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Editorial Advisory Board

contents

Birch River

Sue Matheson

EDITORIAL

It is March, and the long cold continues. This, *the quint's* eclectic fifty seventh issue, offers readers with cabin fever opportunities to escape the winter doldrums via authors from Nigeria, Tunisia, Iran, the United Kingdom, Brazil, and Canada. Ruth Etuwe Epochi-Olise's "A Womanist Appraisal of the Representation of Women in the Ndokwa Masquerade Tradition" begins our March offerings. Historically, the masquerade arts among the Ndokwa people of South-South Nigeria have been male-controlled and male-dominated. Women, however, have been initiating change. Her paper investigates women's representations in the secular and sacred spheres of the Ndokwa masquerade tradition. Next, Aliaksandra Kpuduwei and Vincent Obobolo examine two Pentecostal sermons and identify the linguistic means that contribute to their power by approaching discourse as text, as discursive practice, and as social practice in "Linguistic Realization of Power in Religious Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nigerian Pentecostal Sermons." Then, Mounir Guirat's "Merging the Veranda with the House: Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* as a Narrative for a New Form of Identity" explores the possibilities offered by the diasporic novel to expand the parameters of the canonical English novel. Guirat argues that the former merges with the latter's narrative of exclusion and marginalization to give the female immigrant in *Brick Lane* the possibility not only to escape the patriarchal attic of otherness but also to restructure Britishness, redrawing its fixed boundaries by adding a veranda of possibilities of being to the main house of British culture. Following, in "Peacekeeping as Option for Unity under the Instrumentality of the Law and Religion in Nigeria," Clifford Meesua Sibani and Blessing Leera Clifford-Sibani first focus on the nature of peacekeeping, conflict management/resolution, and the utilization of diplomacy

in peace building before discussing the activity of peacekeeping via the instruments of law and religion in Nigeria.

Then, Patricia Ngozi Anyanwu and Chinomso Patricia Dozie's "Leadership Crisis and Migration in Nigeria: A Study of Chimamanda Adichie's "The Thing around Your Neck" and "The American Embassy" addresses the recent mass flight of Nigerians to the United States of America by interrogating its causes, challenges, and prospects depicted in Chimamanda Adichie's short stories, "The Thing around Your Neck" and "The American Embassy." Following, Michael Nnabundo Nwabuzor's "From Street to Internet: A Textual Analysis of Political Protests on Facebook among Nigerian Social Media Users" finds social media following the technological revolution that gave birth to web 2.0 has added a new dimension to political protests in Nigeria. Nigerians are using Facebook to distribute information about political protests. Nwabuzor recommends that further studies of other social media platforms and examinations of participants' demographics influencing political protest posts on Facebook be initiated. Completing the offerings of this issue's articles, Okechukwu Chukwuma's "Using the Online Space as a Battle Field: An Exploration of the Effectiveness of Social Media Usage for the #EndSARS Protest in Nigeria" also discusses how social media platforms have redefined citizens' engagement with government and those in positions of authority. Using the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria, an organized social movement against police brutality, as an example, Chukiwuma finds in some States, the protest went beyond calling for ending police brutality to ending bad governance on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and in blogs.

Film and book reviews are also housed in this issue. Jean-Baptiste de Vaulx's film review, "Perception, the Past and Free Indirect Discourse in László Nemes' *Sunset*" contends that *Sunset* mirrors our own contested media landscape of fake news, viral conspiracy videos, and growing distrust of experts in favor of populist orators. De Vaulx finds in the film a sobering warning. Ramtin Ebrahimi's "Broken and Defeated: Abortion and the Patriarchal Order in Cristian Mungiu's *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*" deems Mungiu's realistic depiction of women being underpowered by Romania's abortion ban a powerful example of the critique contained in Romanian New Wave Cinema. In "Locating Contemporary Māori Masculinity in Taika Waititi's *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*," Harriet Fairclough points out that Waititi celebrates the bi-culturalism of New Zealand via comedy and a transformative journey through the bush in his box-office hit. Sergio Schargelis "A Satire on Fascism: A Review of *Look Who's Back*" argues that *Look Who's Back* is essential for realizing that fascism did not die in 1945. More than an attack on fascism, Schargelis finds the film's criticism that our memory of fascism hinders its contemporary identification compelling.

No issue of the quint can be complete without its creative component. We are delighted to present a significant portion of taut and beautifully crafted of travel poems by Amy Lilwall and Rupert Loydell's in their prose poem gazatteer,, *WHEN WE WERE THERE*. The first half of this stunning sequence of post cards will be available in *Axon: Creative Explorations*, Australia/online, later in 2022. Acknowledging the coming of Spring in the North, I offer you images that record snowbound and gritty, ice-breaking rivers in Northern Manitoba. The softness of Spring is yet to come. As the North continues in another wave of the pandemic, here is good reading. *the quint* returns in June, with more reading, in anticipation of warmer and healthier days ahead.

Sue Matheson

Red Deer Thaws

Sue Matheson

Editor

A Womanist Appraisal of the Representation of Women in the Ndokwa Masquerade Tradition

Ruth Etuwe Epochi-Olise

Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Nigeria

Abstract

Historically, the masquerade arts among the Ndokwa people of South-South Nigeria have been a male-controlled and male-dominated affair. However, hybridization and urbanization have enabled women to see themselves as active agents initiating change in cultural representation in masquerade festivals. This paper investigates women's representations in secular and sacred spheres of the masquerade tradition, using primary data gathered through oral interviews, pictures and video recordings using the observation method and womanist theory of "Snail-sense Feminism" (Adimorah-Ezeigbo, 2015).

Keywords: Womanist, Snail-sense feminism, Ndokwa, Masquerade tradition.

Introduction

Women play central but emphatically socially subordinate roles in African society (Uchendu, 2005). For example, in the larger African rural societies, especially in the South-South region, there is continuous systemic patriarchal discrimination against women in terms of the sexual division of labor, even when they are also as responsible for food cultivation and processing alongside their male counterparts. In part, a woman's subordinate status is the result of her being the primary caregiver in her home. The masquerade arts, which have been in existence for more than five (5) centuries, have also been dominated and controlled by men. In Africa, ritualized practices are generally gender specific as the concept of the male order cuts across as the norm in language, form, and custom. The narratives during rituals are therefore usually gender biased. Notably, women's domestic duties have kept them from witnessing certain aspects of rituals performed during most African festivals. In their temporal form, these rituals ensure cultural regeneration, communal cleansing, bumper harvests, and propitiation. As in other traditional, ritualistic activities, there exists in masquerade traditions a symbiotic relationship between the ancestors and the living. Because of hybridization and urbanization, women now see themselves as active agents capable of initiating change in the cultural representation of masquerade festivals—for a more functional society/community and to ensure a cosmic relationship between their community and their ancestors.

The Ndokwa People of Delta State

The Ndokwa people inhabit the low-lying and swampy area, located between longitude 6061 and 6042 East, latitude 6031 and 5025 North. A political component within the Delta State of Nigeria (Wizor & Okugini, 2020; Opone, 2017; Dami, Odihi & Ayuba, 2014), they reside in over fifty clans. They are the largest ethnic group among the *Anioma* people in the Delta North Senatorial District of Delta State. The Ndokwas people's name is derived from the topographical construct of their environment—it means low-land dwellers, conforming to the Igbo way of naming their settlement according to its geographical features.

Because of its vast size and geographical position, Ndokwa is a land of contrasts sandwiched between two belts: the Deltaic Swampy Forest, which covers the southern and south eastern coastal towns, and the tropical rain forest situated in the Northern part of the territory. Its peoples are bounded on the North by the Benin (Orhwomwon) of Edo State, on the South by the Ijaw, on the East by the Niger River, on the West by the Urhobo and Isoko, on the North–East by the Ika and Aniocha/Oshimili and on the South-East by the Ahoada of Rivers State. Because of their varied geographical terrain, they are ethnically diverse. The Ndokwa people, like every other tribe or ethnic group in Nigeria, have their own traditions of origin—their array and range being almost endless because the various clans do not share a common origin. Some say they are autochthonous, dating into antiquity; others say they are descendants of the ancient Benin empire; some claim they migrated from the Igbo across the Niger. Their varied cultural influences, through cultural contact or cultural cross pollination or borrowing from neighbours like the Igbos, Urhobos, Izons, and Edos, have made their identity unique in every sense and very patriotic to the core. The Ndokwa culture sustains moral direction as well as a stock of covenants with visible and invisible entities from their ancestral origins,which gives unity and sanctity to the culture. In spite of later religions —Christianity and Islam—that swept over the land, the Ndokwa continued to worship

their ancient gods. Their cultural values are varied because of borrowing from other cultures and have helped in their peaceful co-existence. These values can be traced back to those of other communities with which they share common boundaries.

Traditionally, the Ndokwa's system of governance consists of age grades that climax in a gerontocratic form of leadership with the oldest man in the clan being the traditional ruler who is bestowed with spiritual and temporal/secular powers and known as the *Okpala-Uku*. The *Odua* is the next in command followed by the *Okwa,* then the *Onotu –Uku, Ikpala-Uku* (eldest man - *Ọkei* of the each family linage), *Ngbumeka, Onotu, Otu Nta, Otu Olile, Otu Onuogbe, Otu Uzomi, Otu Nkpa, Otu Aya*. made possible by system of age-grades. Made possible by the system of age-grades, the *Odua, Okwa, Onotu-Uku, Ikpala, Inotu* make up the advisory body of the *Okpala-Uku*, while the *Ikpala* and *Inotu* are his foot soldiers who carry out the wishes of the council of chiefs and generally control the remaining population. Each clan has absolute respect for their age groups, which begin in some communities with the *Otu-Aya* (10-20 years of age) and ends with the *Okpala-Uku* in all communities, who in collaboration with the priests and diviners take on the administration of the clan (Elugbe, 2000; Okolugbo, 2004).

For the women, the age-grades are similar, but there is a slight difference at the top level starting from the *Ofashi*: these sets of women are comprised of the *Umu-Ada*, women whose parentage are of the community. Like the *Okwa*, they must have attained the age of 80 years and above while the oldest amongst them is referred to as the *Ada,* also known as the *Olunumelu*. This group is made of women of menopausal age. Their membership, not hereditary, is because of their age. The *Ofashi Ada* is in charge of all the spiritual services for the members of their community. She and other *Ofashi* are responsible for the spiritual protection of the community from harm and for the offerings of sacrifices to appease the deities of the land. As the custodian of morals and the religious leaders, it is the duty of the *Ada* and her members to uphold the traditional rules governing the community regarding taboos, especially as they pertain to women. These rules must be obeyed and maintained, as the worship of the deities of the land is appropriately carried out. Aside from the above, all the women help create the music, songs and dances in all the festivals, rituals, and masquerade performances that honour the deities.

The Ndokwa people have also created the monarchical systems, in which rule is either decided by heredity or king-makers, whose titles range from Obi, Igwe, Awoh, Aje, Eze, Ogene, or Inawa to Igwete. Generally, the gerontocratic system is orderly and natural without dispute, unlike the monarchical which one finds internal struggle and disputes about the heir apparent.

As a traditional community, the Ndokwa people have ritual performances, religious performances, festival ceremonies, and masquerade performances. These performances are innate in the people's culture as they are believed to have emanated from their ancestors and are cultural observances that help the entire community attain peace and progress in their endeavours all year round. During these ritualistic and festival performances, the people become conscious of their unique cultural heritages that demonstrate their beliefs and mirror their religious, secular, and aesthetic philosophies (Amankulor, 1985, p. 85). These traditional performances provide opportunities for ancestral worship and the purification of the people. They also entertain and enliven the community's members. Among the ritualised festivals that enjoy very rich masquerade traditions are Orji Efor, Ikenge, Ekwensu, Uyo, Igochi, Ukpalabor, Ojei, Mmanwu, Nduku, Ukwata,

Inyewe, and Ezemmo. In all of these, the masquerade arts are an important aspect of the ritualised and the performance spectacles. Although women are a meaningful part of that continuous existence of the Ndokwa communities, they are hardly active participants in the rich masking traditions that exist in Ndokwa. Some aspects of the ritualistic elements of these masquerades belong to women, but the actual masking and donning of the mask is solely men's right. And women do not have absolute control of the ritual space as they are overseen by the Chief Priest of the community who is predominately male.

