suggest an ill omen and in many cases, the death of someone.

Similarly, the consistent screaming of íkómé (squirrel) at the corner of a bush is interpreted as a warning of the presence of a snake. This helps the individual to avoid a snake bite. Additionally, the ékú (owl) is a bird that, according to the Ejagham people, is believed to have a strong connection with witchcraft, and it is therefore abhorred by them. The sound of the owl is taken to mean the sound of a witch or a wizard. Often, this sound is met with a severe rebuke by the people. Òsarí persistent (type of a bird) is believed by the Ejagham socio-cultural setting to have the capacity to forewarn. It is culturally believed among the Ejagham people to be a warning to you of a possible danger ahead or to look out for something good ahead. Gunshots in the Ejagham community communicate an essential message to those in the farm and at the outskirts of the community. The guns are not used within the community; they are used for hunting in the forest, and as such, gun shots heard in the forest suggest the killing of an animal by a hunter. This message is consistent in the Ejagham cultural setting that a gunshot in the bush communicates the message that a hunter killed an animal. However, gunshots heard in the community multiple times communicate information that a significant event has occurred, usually a celebration.

Sounds from instruments in the Ejagham culture that possess communicative capabilities are the èyúk and the òfírikó. The èyúk is a source of sound in Ejagham culture that is used to inform the community of events or happenings in the community. A skilled player often plays it and produces accurate sounds that communicate the event. When the sound of èyúk is heard, it can only speak two things: the death of an influential person in society or a celebration. Either way, it depends on the skill of the player to produce the sound that communicates the event appropriately. Òfírikó, on the other hand, is a traditional flute that, when it is played, means an invitation to the warriors and brave men in preparation for an act that requires bravery. It also refers to an event that suggests what is termed "òsénghè" in Ejagham philosophy. This concerns a situation that connotes oppression, sorrow, and tears. This typically attracts a specific type of action.

CONCLUSION

The study explored the concept of sound in the cultural life of the Ejagham people. It established that the sounds of humans, animals, birds, or other cultural items played a crucial role in the socio-cultural life of the Ejagham people, as they communicated various types of messages, including positive, negative, and warning or cautionary messages, and alerted them to a particular action for any eventuality. It is further discovered in this research that all sounds made by humans, animals, birds, and Ejagham cultural instruments signal a potential message and action. From an artistic perspective, and within the context of the Ejagham socio-cultural setting, sounds extend beyond words and music. These sounds are used in communicating events and significant happenings. It is understood that the correct interpretation of sounds protects the individual from harm, helps them take the right action, and safeguards their environment and life. The research, therefore, concludes that the different types of sounds have profound socio-cultural implications for the Ejagham people's perception of the world around them.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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Name and Naming in Ayobami Adebayo's Stay With Me: An Onomastic Exploration

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ABSTRACT: *The study examines the onomastic landscape of Ayobami Adebayo's "Stay With Me" (SWM), exploring the significance of names and naming patterns in the novel set in a Yoruba locale of South West, Nigeria. By analyzing selected characters and recurring naming motifs, the study explores how these linguistic elements contribute to the overall themes and character development in the novel. The research further investigates symbolic and allegorical meanings associated with names, their relationship to the cultural and historical context of Yoruba, so much so that an individual's name is considered his primary identity. Through a close examination of the onomastics of SWM, this study reveals how names are employed in the novel to lend meaning to specific phenomena and explain certain situations that unfold during the interaction among the selected characters. Research indicates that names have an impact on the portrayal of character and behavioral patterns of the individuals being identified.*

KEYWORDS: *Onomastics, Ayobami Adebayo's Stay With Me, Yoruba Naming Pattern, Names, Anthroponomy.*

INTRODUCTION

The book *Stay With Me* (SWM), the enriching debut work of Ayobami Adebayo, is predominantly set in a Yoruba locale in South West Nigeria. It reveals the story of two passionate lovers, Akinjide and Yejide Ajayi, who met as undergraduates at Ife University in Nigeria and got married amid political upheaval in the country. Although they had vowed nothing was going to come between them, they were weighed down by the issues of barrenness and childlessness after having waited for four years after marriage. These challenges were further compounded by family and societal pressure, which led to diverse and intriguing issues of deceit, despair, denial, death, disappointment, separation, and sorrow. It celebrates human frailty, leaving the readers to catch their breath at unfolding events. The book *SWM*, is a highly celebrated one that has won several awards.

The novel has been researched severally by Azizah (2019), Adam(2020), Gbadeges in (2023), Abianji-Menang (2024) and Yeboah *et al*(2024), where emphasis were laid on issues of feminism, masculinity, infertility, childlessness etc. with little or no attention paid to names/naming in the novel, except cursory references to characters, in a bid to discuss the thematic concerns of the work. However, Alexander(2018), in her book review of the text, mentioned the onomastic dimension of the work, but this was not an exhaustive treatment. This dearth of literature on the onomastic study of the work needs to be arrested, as a reading of the material reveals that issues of names and naming are cleverly and exhaustively treated/woven around the work. Indeed, Osawale (2018) has stated that names reflect people's language and culture; hence, novelists often capture their socio-cultural background, the society in which their texts are set, or the background of their fictional stories. Moreover, Odebunmi (2008) also asserts that examining names in literary works can provide insight into the text, as literary names are often closely associated with the author's thematic concerns and visions. Also, Nicolaisen(1982) declared that the study of names in literature (usually referred to as literary onomastics) has become increasingly popular as scholars have found that character naming in literary work implicitly contributes to character depiction and that some literary writers purposefully name their characters to serve a particular function. It is against this backdrop that we want to explore naming techniques in the literary work, *SWM*, by Ayobami Adebayo.

This article examines the functions, form, and significance of the selected names in the text and Yoruba society in which the book is located. It also analyses how the selected names contribute to the themes of the work and how they reflect the cultural and historical context of the work.

LITERARY ONOMASTICS

Literary onomastics is an interdisciplinary approach that analyzes names in literature using methods of linguistic and literary criticism (Nicolaisen, 2015). The field examines the usage, functions, and formation of names in literature and how an examination of names can add to an understanding and appreciation of the literary work. Moreover, Ngubane (2013) states that Literary Onomastics examines the structure of names, what the name means, and how naming is used to construct identities that reflect the social and cultural realities of their society. It thus studies names as linguistic signs, etymology, and lexical associations.

Indeed, Bailey (2017, 2 & 3), while answering the question on the importance of names in a fictional character, says amongst others, that a character's name is the symbol of their identity and that the meaning behind and reason for their names are central to developing the character. Moreover, names evoke a specific image in people's minds and play a significant role in identification and memory. It deals with answering such questions as: What is the reason behind the names in the book? Why were the names chosen for the character? What are the stories behind the names?

Furthermore, Windt-Val (2012) states that the writer highlights the close connection between a person's given name and their sense of identity and self. Authors use personal and place names in a literary universe to give the impression of being authentic. Names, as stated by different authors, are significant both as a source of information for the reader and in making the characters real to the authors while writing. It has been stated that the parents' choice of name for a child influences the development of the child's personality. Thus, the author, as the 'parent' of the characters in a literary piece, will have a purpose for naming the characters. The names in the novel generally convey essential information about various aspects of the characters' family history, social background, beliefs, attitudes, social status, and relationships between the characters.

Nouh (2022) states that in literature, the proper name is symbolic of different things: character, status, and identity. To him, names do carry out the function of characterizing at times. The story will have more depth if the reader has an explanation within the course of events for why characters were named in that way. However, even if the subject never comes up within the story, it still adds to the atmosphere of the story and to the impact it may have on the readers.

