

## POST-INDEPENDENCE WEST AFRICAN NARRATIVES, THEMATIC CONCERNS AND HUMAN IN/DIGNITY PARADIGMS

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### Abstract

The post-independence West Africa is characterized with urban development, expansion of economy, love and quest for progress, desire for success and self-fulfilment, etc. Most literary writers satirize and attack neo-colonialism because most African rulers of the post-colonial era terrorize their fellow Africans. The thematic preoccupations of most works of this era are the portrayal of injustice, social ills and tensions created by the neo-colonialists. Most of the writers demand for fairness in leadership. Literature mirrors the social, political, economic and even religious ills in the society. It cautions the society especially the ruling class for failing to live up to expectation and abandoning their proclaimed objectives and ideals. The discoveries are that most West African societies are confronted with security challenges, poverty, lack of just and strong institutions that focus on the welfare of the masses, all of which are attributed to the insensitivity of the leaders. This makes the achievement of Goal sixteen of Sustainable Development Goals very difficult. The theoretical framework for this paper is Gender Theory and the selected works for the exploration of human in/dignity paradigms are Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of Savannah*, *A Man of the People*, Festus Iyayi's *Violence*, and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. This paper recommends selfless leadership and historical reflections as ways forward.

**Key Words:** Post-Independence, Themes, Human, In/dignity, Leadership.

### Introduction

Goal sixteen of Sustainable Development Goals recommends "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions". Examining this in connection with this in relation to the situation in several African states, several writers explore societal issues, projecting the artist/society in different ways. For instance, to Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian society is characterized with dishonesty. Chinua Achebe sees the artist as a teacher and thus expects literary works not only to condemn certain ills in the society, but to teach the masses the correct thing and also proffer solution where the need be. To Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, an artist should identify with his people, agitate and if possible lead revolution to liberate and also achieve the equality of individuals. To Ayi Kwei Armah, the post-colonial African

society is full of corruption and decay.

The West African writers see themselves as integral part of African society. They take it as their duty to be involved in the struggle for freedom from the oppression of neo-colonialists. Literature is very important in every society because it aids the identification of the ideals of such society. The works of the post-colonial era reflect the hopes, fears and aspirants of the writers. To a large extent, they project, with proper understanding, the experiences of the people in the society.

Some writers portray revolutionary consciousness in their works in order to reorganize and re-structure the minds and psyche of people. Such works are geared towards creating awareness in the masses to effect change in the way of thinking and proffer solutions to problems of the society. The essence of revolutionary writing is to

change the society for good. Achebe's proclamation of a writer as a teacher explains why he projects disillusionment in his novel, *A Man of the People*. In this novel, he exposes the corruption that threatens the politicians in Nigerian society. To him, the masses ought to be aware of the political reality of the society in which they live.

Wole Soyinka, a prolific writer, criticises the tyranny, corruption and even the abuse of human rights of the Nigerian society especially in war situation and its aftermath. He presents his imprisonment experiences and the Nigerian situation during the civil war of 1967 to 1970 in his novel, *The Man Died*. Most writers in West African contemporary society aim at awakening revolutionary consciousness through their literary works in order to ensure the continuity of the society.

The Nigerian contemporary writers are more concerned with the lot of the common man. Among this group we have Festus Iyayi, Zulu Sofola, Eddie Iroh, Tanure Ojaide, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and lots more. The civil war in Nigeria precipitated a new phase in literary writing. There emerged a young generation of energetic writers who out of this creative imagination mirror the Nigerian society. Their projection of Nigerian history reveals that disillusionment alienates and since after the war, it becomes very evident. These writers focus mainly on the present rather than, the past and the unknown future. They project the reality of their contemporary society.

Some of the features of post-independence Africa are an expanding of economy, urban development, love for progress, a desire for success and self-fulfilment and these are reflected in the novels of Cyprian Ekwensi. Another feature is that most of the novels are addressed to African audience unlike the previous ones addressed to white audience. Most writers write and protest out of anguish and alienation. They tend to be satirical because the deepest roots of protest and attacks in neo-colonialism is that the African rulers terrorize their fellow

Africans as can be seen in *Anthills of Savannah*.