Nigerian Masquerades as Positive Change Agents

Masquerade traditions in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, cannot be detached from their societal function. Differing in each community, the performances accomplish certain purposes while displaying social dynamics as well as multilayered cultural facets of the people. These traditions embody African civilization, culture and customs. Masquerades can effect positive changes in the society having protective and regulatory roles in the affairs of the living and effecting societal control and stability (Akubor, 2016). These masquerades act as psychological tools in easing tension and facilitating healing, being a reformative medium for societal regeneration and aesthetic expression (Anigala, 2007, p. 3). They perform important governance functions and associated social roles to control anti-social behaviours (Nwankwo, 2015). They maintain in-built principles that prevent members from contravening laid down rules and regulations. They reinforce acceptable social modes of conduct and checkmate delinquency among married women, thereby curbing promiscuity in the society. They help in upholding and validating the cultural beliefs and ethical standards of past generations while using them as a reminder to the present and future generations (Stanley-Niaah, 2004; Willis, 2012; Okachi, 2015). They also entertain, enforce peace, and resolve social conflicts in the community while people renew their commitments to their cultural life by giving guidance and balance to the community (Amaechi, 2018). These masquerades operate as sources of entertainment, social controller, and religious reflector (Okodo, 2012). Finally, masquerades are used to curtail inter/intra communal clashes and war in communities (Akpan & Udofia, 2019).

The Theory of the Snail-Sense Feminism

A cultural medium that is highly valued in most Nigerian communities, masquerade art is basically hegemonic in nature, requiring only adult male citizens. Women have been excluded from masquerades, because they are seen as the feeble and weaker sex, lacking the ability to be secretive, their subordination indigenous to African social morality (Dzurgba 2007; Maillu 1988). Nigerian society has always been patriarchal in nature. A major feature of a traditional society, masquerade encourages male super-ordination and female subordination (Ubrurhe, 1999, p. 82). Victims of cultural practices, women are completely excluded from religious ceremonies and even its language; they are "not just allowed to speak, but also explicitly prevented from speaking, either by social taboos and restrictions or by the more genteel tyrannies of custom and practice" (Cameron, 1990, p. 4).

This exclusion of women from and the genderization of the public space has given rise to theories like Womanism, Misovire, Nego-Feminism to Femalism, Gynism, Snail-sense Feminism, Motherism, Stiwanism, and Personism. Critics like Patricia McFadden, Obioma Nnaemeka, Ifi Amadiume, M. J. Daymond, Obioma Nnaemeka, Chikwenye Okonjo-Ogunyemi, Adimora-Ezeigbo, and Tuzyline Jita Allan all champion fairness and equity among the sexes as fundamental components of the public sphere. As Akachi

Adimora-Ezeigbo would agree, even though traditional masquerade performances seem to be the preserve of men, women have always been the bedrock and "saviours of their societies" (Awe, 2001, p. xiii) sustaining the fabric of communal life by "bringing many things" into the world apart from children.

In *Snail-Sense Feminism: Building on an Indigenous Model*, Adimora-Ezeigbo uses the natural habits of the snail to explain the conciliatory attributes of her brand of feminism also known as womanism t.o illustrate a paradigm that most African women adopt in their relationships with African men. Adimora-Ezeigbo explains that

> [w]omen here often adopt a conciliatory or cooperative attitude towards their men. This is akin to what the snail does with the environment in which it moves and exists. The snail crawls over boulders, rocks, thorns and rough terrains smoothly and efficiently with a lubricated tongue which is not damaged or destroyed by those harsh objects. The snail goes where it will in this manner and arrives at its destination intact. If the worst happens, it withdraws into its shell and is safe. This is what women often do in Africa to survive in Africa's harsh patriarchal culture (2012).

As a variant of the womanist principle, Snail-sense Feminism is informed by African women's tendency to accommodate and cooperate with men in order to revolutionize the social processes. It is a theory that hinges its belief in the synergetic relationship between both sexes and does not promote aggression in women and in their relationship with men. Rather it seeks to promote a kind of balance in women's lives and their relationship with men. It exposes the fact that the man needs a woman as much as the woman needs man. Both need each other's support in order to achieve liberation and empowerment. Snail-sense feminism also demands that women have independent minds and do what they want to do but not to the detriment of other people around them.

Adimora-Ezeigbo believes the conciliatory and inclusive nature of women who are equipped to know "when, where, and how to negotiate with or negotiate around patriarchy in different contexts" (Nnaemenka, 2005, pp. 377-8) counteracts patriarchal domination. She believes that women's visible, qualitative roles in public and private spheres of traditional life deconstruct what is generally considered to be the natural order of nativity. A platform for constructive change in the narrative of a new Ndokwa masquerade tradition, Snail-sense feminism suggests that community functions better if every part of society supports one other not only within the everyday ritualized practices of living but also in the cosmic world of the spirit by including women in core ritual and masking traditions beyond the passive participation seen in Uyo, the only masking ritual festival that involves women in Ndokwa.

Womanist Representation in Ndokwa Masquerade Tradition

According to Adimora-Ezeigbo, women as active participants in both public and private space should not seek to eradicate or fight for leadership with men. Rather, the Ndokwa woman's presence and essence brings positive and appropriate changes. Accommodating and cooperating with men for an all-inclusive social reformation, this strategy, according to Phillips, "seeks to harmonise and coordinate difference so that difference does not become irreconcilable and dissolve into violent destruction" (2006, p. xxii). In this way, female masquerade would subtly weaken the patriarchal culture which fuels male hegemony while reconstructing the Ndokwa female image by making her valuable and

indispensable in the society.

The Ndokwa people do not have a female masquerade tradition like some African communities in Arochukwu (Abia State), Ajalli (Anambra State), Ibil, Ekajuk, Izzi, Boki, Ikom, Bakor (Cross River State), Okpella (Edo State), Izzi (Ebonyi State), Amokwe and Uvuru (Enugu State), Arondizogu (Imo State), Isiokpo (Rivers State), Wuli (Senegal and Gambia), Shebro (Sierra Leone) and some Yoruba communities. The secrecy and sacredness accorded to the masquerade cult is associated with knowledge of "the tremendous power women [sic] wield and their fearful capacity as witches have therefore been positioned as the key reason why the men folk instituted the masquerade art and logically exclude female overt participation" (Ododo in Asigbo, 2010, p. 4). the éwóórọnight masquerade does not permit women to be involved. They are excluded from being members of cults that don and produce the masks even though their images are characterized in the performance. Women, however, are fully involved in many of the ritualistic aspects of the tradition that have been relegated to the background because they are not directly involved in the masquerade as entertainment. They use this opportunity to express their worries in a public space while maintaining their social roles and services in the private domain of the masquerade tradition of most Ndokwa communities.

Women are mothers who are embodiments of the generative aspect of society "equated with the life force itself" (Steady, 1987, p. 7). They are associated with the environment that produce food and water and often give protection and are believed to be beneficent provider of justice, riches, wisdom, wealth, good health, and beauty as well as being the source of creative inspiration and children and the protector of the land, which is her womb (Bateye, 2006, p. 147). These characteristics of womanhood are integrated into the ritual aspects of the festivals.

In Ndokwa culture, the *Umu-Ada* postmenopausal women, play very important roles in the masquerade tradition. They also partake in the spectacle of the masquerade even when barred from actually donning the mask. Historically, these women are chosen as ritual leaders who preside over and conduct particular religious rituals. No longer menstrating, the *Ofashis* are the spiritual purifiers of the community, being "mother to humanity" (Lugira, 2009, p. 90). Because women bear children, as the earth generates life, they are seen as those who should appease the earth, induce and summon the spirit of fertility. The Uyo festival of Umusadege-Ogbe people showcases the *Ofashis* and their practice in the community of offering sacrifices to cleanse the land and usher in bumper harvest in the subsequent year. These women, though not formally organized as the men, have major roles to play. The Ófashis are seen as "mothers to all", not just to the women-folk whose duties are recognized and celebrated in the community. They are seen as possessing great powers in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres in Umusadege community because they are recognized artisans, child bearers, caregivers, healers, and agriculturalists. They are committed to the survival and wholeness of their entire people, male and female, taking the lead in performing fundamental rituals activities as cleansers, who ward off evils and deadly diseases, especially at the inception of the dry season.

The masquerade of Ojieh festival of Ashaka people starts its performance after receiving the blessings of the *Ada* of the clan (see Fig. 1). These women spiritually prepare the masquerade by applying the *nzú ocha* (white native chalk) like paint over incised lines on the body (arms and feet) of the masker before the masker goes off to perform in the public space. This act of inscription on the masker's body is an aspect

of the ritual that enables the community to connect with their ancestors as it connotes their invisible nature to the world of the living. This inscribing signifies the state of purity, sanctity, and cleanliness ascribed to elderly women (the Ófáshi) whose duty it is to finalize the dressing of the *Elishi* masquerade. The *nzú ocha,* combined with the bird motifs of the masquerade, are utilized in the healing rituals of the Ashaka people. As health care providers, thesemothers tend to the masquerade to ensure the well-being of the community.

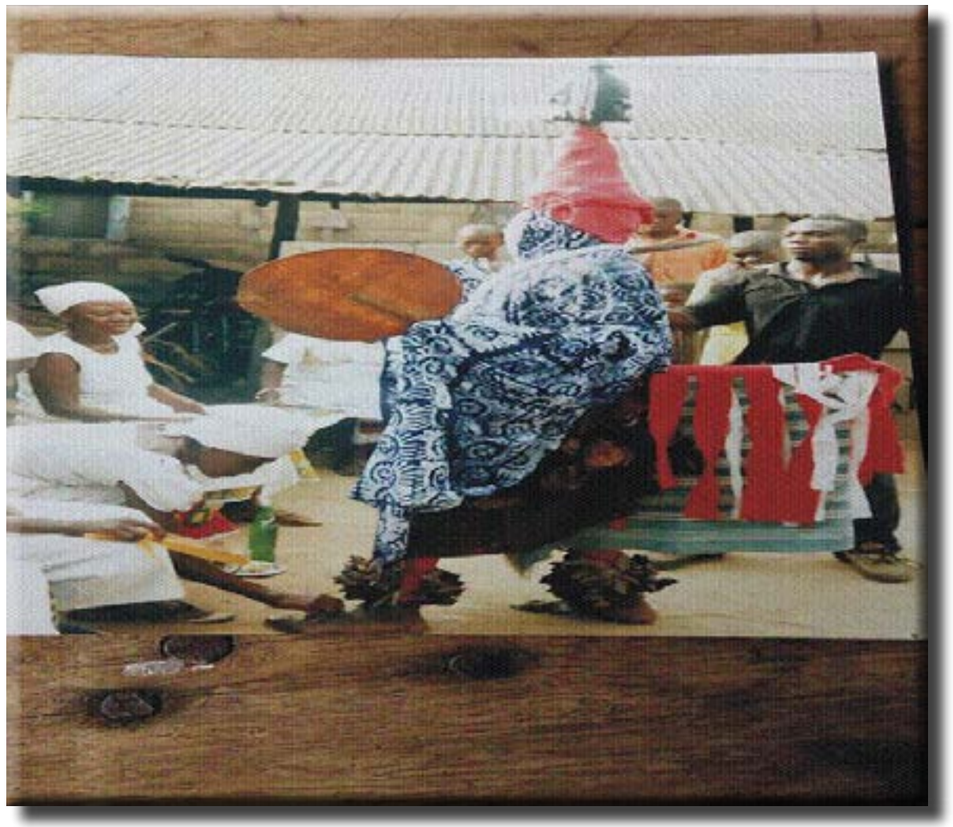

Photo credit: Ruth Epochi-Olise

Figure 1 **The *Ofashi-Ada* performing her role during the Ojei festivals in Ashaka**

Since women cannot forcefully step into the public space of Ndokwa masquerade, they subtly enter in a snail-like manner, insisting on inclusivity, a crucial benchmark for the transformation of their society. Imperceptibly, these women are breaking the bonds of tradition, conjuring counter-spaces but complementary forms of power in their activities and roles with men, creating a harmonious relationship that allows both genders to connect and bond with one another in all areas of existence while fostering unity and building on to the masquerade tradition in Ndokwa land. Ndokwa women continuously apply the qualities of a snail, negotiating with the conciliatory attitude that has been her survival strategy in the difficult terrain of the patriarchal masquerade tradition of her people. As womanists, they believe in the conciliation, collaboration, consensus and complimentary of roles that predominate between men and women (Ogunyemi, 1996), helping men to reconstruct the image of the Ndokwa masquerade tradition by making women valuable and indispensable in the society. Even when these masquerades are dominated by men, these women constitute the majority of the dancers, clappers ,and singers. Women are not meant to be among the mrmbers of the masquerade cult as dancers or singers or even followers, but Ndokwa women have subtly entered the masquerade groups by showcasing their singing and dancing expertise.