Osawale (2018) says that proper names are not empty markers for reference, as they may also carry specific added meanings, though imprecise, and are nonetheless an essential and fundamental aspect of the proper name. In literature, character names have the same importance as names in life. They help the readers visualize the characters. Names are identities to characters through an intertwining of language and culture. The identity may mirror the expected character, roles, and circumstances surrounding conception and birth, or reflect the worldview of the society.

Furthermore, Al-Zumor (2009) agrees that there is a strong bond between a language and cultural practices, and how language functions as a cultural resource that is seen as a tool to view and understand the worldview of society. Personal names are an aspect of the language, and literary artists set their work in specific societies and use available names in the society to achieve purposes.

NAMING AMONG YORUBA PEOPLE

Among the Yoruba people, where the novel is set, names are not just ordinary referents. Name-giving is considered a spiritual and highly celebrated practice, as parents/elders in the family consider various factors, such as the circumstances before, during, or after the child's conception, gestation, and birth, as well as the family's occupation or preoccupations, religious background, and beliefs. Indeed, conception of a child immediately after marriage is always a thing of joy, and naming ceremonies are a period marked with jubilation. In the traditional Yoruba society, the more children one has, the merrier for the individual, and childlessness is seen as a taboo.

Akinola (2014) makes the following observations on name and naming amongst the Yoruba people: It possesses the ability to predict the child's path

in life as names are profound; It is meaningful and can influence a child's lifestyle; A Yoruba child usually has more than one name because extended family members and well-wishers are given the honor to give names. In their analysis of Yoruba onomastics and translation, Akanmu and Adeniyi (2022:179), like Adeleke (2020), Adeniyi (2017), Babalola and Alaba (2003) categorize Yoruba names into i) family name (Orukoidile) ii) Child's given name (Orukoabiso) iii) Abiku's name (A child predestined to die) iv) Praise name (Orukoinagije), and v) predestined name (Oruko Amutorunwa). Other scholars, such as Ikotun (2014) and Ogunwale (2015), have also explored the social and pragmatic use of Yoruba names, further underscoring the great importance that Yoruba attach to names and naming as a social practice.

RESEARCH REVIEWS ON ADEBAYO'S *SWM*

As stated earlier, the research articles on *SWM* have emphasized issues of infertility, barrenness, and feminism. Abianji-Menang (2024) examines the challenges of infertility as a major reproductive health problem that brings shame and leads to social exclusion of women in Sub-Saharan Africa in the novel. Also, Yeboah *et al* (2024), leaning on the theories of feminism and masculinity, sought to expose the neglected aspect of infertility in the novel *SWM*. Azizah (2019) examines the discourse of women dominating women in the book. It analyses a childless woman's condition being oppressed, objectified and subordinated by other women in her surroundings using Star Hall's Representation Theory linked to Michel Foucault's Discourse Analysis.

Adam's (2020) work critically examines selected works by three twenty-first-century African writers, one of whom is Adebayo. It provides a sociological grounding to analyze these works, which are based on issues and events in the lives and experiences of African women, exploring the persistence of cultural expectations in marriage, sexuality, and motherhood, and the devastating consequences for African women. The work concludes that African women are disadvantaged in marital relationships because of unfair cultural demands. It recommends an improvement in the social status of African women through greater access to superior education.

Gbadegesin (2023) focuses on the struggles of the non-virile man in a culture where his existence is deeply rooted in virility. Using Corpus Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, the pronoun 'I' and its N-Gram realizations were employed to express the male character's struggles with infertility in *SWM*. These reviews reveal the dearth of literature on the onomastics of *SWM*, hence, the rationale for this study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study uses the theoretical framework of Anthroponomastics to examine names in the selected Nigerian novel. Anthroponomastics is a field under Onomastics that explores the study of proper names, especially the study of their forms and uses. It uses literary onomastics, an interdisciplinary area that investigates proper names in literary work using methods of linguistics and literary criticism. It deals with the significance of names in drama, poetry,

prose fiction, and folklore (Alvarez-Altman et. al, 1981,iii). Ours is the linguistic dimension as it examines the etymology, lexical, and semantic associations. We are interested in the names as a fact of language and as a part of the text.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this paper were obtained from *SWM* by Ayobami Adebayo. The text was read repeatedly to understand its contents. Character names reveal characters' roles, and those that have significant onomastic implications in the novels were identified. Exhibits from the work that reveal character depictions were taken from the primary source. We selected key characters whose names are more central to the narrative and have greater significance to the themes and plot, thus creating relevance to our research objectives and ensuring in-depth analysis. Data were further treated using a content analysis method. Here, the researchers read the work, examined character depiction, and then explained it by reviewing the character naming method used. Thus, we identified the meanings of the characters' names by examining their semantic and lexical meanings and evaluated whether they are related to the characters' roles and theme(s). Analysis was influenced by the researchers' experience as users of Yoruba as a first language. Indeed, in an interview with *The Guardian*, Adebayo admits that the novel was influenced by the Yoruba language (Omoyele, 2017).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This aspect deals with an onomastic analysis of selected characters in the novel. The etymological, lexical, and semantic explanations of the characters' names are identified and linked to their roles and character portraits.

A-YEJIDE

Yejide is the first name of the main character, from whom we hear most of the events in the story, with the use of the first-person point of view. The name in Yoruba culture refers to a female child born after the death of the maternal grandmother or mother. In the book, it relates to the main character, Yejide, whose mother died after her delivery (extract 1). This affirms Windt-Val's (2012) belief that the name given to a character enables the readers to know that character's personality and actions. The text shows that the author explicitly gave the name because of this circumstance. Yejide is a Yoruba name meaning 'Mother has resurrected'. Morphologically, it is rendered IYA-JI-DE, Iya/Iye (mother) ji (awaken, arise) de (arrive, return).

Ye-ji-de

Morphological process: Sentential derivation

	Iya/Iye	ji	de
Linear glossing:	mother	awaken	return
Logical glossing:	Mother has resurrected.		

Extract 1

... Only motherless children, children like me, could misbehave like that. And it was not just that I did not have a mother, but the one I once had, the one who died seconds after she had pushed me out into the world, was a woman without lineage! ...(p.42).

B-Yejide Terror

This is a nickname given to Yejide due to her stubborn nature. The mention of this name helped further in her character depiction, as she had it in mind to deal with her co-wife, Funmi who was married off to her husband, Akinyele because she was said to be barren. Moreover, it was a style used by the author to develop further the story, telling us about the challenge of being a motherless child amid a polygamous setting, as we have below:

Extract 2

...years before, nothing would have stopped me from punching her teeth down her throat. When I was a student of Ife Girls' High School, I was known as Yejide Terror. I got into fights every other day... And I always won- not once, not one single time did I lose. I lost a few buttons, broke a tooth, got a bloody nose many times, but I never lost. I never got one grain of sand in my mouth(pp. 41-42).

As a motherless college girl, Yejide must have seen life challenges in school as an extension of the deadly blow death dealt to his mother, so she becomes sensitive to any act of oppression from any quarter. In fact, delivering punches to her stressors in high school was to her a psychological therapy rather than a transfer of aggression. Again, since there was no mother to report her misdemeanor to, she became a terror. At the home front, Yejide becomes a terror because she sees herself losing out to the younger wife because of her barrenness and the shift of attention by her husband, Akinyele to Funmi, the younger wife. So, toughened by her lived experiences as a child without motherly affection, she becomes hard on her husband and the younger wife by activating a defense mechanism, thereby becoming confrontational in order not to be the weeping girl both in school and the polygamous setting. The author deliberately chooses the name Yejide and the nickname Yejide Terror to give meaning to the role she played in the story's plot development.

C-Akinyele/Akin

Akinyele is Yejide's husband and the second main character, who also, through the use of the first-person narrative technique, brings to the readers part of the events in the novel.

