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Literature and the Society: Lack of Patriotism and Unity of Purpose and Nigerian Democratic Government

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Abstract

Nigeria as the most populated African nation has never experienced real unification right from the birth of the nation in 1914. Tribalism and day to day ethnic conflicts continue to manifest not minding the singing of 'One Nigeria' by the political class as against the cry of the populace. The evidence of patriotism is questionable due to the high level of corruption and low regard of public accountability the political leaders display. Despite the return to democratic rule since 1999 in Nigeria, there is a rise in terrorism and corruption in the country which still revolve around tribalism and abuse of power. One of the themes of Nigerian literature, as a representation of life and mirror to the society, is the flaws associated with political leadership and the ways forward to reforming the society. This study aims at bringing out the open evidences of lack of unity and patriotism among political class and the populace as represented in some selected Nigerian novels. The paper also explores the job of creative writers as social reformers by highlighting their suggested ways to buttress great love for our fatherland if we actually want the manifestation of 'One Nigeria' as we sing.

Keywords: Unification, Patriotism, Tribalism, Corruption, Terrorism, Democracy, Reformation.

Introduction

The Black Africans have a long history of social injustice of which a good example is a brief discussion of the history of Nigeria in West Africa. Colonialism so shattered the lives of the colonized that people lacked unity. The colonized are not allowed to raise a voice on issues concerning their lives. They are not allowed to say their mind and so

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could not destabilize the culture that is suppressing them. The ethnic groups that formed Nigeria are supposedly seen as being one while the truth is that tribalism and ethnic conflicts are grounded in the nation. The result is that after many years of independence the ills of these forceful bringing together of people by the colonial power that are not supposed to be together still abound as the people still struggle to be one. A major theme presented in Nigerian literature during the colonial era is the theme of social injustice and exploitation. In Nigeria Lord Fredrick Lugard, the first Governor General of Nigeria (1 January 1914 - 8 August 1919) and other British Colonial Masters brought the Hausa/Fulani (the North), the Igbo (the East) and the Yorubas (the West) – the three predominant tribes together as one Nigeria on 1st January 1914. They did not want to know how these tribes felt; they were just brought together to be one whether they liked it or not. These tribes were not given the opportunity to speak for themselves even when the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Nigeria each is bigger than independent nation states in Europe. The primary concern of the colonial masters is to join them together for exploitation and easy rule. In her novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie presents a discussion between Kainene and his European friend, Richard "how at the Berlin Conference of 1884, the Europeans divided Africa. Britain beat France to two protectorates around the River Niger: the North and the South' (115).

These colonial masters also did not seek the consent of the Africans in naming their countries. They just imposed names on them. Adichie presents the naming of Nigeria as just a family affair. The girl friend of Lord Laggard just picked a name and the country was born. "In 1914, the Governor General joined the North and the South, and his wife picked a name and Nigeria was born" (115). Chinua Achebe, in his memoir *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1983), opines that this same woman also wrote the first Nigerian national anthem which he calls "our very hymn of deliverance from British colonial bondage" (7). Achebe further asserts that the Europeans did not understand the tribal politics in Nigeria and that made them not to understand that the lip service Nigerians play when they proclaim themselves one Nigeria. Achebe points out the lip service of Nigerians in *The Trouble with Nigeria* by stressing on how the national anthem was written "by a British woman who unfortunately had not been properly briefed on the current awkwardness of the word *tribe*. So we found ourselves on independence morning, rolling their tongues around the very same trickster godling: Though tribe and tongue may differ/In brotherhood we stand! It was a most ominous beginning" (7).

After gaining political independence, the Europeans still come back to control our economy in Africa and because they have a kind of tight hold of our economy in Nigeria, we are not yet economically independent. One great importance of literature is that it enriches people in the knowledge of their experience. The beauty of African literature, therefore, becomes vivid as it not only exposes us to our past and the present but projects into the future. This is the main reason why creative writers are seen as prophets. Some Nigerian literary writers started prophesying of what would be the possible outcome of disagreement between the ethnic groups that formed Nigeria