In the Mmanwu Ashaka masquerade performances, the masquerades appear in pairs indicating both sexes and showing attributes of both male and female (see Fig. 3a & Fig. 3b) to represent ideas of nurturing that are necessary for the farming year. The masquerade, in its happy and cheerful mood, mediates between the gods and man as to how the earth produces bountifully that which man has deposited in it, showing man's success and progress. But if this success that revolutionized the earth is not tackled properly, it might bring violent disorder (destruction).

Photo credit: Ruth Epochi-Olise

Figure 2 **Women Participants in Ukpalabor Masquerade Performance**

In the Mmanwu Ashaka masquerade performances, the masquerades appear in pairs indicating both sexes and showing attributes of both male and female (see Fig. 3a & Fig. 3b) to represent ideas of nurturing that are necessary for the farming year. The masquerade, in its happy and cheerful mood, mediates between the gods and man as to how the earth produces bountifully that which man has deposited in it, showing man's success and progress. But if this success that revolutionized the earth is not tackled properly, it might bring violent disorder (destruction).

Though masculine in nature, these masquerades also showcase some feminine features like the long, silky, black human hair covering their heads. The human hair worn by the masquerade performer symbolizes the role of the mother in the affairs of the home. While the male masquerade is aggressive in nature, the female appeases him with her charms via praise-singing and chants about his great deeds. The synergy of both sexes have made the Mmanwu Ashaka masquerade tradition, a cynosure for all eyes as people always come to their performance to watch them.

Photo credit: Ruth Epochi-Olise

Figure 3a**. Pairs of Mmanwu Ashaka Performing**

Photo credit: Ruth Epochi-Olise

***Figure 3b*. Mmanwu Ashaka Performing in pairs**

For better aesthetics and festival appreciation, women create new materials to the costumes for the Ukwata carriers (maskers). These costumes are referred to as ancestral clothes, but are actually donations from women made to cloth their deity; they are used to appeal to, solicit favour from, and honour these superior powers. Even when they are a means of building individual and collective prestige, the costumes are also reflections of the versatile aesthetic background of the Ndokwa people on physical and cultural levels.

It is well known that in some parts of the African continent, masquerade costume masks and accessories/props are exclusively made by men (Phillips, 1995) but this

narrative is changing in the masquerade tradition of the Ndokwa people. The assertion of male dominance and supremacy which gives rise to the sexual politics of costume making has been deconstructed as the Ukwata masker's costumes demonstrate in Figs. 5a & b. Women are not allowed to dress and perform in the masquerades or to take care of or preserve these costumes before, during, and after the performance/celebration of the Ndokwa festivals. They, however, have devised a way to cloth their deity by donating their clothes to the cult.

Photo credit: Ruth Epochi-Olise

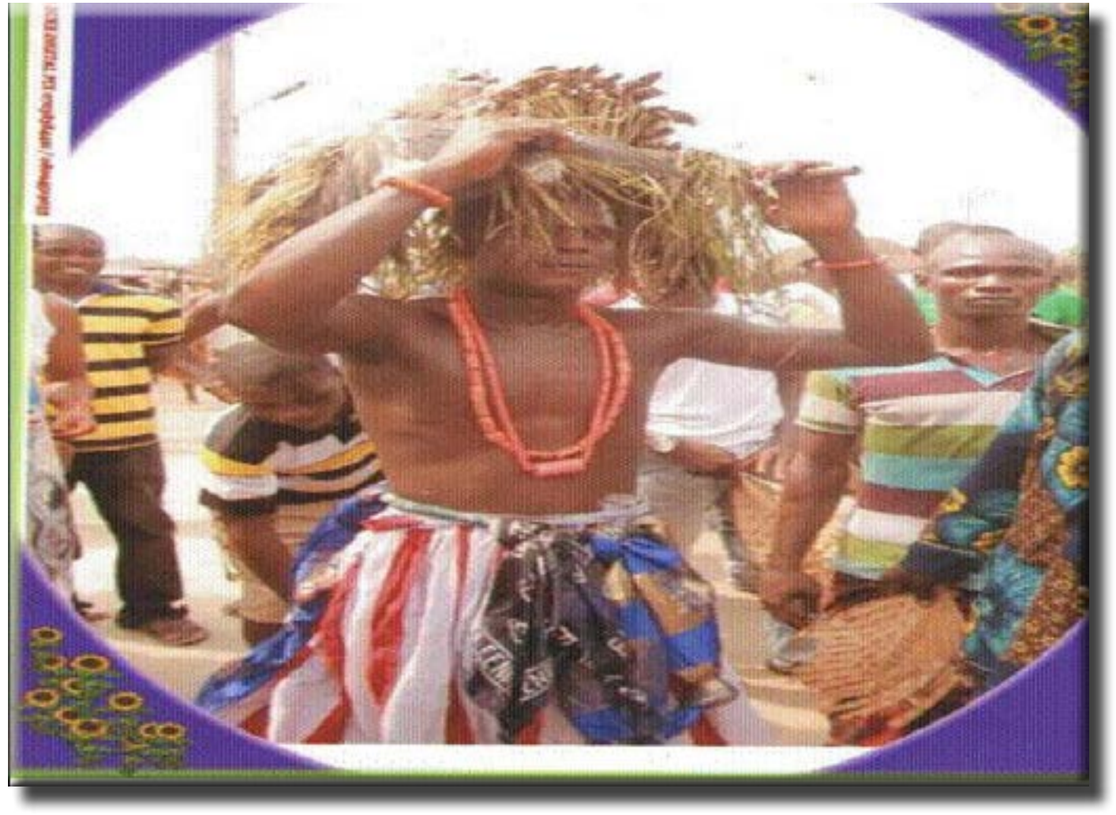

***Figure 5a*. Current Costume of Ukwata Carrier**

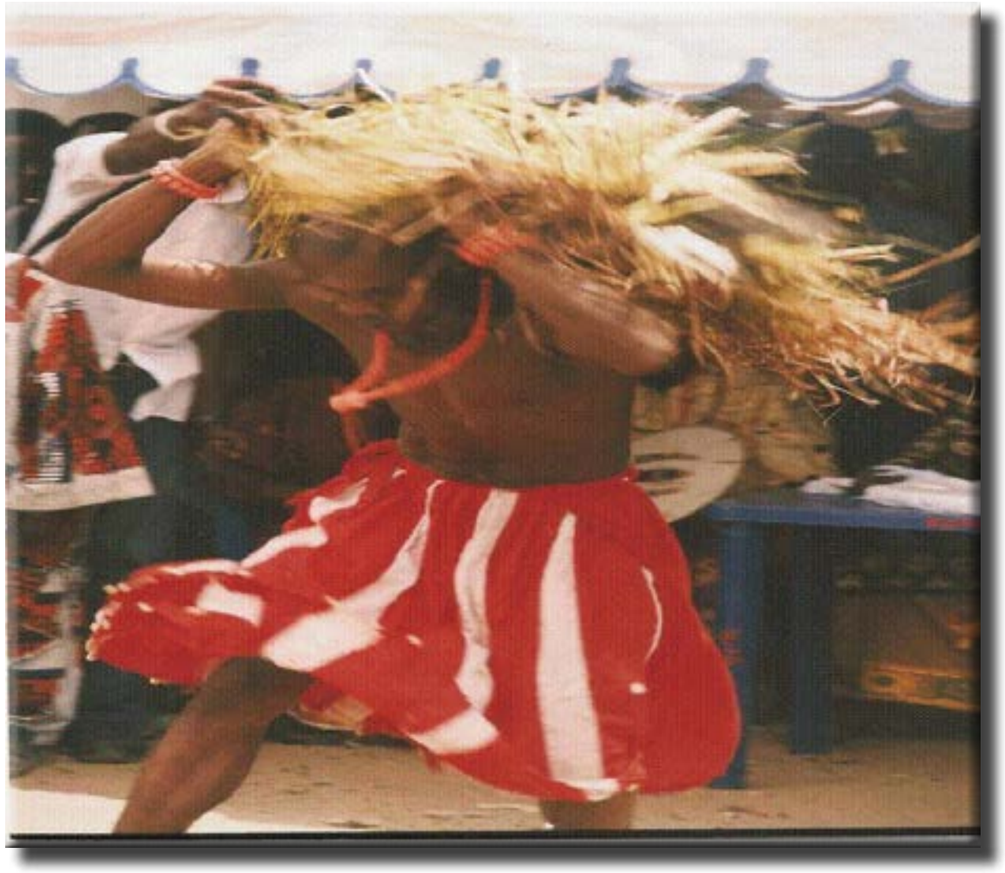

Photo credit: Ruth Epochi-Olise

***Figure 5b*. The Original Costume of the Ukwata Carrier**

Conclusion

The Ndokwa masquerade tradition has always been perceived as a gendered sect which disallows female participation because of its patriarchal stance. This tradition has refused to acknowledge the dual existence of both sexes with their shared rights that characterized the life of their community. Although this tradition subordinates women, relegating them to the background even though they occupy the private and public space, women are visible in Ndokwa masquerade. Their inclusiveness does not hinder blessings, peacefulness, and prosperity in the community being bestowed by the ancestors. Rather, women's participation is a pointer to the normalcy in the system set against the belief and notion held for so long about women's exclusion. The performance space is never complete with only the presence of one gender, as both genders collaborate in a unified front to achieve the aims of the Ndokwa people; both are needed in the preservation and survival of their community. Irrespective of who dons the mask, women are subtly adapting a new performance space in which they may negotiate complex patriarchal systems of power, performing new subjectivities in response to where they are going, not solely where they have been (Carlson, 2019; Adimora-Ezeigbo, 1996).

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Linguistic Realization of Power in Religious Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nigerian Pentecostal Sermons

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Abstract

Considered one of the leading approaches in the study of language, critical discourse investigates how language is related to society and how its influence and power reflect social relations. This paper examines two Pentecostal sermons and identifies the linguistic means that contribute to their power via Fairclough's three-dimensional model which investigates discourse as text, as discursive practice, and as social practice.

Keywords: Religious discourse, Power, Language, Critical discourse analysis, Social practice

Introduction

Although Wijsen (2013) and Kim (2016) have remarked on the need to cover "the gap between theoretical and scientific approaches" in the study of religion, religious discourse has received scanty attention. Spolsky (2003) also argues that research in the area of CDA of religious discourse is limited. Employing critical discourse analysis (CDA) which supposes discourse is social practice (institutional and social contexts form and influence discourses, while the latter, in their turn, shape our social and political reality [Wodak et al., 1999, p.8]), this paper examines the linguistic basis of power and authority in religious discourse and how it is formed by the social context in which it is placed, and how, in turn, it informs social reality and environment in two sermons, *Power of a Changed Mind* and *Change Your Thinking*, by Pastor David Wale Feso of Charismatic Renaissance International Church (Yenagoa, Bayelsa state, Nigeria).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach that establishes "the relations between signs, meanings and social and historical conditions which govern the semiotic structure of discourse" (Fowler, 1995, p.5) and reveals how discourse is determined by social, cognitive, political, historical and cultural contexts. The interdisciplinary character of CDA is conditioned by its aim to identify the ideological characteristics of language in the process of production, reproduction, and modification of social structures, relations, and subjects (Myers, 2004, p.5). As Wodak (1995) observes, this reveals the nature of power and dominance of the discourse and the role of discourse in their production (p.204). Using CDA, linguists expose abuse embedded in texts that leads to the stereotypes of some social groups. An important peculiarity of CDA is that it explains the received data with help of multiple social theories for the sake of revealing ideological foundations of the interpreted procedures (Kravchenko, 2012).