Akin-ye-le

Morphological process: Sentential derivation

	Akin	ye	le
Linear glossing:	valor	befits	house

Logical glossing: Valor is worthy of the house or valor befits the house. Akinyele is a first name. It means 'valor is worthy of the house'. Morphologically, it is Akin-Ye-Le, where Akin depicts valor, bravery, Ye - be respectable, Yelebe befitting of Ile-home, house.

This name serves as a vehicle of communication (Akinola, 2019) to express one's ideas, feelings, or states of mind and thought expression. It is a name given to only male children in the Yoruba society. As the firstborn, he is expected to be the brave one who will bear all challenges and excel. Interestingly, the Yoruba people do not name girls with the prefix 'Akin' before their names, probably because women or ladies were not expected to be warriors or valiant in nature. However, beyond this, Akin was a warrior in the book! Indeed, Alexander(2017), a book reviewer, said Akin struggled to prove his masculinity. Thus, his name celebrates the theme of masculinity and the issues of having a flaccid penis(Gbadegesin,2023). The name/character is also used to reveal the functions, expectations, or importance of the firstborn in the Yoruba society, which further added to his desperation to have a child. Mkaudize (2020) states that writers make use of characters' names to communicate thematic aspects and reinforce the role that those characters play in literary work.

Extract 3

'I'm Akinyele and everyone calls me Akin,' he said. (p.184)

Extract 4

"I was her first-born son, the beginning of her strength." (p.132). Quite revealing in the onomastic patterning of Yoruba names, although he is Akinyele, he's popularly referred to as the clipped form, Akin(extract 3), probably because of the polysyllabic nature of the name. However, the name is mentioned in full when there are issues, or he has done something wrong or is being reprimanded, as we have in the extracts below.

Extract5

She sighs. 'Akinyele.' It's never a good sign when she calls my name in full. I walk across the room, sit in a cushioned chair, and wait for her to continue. (p.94)

Indeed, the name was used in full when he walked out of her mother's house in annoyance when she suggested he take yet another wife after the death of Funmi in a horrible circumstance, mainly because he, Akin, knew the issues were from him and not Yejide because he had erectile dysfunction issues.

Extract 6

'Moomi, as if you have not destroyed my life enough.' Her mouth dropped open. 'Akinyele, what nonsense are you saying?' 'Are you sick? What have I said that -?' I stood up. 'Don't call me for this kind of discussion again. Never again. Lai lai.' 'Me? Abi, you don't know who you are talking to ni? Akin?

Akinyele? Abi, you are walking away, Akin? Come back here. Akin, I'm still talking to you. Are you not the one I am calling? See this boy. Akinyele!' I didn't look back. (p. 266).

D-Olamide

The name Olamide is a first name which means "my wealth has come." Morphologically, it is OLA-MI-DE. In the text, Olamide is the much awaited first born of Yejide and Akinjide Ajayi.

Ola-mi-de

Morphological process: Sentential derivation

Ola mi de

Linear glossing: wealthmy come

Logical glossing: My wealth has come.

Yejide gave the name, although people felt it was given by her husband, Akinyele. Her naming ceremony as the first child after several years of waiting was grand, thus revealing a traditional naming pattern of the Yoruba. Additionally, she was given the name Olamide and twenty other names (extracts 7 & 8). The author also uses the name to reiterate the theme of the importance of having children. By saying her wealth had come as the name communicated, it shows children are a source of wealth. The name thus reveals the circumstances of her birth and contributes to plot development and themes. Hence, the characters live out their names. Allagbe (2016) says that writers give specific names to the characters in the literary content, which usually serve a particular function. This means characters are given names purposefully. This naming method is relevant to the culture within which the literary work is written, where names are influenced by the events surrounding the baby's birth. Additionally, Butler (2010) asserts that literary names are far more than mere labels and classificatory markers; writers can choose characters' names that are connected to the context.

Extract7

We called the baby Olamide and twenty other names (p. 123).

Extract 8

Each name was a contribution from a key family member. Even Yejide's stepmother contributed names. Olamide was Yejide's choice, but everyone thought it was my choice since it was the first name I called out. (p. 133).

E-Sesan

This is the name given to the child born after the death of Olamide, the first much-desired and awaited child of Akinyele and Yejide Ajayi. Sesan is a circumstantial name that reveals the parents' experience before conception. It is a consolation that the Lord uses the child to console, to replace the dead one. The name means (God) has avenged me. The name is usually preceded

by Olu or Ade or Oye. Morphologically, it is SE-ESAN. Se-Make, Esan-payment, revenge, recompense.

Se-san

Morphological process: Sentential derivation

(Olu) Se esan

Linear glossing: (God) Make reward

Logical glossing: God has rewarded (me) or has repaid (me)

The name, Sesan, further follows the Yoruba naming pattern, which shows the author did not just select the name randomly. It follows a naming system that involves clipping that suggests *Oluwa san mi niesan* which is "God has rewarded me." Furthermore, the naming ceremony and pattern when compared with that of Olamide were sober (extract 9). She is seen as a replacement or consolation. According to Yoruba, Esan is a form of consolation, and in the book, the child is also to console the parents. This means the author did not just name the characters arbitrarily but did so to reveal the cultural background of the work to make it authentic. In Yoruba socio-cultural setting, a woman who loses an only child after many years of barrenness or childlessness, especially in a polygamous home is seen as a reproach. She is an object of ridicule for not having a child. So, the arrival of a child in such circumstances is like a consolation or a reward for years of reproach, especially from the second wife. So is Sesan. No wonder, when Sesan died, Moomi requested her corpse for mutilation to find out when she comes in a cyclical rebirth as another child, that is, as an abiku.

Extract 9

Sesan was born on a Wednesday. There were few people at Sesan's naming ceremony. It was a small gathering that took place in our sitting room. Guests sat on dining chairs we had borrowed from our neighbors, ate jollof rice, and went home an hour after the ceremony. Moomi did not even come. ... No one travelled down from Lagos or Ife. There was no live band, tarpaulin tent outside, microphone, or DJ. There was no dancing (p. 157).

F-Ige

This is the middle name of Sesan. According to the Yoruba worldview, the name signifies that the individual bearing the name was born in the breech position. Thus, it is a circumstantial name or *Orukoamutorunwa*, the name a child brings naturally from heaven. In Yoruba worldview, being born in such a way is considered unique and linked sometimes with the child possessing special qualities or destined for a remarkable path in life. Adebayo, in the body of the text, indeed referred to this Yoruba worldview (extract 10), which makes us realize the names were not selected nor given randomly, but to ensure authenticity and relevance to the setting of the work. The message derived from the name 'Ige' is the Yoruba belief that some children are said

to bring good luck through their birth, and if evil does not befall some, no good can come to others (extract 10).

Extract 10

Sesan's middle name was Ige because he entered the world feet first. Those feet were exceptional; there was no doubt in anyone's mind after a few weeks that my son's feet were as good as they could get. Like all people with good feet, his arrival in our family was followed by all sorts of good things happening to us. For instance, Akin bought four plots of land for half the market value because the owner was swamped in debt and had to sell all his assets. That was not such a good thing for the poor man, but as with many things in life, sometimes one person's good fortune is a direct consequence of another person's ruin. (p. 158)

G-Rotimi

The writer also uses the name Rotimi, meaning 'Stay with Me'. Morphologically, it is RO(stay)-TI(with)-MI(me). The name is a complete sentence in the Yoruba language: Duroti mi, "stay with me."