In this era, the thematic preoccupation of most writers is the portrayal of injustice, social evils, and tensions. Some of them, if not all, demand their new leaders (Africans) to be accountable to them. In this case, literature becomes a screening instrument for mirroring the existing social political, economic and even religious ills of the neo-colonial society in order to expose the ills in the society. They demand for upholding of objectives and ideals. The evidence of this is seen in Wole Soyinka's projection of the Nigerian Society and dishonesty. Chinua Achebe projects an artist as a teacher whose duty is to teach the masses the correct thing to do through condemnation of certain ills and proffering of solutions. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o focuses or projects an artist as one who identifies people and agitates for revolution to achieve equality of individuals, as well as economic and social liberation. Ayi Kwei Armah portrays the colonial African society in *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* as one full of corruption and decay.

These writers see themselves as integral parts of African society and feel that it is their duty to be at the centre of the struggle and this attests to the importance of literature in every society to aid their identification of her ideals. This therefore calls for the restoration and celebration of the past. Most writers of this period reflect not only this hopes, but fears and aspirations in this work and these enable them to write the and depict proper understanding of the experiences of the people. Most novels and plays of Achebe, Soyinka, Ngugi, etc. belong to this category. Even South African writers like Peter Abrahams, Alex La Guma, Dennis Brutus, etc. belong to this group.

#### **Post-Independence Disillusionment and Neo-colonialism**

In tracing events in recent African society and historical experience, African writers have been acutely conscious of developments in the wake of the political independence of African countries. In general, they have presented fictional accounts of events which

portray deep disappointment with the way things have generally developed on the political scene. The general picture is that socially, politically, intellectually morally and economically, the promise of independence has been betrayed and been unfulfilled. This is as a result of brazen corruption of the moral and political focus of the leadership of these countries. Principally, the writers have directed their attacks on:

**The political leaders:** in this regard, the politicians have been presented as corrupt and treacherous to their duties and the legitimate hopes of the people with regard to honest and positive leadership. In most cases, they have come to power on false promises to the people, only to turn round to misrule them. Their goals are essentially to inherit the position and privileges previously enjoyed by colonial overlords. Having achieved this objective, they turn themselves into direct and indirect oppressors of their own people, sometimes provide themselves to be even more exploitative of their countries and peoples than the colonial rulers. They go further to collude with foreign groups to deplete and loot their nations' economic recourse, leaving the people the worse for it. They use tribal and other negative sentiments to divide the common people, thus ensuring that they are not removed from power by the anger of the general population. Morally, their lives are unclean, for their preoccupations are with money, women and power, their hypocrisy is exposed in various novels which deal with this theme. In this regard, one thinks of the politicians who people the novels of Achebe, Ngugi, Soyinka, Armah, etc.

**The intellectual class** is also prominent in the presentation of the post independence African scene. In many cases, they are seen as having failed to formulate viable and credible ideologies for the rejuvenation and guidance of the leaders and the people. But more significantly, they are often easily distracted and diverted when they enter the political arena, and end up not achieving any change within the system. But even more disappointing is the fact that a good

many of these intellectual class (academics, judges, journalist etc) go into politics, too, with ill-defined goal. Equally, the sources of their political motivation and adventures are often suspect that is their reasons for going into politics at all may be purely private and personal, with no genuine relevance to the political redemption of the country. Characters that fit in one form or other into these categories can be found in the novels of Armah, Soyinka, Ngugi, Achebe and Okara.

The common people are criticized for their dogged refusal to believe that their representatives, their political leaders, are corrupt. They are also criticized for their cynicism which makes them see politics as a game for other. Above all, they are criticised for their agreement which makes it possible for corrupt politicians to buy them over with token monetary and material gestures.

It is therefore obvious that as far as African writers are concerned, the promises and expectations attached to the achievement of independence have proved to be a mirage. These writers have been disillusioned by the acts of the various classes mentioned above who, collectively or individually have failed to live up to the historic goals of fashioning reasonably honest political and social systems for their countries. There are three basic forms of alienation: spiritual, emotional and physical alienation of man in African society.

Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is about the social corruption in post-independence Ghana under the leadership of President Kwame Nkrumah who was deposed between 1964 and 65 in a coup. It projects the Ghanaian society as being grossly materialistic. It also shows that the post-independence government of many African States have been corrupt and exploitative. The Ghanaian society portrayed in the novel is one in which the corruption of nepotism has eaten deep into the fabrics of the life of the people. The writer indirectly projects the entire African society of the post colonial era as one full of corruption, physical filth and decay on not only persons but the environment in which they live.