Power and Discourse

Discourse and power are central categories of CDA. Discourse analysts investigate the role of discourse in the process of power production and power abuse in society. As T. van Dejk points out, various forms of social inequality (based on such factors as gender, race, social class) are constructed, consolidated and legitimized in oral and written texts, especially in different types of public discourse controlled by the elite (2013). Discourse , of course, may be defined in various ways. Brown and Yule (1983, cited in Baker & Ellece, 2011) refer to discourse as any form of language use or naturally occurring language. Baker and Ellece say that discourse can "refer to particular contexts of language use, and in this sense it becomes similar to concepts like genre or text type" (2011, p.31). Foucault (1972, p.49) defines discourse ideologically being "practices which systematically from the objects of which they speak." Baker and Ellece (2011) also remark that "discourses are not articulated explicitly but traces of them can be found in language use." Fairclough in *Critical Discourse Analysis* (1993) distinguishes between 1) discourse as "a category for designating particular ways of representing particular aspects of social life"; and 2) discourse as a category that is "defined through its relation to and difference from two other categories, 'genre' and 'style'." This study adopts a more general definition of discourse as the kind of language used within a specific field.

Generally, power is defined as the ability to direct or influence the behavior of

others or the course of events, or the ability to produce an effect. Foucault (1979, cited in Baker & Ellence, 2011, p. 99) distinguishes between disciplinary and sovereign power. Fairclough (1989, cited in Baker & Ellence, 2011, p.99) refers to these two types as consent and coercion respectively. Sovereign power is exercised by states or sovereigns that can punish or coerce or kill people, while disciplinary power is considered by Foucault as a more efficient method of control and has nothing to do with physical might, but is considered as a necessary, productive and positive force in society (Gaventa, 2003). Van Dejk also admits that power is not necessarily regarded as something negative. Power can be directed at reaching positive or at least neutral results and points out that power abuse can only be studied when it is realised how much harm it causes people and how social inequality is constructed and reproduced in our everyday lives. As Baker and Ellece observe, "power relations are constructed, maintained and contested via discourse" (2011, p. 99). Because power relations are constantly changing," discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart" (Foucault, 1998, pp.100-101).

Religious Discourse

Kim (2016, p.60) defines religious discourse as a type of discourse that "purports to serve didactic purposes, aiming to admonish, inculcate, and invoke changed attitudes and behaviors of members of the group" via their religious beliefs. Finnern (2014) gives a more detailed description of religious discourse. Finnern (2014) notes that its religious content involves 1) a religious or non-religious character (a monk, believer, and atheist); 2) a supernatural being depending on the belief system; 3) direct or indirect reference to

religious texts. According to Kress (1989, p.19), "genres have specific forms and meanings, deriving from and encoding the functions, purposes and meanings of social occasions." Sermon as a genre has been previously described by Brinton (1995) who identified their specific characteristics: 1) presence of biblical text; 2) the author of the text has certain intentions over the listener and 3) delivers them in form of rules which control the genre; and 4) is familiar with these rules.

Like political discourse, religious discourse considers particular actions and views as being legitimate or not. Often such judgments are based on individual interpretations of religious texts. Because some fundamental religious beliefs place certain groups in unfavourable positions while sustaining the privileged status of others, one must ask what role does discourse play in this situation, and how is language employed to create social inequality? CDA, on the one hand, considers discourse a well-organized phenomenon that structures reality. By means of language, discourse imposes its system of values, social and economic (Fowler, 1995, p.4), and forms reality according to its own pattern. On the other hand, discourse is also a socially structured phenomenon. According to Fairclough (2003, p.22), texts are formed by social structures and social practices as social agents and people are engaged into social events, making, discourse simultaneously constitutive and constituted.

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of CDA

Fairclough's useful framework for the analysis of discourse as social practice "contains a range of different concepts that are interconnected in a complex three-dimensional model" and uses detailed text analysis to see how "discursive processes operate linguistically"

(Jorgensen & Phillips, 2003, p. 64). This method combines three levels of analysis: 1) description which focuses on textual and linguistic characteristics of a discourse; 2) interpretation that concentrates on the issues of production and consumption of texts, allows to identify certain ideological frames of the participants of communication; and 3) explanation where various social theories are employed in order to reveal the ideological basis of the text under study.

Analyzing the Data

For the purpose of this research two Pentecostal sermons were chosen: *Change Your Thinking* and *Power of Changed Mind*. They were delivered by Pastor David Wale Feso of Charismatic Renaissance International Church situated in Yenagoa, Bayelsa state. The sermons were randomly chosen from those available in printed version, and are both devoted to the same topic "Influence of Mind." The three-dimensional model of CDA introduced by Fairclough and employed in the analysis of data in this research suggests looking into three components of discourse that can be analyzed separately: text, discursive practice and social practice.

Discursive Practice

Intertextuality, which occurs when texts draw on earlier texts, is important to consider when determining how the text is produced by its speaker and how it is consumed by its audience. Fairclough distinguishes between manifest and constitutive intertextuality, by noting that the former is more pronounced and explicit and can be realized through citation (Fairclough, 1992, cited in Jorgensen & Phillips, 2003). Interdiscursivity is a form of intertextuality and "occurs when different discourses and genres are articulated together in a communicative event" (Jorensen & Phillips, 2003, p.73). Both sermons under analysis are characterized by high levels of interdiscursivity and intertextuality. Intertextuality is generally achieved by direct citation from the Bible, which is not surprising as it is the primary source of reference for every Christian. Mostly biblical citations are used to reinforce the words of the preacher, to prove the correctness of his thoughts, as they tally with the Word of God, or to introduce a new idea: **for example,** Feso remarks, "the future that you see is the future that will be. What future do you see in your home? That is the future that will be. "For as he thinketh in his heart so is he."; "I sincerely believe that there is nothing this world can do against me that can stop me. Why? Because 1 John 5:4 "whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world."; "our thoughts our words and we know that whatever we say will affect our lives because Isaiah 57:19 says, "I create the fruit of the lips." At times, he names verse in the Bible without citing it word for word: "according to 3 John 2."

The preacher also uses indirect citations from the Word of God. Such are instances involve retelling biblical stories and referring to biblical characters: "the children of Israel in the wilderness, they never saw themselves in the Promised Land. Every time they kept on complaining, oh the Lord brought us to die in the wilderness…"; "he changed Sarai's name to Sarah which means 'princess'" Besides citations from the Bible, the preacher also refers to other sources such as proverbs,"I have always said that a lizard in Nigeria will not become an alligator in America,"or quotations as "[r]epetition is the law of deep and lasting impression."

Implied intertextuality is evident when Feso offers possible questions from the

audience that beg further explanation: “Your words are the expression of your thoughts. How do you mean pastor?”; “I sincerely believe that there is nothing our world can do against me that can stop me. Why? Because I…” Interdiscursivity is also evident in Feso's sermons which mix types of discourse. For example, explanatory discourse appears when the preacher explains biblical verses: “For as he thinketh in his heart so is he.” That means that…. It says as …”; “the word ‘strengthens’ is the Greek word ’endunamoo’. It means." Narrative discourse appears when the preacher relates stories from his life or the lives of others: ““A man that was beginning to fail in business went to see his Pastor." Fairclough (cited in Jorgensen & Phillips, 2003, p.82-83,) observes that a high level of interdiscursivity and intertextuality indicates change, while the opposite situation implies “a reproduction of established order.” Accordingly, both sermons suggest societal change “by drawing on existing discourses in new ways” (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2003, p.74). Whether such change is possible is determined by power relations which make different discourses accessible to different people (Fairclough 1993).

Discourse as Text

According to Benwell and Stokoe (2006, p.108), discourse is a system of lexical and grammatical variants.. Transitivity regarding lexical items (figures of speech, clichés, style, grammatical elements, and structure of argumentation) is of special importance in CDA (Kravchenko, 2012), especially clausal structure and grammatical representation of connections between the participants, processes and circumstances (Halliday, cited in Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015). Because different social structures and values require different patterns of transitivity, transitivity demonstrates “how speakers/writers encode

in language their mental reflection of the world and how they account for their experience of the world around them” (Mehmood, et al., 2014).

Generally, active constructions are used in Feso's sermons with the subjects expressed either by the personal pronoun, you, or a noun phrase modified by the possessive pronoun, your: for example, “your life will not change until”, “you can achieve”, “your future is”, “you will actually change your life”, “you are moving in the direction of”, “you begin to learn.” Consequently, material processes dominate the texts of the sermons which indicate that someone undertakes a particular action in order to achieve a particular result. Due to the subject matter of the sermons, mental processes are also represented that usually are introduced by the modal verb, need, in order to indicate their necessity: “you need to know,” “you need to understand,” and “you need to renew you mind.” This use of material processes indicates the participants', in particular the listeners', active involvement in activities that can bring about changes in their lives, shows the level of their responsibility. The speaker seldom demonstrates his involvement in these activities and responsibilities, positioning himself above his audience. His superior position can be perceived inthe following constructions: “I have always said, “let me show you something,” “I want you to always remember,” “I know you will make a success with your life.”

Modality indicates the attitude of the speaker towards what he/she is saying. It can be expressed by means of mood (a verbal category), by means of modal verbs, and by some lexical items. These elements reveal the character of the relationships between the participants of the communication and the level of subjectivity of the speaker. The prevailing type of modality in the analyzed sermons is truth. The speaker is sure of the genuineness of his statements and never expresses doubt or hesitation. His attitude is

expressed in the use of the indicative mood which is prevalent throughout the sermons. There are also instances of the imperative mood in these texts. They express orders and pieces of advice from the speaker to the audience. The speaker is considered the carrier of knowledge not yet available to the listeners: the listeners are advised to“take the scripture, meditate upon it over and over,” “stop complaining," “wake up and know,” “notice,” “don’t forget,” and “begin to.".[1] Several instances of the use of modal words (“you need”and “you must”) also indicate the listeners' necessity or obligation to do something. Objective modality is also expressed through the use of verb tense which is predominantly presented as indefinite, offering the speaker’s words as ever true and variable, andhelping to create a positive mindset for the listeners.

These sermons are characterized by the presence of a complex syntactical structure. Mostly complex sentences are used, with subordinate clauses of time, condition ,and reason. Of greater interest are the sentences with subordinate clauses of time and condition, in which the subject and relative clauses implicitly encourage the listeners to do something in order to obtain something greater: “You must keep on meditating on the word of God until you see yourself in the light of what God says”; “If you will start changing what you keep your mind on, if you will change the movies you watch, you will actually change your life”; “Until you have a new self-concept, you are limited.”; “what keep our minds on we will pursue.”; “If the pictures in your mind are wrong, your life will be wrong”; “what you visualize is what will materialize.”In most of the cases of such complex sentences, the speaker contrasts the present unfavorable position of the listeners to a better one which usually existsunder certain condition, indirectly calling him/her to

action.

Feso uses a number of rhetorical questions. For example, he asks, “How do you see your life? How do you see situations in your life?” The preacher answers these questions by giving an instruction or an example to follow (this is what I do, and you should learn how to do it too0: “I see the challenges in my life as strategic positioning for a greater future.” Some instances of the speaker questioning himself are made for the sake of reinforcing a particular argument: “Notice that when we know His love, then we are bolder. What is boldness? Faith; when you have faith, you are bold." Other statements are made merely to retain the attention of the audience and create a positivity on the oart of the speaker: for example, “Your future is in your heart.”; “The boundaries are in your mind.”; “our thoughts affect our word and we know that whatever we say will affect our lives”; “There is power working in you”. Future references with the modal verb will are also frequently used for the sake of indicating outcomes of the listeners' actions: “How your future will turn out, what amount of money you will make, how your marriage will be…is in your heart.”; “Your life will always reflect your thoughts.” There are also instances of past tense, but these are typical of contexts in which the speaker narrates biblical stories or refers to others' past experiences or his own.

Kravchenko (2012) when referring to J. Lakoff (1990) remarks that metaphors, metonymy and synecdoche are important means of manipulation and create particular perceptions of certain social groups. These sermons, however, lack figures of speech in general. The language is neutral and straightforward withe the exception of one instance of metaphorical use, “no weapon formed against you shall prosper”. Here, the word, weapon, is not used to meanarms but to denote the negative thoughts and deeds of

one's enemies. The use of the noun, Word, is an example of synecdoche as it represents the Bible. However, it does not carry any stylistic coloring as this is the synecdoche's conventional use in Christianity.