as a nation because ever since 1914, the Northern and Southern Nigeria have continued to disagree. On 6th July 1967, the disagreement led to a civil war – the Nigeria/Biafra War due to the massacre of the Igbo in the Northern states of Nigeria. This civil war lasted for about thirty months and on 12th January, 1970 the civil war ended. General Gowon declared "NO VICTOR, NO VANQUISHED" and everybody was asked to shout 'ONE NIGERIA!' In order to conceal the evils done to the Igbo ethnic group so that the future generations of the Igbo would not rise up to speak about the oppression meted on them, the Nigerian government refused to bring up the war in their school curriculum. One thing, the government did not consider, is story telling as a powerful African heritage. Despite the fact that according to Ernest Emenyonu in his *Studies on the Nigerian Novel* (1991), "the war attracted many works of fiction and non-fiction by Nigerians, many of them from the former 'Republic of Biafra', particularly, those of Ibo origin" (89); the remnants of the Igbo, the dominant group in the Nigeria-Biafra conflict is rich in oral literature which made them continue to pass the information about the war from generation to generation. Even after fifty years of the war, the younger generation of the Igbo feels afresh the pains of the wound created by the war which has refused to heal. To add to the pain, Nigerian democratic government has not done anything positive for the Igbo people. The Igbo is marginalized in political appointments as well as infrastructure development and they are still butchered in Northern Nigeria as if they are fowls because they are industrious and prosper in anywhere they migrate, struggling to have a meaningful life.

Due to neglect of the people of South-East Nigeria, where the oil that gives the nation her major economy is found, the Niger Delta youths struggling for their rights turn into militancy which in turn leads to robbery and kidnapping that are rampant in the country. Political and religious leaders instigate and sponsor terrorism in playing politics in Nigeria. They, therefore, foster division in Nigeria to make way for their corrupt practices. These are the wages of the forceful joining of social groups that do not agree together. The wages are now reaped in full as blowing the trumpet and shouting 'One Nigeria' that did not bring the disagreement to an end. Every nation that fights a civil war is expected to launch into greatness after the war but Nigeria's case is a different one. Such a long period after the civil war, disagreement still remains a problem of Nigerians and has become more complex. It comes up in a full and greater force with Boko Haram insurgency in the north, Niger Delta militancy in the southeast and IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) agitation for the actualization of the Biafra in the east. Situation in Nigeria has extended from the massacre of the Igbo to frequent bombing on churches, police and army barracks and killing of Christians and Muslims alike. Terrorism in the country has reached to abducting of school girls while both the rich and the poor are victims of kidnapping in every part of the country. The agitation for the actualization of Biafran state has taken an aggressive mood and the country is at the verge of experiencing another civil war.

Literature mirrors the society and creative writers write on issue across regions and sometimes across the globe. Literature is about the present, past and the future and as it projects into the future, many Nigerian creative writers have prophesied of

the present situation of Nigeria with the aim of averting a tragic end. Chinua Achebe is a good example of such creative writers. This paper examines Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1967), *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1983), *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and *There Was A Country* (2012) with focuses on how the writer deploys realism in representation of bad governance due to lack of patriotism and unity for the same purpose, and advocating for an improved Nigerian society by suggesting the way forward in the people's struggle for a unified democratic nation.

The analysis of the selected fictions used in this paper is done through literary realism and postcolonial criticism. Christine Baron's *Realism/Anti-Realism in 20th-Century* (2010) points out that realism in literature is a literary movement in 19th century France, specifically with the French novelists Gustave, Flaubert and Honoré de Balzac. Literary realism is an approach to literary criticism that attempts to describe the reality of subject matters. It is a truthful representation of life without idealization or romantic subjectivity. What is presented in the text is verisimilitude of what happens in real life. In his novels, Chinua Achebe presents the realistic forms of corruption going on in Nigeria since the people gained political independence in 1960. The realistic representation of these corrupt practices is to arouse awareness in the people to turn away from evils and bring improvement in the society.

Postcolonialism is a theory that rises in opposition to colonialism. Postcolonial criticism, according to Peter Barry, creates an awareness of representation of the non-European ideologies as exotic order. This implies that postcolonial critics examine the representation of other cultures in literature. African/Nigerian literature is different from the European literature in the way and manner. Postcolonial theory provides diversified interpretation of literary texts and the diversity of Nigerian culture is presented by Achebe in his fictions selected for this study. The different ethnic groups that make up the nation Nigeria and the way the ethnic groups see themselves as against how the colonial masters take them as presented in Achebe's literary texts are set out to denounce what colonizer's ideology has laid down as parameters to assess literature. Therefore literary realism and postcolonial criticism are relevant to the study.