Several characteristics symbolize corruption in the society as can be seen in the bus

conductor, the traffic policeman, the officials of Ghana government lottery, the Minister Koomson and even the unnamed supervisor of the railway administration. Koomson's wife and mother – in – law are equally examples of corrupt acquisition of materialism. The entire Ghanaian society as portrayed in the novel not only admires but encourages corruption to the extent that it is a way of life. In view of this regarded as fools, cowards and misfit in the society. The damage done to the society by corruption is revealed through the reactions of some of the upright characters who are equally in minority.

The central character in the novel, the “man” is known for the purity of his existence. He inevitable becomes entrenched. To him, what matters in life are honesty and truth. He displays such ideals through his simple appearance and the choice of simple chairs as his house furniture. He believes that a pure and honest life gives peace. He therefore resists corruption such as taking bribe from the tribe merchant. He also refuses the shady business manoeuvres made to him by Koomson. Koomson was not only a minister, but the man's classmate who wanted to use the man to siphon the government money.

The man represents many victims of corrupt government in post-independence Africa. He desires to live an honest life in a corrupt – ridden society has serious implications. For example, he has no friend except teacher who is his character resemblance and he hardly receives guests. He avoids the company of his fellow workers and he is entrenched even from his family members who keep taunting him as a failure. He is so passive that he does not respond to the insult of the timber merchant and the bus conductor. The ubiquity of corruption in the society made him to desire comfort and peace from loneliness. He feels better at the office in the evenings when people have gone away and he is all by himself. His vindication came after the military coup when his wife sees Koomson's pitiable state. She then apologizes to the man, “I am glad you never became like him”.

The teacher is equally a symbol of honesty. He is even more isolated in the society than the “man”. He lives alone, and always locks himself up so as to have no contact whatsoever the corrupt people around him. He abandons the company of all people including that of his mother and other members of his family whom he fondly remembers as loved ones. He maintains no human contact except the 'man'. His staying naked in society symbolizes 'purity' as he tries to promote. Teacher is a pessimist who has lost all hope for any good in the Ghanaian society. Due to this, he only prepares his mind for death. He is a pathetic victim of what a corrupt society can do to someone's psyche.

### **Wars, Politics and Revolutionary Consciousness**

Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of Savannah* can be interpreted in different ways. The novel centres on three old friends and the management of a fictitious African state called Kangan. It presents the political history of Kangan in the light of the history of three male friends with western education. These three friends (Chris, Sam and Ikem) are doomed to fail due to their pattern of running the country. The novel is a satire of political oppression and ruthless dictatorship in a post-colonial African state, Kangan which is synonymous to the contemporary Nigerian society. The Republic of Kangan was four provinces with Bassa in the south as the capital and seat of government. The Abazon province in the North West is characterized with drought and is a constant source of violence (opposition) to the military regime.

The novel also addresses the issues a love and friendship, betrayal and death in which three close friends as well as school mates later become important people in the country's political terrain – Sam is the military head of state, Christopher Oriko is the commissioner for information and Ikem Ogodu, the editor of the government – owned newspaper, the “National Gazette” which Chris earlier edited. These three friends attended Lord Lugard College in their teens. The strange relationship between the press and the government engendered by the media role of the press as a watch-dog soon ensured between Sam and Ikem. Ikem uses the newspaper to fight

relentlessly the corrupt and oppressive regime of Sam who at the same time tries to use Chris to call Ikem to order through a suspension notice which Chris refused to adhere to.

Ikem, the editor, is from Abazon province, he is falsely implicated in a fictitious plot by some Abazonians to overthrow the government. This led to his removal as an editor, later arrest and being killed by security agents. At the same time, Chris who is declared wanted goes into hiding. On his escape trip to the North, there is news of the overthrow of the brutal regime and the kidnapping and killing of the tyrannical President by unknown persons through a coup. The masses of Kangan are happy out the success of the coup. The last of the trio to meet with violent death is Chris Oriko who was shot in the chest in an attempt to resume a girl from being raped by a drunken police sergeant. However, the women in the lives of Chris and Ikem in the persons of Beatrice and Elewa, tried their best to preserve the memory of the men.

The dominant theme of the novel is political oppression and military dictatorship and this is found in a typical African nation. The action that depicts this theme in the novel can be summarized thus: Before the commencement of the novel, the government of civilian politicians was overthrown. His Excellency, Sam, commenced his regime without actually being prepared for political leadership.