Discourse as Social Practice

According to its genre, a sermon should present a biblical text with certain aims. The sermon presents a problem for which the preacher knows the answer. In the sermon, the preacher guides others towards perfection, making the preacher a great power holder, a possessor of authority to influence other people and bring about change in their spiritual and social lives. To demonstrate the power over the audience through language, the preacher needs to be able to present his thoughts as credible and reasonable to convey ultimate truth.

How is this credibility be manifested in the texts of sermons? First, the position of the preacher as leader is the primary reason for the congregation accepting his teachings. Being the leader gives Feso power and authority and guarantees the credibility of his sermons which embody "the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader and his or her followers" (Gardner, 1988). In the texts of Feso's sermons, his authoritative position is manifested in expressions like "I have always said" and "I know", with the help of modal verbs expressing necessity for the listeners to do something. Constant use of the personal pronoun, you, and the possessive pronoun, your, positions the preacher above the audience; setting himself as an example to be followed: "How do you see your enemies? For me, I see my enemies as opportunities. I see every opposition as opportunity." The credibility of a preacher's words is also manifested in the uses of appropriate biblical stories and verses that support the preacher's ideas. For Feso words to be reliable, they must be grounded in the words of authority, from a source that is commonly considered trustworthy. This source in Christianity is the Bible, according to which believers' actions and words are judged. Its words are integrated into the sermons by means of direct citations, the narration of biblical stories and simply by mentioning particular verses. In short, the manifestation of power in the sermons is twofold. First it rests on the system that places a preacher in a position of authority, creating a social hierarchary. This position is manifested in different ways with the help of linguistic means in his sermons. Second, the preacher's ideas are reinforced by constant references to the Bible.

Findings

This paper has shown that, on one hand, power is attributed to the position of the preacher as a leader which gives him a certain degree of authority over people and the ability to influence and guide their actions. This authority is manifested in the texts of sermons through various linguistic means. First, the use of the personal and possessive pronouns, you and your, positions the leader above the audience as someone who possesses the knowledge of truth, reinforcing the need for the listener to change his/her ways. The preacher avoids generalizations and refers to himself as I. The few cases of the inclusive personal and possessive pronouns, we and our, seem to be accidental.

Second, in the sermons, modality is categorical and objective. The preacher presents his ideas and interprets the Bible as fact which reflects and reinforces the hisauthority. The preacher never hesitates in his thoughts. The use of imperative mood to express

commands, modal verbs denoting obligation and necessity, and other lexical items indicating importance of what is being said ("it is important that") also contribute to this effect. However, the items mentioned in the previous sentences are not numerous, rather the preacher resorts to motivation by means of examples from his own experience and story-telling. Third, the authoritative position of a preacher is reinforced by using himself as an example by which the listeners should be guided. Often, such instances are introduced by questions the preacher asks himself or the audience. Rhetorical questions are also used to emphasize ideas and draw the attention of the audience and to activate the listeners' mental processes.

Another expression of power is found in the sermons' syntactic structures. The preacher attempts to persuade the audience to change in accordance with the word of God by means of reason. This logic is expressed in complex sentences with subordinate clauses of time, reason, and condition used in the sermons' pattern of problem and solution. These sermons reflect the present problem a person faces and offer a solution that can be achieved *if* something is done, *by the time* it is done, and *for the reason* it is supposed to be done. The texts' high levels of cohesion also make the preacher's reasoning more powerful. In terms of transitivity, the clausal structures of the sermons are characterized by presence of material processes, which include a person's activities and are realized through the use of active voice, indicating the listeners' prospective and active involvement in those activities and anticipating their readiness to accept responsibilities. This type of sentence structure helps the preacher to program future actions of his audience and present ideas as facts. Metaphors (that are normally used to represent our cognitive perception of events and phenomena, and as means of realization of strategies of dominant social group Van Dejk [1998] cited in Kravchenko, [2012]) are practically absent in the sermons. This can be attributed to the subject matter of the texts or to the style of the preacher in general.

In all, the linguistic means mentionned above express and support the power and authority of the preacher which originates from his social position as a leader. The presence of biblical text in his sermons also reinforces a preacher's credibility, his words being supported by excerpts from the Bible. Remarkably, the high level of intertextuality (realized through citations from the Bible and other resources) and interdiscursivity (the demonstrated shifts between various types of discourses) are markers of possibility as the more types of discourses are combined in one, the more influential (powerful) the change the preacher offers becomes (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.75).

Conclusion

These written sermons, delivered by Pastor David Wale Feso of Charismatic Renaissance International Church, demonstrate how religious discourse and social context are mutually dependant and influence each other. Their social dimension is an important factor which in turn shapes their listeners' social relations and social structures. The power of these texts is also conferred by the authoritative position of the preacher prescribed by the church, manifested in their particular use of language, and the presence of biblical references.

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Merging the Veranda with the House: Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* as a Narrative for a New Form of Identity

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Abstract

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* focuses on the importance of the diasporic context in the formation of new female subjectivities. In so doing, it creates a positive account of belonging to the host land and valorises the female immigrant's contribution to the construction of the meaning of Britishness. Exploring the possibilities offered by the diasporic novel to expand the parameters of the canonical English novel, this article suggests the former merges with the latter's narrative of exclusion and marginalization to give the female immigrant the possibility not only to escape the patriarchal attic of otherness but also to restructure Britishness while redrawing its fixed boundaries by adding to its main house a veranda containing possibilities of being. In this way, the novel in English is

understood in terms of being a veranda to the main house of the culture itself,, aiding in the construction of new cultural and spatial articulations by being capable of circumventing racial and ideological surveillance and policing.

Keywords: Monica Ali, Brick Lane, diasporic novel, belonging, Veranda, Surveillance

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Introduction

During the Renaissance, Britain witnessed a major economic change "away from feudal economies based on land ownership and the obligation and rights that it involved, to a structure [. . .] involving private ownership and investment, profit-seeking and competition, credit systems and speculation—what has come to be known as capitalism" (Hiscock 2008, 128). This materialised in the enclosure of common lands by landowners, which produced violent reactions by "angry protesters tearing the offending fences and hedges which prevented grazing and the collection of fuel" (128). Enclosure was speeded up in the eighteenth century. In fact, the "customary access of the landless to grazing land, peat-cutting, firewood, fishing and game was lost [. . .]. The process was also sometimes violently resisted with rioting, the destruction of hedgerows and the burning of ricks" (Kitson 2008, 315). Enclosure imposed borders and fences to cater for the private interests of the landowners. This crippled communal use of lands and paved the way for the capitalist economic system, creating margins that were part of untamed wilderness.

Enclosure as an agricultural movement associated with bounding, fencing and individualism could be used as a metaphor to define the English novel as an enclosing form that was born in the eighteenth century following a number of economic and social conditions. Enclosure, in this sense, is related to its aesthetic aspects and to its ideological foregrounding of Englishness. Gail Baylis (1996), for instance, points out in "Prose and the Novel 1573-1830" that the "emergence of the English novel in the eighteenth century involves a bewildering multiplicity of themes, methods and influences" (201). It has its "literary origins [. . .] in the picaresque, in romance, in prose forms (fictional and non-fictional) of the Renaissance" (201). It also has a "debt to the concept of narrative in literature *per se*—including the classical epic, dramatic forms and periodical styles" (201). These enclosed genres and forms in the English novel preserved its individualistic drives and supremacist discourse based on the exclusion of the other. In subverting the canonicity of the English novel, the diasporic novel changes the architecture of the main house, demolishes its fences, revisits its attics, and gives the building new verandas to widen its scope and broaden its vision. This article focuses on the role of the diasporic novel in producing openness and expansion that move beyond the Procrustean rules and themes of the canonical English novel to air out what used to be stifled and repressed. I argue that Monica Ali's (2003) *Brick Lane* participates in the opening of the English novel into literary verandas long neglected as marginal and outside the

literary enclosure, the main literary house. Ali's women characters show how marginalised literary verandas can be expanded and merged into the main house of the English novel introducing cultural diversity and fluidity. Pérez-Fernández's (2009) problematization of the fixed understanding of British identity and celebration of the "third space" (143), Poon's (2009) study of the link between "migrant knowing" and "social change" (426), and Pereira-Ares's (2013) "socio-cultural" reading of "the politics of *hijab*" have contributed to the critical reading of Ali's *Brick Lane* (201).Little criticism, however, has been devoted to studying the way the diasporic novel merges with the English narrative of exclusion and marginalization to form a new narrative where artistic, social, and cultural differences and boundaries gradually disappear and make space for new and emergent forms of identity.

Expanding the English Novel

In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," T. S. Eliot (1932) discusses the relationship between tradition and individual creativity and contribution. He argues that "[n]o poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead" (15). The poet or artist, in this sense, is unavoidably defined in relation to their predecessors who have set the literary paradigms that inform the new poets' works. Eliot points out that "for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new" (15). Conformity sets the necessary limitations to avoid literary deviations or excesses that could subvert the established literary tradition. That is why it is not "preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities" (15). The poet's role lies in managing these difficulties and responsibilities by creating a middle way between the meanderings of individuality and the established tradition. As such, the poet is made "traditional" as the

> historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. (14)

This understanding of order does not take into account other literary creations as it constructs a blinkered meaning of tradition that constantly controls the amount of individuality and thus creativity of the poet. Eliot's foregrounding of tradition, enriched with individuality, is also smoothly contoured to look like a closed house that accepts only writers who have the right key to gain access to it. In his theorisation, tradition is an architectural enclosure that is fundamental

to any form of literary articulation that has no contact with what is outside its confines.

Eliot's definition of tradition has been questioned by different critical perspectives that find in its establishment a Eurocentric attitude that ignores the significance of other literary works. Feminists, postmodernists, and postcolonialists, for instance, have concentrated on literary texts that have been overlooked and marginalised by the defenders of the Western literary canon. Diasporic writers have also expanded Eliot's literary house outwards by turning marginal literary verandas into additional rooms that make part of the house and create aesthetic and thematic alternatives. Their diasporic novels resist being enclosed and instead open and enlarge the main house of tradition as they show that individuality, as opposed to tradition, is part and parcel of the act of writing. Often classified as postcolonial writers as they address themes related to identity and belonging, they have managed to develop the English novel as the established tradition by endorsing its novelty and its flexible, fluid aesthetic boundaries. Accommodating experimental and innovative impulses to defamiliarise the traditional and the conventional, the novel proves to be an ever expanding literary form capable of to translating new ideas, concerns, and cultures. Terry Eagleton (2005) points out that the "novel is a mighty melting pot, a mongrel among literary thoroughbreds. There seems to be nothing it cannot do" (1). The significant moves of the diasporic novel in expanding the English novel are made possible by its flexibility and fluidity as a literary form.

Consideration of the development of the English novel also unveils its capacity to accommodate and convey newly emerging concerns and notions. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), for instance, are eighteenth-century texts that have participated in the formation of the meaning of Englishness and its others and in the establishment of the features and ideological orientations of the canonical literary text. In fact, the "major eighteenth-century novels [. . .] are often engaged globally, rather than domestically" (Morrissey 2008, 255). With the nineteenth-century novels, the "focus is on tensions between city and country, or between poor residents of the provinces and wealthier city residents, or on the lonely consequences of living in the landscape" (254). This shift in interest reveals the way the English novel became in the nineteenth century more involved in the development of a social and cultural matrix for the construction and the maintenance of the meaning of Englishness and its hegemonic paradigms. As Lee Morrissey (2008) points out,

> [m]any of the major nineteenth-century novels are domestic in the largest sense, set in the great country house and in a changing English countryside. In these nineteenth-century novels, England's relation to the outside world and to its colonies is consigned to the attic, so to speak. (255)

The major features of the English novel were shaped in the nineteenth century. An established literary tradition developed by authors like Charlotte Brontë,

Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy engaged readers to better understand their social, political, and cultural norms and to define themselves accordingly. In fact, "in the nineteenth-century novel a sprawling assortment of native English voices assembled from across the socio-economic spectrum" gave the clear directions of this literary form and made readers more aware of the different levels of their Victorian society (255). Class relations and conflicts featured most literary texts as the Victorian society was experiencing major changes informed by the ideals of progress and growth. These ideals did not hide the social and political rifts experienced by Victorian people as they tried to understand their national identity.