Civilian Rule and Corruption in Nigeria

From the experience of the Igbo ethnic group of eastern Nigeria, Chinua Achebe, the novelist creates a powerful commentary on the psychological and historical legacy of colonial social injustice. The amalgamation of the northern, eastern and northern tribes of Nigeria in 1914 to form one nation without having a deeper understanding of tribal culture for easy rule by the colonial administration in Nigeria has left division and war as legacy. Chinua Achebe, one of the founding fathers of African literature, is a teacher and historian. He uses his works to create awareness to fellow Africans and this is the reason why his watchword is this proverb: "A man who does not know where the rain started beating him will not know when his body will dry." Africans are of the opinion that Africans/Nigerians should go back to their history, know where their problems started, to be able to know the proper way to fight the evils that have risen up their ugly heads against successive democratic government in Africa/Nigeria.

In *A Man of the People*, Achebe presents a realistic view of the various political and social changes in Nigeria since its independence in 1960. The major theme presented in this novel is the corruption inherent in the political system of the country. In the novel the highhandedness of the Prime Minister leading to the sacking of the educated ministers who had integrity and the use of the semi-literate ministers is portrayed. The Prime Minister vehemently rejects the advice offered by the renowned Minister of Finance, "a first-rate economist with a PhD in Public Finance" when the government had a dangerous financial crisis (3). The Minister of Finance's advice to the Prime Minster is to cut down the price paid to coffee planters but even though two-third of the cabinet see reasons with the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister due to his selfish interests turns deaf ears to the piece of advice because the coffee farmers are the bulwark of his party.

> The Prime Minster said 'No' to the plan. He was not going to risk losing the election by cutting down the price paid to coffee planters at that critical moment: The National Bank should be instructed to print fifteen million pound (Achebe, *A Man of the People* 3-4).

The Prime Minister did not only print the huge amount of money that would heighten inflation in the nameless country but also raised false accusation against the educated ministers, tagged them conspirators and traitors who teamed up with foreign investors to destroy the nation in order to lay them off from their political offices. He also instigated the angry mob against the Minister of Finance and his team during campaign. The angry mob attached the minister's team and it took the grace of God to save their lives.

> I remember the grief-stricken figure of the dismissed Minister of Finance as he led his team into the chamber and was loudly booed by members and the public. That week his car had been destroyed by the angry mobs and his house stoned. Another dismissed minister had been pulled out of his car, beaten insensibly, and dragged along the road for fifty yards, then tied hand and foot, gagged and left by the roadside. He was still in the orthopaedic hospital when the house met (Achebe, *A Man of the People* 5).

Achebe through this novel, *The Man of the People*, brings to limelight the situation in Nigeria, where the Hausa/Fulani (the northerners) who are backward academically hijacked political power and claim that it is their birthright. Achebe perfectly represents this 'we are born to rule' attitude of the Hausas through the character of the Honourable Prime Minister. They fight any body from the other ethnic groups who are opportune to win the presidential seat and go to any length to retain the power even it meant destroying the lives and property of aspirants from the other ethnic groups. They also fight any ethnic group that speaks against the neglect of its people in government appointments and in infrastructural developments. A good example of the elimination of people from other ethnic groups that fight for their rights is presented in Kaine Agary's *Yellow Yellow* (2006). The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine others from Ogoni land for speaking about the neglect of their people by the Nigerian Government

is used by Agary to highlight the height of wickedness exhibited by Nigerian leaders. The wound created in the hearts of the Ogoni people of Niger Delta (Nigeria in executing their sons) added fuel into the burning fire of the struggle and even led to the forming of the Niger Delta militant groups. The struggle to make the cause of death of fellow kinsmen continues until a positive result is achieved. This is also one of the things that motivated Kaine Agary to write the novel, *Yellow Yellow*.

> It was the year after the government hanged Ken Saro-Wiwa, along with nine other Ogonis, for inciting an insurrection that led to the deaths of four elders in Ogoni land. Every young boy had visions of dying valiantly for the cause, as Ken Saro-Wiwa just had and as Isaac Adaka Boro had done nearly thirty years before him. The report were that Ken Saro-Wiwa's last words on the day of his execution were, 'Lord, take my soul, but the struggle continues' (34).

The fight for destruction of life and property to retain political power in Nigeria by the politicians in the north gave birth to the formation of Boko Haram insurgents, a terrorist group that has become a thorn on flesh of not only Nigerians but other countries that share boundary with Nigeria.