Ro-ti-mi

Morphological process: Sentential derivation

Ro ti mi

Linear glossing: stay with me

Logical glossing: Stay with me

Rotimi is the eponymous character on whose name the title of the novel is hinged(extract 11). It is usually given to a child whose birth is preceded by the death of siblings, referred to as 'Abiku'. It is in the category of the Abiku name, which refers to children that are born to die, thus making it another circumstantial name. Adebayo used the name to highlight the theme of reincarnation and the importance of having children. Indeed, the name Rotimi relates to her birth situation. It also shows Adebayo uses Yoruba traditional naming practices in her literary characterization. Hence, Windt-Val (2012) states that the name has many different functions in real life, and all of these can be transferred to literature. The name Rotimi defines the African ideology of reincarnation and explication of the cyclic nature of life, which validates the African belief of a mysterious bond between the dead and the living (Lamidi & Aboh,2011).

The name also highlights the themes of premature death of children and the genetic group of red blood cell disorder - sickle cell disease. It also develops the theme of reincarnation in the work and Yoruba philosophy. Also, the name is suggestive of a cry of despair, a plaintive plea for life's shield against death. From the text it is observed the writer said the name is also used to develop the theme of hopelessness and earnest desire for a child. It is observed that Rotimi is assumed to be the reincarnated Sesan, and since

Sesan's body was mutilated, it is expected that these marks would be seen on Rotimi, but this was not the case, as revealed in (**extract 12**).

Extract 11

I did not know what to do with the screaming girl whom we were already pleading with, every day, every moment we called her name – Rotimi – stay with me (p. 210).

Extract 12

There were no incisions on my daughter's body, no lacerations, no scars, not one single lash mark from a previous life. Still, they named her Rotimi, a name that implied that she was an Abiku child who had come into the world intending to die as soon as she could. Rotimi, stay with me. It was the name my mother-in-law had chosen, a name that until then I had thought was given to boy alone. I wondered if Moomi had picked Rotimi because it was mutable. If the right prefix were added later on, it would sound normal, stripped of the tortured history that Abiku names announced. Rotimi could easily become Olarotimi – Wealth stays with me. There was no getting around other alternatives like Maku.

Don't die, Kukoyi – Death, reject this one. (p. 210). Not only did the name symbolize a desire or a fervent prayer to live, but the naming ceremony and the attendant events were devoid of pageantry or grand celebration as a result of the Yoruba belief, as seen below.

Extract 13

The day Rotimi was named, in a quiet ceremony that included only ten people ... (p. 211)

When Sesan was ill and about to die, the mother, Yejide, declared:

Extract 14

By the third day, I was on my knees praying to him in muted words only I could hear. Saanu mi, malo, omo mi, joo nitori olorun. Saanu mi. Durotimi. Have mercy on me, don't go, please. Stay with me, I ran to the bathroom and back. I did not eat or bathe (p.198).

H.Timi

This is the name adopted by Rotimi when she became older, as she believed she was not a reincarnated individual, and so, her life should not be attached to some dead individuals. This we find in **extract 15**. It is the clipped form of Rotimi. This name change is true to life in the Yoruba society, as this is what obtains when some individuals come of age. They feel uncomfortable about the names given to them because of their connotations they thus, they lessen such an effect by clipping off the part that shows the untoward message.

Extract 15

She prefers to be called Timi, says she is her own person, not a monument to siblings she never knew. I agree. She plans to change her name officially but wants to discuss it with you first. (p. 297)

I. Arinola

Arinola is Akinyele and Dotun Ajayi's only sister. The name means - Born in the midst of wealth. Morphologically, it is ARIN-OLA. Aarin- middle, ola-wealth. This is different semantically from *Abisola*, born into wealth. Arinola signifies one born amid wealth.

Arin-ola

Morphological process: Sentential derivation

Arin ola

Linear glossing: Middle wealth

Logical glossing: Middle of wealth

It is in the Yoruba world, a girl's/daughter's name. Just as the name signifies, she is also an only daughter. So, the name is chosen to suit her gender and her birth position in her family. As the only girl child, the name is suggestive of a child born in opulence, with a tacit indication of having more than enough wealth. This is expected to show in her carriage, her outlook, and form. That could also be the reason Yejide honors or respects her as she says:

Extract 16

Akin's sister, Arinola, was the only woman whose hair I wove (p. 39).

J. Juwon

This is the name of Akinyele's younger stepbrother, the son of the second wife, who was married after Akinyele's mother, the first wife. As expected in a polygamous family, Akinyele's mum says the boy is not just a threat to her first son, Akinyele, but a measuring guard to weigh how far Akinyele has gone in life. The name means- "more than them or /bigger than them." It's a clipped first name which could be prefixed by Olu, God, or Ade, crown, or arrive, becoming something like Olujuwon—"God more than them." Devoid of the clipping, the name will mean *Oluwajuwon* or *Olujuwon*, with the same semantic implication, "God is more than them."

Ju-won

Morphological process: Sentential derivation

Ju won

Linear glossing: More than them

Logical glossing: More than them

The choice of Juwon by the author is aptly selected to reveal the competitive spirit among co-wives in a Yoruba polygamous home. Just as the name

connotes in the Yoruba culture, the character Juwon was used to depict a younger sibling in a Yoruba polygamous family who tended to be better than his elder brother, and further compounded by the competitive nature of a polygamous family where mothers derive joy in seeing their children excelling above the children of their co-wives, as seen in extract 17 below:

Extract 17

Soon, Moomi began talking about Juwon, my half-brother, the first son of my father's second wife. It'd been years since Moomi had used him as an example. When I was much younger, she was always talking about him. Juwon never comes home with dirty uniforms; why is your shirt dirty? Juwon has never lost his school sandals; this is the third pair you've lost this term...How come Juwon came home with prizes and you didn't? You are the first son in the family. Do you know what that means? Do you know what that means at all? Do you want him to take your place? (p.28).

The name underscores the level of competition and rivalry that characterizes a polygamous family, where the rise of the younger wife's child is a direct threat to the first wife and her children. So, for the second wife to name her son Juwon (more than them), she has already sent a message to the effect that her son is bigger than the other children from the senior wife. Apart from courting the trouble of the first wife, she has inadvertently indicated that the battle line is drawn.

CONCLUSION

The work reveals names in the novel, depicts experiences, positions, behaviors, and roles of their bearers. They are also deployed in developing and reinforcing literary themes woven around the plot structure of the selected text. The paper examines the names of characters to show the socio-cultural factors that influence name choice and their effects on their roles, thematic concerns, and plot of the work. In addition, the work examines names, forms, uses, and varieties of naming practices/ceremonies in the novel. The study also reveals the author's understanding of the socio-cultural milieu of the Yoruba to be able to carve roles for the characters according to the semantic implications of the names he gives to them. Further investigation reveals that there is an interconnection between names cum naming system and the behavioral patterns of the selected characters in the novel, and this helps not only character portrayal but also the understanding of the thematic thrusts in the book.