Dealing with the modern novel in his essay "The Modern Novel," Randall Stevenson (1996) discusses the major changes that the English novel has witnessed and studies the works of authors like Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and Virginia Woolf. He points out that one of modernism's major contributions is the

> rejection of the serial chronology conventional to Victorian or Edwardian fiction in favour of more fluid approaches to structure. For the Victorians, the onward flow of history and the life in time may have seemed sufficiently coherent to provide a valid structuring basis for the novel. (444)

The modernist text, in this sense, is interested in different experimental directions at the levels of setting, narration, characterisation and structure. It questions the restrictions of realism and produces new forms of writing. In fact, "the contemporary situation of the novel seems productively complex: conventions surviving or being subordinated by innovative alternatives; foreign or marginal influences competing with or contributing to the mainstream" (477). This reveals the susceptibility of the novel to narrative experimentation being an express lane that avoids generic boundaries and circumvents ideological restrictions in order to construct multiple narrative possibilities meant to broaden and enrich the meaning of the English novel. Conventions of realistic writing are further questioned by new narrative strategies developed by postmodern and postcolonial novels which have replenished the novelty of the novel with new aesthetic dimensions. Stevenson argues:

> The main road of realist tradition running through the century will no doubt remain a strong direction at its end. Yet the range of alternatives—modernist or postmodernist—has grown sufficiently diverse to make David Lodge's crossroads seem an inadequate metaphor. The novel has moved beyond the crossroads to a kind of spaghetti junction, a formation whose complexity and faintly foreign flavour make it a more appropriate image for an era in which long-serving main roads may remain discernible, but increasingly overlaid with new directions, recombining and diversifying the old. (477)

The new directions that the English novel has taken have revitalised its meaning with many writers staking their claim for a place in its development as a matrix of experimental and creative paths. These writers—modernist, postmodernist, postcolonialist, and diasporic—have questioned established dominant discursive paradigms and constructed new aesthetic and subjective forms that are in tune with the opening up of new cultural opportunities for women and black people. This reveals how the English novel, as the main house, is ready to get larger paving the way to verandas of diasporic writing. In his book *Reading the Novel in English: 1950-2000*, Brian W. Shaffer (2006) points out that the "last half of the twentieth century witnessed a monumental shift in the character of both literary and national identity: the "novel in English" supplanted the "English novel" in significance and cogency" (15). He adds that "the English-language novel is now a genuinely international affair, with postcolonial Anglophone and "black British" works as widely read and critically esteemed as "British" ones" (15). British writers of South Asian descent like Hanif Kureishi, Nadeem Aslam, Meera Syal, and Monica Ali have contributed to a great extent to the growth and maturity of the English-language novel through articulating new forms of identity and subjectivity that question fixed assumptions. Shaffer, in this sense, argues that "it is non-English novelists who now arguably dictate the parameters of literary debate and attract the most interest" (15). This is because power relations have changed in a new postcolonial and postmodern cultural context that resists mainstream rules and boundaries and endorses plurality and diversity. Contrary to the canonical English novel which has always marginalised the other, the "English-language novel" offers new narrative strategies for crafting aesthetic, social, cultural, and political changes that set new discursive norms and deconstruct dominant ideologies.

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, in this sense, is an "English-language novel" that liberates what has always been locked up between walls. It materialises the belief "that literature provides a passport to imaginary worlds previously unseen, that it can unlock doors and ask questions which sometimes undermine official histories" (Nasta 2004, 6). Indeed "creative works can not only alter lives but perhaps provide both readers and writers with a bigger window on the world, a wider-angled lens which can shift perceptions as well as the shapes and contours of that world in the process" (6). *Brick Lane* is actually an imaginative narrative of the need of unlocking doors and seeing the world differently to give it new configurations free from established and stereotypical visions. Nazneen's centrality and centricity to the narrative is the coming out of the cultural other, a movement out of the attic of literary mansions of the English novel to verandas that offer an alternative conception of architectural and literary space. This space that she occupies does not substitute the margin for the centre but one in which she locates herself within the centre, a space that I conceive as a veranda that expands the house and opens it. Ali explores in her novel the way Nazneen, the protagonist, redefines herself in the diasporic space. Heading towards Britishness, not by birth and education but by change and growth, Nazneen chooses to belong in England. The reader actually appreciates her

journey towards freedom from fear as well as ethnic and gender restrictions as the narrative plumbs the depths of domination and exclusion and foregrounds the significance of resistance and growth. Nazneen's agency and subjectivity are materialised in the way she turns into an individual and political apparatus to decide on the understanding and definition of her identity and the identity of her daughters without calling for her husband's intervention. At first she was "a girl from the village: totally unspoilt," in the words of her husband Chanu, but then she has been transformed into and independent and confident woman who rejects her forced cloistered life to experience the pleasures of freedom (Ali 2004, 23). Ali actually acknowledges the significance of change for Nazneen as she uses her to provide new social and cultural perspectives that have been excluded in the canonical literary text which either belittles or glosses over the contribution of the racial other. The reconstruction and valorisation of the role of Nazneen is meant to offer new ways of thinking about diasporic cultural identity as a corrective action to resist stereotypical representations and expand the canonical narrative through the emergence of new discursive levels.

Expanding the Role of the Diasporic Subject

Ali's concern with expanding the space allotted to the diasporic subject is materialised at two levels: leaving the patriarchal attic of otherness to which the woman immigrant is consigned in the host country and escaping the Foucauldian panopticon rules of surveillance that subjugate and underestimate her potentialities towards development and growth. The attic and the panopticon are invoked as metaphors for social, cultural, and racial subjugation. Ali releases her protagonist from the attic and the panoption systems and introduces changes in the spatial distribution of the host people and the diasporic ones meant to redefine the established meanings of Englishness and Britishness. In challenging the insularity of the host country, Ali gives her women characters, in particular Nazneen, the possibility to enter and enjoy the space of Britishness and surmount the experiences of social and cultural denigrations experienced by south Asian women immigrants. Rewriting the conventional and prejudicial configuration of the Bangladeshi female immigrant, Ali gives Nazneen an unpredictable role in the creation of a new spatial order that does not necessarily engage male presence, as Nazneen's husband, for instance, decides to return to Bangladesh by the end of the novel. This new spatial order is sought to undo the enduring patriarchal and racial paradigms that marginalise diasporic female subjects. Parallel with Chanu's patriarchal world and his great admiration for his Bangladeshi origin, Nazneen is given the opportunity to come to terms with herself and construct her individual world slowly but significantly. Chanu is obsessed with Bangladesh's past: "In the sixteenth century, Bengal was called the Paradise of Nations. These are our roots? Do they teach these things in the school here?" (Ali 2004, 185). Nazneen, however, is interested in her present and tells Chanu that she is staying instead of returning with him to Bangladesh: "I can't go with you" (478). Her journey of growth and self-realisation is encapsulated at the beginning of the novel where the reader's attention is captured by the protagonist's capacity to surmount multiple anxieties and difficulties and proves to be highly adaptable

to cultural change, demonstrating her deserved belonging to the diasporic space:

> So that when, at the age of thirty-four, after she had been given three children and had one taken away, when she had a futile husband and had been fated a young and demanding lover, when for the first time she could not wait for the future to be revealed but had to make it for herself, she was as startled by her own agency as an infant who waves a clenched fist and strikes itself upon the eye. (Ali 16)

The reader is as startled as Nazneen to discover the inner resources that make her move beyond the stereotypical image of the docile and ignorant wife and steer a middle course between her culture of origin and the host culture. Her acquired agency enables her to develop a sense of direction towards self-discovery and self-worth. This makes her more successful than her husband whose refusal or failure to assimilate into the host country forces him to return to Bangladesh. Nazneen takes control of her future as her actions speak louder than words. After nearly two decades in London, she realises that "she was not the girl from the village anymore. She was not the real thing" (Ali 385). She comes to terms with herself, refuses Karim's marriage proposal, decides to stay in London, and starts a clothing company with her friend Razia.

Ali's valorisation of Nazneen's agency and role in the diasporic space makes her depart from the conventional diasporic story that either fictionalises the racist problems and marginalisation faced by male immigrants, their total assimilation in the host country, or their construction of a hybrid mode of living that attempts to find a meeting point between the culture of origin and the host culture. Ali feminises the diasporic experience through building another veranda next to the male one. She interferes with the diasporic story and manipulates its storyline to create a defamiliarizing effect that unsettles both Nazneen and the reader as both of them are free to divert their attention from forms of domination and subjugation to the narrative embodiment of liberation and growth. Practices of exclusion and domestication and rigid bounds of English insularity are challenged to produce new diasporic orientations and perspectives that engage the productive role of the female Bangladeshi immigrant. She is empowered to cross fixed borders as "dividing lines that are simultaneously social, cultural and psychic; territories to be patrolled against those whom they construct as outsiders, aliens, the Others; forms of demarcation where the very act of prohibition inscribes transgression" (Brah 1996, 198). Nazneen's relationship with the public world makes her rework her place in the diasporic space as she develops different networks that question ethnic and cultural particularities in favour of a more inclusive multicultural orientation. Moving away from the fixed dividing lines and paradigms is what makes Ali's protagonist emerge from her native shell and explore the new meanings of identity formation. Her emergence is informed by her preoccupation with the present rather than the past and by her capacity to overcome her "anxiety of agency," a fear that she cannot be an independent individual or subject who controls her life and defines her place in the diasporic space. Nazneen's anxiety of agency is challenged by resistance to

the trammels of the domestic sphere, which undergirds her orientation towards discovering the public world and achieving growth.

Ali's representation of the female diasporic experience is ineluctably involved in the valorisation of the role of space in creating new cultural and ethnic patterns free of fixed and biased particularities. Nazneen's quest for self in the host country is predicated on leaving the attic of marginality and asserting her individuality through exploring different places to develop new kinds of social and cultural affiliations. Nazneen "came to London to sit day after day in this large box with the furniture to dust, and the muffled sound of private lives sealed above, below and around her" (Ali 24). This large box/attic defines her as a caged village girl whose self-effacement is caused by her husband's disciplinary and patriarchal measures. The temptation of breaking free, knowing, and understanding of the world around her paves the way to her self-ownership and modifies our understanding the female diasporic immigrant as unavoidably dependent on man's power. What one learns from Nazneen's awakening as an individual is the significance of the interrelationship between her private world and the public one in portraying her spatial relocation and belonging against "a settled way of life, with its law based upon the intolerant root" (Glissant 1997, 11). Her displacement and mobility become the condition for liberating herself from the burden of the cultural root and relocating it in an interstitially situated space constantly redefined. She engages in the reconfiguration of her own space as she experiences "the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world—the unhomeliness—that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations" (Bhabha 1994, 9). This makes her face psychological challenges that control the ubiquity of the native home through the influence of the public realm of the host country, which creates new and strange situations in the process identity formation. Bhabha (1994) points out that this "unhomely" experience is "a paradigmatic colonial and postcolonial condition" that Nazneen is compelled to live as in "that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other" (9). In her refusal to be constantly defined according to the native, domestic, and private paradigms, Nazneen is awakened to an internal power that allows her to renegotiate her relocation and belonging through inhabiting the unfamiliar. Bhabha's theorisation of this hybrid space is instrumental to understanding Nazneen's configuration of her antiessentialist identity as she moves between borders:

> Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy. It is an intimacy that questions binary divisions through which such spheres of social experience are often spatially opposed. These spheres of life are linked through an 'in-between' temporality that takes the measure of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history. This is the moment of aesthetic distance that provides the narrative with a double edge, which [. . .] represents a hybridity, a difference 'within', a subject

that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality. (Bhabha 13)

This concretises the significance of restructuring one's understanding of home in the diasporic space where the crossing of boundaries becomes necessary to renegotiate one's subjectivity through new racial and cultural coordinates. Nazneen's story, then, is a case of "interstitial intimacy" that privileges the agency of the diasporic female subject and her mobility in escaping monolithic cultural values that reject non-nationalist orientations. Nazneen finds in the host country a new vantage point to come to terms with herself and to see things differently in the construction of her hybrid cultural identity. She refuses to live the life of the alienated other as she foregrounds herself as an active participant in the redefinition of the meaning of home for the female Bangladeshi immigrant.