There is an indication in the novel that His Excellency has taken a decision to transform into a military president – the appointment of Major Johnson Ossai as the director of the state research council (SRC) in the face of all oppositions. He is to render security service most appropriate for brutality and oppression. His invention of the simplest tortures for preliminary interrogations can be seen on page 106. The beginning of the novel shows the president high-handedness of cabinet meetings. His Excellency took several notorious African dictators as his mentors and models and this was achieved through the impact of his first attendance of an OAU summit in which he made contact with such leaders.

The theme is also portrayed through his suspension of Ikem, the editor of the National Gazette, arrest and finally murder of him despite their friendship that has lasted for years.

Mr. John Kent (alias Mad Medico), a sovereign, presents the central theme of the novel. His case becomes Ikem's most sensational editorials (written in respect of the medical doctors' crisis), A medical practitioner, Dr. Ofe, demanded the sum of twenty-five manila from the wretched relations of a critically ill patient before a surgical operation could be carried on. As they could not raise the money, Mr John Kent intervened and got another doctor to perform the operation but unfortunately, because it was belated the patient died. Dr. Ofe enjoyed the support of his medical compatriots, all requesting for Mr Kent to be deported. Ikem's stout defence of Mr Kent saved him from imminent deportation.

The hunt by Chris Oriko and Emmanuel Obete the militant president of the students union of the University of Bussa by security operatives depict political oppression and military dictatorship. To crown it all, the repressive government of his Excellency was overthrown. He was kidnapped and assassinated. The novel can also be seen as post colonial feminism dealing with the restoration of women in post-colonial visions of African's past, present and future through the presentation of strong, central female characters as sources of passion and inspiration. Through such presentation, the relationship between the postcolonial independence and gender equality is highlighted.

Beatrice is a very important character in the novel due to her roles in the inner workings of the government of the three male friends – Sam, Chris and Ikem. Her capability is shown in her observation of the status of Kangan and her perspective of reality she sees the three friends as incredibly conceited ones who story constitute the story of the country. To Achebe, African societies are doomed to modes can be achieved in a situation where solutions to problem are proffered through Western ideas of achieving success. This is because the dismantling of a house tools. In the same vein,

Ken Saro-Wiwa was of the opinion that Africa's problems solely in more tribal villages. Men who are products are bound to repeat the themes of colonialism as can be seen in the attitude of the leading Africans to the poor in their midst Beatrice is of the opinion that Ikem has no clear role of women in his political thinking.

Ikem sees the African society as an extension of the individual and proffers reform as the best solution to any problematic psyche of any individual. Beatrice sees the African Tradition as being faulty especially in the aspect of naming a child by the father. This explains why she decides to name Ikem's daughter herself during the naming ceremony especially in the absence of the biological father. This singular action of hers suggests a new beginning. The therefore leads the change and at the same time enforces it on others. Beatrice serves as a source of passion and inspiration to men around her. In the novel, Achebe seeks to restore women in African society. Though Ikem and Elewa are lovers, he always insists on returning her to her house because they are not yet married.

Achebe's *A Man of the People* depicts disillusionment. It examines the disappointment of Africans, Nigerians precisely in the conduct of the affairs of the country. It also expresses the social tension between the rulers and the ruled.

In the novel, there are two contrasting groups of people that can be perceived from a political and social life of West Africa. These two groups represent the old and new generations of politicians represented by the two characters Odili, the narrator who stands for the new intellectual generation and Chief Nanga, Odili's former teacher, a symbol of old, primitive politicians. These two characters generate conflict between the old and the new ways through their incessant disagreement and quarrel was political views and women. Achebe ends the story in the novel with a military coup that depicts the 1966 Nigerian revolution. Through the demonstration of violence and corruption, Achebe is able to feature the actual reality in the lives of the two contrasting characters.

Considering the characters as leaders, Odili is seen as a narrator while chief Nanga is the man of the people. He is not only regarded as the most approached politician in the country, but is seen as a man of substance being the minister of culture. However, Odili's story reveals that chief Nanga is not a man of his words. He says one thing and does another just like most politicians in our contemporary society. He siphons money meant for helping his community to satisfy his selfish desire such as building four storey buildings for commercial purposes. To show that he has the interest of his community at heart, he is expected to defend the traditions and the pre-colonial African culture though the writer major emphasis is on politics of post colonial West African communities. Achebe projects the greediness of the old and primitive politician Chief Nanga and at the same time shows the glaring differences between the old and new styles of politics.