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The Paradoxical Image of Women in Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialist*, *Kongi's Harvest* and *Death and the King's Horseman*

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ABSTRACT: *Extant studies on the representation of women in the plays of Wole Soyinka enunciated the subjugation and oppression of women informed by the patriarchal cultural standards. This paper questioned this prevailing reading and embarked on evaluating the paradoxical image of women in Soyinka's Madmen and Specialist, Kongi's Harvest, and Death and the King's Horseman. Emphasis is laid on their traditional roles and the "Ogunnian" concept inherent in the selected plays, highlighting the paradox that runs through the words, actions, and thoughts of the female characters. The aim is to challenge the criticism that Soyinka portrayed women in his plays merely as objects for men's sexual pleasure or evil seductresses who live off men and precipitate their fall. The research methodology is descriptive, involving a close reading of the selected plays from the perspective of Arnold (1970) Historicism, which juxtaposes the historic estimate with the real estimate of the text, and the Formalist approach, which analyzes plots, evaluates conflicts, figurative expressions, and determines how these elements affect the actions of the female characters. The female characters in the selected plays were interpreted based on their actions, speeches, and their relationships with other characters within the text. The findings revealed that African women in the selected plays, although capable of doing good and evil, are industrious and supportive of the men and community, engaging in diverse vocations, firm and intrepid in the face of tyranny, and consistent in defending their beliefs. The paper concluded that Soyinka's characterization of women in the selected plays was utterly ambivalent, yet persistent in its defence of African traditions and principles of life and growth, revealing African women as the pivot of community life.*

KEY WORDS: *Arnoldian Historicism, Formalist, Ogunnian, Patriarchal, Tradition*

INTRODUCTION

The first-generation writers, of which Wole Soyinka belongs, do not see writing from the perspective of art for art's sake. Writing for them is a way to express their understanding of the realities of the African society. In presenting the image of an African woman, contemporary African writers address the struggles of women in traditional culture during colonial exploitation and in the post-independence period. Their evocation of these women characters is, on the whole, not a simplistic separation into the old and the new woman; instead, the writers are aware of the evolving trends in the roles of women in society. They delineate their characters in accordance with societal trends.

Soyinka, in portraying women in his plays, appropriates the *Ogun* myth. Jain (2021) posits that 'Ogun' is Soyinka's favourite god as it represents the duality of creation and destruction, life and death (p.69). Soyinka attributes women's sexuality to the necessity of harvest, an attribute of *Ogun*. 'Ogun', the Yoruba god of iron, also represents the principle of duality, with both positive uses (for farm implements, vehicles, furniture, etc) and negative possibilities (guns, swords, etc). These creative and destructive faculties are inherent in the essence of the god, the central symbol in Soyinka's writing. His propensity for the 'Ogunnian concept' elucidates the paradoxical representation of female characters in his plays. Soyinka celebrates the ambiguous qualities of the god in his poem 'Idanre'. He brings to fore the positive force of Ogun

'as the motivating spirit behind a national uprising against domestic injustice and oppression ...' Ogunba (1994:2). Soyinka imbues his female characters with this spirit. Thus, they are modeled to support and fight against any act of injustice and oppression, as well as tenets that contradict their beliefs.

Soyinka's intellectual attachment to Yoruba cosmology is borne out of his exploration of the tradition. Traditional African women are perceived as witches in their firm resolution to uphold their belief, and Soyinka deconstructs this negative view of witches and represents them as capable of doing good and evil. Therefore, it is evident that his portrayals of women are structured as described in many of his plays. Yoruba culture and life are dominated by religion, and there is a strong belief that spirits and gods affect human existence. This belief affected Soyinka's portrayal of his female characters. The female characters show their belief in the culture and life, and their readiness to die defending both. Accordingly, in most cases, they are presented as traditionalists.

Again, the Yoruba language equally affects his art, which can also be seen in the language of his female characters. Their language is tonal and musical, which gives the reader the impression that the words are being chanted rather than spoken. Soyinka thinks in images which, when cracked, bring out the meaning of his ideas; thus, his female characters are strong images which the paper tries to examine to reveal the apparent paradoxical image of African women. It is also pertinent to note that Soyinka's life is inseparable from his work, so much so that his female characters are modelled upon his relationship with his mother and aunt; thus, the image of highly principled characters dedicated to a cause is inherent in his portrayal of his female characters. He is a man who celebrates life and creates his female characters in that manner, for they celebrate life and deprecate the opposite while performing their cultural duties.

Soyinka is one of the most prolific modern African writers. As a result, a lot has been written about his works, but only a few critics have examined his portrayal of women. Moore (1974), Maduakor (1987), and Jones (1988) examined Soyinka's plays from the perspective of form, structure, and features of style with no special attention to the female image. However, a few critical works done on the playwright negatively view his presentation of the female characters. Ogunba (1975) posits that Soyinka is biased against women. He questions the portrayal of Sidi in *The Lion and the Jewel*:

The Jewel of Ilunjile (Sidi) has been by the Lion (Baroka). But what is a lion expected to do with a jewel other than to destroy it? This is the thought Soyinka leaves with us at the end of this play, that is, the feeling that we have experienced a distressing waste. Ogunba (1975:40).

Ogunba feels that Sidi, with her strong qualities and youthfulness, would have been better for Lakunle than Baroka. Davies (1985) sees the playwright's presentation of women in the light of their being "...object of quest rather than as subjects in their own right" (p.89). She further states that "a feminist reading of Soyinka reveals enough female stereotypes to suggest a definite sexual bias against women" (p.90). Kolawole (1994), reading Soyinka from a womanist perspective, asserts that Soyinka's

"women are either marginalized or over-idealized without a sense of fulfillment or achievement" (p. 57). However, she states that "his depiction of women is not altogether negative in that he avoids popular portraits of timid, slavish, defeated individuals, beasts of burden in a 'man-made' world" (p.57). Kolawole (1994) agrees with Davies (1985) and argues that Soyinka portrays his female characters as "object of men's quest and or destruction" (p.58). Ekwierhoma (2006) posits that Soyinka's female characters are not structured to meet the audience agenda. She notes that modern African society sets a turn in roles and functions. As such, writers ought to shape their message towards a "women-centered perspective" (p.145). Ekwierhoma (2006) equally agrees with Davies (1985) and Kolawole (1994) view that women in Soyinka's plays are marginalised.

Having seen the various criticisms of the presentation of women in Soyinka's plays, this paper seeks to evaluate how Soyinka has effectively put to use the *Ogun* myth and Yoruba traditional culture and religion to portray the paradoxical image of women in *Madmen and Specialist*, *Kongi's Harvest*, and *Death and the King's Horseman*. In other words, it is aimed at highlighting the positive qualities of the female characters while presenting them as individuals with constructive and destructive proclivities using the theoretical approaches of Historicism and Formalism. Soyinka's presentation of these female characters has nothing to do with their gender per se, but they are images of African women, just as we have males and females with different virtues and vices. The specific objective is to highlight their creative roles to elicit a better appreciation of the playwright's placement of women in his plays and identify the *Ogunnian* trait inherent in these female characters.

Not much has been done by great scholars and critics in examining Soyinka's portrayal of women as strong and heroic characters. This paper will explore the rich Yoruba traditional culture used by the playwright to elicit this image of an African woman.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Historicism, as applied in this paper, considers all factors of society as well as the background of the playwright. The theory encourages the reader to identify with the author's intentions by proposing the audience of different periods as the standards for interpretation and evaluation. Wellek (1986: 267) posits that the "...historico-sociological approach provides the critic with a factual structure to which he can attach his perception and generalisation". The need for relevance necessitates considering historical facts in evaluating the author's work and concerns. This perception confirms the assertion that every age has its own sensibility. Historical criticism, thus, endeavours as Taine (2020) states;

The discovery has been made that a literary work is not a mere play of the imagination, the isolated caprice of an excited brain, but a transcript of contemporary manners and customs and the sign of a particular state of intellect. The conclusion derived from this is that, through literary monuments, we can retrace the way in which men felt and thought many centuries ago" Taine (2020:17)

This approach to criticism thus defines literary interpretation on a genetic model as an explanation of how a work's origin in a historical situation makes it a distinct, ingenious object. Historicists see literary history as part of a larger cultural history. From Arnold (1970)'s perspective, three factors come into play in reading a literary text: the historical background of the text, the text itself, and the context of the author's time and life.

To trace the labour, the attempts, the weakness, the failures of a genuine classic, to acquaint oneself with his time and his life and his historical relationships, is a mere literary dilettantism unless it has that clear sense and deeper enjoyment for its end. Arnold (1970:244).