Nazneen develops a useful rapprochement between her private and public worlds, which becomes a stepping stone to a more active role in changing the stereotypical image of the female Bangladeshi immigrant. Unlike her husband Chanu who fails to relocate himself in the diasporic space, Ali's protagonist overcomes unhomeliness as "the feeling of having no stable cultural identity—no real home in any culture—that occurs to people who do not belong to the dominant culture and have rejected their own culture as inferior" (Tyson 2011, 250). There is no doubt that the host country functions in Ali's novel as a catalyst for growth and development allowing for the protagonist's progress from a docile village girl from Bangladesh to a mature, fully fledged individual. But her response to her new environment remains a distinguishing marker of

individuality. In reinventing herself in relationship to the host land, Nazneen gradually liberates herself from the metaphorical attic of confinement and isolation and the patriarchal panopticon of surveillance and control. Her newly-emerging "commitment to citizenship, and to dwelling, rather than to the diasporic discourse of return" (Upstone 2010, 178) informs her quest for relocating the self in a space defined by "an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-delà*—here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth" (Bhabha 1994, 1). The new space that she occupies and constructs is not a border zone, a space between home and hostland. It is rather a space that resists borders. It is a veranda that in being both outside and inside resists being relegated to either position. The host country becomes home. It is restructured, expanded, and opened to new possibilities of being.

Nazneen disrupts the conventional story of the female immigrant's weakness, passivity, and irrationality by becoming a subject in a perpetual process of becoming. She is "here and there, on all sides," in tune with the demands and temptations of the "diaspora space [. . .] where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed; where the permitted and the prohibited perpetually interrogate" (Brah 1996, 208). Her magnetic personality contests "boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of 'us' and 'them'" and proves her capacity for enriching the meaning of Britishness (Brah 1996, 209). She overcomes her feelings of alienation and estrangement

refusing "to sit on the sidelines nursing a wound" (Said 1990, 365). Her journey of self-development starts with questioning the divide between the inside and the outside. In fact, she explores the streets in East London without Chanu's permission. She ponders over her daring exploits as she talks with him about her sister Hasina:

> *Anything is possible*. She wanted to shout it. Do you know what I did today? I went inside a pub. To use the toilet. Did you think I could do that? I walked mile upon mile, probably around the whole of London, although I did not see the edge of it. And to go home again I went to a restaurant. I found a Bangladeshi restaurant and asked directions. See what I can do! (63)

The sense of defiance and triumph she experiences in acting against the dictates of her culture triggers a remapping of the self, a reconfiguration that would incorporate public and private, inside and outside.

As Nazneen becomes more conscious of the need of emerging from her oppressive, patriarchal cocoon and cultivating her courageous thoughts about her individuality and subjectivity, she conceives of herself in relation to space. She therefore becomes more and more concerned with liberating herself from the burden of physical and psychological incarceration and repositioning herself in the diasporic space. The narrator tells us: "She looked and she saw that she was trapped inside this body, inside this room, inside this flat, inside this concrete slab of entombed humanity. They had nothing to do with her" (76). Ready to cross the boundaries of her body, her room, and her flat, she opts for an outward expanding movement that would allow her access into a contact zone in the diasporic context. The reader is seduced by Nazneen's accelerated moves towards freedom as she becomes more determined "to move across existing frontiers and to cut across allegiances" (Bromley 2000, 6). The female protagonist develops a form of resistance to a perceived dominant discourse that silences the other's transformative potential. She goes on to shape her own subjectivity and individuality as she challenges both patriarchal authority represented by her husband Chanu and racist western culture exemplified in the host country. She tells us her own story through the significant moves she has taken in her journey towards self-discovery. Her anti-authoritarian ideas and attitudes foreground the significant role the female immigrant could play to overcome her sense of alienation in the host culture, being both a subjugated Bangladeshi wife and an invisible and stereotyped immigrant. Many instances in the novel focus on Nazneen's oppositional consciousness that starts to confront marginalisation and cross fixed boundaries. The narrator tells us:

> Nazneen dropped the promotion from her prayers. The next day she chopped two fiery red chillies and placed them, like hand grenades, in Chanu's sandwich. Unwashed socks were paired and put back in his drawer. The razor slipped when she cut his corns. His files got mixed up when she tidied. All her chores, peasants in his princely

> kingdom, rebelled in turn. Small insurrections, designed to destroy the state from within. (Ali 63)

To some degree, these moves and minor insurrections are meaningful expressions that reveal this female character's deviation from the patriarchal accepted norms and values. She tends to offer a surreptitious sort of resistance to her husband's hegemonic authority that makes her figure out her forced marginalisation and experience a foretaste of what is to come. Nazneen will become more conscious of a "shapeless, nameless thing that crawled across her shoulders and nested in her hair and poisoned her lungs, that made her both restless and listless" (Ali 102). This demonic force that makes the protagonist unsettled and lethargic is the regenerative power that will push her to enact change and to believe in her effective individual efforts in introducing and developing alternative values. Nazneen actually engages in personal and social transformation as she "gave herself up to a power [that] was inside her, that she was its creator" (Ali 299-300). This power encourages her to make significant changes in her life in an effort to pave the way for a more independent woman who seeks to undermine the patriarchal authority exemplified by her father, by her husband, and by her lover Karim. The seeds of her discontent have practically developed into an open confrontation that makes us easily predict what the eventual outcome will be. Rather than constantly fitting the stereotypical representation constructed to negate her subjectivity and individuality, she aligns herself with her newly found power and proves her capacity to overcome her passivity, docility, and ignorance and reach wholeness. In other words, the "old Nazneen was sublimated and the new Nazneen [is] filled with white light, glory" (Ali 41). This further consolidates her overt resistance and gives legitimacy to her actions towards disrupting or countering hegemonic attitudes.

Resistance and growth in Ali's *Brick lane* find expression in its "fictional exploration of the complexities of belonging and identity, the shifting and cross-cutting cultural experience of diaspora and relocation" (Bromley 2000, 4). The female character's capacity to relocate the self and make it belong is what makes us appreciate her journey of identity formation in a cultural context that is most of the time exclusionary of the emergence of the other as a potential enriching force. Ali's construction of a positive story for the female immigrant is attuned to the development of "narratives for a new belonging" (Bromley 2000, 1). These differ significantly from established male immigrants' narratives and reinforce the need to integrate the female Bangladeshi diasporic other "into the narrative of the British nation" (Muñoz-Valdivieso 2010, 163). Ali emphasises this other's important role in conceiving of Britain as a multicultural space that is always expanding. In boosting Nazneen's agency, she celebrates the capacity of this female diasporic subject to restructure the house of the British nation and open it up to a veranda that would expand it and push its boundaries. Ali, therefore, contests the meaning of both the English novel and the English identity as she rethinks them in terms of openness and fluidity, incorporating diasporic issues and cultural practices that have become unavoidably associated with the new

"English-language novel." Both novel and protagonist are "a form of cultural travelling, a means of transporting words into other worlds, of making crossings and forging connections between apparently conflicting worlds" (Nasta 2004, 6). Both restructure the architecture of the host culture. The impact they have on its literary, social, and cultural aspects is one of expansion and openness.

Rather than accepting to be passively defined and controlled by a hegemonic power that forces her imprisonment in the attic of cultural difference and deviation, the female protagonist is fictionally and politically constructed to exemplify cultural hybridity that has become a determining factor in the British cultural context. These connections between seemingly opposite worlds are the meeting point that allows Nazneen to move from an opaque space of social and cultural deprivation to an open and fluid space of cultural metamorphosis, freedom, and growth. She enters a space that nurtures her potential resources and raises her awareness against blanket assumptions that silence voices and offer no opportunities to Britain's new subjects. In deciding to stay in London with her two daughters, Nazneen paves the way for a different type of life and future in which the immigrant is no longer constrained by the Bangladeshi cultural values and stereotypes. This does not necessarily mean cutting her cultural roots and embracing a complete westernised type of life. Actually, the female protagonist is roused to action by the appeal of the discovered host country which offers her more possibilities to go beyond her fixed and manipulated identity and negotiate a new understanding of her individuality. Leaving the domestic space, exemplified in her flat in Tower Hamlets, is one way of theorising and narrating a new form of agency at two levels. First, Nazneen frees herself from the microcosmic Bangladesh reproduced in London and meant to deny her subjectivity. Second, she proves her capacity to develop a more balanced personality as an immigrant who desires to be seen by the host country differently, to be respected as a British subject who has the right to enter the British house and leave marginality behind. This sense of inclusion that Ali defends is intended to improve the immigrant's image and promote her role as an active participant in the blurring of boundaries between cultures created by dominant structures of power. For instance, when Nazneen goes ice-skating in her sari by the end of the novel, her friend Razia tells her "This is England. [. . .] You can do whatever you like" (Ali 492). Her hopes and desires are met as she skates on a frozen ice rink that warmly tolerates difference. It is important to stress, therefore, that, alongside her cultural transformation and self-realization, there is a Bangladeshi aspect that remains present in her life and that characterises her newly emergent cultural identity. "Without renouncing her traditional clothes," Nazneen reveals that "there are new forms of being Asian and Muslim in Britain" (Pereira-Ares 2013, 210). These new forms communicate a new understanding of the meaning of Britishness that facilitates the immigrant's integration into the host society. Thus, Nazneen's unfamiliar ice-skating creates "a note of mobility" that produces "a kind of willed optimism about freedom and an expansive Englishness rather than as just a naïve and sentimental gloss on continuing problems of racism faced by immigrants" (Poon 2009, 435). She claims a new cultural affiliation

that makes her respond positively to what is alternatively offered by the external environment. She works on the development of stronger connections with her newly discovered world as a means to surmount the negative effects of her previous confinement in her patriarchal flat. Therefore, she resists "stasis and closure" and gets attuned to "continued rhythms and journeys [. . .] reiterating and valorizing change that is rooted in the willingness to take small steps" (435). Likewise, by pointing out that she is now more or less British, she decides on her own model of belonging by placing herself beyond any bounded, fixed, and stereotyped form of identity.

Conclusion

The exclusionary drive of the English novel in constructing stereotyped characters who do not fit into the English social and cultural context and who are forced to inhabit the margin has produced artistic and critical reactions by writers and readers. Postcolonial and diasporic writers have found ways to infiltrate into the English novel in spite of the fences that secure its ideological surveillance and policing. The "freedom of the novel, the fact that the genre is always genuinely 'novel'" has given these writers the possibilities to enter its western stronghold and participate in the feeding of its novelty (Peck 1996, 24). Countless subversive readers have also focused "on the dichotomies and contradictions within the genre, and the tensions of its positioning within literature" (Azim 10-11). Being a diasporic writer with a specialist input to the ongoing discussions on issues of immigration, belonging, and identity, Ali stands as an example who "struggles to go beyond the boundaries and to exceed the limits of racialised, colonised and national identities" (Bromley 2000, 3). She revitalises the English novel by showing that it resists and undermines boundaries as it is "an extraordinarily capacious" form of writing (Eagleton 2005, 2). Her "English-language novel" *Brick Lane* hosts diasporic characters and foregrounds their role in challenging "the construction of a universal and homogeneous subject [. . .] held together by the annihilation of other subject-positions" (Azim 1993, 30). Nazneen's defiance of domesticity and docility, as she breaks down the barriers of fear and reserve, defines her in appreciative terms that value her presence in the host country as a British subject whose belonging is uncontested. Nazneen, her daughters Shahana and Bibi, her friend Razia, Mrs Azad, and many other female diasporic characters are far removed from the ambivalent and marginalised immigrant; instead they are represented as strong individuals leading meaningful lives, claiming their right to their new homeland Britain without cutting the ties with their country of origin.

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Peacekeeping as an Option for Unity under the Instruments of Law and Religion in Nigeria

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Abstract

Peace is the absence of war, crisis, or conflict. It is a state of stability and tranquility. To keep peace involves a deliberate and conscious effort in intervening in a crisis situation and ensuring it does not escalate. We live in a world in which crisis, misunderstanding and the option for retaliation grow by the day leaving humans in fear of the unknown. So many crisis occur along families, communities, ethnic, state and national lines which destroy lives and properties on daily basis. This paper focuses on peacekeeping, conflict management/resolution, and the utilization of diplomacy in peace building before discussing peacekeeping under the instruments of law and religion in Nigeria.