With the character 'The Prime Minister', Achebe portrays the Nigerian of today thirty years ago in the *A Man of the People*. The activities of the Boko Haram, a terrorist group that is destroying lives and property in northern Nigeria for about eight years now prove that creative writers have foresight. Boko Haram insurgency is an Islamic group that abhors everything of western education. They hate western civilization with passion and struggle to take over Northern Nigerian States through bombing as an instrument for their *jihad*. Obinna Udenwe, in his *Satans and Shaitans* (2015), highlights the activities of the Islamic Terrorist Organisation targets the minority ethnic group in southern part of Nigeria. Udenwe in *Satans and Shaitans* further portrays that the bombing and killing in Nigeria are engineered by politicians during political campaigns and elections. They rig elections so that they would be able to control the economy of the nation. Udenwe presents the motive behind the bombing and killing to clearly portray lack of patriotism among the leaders. The only concern of the greedy politicians in Nigeria is to divert national fund into their pockets whether the masses are suffering or not. The killing instigated by politicians in Nigeria against one another increases day by day and it turns into serial killing as people start to revenge the death of their relatives. In the novel, *Satans and Shaitans,* Malik Hassan, the younger brother of Alhaji Umar Hassan, a member of the Order in the north turns into an assassin. He wants to revenge the death of his brother Umar Hassan and vows that many other politicians and members of the Sacred Order formed by the politicians to control the government will go down with Umar. Malik kills Alhaji Abu Rabiu Mukhtar, 'Alhaji Mukhtar! This is for Umar Hassan!' the assassin shouted and fired four times into the man's head (163). He also kills Prof. Saturday Effiong.

> The Professor's security guard, who doubled as the gateman and who had admitted the men, convinced that they were doctors, saw what happened.

> … Another bodyguard ran out from the quarters, carrying an AK-67. But the tall assassin – Malik Hassan – was already close by, and before the bodyguard could fire a shot, he was gunned down (164).

The irony in using the Boko Haram Insurgency in the bombing and killing is that the killings are done in the north and property burnt down will take decades to reconstruct. It has also become a thorn in the flesh of the politicians that initially sponsor them yet the political leaders fail to learn from their mistakes and be unified for a greater Nigeria.

Chief Nanga, the semi-literate Minister of Culture, and Chief Koko are appointed by the Prime Minister in *A Man of the People* to replace the intellectuals. Achebe goes on to reveal the kind of people the Prime Minister prefers to work with in the lives of Chief Nanga and Chief Koko. Chief Nanga, the Minister of Culture, promotes wearing of suits and Achebe uses this to expose the ignorance of a minister of culture that does not know that a suit is not the cultural dress of his people. "If you want me to attend any of your functions, you must wear a proper dress. Either you wear a suit … or our national costume. That is correct protocol" (6). Achebe in *A Man of the People* also satirizes the Nigerian democratic system that is filled with politicians who brag about their vast hold of knowledge and wisdom only to expose their ignorance. Chief Nanga further exposes his ignorance and ridiculed himself by the speech he delivered during the book exhibition of works by local authors.

Chief Nanga enriches himself with public fund to the extent that men raise their eyebrows. Max describes Chief Nanga as a "corrupt, empty-headed, illiterate capitalist" (80). The political leaders in Nigeria know that if corruption is graded, they are the grand corrupt individuals. The corrupt politicians are further exposed in the novel during the construction of the road from Gilgili to Anata. They inflate the budget for the project. The Minister of Public Construction wants to award the contract to his boys but claims that he is awarding it to expert. Chief Nanga even reveals that the reason why the works by contractors are delayed is because the politicians do not like to supervise the works not done on their own constituencies. It is due to his personal interest; for him to convince the people to vote for him in the election that is near and also for the buses he has ordered for. "…he had ordered ten busses to ply the route as soon as it was tarred. Each would cost him six thousand pounds. So he had too good reasons for wanting the road tarred – next election and the arrival of his buses" (46).

The illegal sharing of public fund by the politicians is revealed by the ministers by the block of houses of the ministers and street names they have in the capital. The Prime Minister could not caution them because he is corrupt too and has no moral justification to that. They keep a lot of mistresses, both married women and singles that are even young enough to be their daughters. They bribe anybody that aspires to vie for their position and use thugs to eliminate those who refuse to be bribed. Chief Koko, the minister of Construction runs over Max with his jeep and he died "as soon as he alighted from his car, one of Chief Koko's jeeps swept up from behind, knocked him over and killed him on the spot" (155). Odili is battered by Chief Nanga's thugs for daring to vie for his position in their constituency. "By this time blows were falling

as fast as rain on my head and body until something heavier than the rest seemed to split my skill" (152-153). At the end of the novel, the military takes over the government and pushes greedy politicians out of the government but it is very unfortunate that things do not improve in the society still.