In other words, a critical reading of a work of art should consider the historical relationships of the text as well as the literariness of the text. "Niyi Osundare observes the place of history when he posits that a writer must have memory to be able to create and memory is simply a product of history." Onuoha (2018:17) Greeneblatt affirms our conviction when he submits that: "... the work of art is a product of negotiation between a creator... equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoires of conviction, and the institution of the society." Onuoha (2018:18). History gives the work a class, which he calls the "historic estimate". It is on this assessment that the work may be studied to get what Arnold calls "the real estimate," which serves as the base for the other theoretical framework of this paper: formalism.

The concept of formalism considers a work's aesthetic value as entirely determined by its form. This approach to evaluating literary work focuses on how literary elements form unity and give meaning to a text, and how conflicts affect characters' actions rather than the context of its reception. The idea of having two theoretical frameworks for this paper stems from the fact that the method of formalist analysis is necessary but insufficient, as the social world of a literary work is equally relevant. Formalism as a method of criticism tends not to attach any historical significance to ideas, emotions, and the reality of art. Thus, the plays in focus are read from the perspective of their forms as well as their historical relationships. Such that words become dynamic, capable of assuming several meanings, taking up different connotations for different classes of readers.

APPLICATION/ANALYSIS

The society of *Madmen and Specialists* Soyinka (1998) presents a society in a state of hopelessness because of war. The protagonist, Bero, and his father, known as the Old Man, are at the war front, assisting war victims as they recuperate. At the death of the head of the Intelligence section, Bero takes up his position. This new position changes him that he "emerges as a cold-blooded technocrat totally devoid of humanity" Jone (1973:93). Back at home, his sister, Si Bero, continues with Bero's profession as a medical doctor, and due to her inadequacy, she employs the assistance of two female herbalists, Iya Agba and Iya Mate. These two old women prepare herbs for her and carry out rituals that spiritually protect Bero at the war front.

The rituals carried out by Iya Agba and Iya Mate revealed that the religious essence of life forms the core, both implicit and explicit, of existence, playing a dynamic role in the understanding of society. The two women's medical practice represents the earth's divine energy, a spiritual reality, far older and more powerful than the modern medical practice of Bero. Soyinka portrays these women as representing African spiritual forces whose being is rooted in the earth, and they are fully conscious that if any aspect of human existence is not grounded, it may bring destruction rather than blessing to humanity. Their character presentation explicates the assertion that neglecting the spiritual aspect of human existence leads to chaos.

The stage direction at the beginning of the play describes the two women as "sitting silently in a semi-open hut: Iya Agba is smoking a thin pipe. Iya Mate stokes a small fire" Soyinka (1998:7). According to Iyanda et al (2017), "it could be said that Hausa and Yoruba speakers do not use discursive silence in social interaction for the sake of using it. Rather, silence is meant to transfer some meaningful message" (p.153). Thus, their silence exudes the gravity of their assignment as representing the earth's balancing force. Also, Soyinka, in portraying these women handling fire, one smoking it and the other stoking it at the beginning of the play, is Soyinka's way of projecting his female characters' inherent strength and ability in handling challenging tasks. Also, their silence portrays the reflective and analytical traits typical of his female characters. They represent the earth. The earth in African society symbolizes the customs, traditions, and all that has to do with nature. Soyinka projects in Si Bero, Iya Agba, and Iya Mate's characterisation of the root and spirituality of African society. We see this belief in Si Bero's action when the brother returns from his journey. The stage direction reads that she, "*...re-appears with a gourd of palm wine, pours it on the ground in front of the door step. Then she moves to unlace his boots*" Soyinka (1998:27). Si Bero believes that it was the gods that kept her brother alive, and she performs the ritual to appreciate them. This act is the playwright's way of interpreting the traditional qualities of his female characters.

Si Bero is a symbolic character, like Sidi, whom Soyinka uses to project his ideology of the supremacy of traditional African culture over Western culture. Soyinka, in sculpting a typical image of an African female healer using Si Bero, projects his ideology of the potency of traditional linctus over Western medicine. Additionally, the playwright uses the plot of Si Bero's apprenticeship under Iya Agba and Iya Mate to elucidate the concept of a traditional African woman being prepared, initiated, and blessed for their conventional roles by the older women vis-à-vis the African cultural order of existence. This, in effect, implies that development and progress in African society follow a sequence of preparation and initiation. A disruption of this order usually creates chaos.

Si Bero's brother, Bero, who is a medical doctor, sees Si Bero's inclination to tradition as "little habits" Soyinka (1998:28). He believes the sister should have embraced modern civilisation. He thinks the sister should have embraced modern civilization. Soyinka juxtaposes Bero and Old man's characterisation with that of Si Bero to explicate the effect of "bending nature to your will" (p.31), the man's characterization with that of Si Bero's to explicate the impact of "bending nature to your will" (p.31); the individual will drift from nature to become cannibalistic. Si Bero, on the other hand, understands aligning with African spirituality and roots as a process

that gives strength and life to human existence and communalism. Note the dialogue between the siblings:

Bero: Out of your world, little sister, out of your little world. stay in it and do only what I tell you. That way you'll be safe.

Si Bero: (vehemently) Abomination!

Bero: Delicious, you heard me say.

Si Bero: Abomination!

Bero: (deliberate cruelty). Delicious. The balls, to be exact. I thought I told you to stay in your little world! Go and take tea

with the senile pastor or gossip with your old women. Don't

come out from where you're safe. (Quietly.) Or sane.

Si Bero: But at least tell me why in God's name why?

Bero: No, not in God's name- in the name of As!

Si Bero: What?

Bero: The new god and the old-As

Si Bero: What are you trying to be, Bero- evil?

Bero: Does it sound that bad? It was no brain-child of mine. We thought it was a joke. I'll bless the meat, he said. And then – As Was the Beginning, As is, Now, As Ever shall be ... world without ...

Bero: He told us. (Pause, He laughs suddenly.) But why not? Afterwards I said why not? What is one flesh from another? So I tried it again, just to be sure of myself. It was the first step to power you understand. Power in its purest sense. The end of inhibitions. The conquest of the weakness of your too human flesh with all its sentiment. Soyinka(1998:36)

Here, Soyinka depicts the outcome of not aligning to the order of existence. Bero's contact with the "new god", symbolic of modern civilisation, displaced him from nature. As such he becomes cannibalistic. However, Si Bero, the sister, represents the Earth Mother, embodying the order of existence. Bero's contact with the "new god", symbolic of modern civilisation, displaced him from nature, and as such, he became cannibalistic. However, Si Bero, the sister representing the Earth Mother, had to destroy him to restore the order of existence.

Supernatural powers enshrine the African society depicted in the play; there is a belief in the continuity of life from before birth to after death. That is why Iya Mate says that the knowledge of the herbal healing that Si Bero learnt from them had begun with others they no longer call by name." In other words, traditional medical practice is an ancient art that has been passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, the old woman represents the mythical structure of the play. They have supernatural and medicinal powers. They perform the spiritual

coordination of the society through the family. They released into Si Bero, who is younger, power, revealing that women are prepared and initiated, which enables them to be pillars in their homes. Ogundipe (2006) also posits that "The woman or feminine is also considered sacred because of her direct connection with spirits and the spiritual world. For this reason, she predominates as said earlier, in priestly roles and other basic existential rituals, domestic, public, social and political." (p.8). Thus, in the play, we see them performing this existential role of balancing Dr. Bero's excessive power abuse and self-deification with his sister's roots in nature. Dr. Bero believes that "Power comes from bending Nature to your will" Soyinka, 1998:31). The playwright's use of capital letters to begin the word "Nature" indicates his description of nature as a being, African existence. While Dr Bero believes that an individual can manipulate reality, Si Bero's characterisation. Bero thinks that an individual can manipulate existence. Si Bero's characterization projects that the existential structure of African society abhors it. This also portends that development in African society can only occur when there is a balance in existence. Soyinka represented women in the selected plays as custodian of this balancing force; custodians of this balancing force: earth. Consequently, they are the nemesis of any individual who commits the earth's sacrilege. According to Ibitokun (1994), "Bero prescribes bullets to harvest corpses, not medical drugs to save and prolong lives" (p.74). As such, the two old women release punishment upon him for his apostasy, inhumanity, and tyranny. The playwright, in projecting this action of the old women, could be read as projecting the image of women as wicked; on the contrary, Soyinka intends to portray the old women as strong-willed and highly principled, and capable of doing anything to defend and protect their course.