Ordinarily and as in the novel, politicians are intermediaries between the public and the government. Initially, chief Nanga was against corrupt system but later learns to use such system to win elections. Fortunately for him, the common people in the society trust him. However, he withdraws himself from intellectuals whom he sees as mini-Europeans. To Odili, Chief Nanga is just after making money, obtaining power and getting women. As Odili's teacher and considering his initial election, Odili cherished and respected Chief Nanga. But as his corrupt tendencies started unfolding, he lost regard. Having opportunity to live with Nanga gave him a thorough insight into his corrupt activities as a politician. Like our contemporary politicians, Chief Nanga makes use of things.

Chief Nanga's deceitful attitude motivates Odili to form a political party with his friend Max with a view of representing the masses better. Odili equally intends to revenge as Chief Nanga encroaches on the woman he desires. But Nanga, presenting Odili as a European intellectual to the people stands a better grounds of winning. Just like the present day politicians in our society, the politicians in the novel have different motives and different ways of achieving their goals as can be seen in the use of violence, power,

curiosity, discovery, lust, greed, money and even vengeance. Odili's father was against him for campaigning against chief Nanga who in turn tries to bribe Odili so that he will back out of the election – a common phenomenon in our present day Nigeria. Through his things, Nanga attempts to handle Odili. At a time, he even arrests the father, rigs election and does all sorts of things to get him out of the way.

#### **Literature and Problems of the Masses: Nigeria as Example**

Festus Iyayi's *Violence* is very suitable for illustration in this area. It depicts gross exploitation of the ordinary person by capitalist in Nigeria. The protagonist is Idemudia. Idemudia stopped his secondary education in class for because his father could no longer afford to pay his fees so he went into the already saturated labour market. Months rolled into years but he could get no job. Becoming so frustrated, he hung around Iyaro area of the town for hire as an occasional labour. Meanwhile, his mother had married for him a young beautiful wife whom he could not afford to feed let alone to cloth properly. Their only child was sent back to the village when things became critical. Idemudia and his wife will stay for days without food and they lived in a filthy and squalid slum area and owed their neighbours sums of money they could not pay back but incidentally Idemudia came in contact with a wealthy couple Obafun and Queen his wife. They lived Idemudia a rainy day to off load three lorry load of cement for which they grudgingly paid him and his three friends Okaro, Onyoifo and Patrick N5 each. This task of off loading cement in the rain coupled with starvation and exhaustion forced Idemudia to collapse and he was subsequently hospitalized. Weeks after, Idemudia and his colleagues were lived as daily labourers at Queen's building site in the government's low cost housing project. The novel shows clearly the injustice meted out to the poor in Nigeria and it is this exploitation and oppression of the poor by the rich that is referred to as violence in the novel's title.

The most prominent literary device used is

contrast. Two worlds are contrasted – the world of the poor and the rich Idemudia who represents the poor masses lives in a slum where two days earlier two houses had collapsed trapping a small child. The situation is so desperate that occasionally he had to sell his blood in order to feed his family. Contrasted with this is the world of affluence where by fraudulent and corrupt practices. He resigns from government service to escape prosecution but now uses his connections to get contrast for his wife. The family owns a chain of hotels has a fleet of cars and lives in luxury. Queen gets food items for their hotels through Mr. Inso of the government food production Department and pays in kind. Whereas Idemudia and Adim sent his wife would only want to feed, Obofun and Queen are in affluence but yet are insatiable. Rather than feeding Idemudia and the likes of him, food is always being thrown into the dustbin in the Queen's hotel premises. Queen gets government contracts only to divert the mobilization fee to other projects while her labourers are under paid and work worse than slaves in the bid to save her contract from revocation by government queen again employs Idemudia and his friends hoping to dupe them as she had done before. The working conditions are most arduous his group to bear it Idemudia and his group embark on a striker to stop the strike queen offers him N200 and at first and then N300 bribe but Idemudia does not bulge. With the revocation date drawing nearer, queen desperately offers her body but is shocked that Idemudia again declined. This incident reveals the moral decadence among the capitalist class.

The exploitation of the poor is again highlighted in the scene at the hospital where Idemudia had gone for treatment. The wife brought him to the university teaching hospital only to realize that she could not afford the money to get him registered. They were referred to a private hospital in bothering hospitals the general wards are so congested that patients either share bed or sleep on the floor but there are senior service wards which are virtually empty. This is an indication is an indication of class.