Military Rule and Corruption in Nigeria

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe also satirizes the corrupt practices in the military to prove that the problem with Nigeria is that of bad leadership. The novel, *Anthills of the Savannah,* is published at the height of the 'dictatorial regime' of Sani Abacha. The soldiers that masquerade as saviour to the people in *A Man of the People,* turn to be the worst. Achebe in *Anthills of the Savannah* portrays the disillusionment the people feel when the *Almighty Messiahs* (the Nigerian soldiers) who carried out the coup and took over governance from the corrupt civilian leaders turn to be dictators and terrorists. Achebe presents a character, His Excellency Sam, to highlight the interest of the military in holding up power rather than in solving the nation's problem of corruption. His Excellency makes all the decisions in their cabinets' meeting which the cabinets take without questioning. His Excellency made himself a god for others to worship proving that the military leaders turn into corrupt capitalists more than the civilians they pushed out of the government. Chris Oriko, the Commissioner of Information, exposes this attitude of His Excellency by explaining the terror that accompanies the cabinets' meetings with His Excellency.

> I could read in the silence of their minds, as we stiffly around the mahogany table, words like: *Well, this is going to be another of those days*. Meaning a bad day. Days are good or bad for us now according to how His Excellency gets out of bed in the morning. On a bad day such as this one had suddenly become after many propitious auguries, there is nothing for it but lie close to your hole, ready to scramble in. And particularly go to keep your mouth shut, for nothing is safe, not even the flattery we have become such experts in disguising as debate (Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* 2).

His Excellency even wants to make himself the life president of the country instead of organising elections and constituting a feasible democratic government in the country but the well-meaning nationals refuse. As a punishment for the people of Amazon for not endorsing the memorandum containing his life presidency, he stops the boreholes they are digging and they suffered draught for a year. The trauma becomes so much on the people of Amazon that they come to Bassa, the capital, to see His Excellency and even endorse whatever memorandum so that their people will not perish. "So we come to Bassa to say our own yes and perhaps the work on our bore-holes will start again and we will not all perish from the anger of the sun" (Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* 127).

His Excellency kills anybody that tries to expose his corrupt practices. Ikem Oshodi and Chris lose their lives for publishing His Excellency's deeds. Ikem Oshodi, the editor of *The National Gazette*, is sacked for identifying with the delegates from Amazon. "Wetin I de hear, Ikem? Na true dem done sack you? Ikem nodded his head

as he pressed her to himself" (149). He is abducted and murdered in cold blood but before that he has exposed the corruption in the government by publishing it.

> In the early hours of this morning a team of security officers effected the arrest of Mr. Oshodi in his official flat at 202 Kingsway Road in the Government Reservation Area and were taking him in a military vehicle for questioning at the SRC Headquarters when he seized a gun from one of the escorts. In the scuffle that ensued between Mr Oshodi and his guards in the moving vehicle Mr Oshodi was fatally wounded by gunshot (Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* 169).

The government in announcing the death of Ikem Oshodi fabricates the story of his death to justify his death. What they do not know is that truth cannot be hidden. Chris, Ikem's friend exposes the government's falsehood and His Excellency asks for his elimination too.

> Chris had described the official account of Ikem's death as 'patently false.' How could he be sure of that? Because Ikem was taken from his flat in handcuffs and so could not have wrenched a gun from his captors. So we are saying in effect that he was murdered? I am saying that there is no shred of doubt that Ikem Oshodi was brutally murdered in cold blood by the security officers of this government (Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* 172-173).

Chris lives in hiding for sometime for publishing the truth about the death of Ikem Oshodi and when he thought that he is free to go back to Bassa after the abduction of His Excellency by unknown faces, he (Chris) is murdered. He tries to rescue a girl from the hands of a police officer who wants to rape her and the drunken police officer shoots him dead. This is another exposition of corruption in the hands of those that are supposed to be protecting the people. Achebe in portraying Ikem Oshodi and his friend Chris Oriko, the Commissioner for Information suffered in the hands of the military leaders, means to encourage Nigerian citizens to do what is right. With this Achebe ends the novel with his argument that the fear of death should not prevent one from doing what is right. It takes patriotism to make a man to lay down his life for his country.