Another plot in the play that could be read as a projection of a negative image of the female characters is seen when victims of war are seen gambling away parts of their bodies in a game of dice. There, we find Si Bero insisting that they earn their living instead of wallowing in self-pity.

AAFA: Three and two, born loser. What did you stake?

GOYI: The stump of the left arm

CRIPPLE: Your last?

GOYI: No. I've got one left

BLINDMAN: Your last. You lost the right stump to me yesterday.

Soyinka (1998:7)

Si Bero takes away their relief entitlement because she believes that they are capable of providing for their daily needs even in their condition. A reading of the scene could project the image of a wicked woman who sees the condition of the men and yetmen's condition and insists on giving them a task to perform. Whereas, the playwright projects that African woman, representing African culture, encourages dignity in labour, Si Bero told the mendicants; the playwright projects that an African women, representing African culture, encourage dignity in labor, Si Bero told the

mendicants, "You can have work and eat. The two go together." (p.10). Here also, the playwright portrays African women as hardworking and industrious.

Soyinka also creates the earth mothers to reveal that, irrespective of the positive front of modern civilization, the problems of African nations require African solutions. Thus, most female characters in Soyinka's selected plays are symbolic. They represent themes the playwright seeks to expose.

Also in the play, we see the old woman having a conversation with Bero, and a picture of a man standing alone with his oppressive ideology is portrayed. The two old women try to make him understand how the new must sprout from the old, as demonstrated in the case of Segi in *Kongi's Harvest*. The plot presents the female characters as a force and a defender of tradition. Like Segi, they are the soil on which Dr Bero grows. For the sake of Si Bero, they try to give him a second chance to align with existence, instead of being a burial ground for him, as in the case of Kongi, until he refuses to recognize the power of the earth by killing his father. The old woman realized that he had allowed himself to become deeply involved in the military dictatorship of the society. Consequently, they destroyed him.

A reading of the plot may project the image of the female characters as the bane of men. Still, the playwright, in essence, uses the plot to project women as traditional purifiers of society. The playwright, using his female characters to perform this role, is his other way of projecting women as strong-willed. Still, the playwright, in essence, uses the plot to project women as traditional purifiers of society. The playwright's use of his female characters to perform this role is his other way of projecting women as strong-willed and resolute.

The playwright also portrays women as being strict in their approach to problems and ensuring that things are done correctly with no sentimentality. Iya Agba and Iya Mate make Bero realize that he cannot understand existence when desperate; "Your mind has run farther than the truth. I see it searching, going round and round in darkness. Truth is always too simple for a desperate mind" Soyinka (1988:58). They therefore did not hesitate to restore the society's leadership.

Historically, the redeeming or purifying role of women is not new in our society as seen in the "Women's uprising of Eastern Nigeria in 1929 and the Egba Women Uprising in Abeokuta women's redeeming or purifying role is not new in our society, as seen in the "Women's uprising of Eastern Nigeria in 1929 and the Egba Women Uprising in Abeokuta," as documented by Mba (1982).

Also, another reading of a plot in the play reveals the thin line between good and evil. Si Bero picks the poison Berry when she intends to choose the good one. The Old Woman's analysis of the berry fruit elucidates the playwright's representation of the female characters as wise. This plot illustrates that every good thing tends to be evil depending on its use. Si Bero picked the evil berry unknowingly where she found the good one, revealing that evil and good co-exist and only the patient ones will identify the difference between the two. Iya Agba told Si Bero not to destroy the evil berry because it will help her to recognize and appreciate the good one. Iya Mate, on the other hand, says, "You don't learn a good thing unless you learn evil" Soyinka (1988:17). The medicine the Old women use to protect Bero is the same they used to destroy him. Soyinka employs this paradoxical vision to highlight the natural

oppositions articulated by the Old women. They represent the creative and destructive force of the earth.

In *Death and the King's Horseman*, the Iyaloja is present to ensure that Elesin Oba fulfills his traditional obligation. She plays the role of cultural enforcer, serves as the conscience of her society, and tries hard to ensure the peaceful passage of the King's horseman when Elesin Oba tries to compromise. She is with the other market women, seeing to the traditional preparations needed for the passage of the King's horseman to the great beyond. Iyaloja denies herself comfort to satisfy Elesin so long as tradition stands. She offers Elesin her son's betrothed when he requested maiden as his last wish. Iyaloja believes in the African tradition of the dead having a hand in the affairs of the living. The Yoruba believe, as do many African people, that the living have their evil destiny changed when the dead intercede for them. She tells the other market women who questioned her acceptance to give her son's betrothed to Elesin: "You wish that I burden him with the knowledge that will sour his wish and lay regrets on the last moments of his mind. You pray to him who is your intercessor to the other world – don't set this world adrift in your own time" (p.21).

Soyinka portrays Iyaloja in that plot as an enforcer of traditional values and culture. She and the other women in the play ensure collective survival and cultural continuity. Just as seen in the characterisation of women in the playwright's other plays, Iyaloja displays good qualities: tolerance, patience, bravery, diplomacy, consistency, understanding, and leadership. On a closer look at her actions, which reflect her character, one could see that she equally shares certain qualities with Si Bero and the Old woman, such as the ability to analyse complex situations and take a right but difficult decision. Just as Si Bero, Iya Agba and Iya Mate, in *Madmen and Specialists*, Iyaloja dares to vilify Elesin who at the time is in Pilkings' custody. She says; "Who are you to bring this abomination on us" (p.68). She does spare him, neither does she spare Pilkings, who contributes to Elesin Oba's failure. She tongue-lashes the latter and impugns his armchair-knowledge of African culture.

Soyinka constructs Iyaloja's character to represent a bold defence of the African culture and tradition. Her ideological stance is borne out of a desire to ensure communal survival and peace. Iyaloja's dialogue with Elesin Oba while in Pilkings' custody depicts how firm and highly principled she is. The state of Elesin at the time is such that it deserves pity and empathy, because the circumstances are beyond his control. On the other hand, one may question, outside the African cultural context, the relevance of his death. But Iyaloja refuses to spare him. She so scorns and ridicules him that the reader would think she is a woman with no human emotions. This principled trait is a recurrent motif in the presentation of Soyinka's female characters that could be read as wickedness. Elesin's plea to make her empathise with him and appreciate his predicaments could soften the hardest of hearts, yet Iyaloja is not moved. This, in effect, portrays Iyaloja's measure of strong-willed and highly principled nature. This characteristic trait is typical of Soyinka's female characters.

The other market women in *Death and the King's Horseman* have the same resolute mind. They can carry the dead body of Olunde without the help of any man. The stage direction reads that they sway from side to side holding the "longish object"; and when finally Elesin commits suicide, "the women continue their dirge,

unmoved by the sudden event”(p.73). Remarkable is the lack of sentiment inherent in these women. They do not allow any form of emotion to override their sense of responsibility. These market women initially act as stimulants to lighten Elesin’s burden, but when he fails in his traditional duty, they are not discouraged; they remain calm and focused in ensuring that tradition is upheld just as Si Bero and the Old women.