The patients in the hospital stage a plan

written by a discharged patient for a visiting commissioner and his entourage. In the drama titled "violence" an unemployed teacher are put on trial for robbing with violence, but the defence council (lawyers) points out that it will be unfair for the judge to convict them when greater crimes go unpunished his definition of violence is that it is definitely lack of opportunity that drives people to crime, madness, prostitution and adultery. Thus, it is the authorities of the nation that are put on trial, Obofun committee violence on Idemudia's wife Adisa by seducing her with money at the time she needed it most to pay for the cost of her husband's hospitalization. Fortunately, Idemudia understands the circumstances that led to the wife's adultery and forgives her. In the end Idemudia realizes that his unfinished education, his joblessness are different forms of violence perpetrated on him and other poor people but the rich people in Nigerian society and the leadership of the nation and the poor have to fight to redress their situation.

This is a revolutionary novel exposing the exploitation, humiliation and degradation of human beings especially labourers in Nigeria. It also depicts the various degrees of the struggle of the poor masses for a better future. The setting is Benin City, the capital of Edo State, Nigeria. The author portrays the reality of the living and suffering of transient workers at Iyaro and East circular of Benin thus exposing the forced sell of labour to the highest bidder. The protagonist, Idemudia and his colleagues Osaro, Patrick and Omoifo are part time workers of Queen who is a business woman. She made her fortune through her husband's contacts with dignitaries in government. She also sleeps with members of tender board of different ministries and prostates.

Their work is to off-load cement no matter the weather condition. She made them to work like slaves in the low cost houses she is building. Queen's life pattern is characterized with lechery, etc. Idemudia is extremely poor. His agony is how to feed his loyal wife who is becoming increasingly bitter in such shabby

environment as a slum neighbourhood off Ekenwan road.

### **The Suffering, Exploitation and Humiliation of Africans**

This is very evident in the suffering of Idemudia and his work-mates who were off-loading cement in the raging rain in front of Queen's "freedom Motel" (42). They actually worked like slaves at the low cost houses as can be seen on page 25. The writer portrays regular labour as unrewarded sweat. The novel depicts critical reality of African society which is characterized with glaring inequality. However, the actual revolution in the novel is the workers strike.

Festus Iyayi explores the problems of the Nigerian masses in the novel. Idemudia for instance was sick and hospitalized but could not pay his hospital bills due to lack of money. He then remains imprisoned there and could not even go out to look for money because of his condition. He is exposed to agonies of life just like the old man, a victim of a fatal accident who keeps on shouting "Anuoha". Most of the patients sleep on the floor and are not taken care of. The general condition in the hospital spurs Idemudia into determination never to give up. The play revealing the conditions of the working class and the genesis of criminal behaviour which he watched in the hospital becomes another source of inspiration to him. The violence perpetuated through the existing social relation is revealed. Through the play, his mind is broadened to the changing reality.

His determination to succeed is depicted in his attitude when he picks up casual employment after leaving the hospital. He becomes very thoughtful, knowledgeable, alert and even ready to play the role of protecting his class. To him, only unity, solidarity and being well organized can solve the problems of his working group. This is because the cheap, slavery, and inhuman nature of their job become so glaring. Again, they were meant to work long hours with very minimal pay. As if these are not enough, their employer turns out to be very passive and uncaring to their condition. There is also his feeling about their general condition as well as his determination to continue struggling.

Idemudia becomes the leader of the worker's



group. He plays the role of a motivator while they were planning for the strike action, a spokesman and even the chief bargainer. He is so committed in the struggle that he rejects a bribe of three hundred naira and the offer to sleep with queen, their employer. Even when he realizes of his wife's adultery, he shows understanding having realized that she did that out of desperation to get money for feeding and payment of his hospital bills. The situation in the novel shows that the changing reality moulds characters in the play into new forms. Idemudia, Bernard, Osaro and others then becomes so determined to unite and fight for their rights. They are even ready to establish a new form of violence and barbaric treatment of individuals. Their perception of existence becomes the central focus of their revolutionary action. The uniqueness of Iyayi's violence therefore has in the awareness of the real situation (exploitation, oppression, etc) in existence and the radical move to exterminate it.

### Conclusion

Most of the issues portrayed in post-colonial West African narratives have a lot to do with human dignity, conscience and leadership procedures all of which culminate into socio-economic and political problems. Gender theory is adopted in this paper as such societal biting issues cut across gender, the reason of which West Africa in particular is yet to be fully free from gender inequalities and related issues bugging the African society.

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“Sustainable Development Goals”

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