In *The Trouble With Nigeria*, Achebe reveals the reason why Nigeria as a nation has not truly enjoyed political peace and economic prosperity despite its abundant natural and human resources since the time it got her independence?

> The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal examples which are the hallmarks of true leadership (Achebe, *The Trouble With Nigeria* 1).

Achebe, in *The Trouble With Nigeria,* names some political leaders in Nigeria, both civilians and soldiers and situations that do not do well. Since 1983 Achebe shows an

intense concern about the nation's corrupt and failed leadership through this novel. Nigerian leaders have refused to change their attitude towards leadership. The issue of corruption in Nigeria is so alarming that fifty-seven years after independence the trouble with Nigeria still remains what Augustine Ozioko in "Prophetic Answers of Chinua Achebe to the Solution of Nigerian Political Problems" (2017) calls, "the same cult of mediocrity, a deeply corrupt cabal - recycle themselves in different guises and incarnations" (181).

The creative writer is a historian, a teacher and nationalist and in *There Was a Country*, Achebe highlights division and war as legacy in Nigeria of colonialism. The legacy is part of the instruments Achebe wants to use to actualize his project of advocating for social and political reformation. *There Was a Country* gives a message to help the people to recuperate a history that has been lost to the ravages of false silences and willed forgetfulness. People remain silent and try to willingly forget but Chinua Achebe in *There Was a Country* (2012) does not want people to be silent about what happened in the Nigerian Civil War to the Igbo. He stresses that rather they are to be remembered and even be taught as part of the school curriculum. Achebe, in this book, presents all the actions that developed into full scale reveries between the Northern Nigeria and the Eastern Nigeria because he had experienced them. How can a person forget the most vengeful thing that happened to him when the offenders do not show any sign of remorse? Achebe is interested in the communication of the different ethnic group of his country because he has self consciousness. There is always a breakdown when communication fails. Oladele (1976), in support of this, stresses that "communication is a two-way affair, whenever it fails; usually the two sides in the system suffer as a result of the breakdown" (114).

Achebe's employing realist representation of Nigeria from 1950s to date is to create awareness in the people of Nigeria to know that it takes love for one to ask for forgiveness if he offends another. It also takes love for the offended to forgive those who offend him. Therefore if we love our country and want it to develop, we should know that the downfall of one ethnic group has a disastrous effect on the others. Both, the offended and the offender, should therefore go back to the history of the people and learn from their past mistakes in order to have a better future. This is the central theme of Achebe's *There Was a Country*. It is also his precious parting gift to his dear country and the entire world. Another reason why Africans/Nigerians should go back to their history is for them to judge the present with the past in order to construct the future. The awareness that the corruptions in African countries today have their root in colonialism will be of immense help in the fight against corruption in Africa. Before colonialism in Africa, there was established and organized ways, discipline and morality instilled in the people. Today the scene is totally different. Niyi Akingbe in his "Decrying Shifting Norms: Towards a Codification of Societal Ethos in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Heart Songs*" (2014) points out that "contemporary Nigerian society has been weakened by its ambivalent positioning of poorly-digested western values and half-forgotten indigenous norms" (Akingbe 27) and this has resulted in increase of corruption in contemporary Nigerian society. If Nigerians should go back to their

indigenous norms in checkmating corruption and those that are involved in corruption are brought to book, there will be progressive growth and development in Nigeria/ Africa.

Conclusion

African writers use the medium of literature to express and empower the African people and to help them go back to their noble past in order to liberate themselves and have a brighter future. This is a call for national or self-consciousness. National consciousness will boost the devotion the people feel for their countries. Patriotism inspires one to sacrifice in order to promote the welfare of one's country. Social and political cohesiveness of Nigeria/African societies is not impossible but the act of impairing integrity and wickedness by Nigerian political leaders hinders the political unification of the many ethnic groups into a real federation. Achebe, as a prophet and one of the first voices on social reformation in Nigeria/Africa, advocates for a repairing of the failed bridge that caused the communication failure among people of different ethnic groups in Nigeria/Africa through going back to the people's noble past. Achebe argues that, Nigerians/Africans freeing themselves from the mistakes that cause division among the ethnic groups in the past will help to eradicate most things that cause post independence disillusionment and putting it down as the central idea of *There was a County*; he bids farewell to his people and this part of existence. The question we ask is: Do children turn deaf ears to the plea and warning of their dying aged father? What we need in Nigeria is not shouting 'One Nigeria' and blowing it with a trumpet but individual reformation and social reconstruction.

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