Again, the African society depicted in *Death and the King’s Horseman* struggles with the clash between Western civilisation and African traditional culture. The playwright’s use of the female characters as a voice to project African traditional culture speaks volumes about his representation of women contrary to previous criticism. We also see similar plot motif in *Kongi’s Harvest*, Jones (1973:72) describes it as “the representation of a clash between a modern dictatorship and the traditional system which it has effectively replaced.” Thus, we find a situation where the men in the community groan under the dictatorial rule of Kongi. Anyone who opposes the system is arrested, and that is how Segi’s father and others got arrested.

The playwright portrays Segi as a fearless, analytical, influential, and beautiful woman. She belongs to a period when women no longer belong to the background. So, we find her living a life of her own as a prostitute. However, Soyinka’s portrayal of her character draws attention to the image of an African woman as a traditional activist, irrespective of the changing times. She symbolises life, for she has the Ogunnian traits in her, that is, the duality of her personality: a creator and a destroyer. The other characters in the play give a good description of her personality from their different points of view. Oba Danlola finds no word to express her character, but underlying his assessment of her is an image of a woman who is influential and affects other people.

DANLOLA: (hesitate and a far-seeing look comes into his eyes):

There was always something more, I knew.
To that strange woman beyond
Her power to turn grown men to infants
Soyinka (1967:63)

The extract above portrays Segi’s personality as proud and influential. First, he recognises her affective aura, that is, her ability to make those men do all she wants without any hesitation. Her attraction for men is specific and total. He also expresses her life-affirming potential, which is in line with her negative capability. That creative aspect of her character is what the playwright fully portrays through her revolutionary action. She can draw people to join in her plans for the revolution. Danlola’s perception of Segi’s enigmatic image manifests as she carries out a movement for socio-political change in her society, even though she is a prostitute, a position presumably associated with nonentities. Thus, we have her being described in different terms; Oba Sarunmi calls her “the witch of night clubs”, Oba Danlola describes her as “a right cannibal of the female species”. These expressions denote her force and influence, bringing to focus the playwright’s presentation of her image as one with hidden depth and great resources. The men in the play see her as an object for sexual gratification

as a result of their relationship with her. However, she possesses a character trait that cannot be understood and yet cannot be neglected. This mystical female quality is what most writers and critics project in a negative light. As demonstrated in the play, it makes the praise-singer "sing", while it makes the Secretary "thirsty". In other words, reading the playwright's portrayal of his female characters objectively will unfold the mystical trait of an African woman. Segi, like most of Soyinka's female characters, believes in the cause of her people. She is seen as a witch because she has power over men. Evidently, any woman who possesses an extraordinary quality is described as a witch.

As seen in the other selected plays, the characteristic images of Soyinka's female characters are portrayed as strategists, strong-willed, responsible, dynamic and firm. When they believe in a cause, they map out a strategy; exhibit analytical traits and re-strategize when their initial plan fails. And ultimately, achieve their goal. It is essential to note that the situations that these female characters struggle against are struggles that help to define their image, and those that question African traditional culture and values. They are also situations that threaten human existence in African society.

Bero and Kongi symbolise something evil that vitiates human existence; Bero, a cannibal and Kongi symbolize something evil that vitiates human existence; Bero is a cannibal, and Kongi is a tyrannical leader. Segi terminates her sexual relationship with Kongi because she understands sex as more than a physical union and Si Bero also estranges herself from Bero as she recognizes family relationship as more than, and Si Bero also estranges herself from Bero as she recognizes family relationships as more than a physical association. Soyinka portrays these female characters to posit that family and sexual relationships personify love, life, growth, increase, abundance – Harvest, of which Kongi and Bero are a negation.

In *Kongi's Harvest*, Segi ascribes her affection to Daodu just as Si Bero in *Madmen and Specialists* transfers hers to the two Old women. Although Daodu wants to match Kongi with the same destructive force, he is encouraged by Segi to be positive. She admonishes him: "Preach life Daodu, only life..."(p.45). Daodu tries to make her see the futility of love in a political revolution. But she is not discouraged, for she knows what she wants. She says: "My eyes were open to what I did. Kongi was a great man, and I loved him"(p.45). Similar character trait is imbued in the character portrayal of Iyaloja in *Death and the King's Horseman*. Segi like Iyaloja know that two wrongs cannot make a right and they understand their role as earth mothers. She says, "I am soil from the final rains"(p.44), and for there to be a good harvest, the soil must be rich. A good seed grows in the soil, while the soil serves as a burial ground for a bad seed. Thus, Segi becomes Kongi's burial ground and good soil for Daodu which gives him life for a harvest of peace. Her dual role confuses the Secretary, who echoes in the plot, "There is something I don't understand. This is not the Segi we hear of. This one seemed to look at you as a woman should. The Segi we know never does" (p.31). Soyinka portrays Segi as a fighter, who is as capable as radical and politicised women in modern African society. Indeed, her portrait evinces the image of women as political activists in contemporary society.

CONCLUSION

Several issues prominent in our discussion of the selected plays of Soyinka bear on the creative and the destructive powers of women, which are reflective of Soyinka's selected plays, which concern women's creative and destructive powers, which reflect the essential dual nature of Ogun, the playwright's Muse who also doubles as the human archetype. The duality interplay in the image of women has been considered in two ways. The creative capability, ingenuity, and strict nature of women generate the problem of women being perceived as "witches", while. In contrast, the insistence of women on tradition creates the situation of women being denigrated as simpletons. The former characteristics can be seen in the life of Iya Agba, Iyaloja and Segi. They exhibit a high degree of sternness to perform their roles as creators, healers, revolutionaries, or defenders of life. Iya Agba has the responsibility to restore sanity to society, and that onerous duty guides her actions. In removing evil from society, she has no choice but to hurt Si Bero's brother. Similarly, Iyaloja feels no pity for Elesin in his predicament. Her main aim is to defend their indigenous culture and ensure its continuity, irrespective of who is hurt in the process. Like Iya Agba, she sacrifices her joy, the joy of her son, and of her daughter-in-law-to-be. Segi, too, loses her father during the struggle to put an end to tyranny in their land. From the African perspective, which prioritizes communal survival over personal salvation, the three women are heroines. They overcome all obstacles to carry out their responsibilities.

Si Bero represents Soyinka's female character who insists on tradition. She may be seen as a simpleton, but she is firm, resolute and she knows what she wants and goes for it. Si Bero always, always, thinks through problems and acts decisively to fix them. The playwright's portrayal of these women is remarkably realistic, as they are everyday women. Iyaloja as the name implies, is the leader of the market women, a local woman with no special background. Yet, she carries out her roles with dignity as a true African woman, as a true African woman, she carries out her roles with dignity. Iya Agba and Iya Mate are typical old women in African society performing their routine, regular duties as traditional healers. Si Bero and Segi represent the younger generation who are struggling to survive in a culture that is undergoing a transition process. Although Segi is a prostitute, she utilises her natural endowments as an exceedingly beautiful and intelligent African woman in the service of liberating her society from despotism. Thus, it is indisputable that the women in the selected plays are people found in all walks of life.

The playwright essentially portrays the characters and their roles in a dual light, not in a derogatory but in a positive sense. He constructs the characters from an African perspective and presumably would expect the readers to appreciate the female characters from that point of view. In the words of Alexander Pope, "A perfect judge will read each work of wit with the same spirit that the author wrote." Pope (1940:60).

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