Keywords: Peacekeeping, Conflict resolution, Moral decadence, Law, Religion, Negotiation.

Introduction

Peace is an issue which every right thinking man pursues to actualize because it brings about development in the society. We are living in the society filled with threats, war and rumors of wars, exploitation, injustice, and moral decadence. Obviously, when there is peace is lacking anywhere, the effect on the economy, the educational sector, and the political sector is grievous. But there are men/women who engage in warfare and terrorism for selfish aims and ulterior motives which may either be political or economic. Webster's New Encyclopedia Dictionary (2002) states that peace is:

> (1) A state of tranquility or quiet: as (a) Freedom from civil disturbance (b) A state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom (a breach of the peace). (2) Freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions. (3) Harmony in personal relations. (4) (a) A state or period of mutual concord between governments. (b) A pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity. (p. 1342)

Lundberg (1939) and Wilson and Kolb (1949) observe that "conflicts are dysfunctional processes resulting from the breakdown of communication (pp. 275, 714). As Olorunyomi (2003) remarks, "communication is very pertinent when trying to keep peace" (71).

Akporo (2017) notes that in peace and conflict we are urged to take one action and to refrain from taking another. It is difficult to develop any society in which the peace quotient is low.

Knowing how to use reconciliation to resolve conflict is on the increase, but in a civil war where those in conflict have common social relations (for instance, through inter-marriage, ceremonies, government, and geographical areas or communities that are economically interdependent), it can be difficult to separate the protagonists. Tribe and ethnic boundaries between them are often very difficult to draw. A prime example of this found in the Nigeria Civil War. Ugwuliri (2002), for example, says the usual belief is that justice (usually meaning the punishment of the offenders) precedes reconciliation. However, such an argument presents a false dichotomy. Any attempt at reconciliation without addressing the injustice in the situation is counterproductive and a mockery and belittling of the the suffering of the victim. There is no reconciliation without justice. Justice and equity lies at the core of reconciliation. Even though justice is a necessary condition for reconciliation, reconciliation takes the concern for justice a step further and is preoccupied with how to rebuild a more livable and psychologically healthy environment between former enemies in which vicious circles of hate, deep suspicion, resentment, and revenge do not continue to fester. As Olagunju (2002) points out, "the simple secret of mediation is in putting both sides in a forum where they are able to listen to each other with empathy" (p. 15). Shedrack (2018) observes that

> [c]ommunication is also a non-adversarial and cheap way of preventing and removing conflict situations available to the parties in a conflict. He

observes that once communication is destroyed, the parties may get into deeper disagreement that may not easily be resolved (p. 104).

This paper addresses the promotion and enforcement of peace through the use of negotiation, conflict management/resolution, diplomacy, African traditional methods, mediation, reconciliation, and conclusion.

Peacekeeping: A Sketchy Background

The need for peace is ongoing. Since the creation of United Nations (UN) in 1945, over 160 major conflicts around the world have left some 25 million dead. In response, peacekeeping operations have been concrete manifestations of the UN's resolve to offer security to all warring parties of conflicts as postulated by Nkpip (2018). As Oyeshola (2005) points out, the Security Council is the supreme authority on peacekeeping. This authority is reinforced by clauses in the United Nation Charter, found in Chapter Vi of the Charter, Articles 33 through 38 is specific about settlement of disputes. Chapter Vii, especially articles 39, 41 and 42, is concerned with action in respect to threats to the peace, breaches of peace, and acts of aggression. The peacekeeping outlined includes the actions of preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace-building.

a) Preventive Diplomacy is primarily an action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, preventing existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.
b) Preventive Deployment is a military United Nation presence in the field at the request of the party or parties concerned or with their consent in order to defuse threats or discourage hostilities.
c) Peacekeeping is a United Nation presence in the field (normally including military and civilian personnel), with the consent of the parties, to implement or monitor the implementation of arrangements relating to the control of conflicts (cease-fire, separation of forces and limitation of forces), to the resolution of conflicts (partial or comprehensive settlements) and to protect the delivery of humanitarian reliefs in situations of conflict.
d) Peace Enforcement may be needed when peaceful means fail. It consists of actions under Chapter Vii of the Charter that include the use of armed force to maintain or restore international peace and security in a situation in which the Council has determined the existence of a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace or an act of aggression (i.e. state of emergency).
e) Peace-building is critical in the aftermath of conflict. It means identifying and supporting measures and structures which will solidify peace and build trust and interaction among former enemies, in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.
f) Post-Conflict Peace Building is meant to enhance the confidence by projects that brings states together to develop agriculture, improve transportation, utilize resources such as water or electricity that they need to share, or join programmes through which barriers between nations are brought down by the means of free travel, culture, exchanges, and mutually beneficial youth and educational projects.

Conflict Management/Resolution

This is one of the cultures that promote peace. It incorporates arbitrations, litigation, and adjudication especially in relation to group, national, and international conflicts. Jomo (2018) observes that there is the use of the bargaining bandage and role dominance approaches. The bargaining approach manages or resolves immediate conflict. It uses concessions and compromise as the instrument of settling the conflict. The disadvantages of this style is that it can involve an individual or group giving up things which are important to them in order to achieve a superficial agreement reached. This bandage approach 'pretends' that there is no real problem, and as such it does not resolve the root cause. Usually, the conflict returns. Role dominance approach instead defines people and groups in terms of their social roles. It provides a resolution to the immediate conflict but normally disempowers the one in the "lesser" role. It also perpetuates an unequal power relationship.

According to Oyeshola (2005), resolving conflict involves mediation/reconciliation, negotiation, diplomacy, and 'peace processes' (peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace building). It aims at helping conflicting parties arrive at agreed compromises. However, there are stages in conflict resolution aimed at bringing peace to reign.

1) The initial introduction that includes clarification of the role of the mediator, description of the process, statement of goals, and information regarding the ground rule (not interrupting, confidentiality, respect). The aim is to provide safety that helps the parties to talk.
2) The clarification of perceptionsof the relationship, conflict, 'self,' and the other party. The development of effective measures to prevent or contain deadly conflict begins with the articulation of the problems generating the conflict, and it requires the mobilization of social forces that desire to address those problems.
3) The hearing by the mediator of each combatant's side of the story takes care not to agree or disagree with any criticisms either one may make about the other. The mediator draws out more details with open-minded questions like can you tell me more about that? And 'how does that affect you'?

The Utilization of Diplomacy in Peace Building

Diplomacy as the practice of conducting relationships between actors with the intent to influence and transmit a position or negotiation on a given issue or situation for a mutually acceptable outcome is crucial to peacemaking process. Oyeshola (2005) looks at diplomacy being in two Folds:

1) Fold one diplomacy involves the participation and interaction of State and/or official actors in areas of conflict. This diplomacy is acted out with the authority and on behalf of one's State or multinational organization. It is a process which utilizes the skills, resources, and intentions of those officials and/or State actors.
2) Fold two diplomacy is more subtle and personal. It involves actors who represent non-governmental organization engaging in activities at the grassroots level and using back channel measures. This type of diplomacy

is necessary in maintaining support at the local level for negotiated agreements and terms of peace settlements. It is obvious that Fold one diplomacy is based in Governments, Multi-Nationals, Organizations, Elites, and Adversarial Leaders. Their methods are positive or negative incentives, mediation, and political or economic support. In all the stages of conflict, these methods are present and of particular importance during peacemaking and peacekeeping when official actors determine cease-fire, peace accords and the terms to negotiate agreements. In Fold two diplomacy, the actors are Non-governmental organizations, Regional and local leaders, and Grassroots groups with methods like Back-Channel discussions, Educational programmes, and Workshops grassroots reconciliation. These methods are also present in all stages but are of particular importance during conflict prevention and peace building. When local and regional actors can detect early warning signs of violence, helping foster personal reconciliation techniques between adversarial parties goes a long way to ing peace in the area. Types of diplomacy involved include Ecumenical diplomacy, Economic diplomacy, Social diplomacy, Community diplomacy, and finally, Creative diplomacy.

Peacekeeping under the Instrumentality of the Law in Nigeria

The Constitution of Nigerian is enshrined in a manner that prevents individuals from taking laws into their hands and fosters peace through the instrumentality of the Court (Chapter VII of the Nigerian Constitution) and Alternative Dispute Methods or Alternative Dispute Resolution.(Section 19 of the CFRN). According to Oddiri (2004), the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended under its section 19 which provides for the settlement of disputes through Litigation, Arbitration, Negotiation, Conciliation, and Mediation.

Litigation as an Instrument for Peacekeeping

The mechanism of peacekeeping called litigation is adversarial in nature, and any party can approach any of the courts, among them, The Supreme Court, (sec 230-236 CFRN) Court of Appeal (237-248 CFRN), The Federal High Court (249-254), The High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (255-259 CFRN) The Sharia Court of Appeal 261-264, and The Customary Court of Appeal (265-). Each of these Courts has their own Jurisdiction that is the crux and pillar upon which an entire case stands. The preconditions for a court assuming Jurisdiction are stated in the case of Madukolu v. Nkemdilim (1962) 2 SCNLR 341:

a) The proper parties must be before the Court;
b) The subject matter must be such that falls within the capacity of the court to handle;
c) The composition of the Court as to members and qualification;
d) The suit must be commenced by the right approach and the due process required by law and upon the fulfillment of any preconditions to assumption of jurisdiction.

Where a Court lacks jurisdiction, the whole proceeding is a nullity—as held in the case of Okolo v. Union Bank Nig. Plc (2004) All F.W.L.R (pt 197)981 Ratio 2—an end is put to litigation, and parties to a suit cannot by connivance, acquiescence, or collusion confer jurisdiction on a Court as in Federal Government of Nigeria v. Oshiomhole (2004) 3 NWLR (pt860) 305. As decided in the case of Attorney General of the Federation v Guardian Newspaper Ltd (2001) FWLR (PT 32)97, despite the fact that parties may not raise the issue of jurisdiction before a court, the Court on its own must consciously assess each case before it and determine if she has jurisdiction or not to be able to entertain such suit. Where the Court assumes jurisdiction, she, however, cannot expand the limits of its jurisdiction as that would amount to creating laws which is a legislative function.

Though the court is mostly and primarily involved in litigation, however, with the consent of the parties before it, the court may encourage the resolution of such matters through other options of dispute resolution which is called Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) which includes Arbitration, Conciliation, Mediation, and other lawfully recognized method of dispute resolution (Order 28, Lagos State High Court Civil Procedure Rule 2019, Order 26 Edo State High Court Civil Procedure Rules, 2018).

Arbitration as a Tool for Peacekeeping

"Arbitration is a method of dispute resolution involving one or more neutral third parties who are usually agreed to by the disputing parties and whose decision is binding."

Black's Law Dictionary, Eight Edition (2004, p.112)

For parties to enjoy the benefits of peace building through arbitration, they must have made conscious effort to insert in their agreement a clause that will allow them explore arbitration. In Ogun State Housing Corporation v. Ogunsola, (2000)14 NWLR(PT.687) at431), the court held that where an agreement stipulates that parties have agreed to arbitration in their agreement, it would amount to *jumping the* queue if another option of settlement is sought without having recourse to arbitration. These parties may appoint an independent arbitrator who is said to be impartial and unbiased; where an arbitrator is so appointed, he must make declaration as to any circumstance, condition, and or situation that would hinder the impartiality or objectiveness of the arbitral panel (Sofunde Osakwe Ogundipe & Belgore, 2020). As stated in Aribco Nigerian Limited v. Nigeria Machine Tools Limited (2002)LCN/1121/CA, The court or anybody or organ does not have any power in interfering or meddling in the arbitration process, except in the appointment of the arbitrators where one of the parties fails to do so, or where a party feels an arbitrator is partial and wishes that such an arbitrator be removed or that the arbitral award be set aside or to be enforced, as held in Bendex Engineering vs. Efficient Petroleum(2010)8NWLR(PT.715)333 and in Ajudua (2000).

The law that gives credence to the use of arbitration as a means of peace building is The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, CAP 18 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004. Tis Act incorporates the 1988 UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration and stipulates the process and procedure for obtaining peaceful resolution under the Act**.** Thus far, the use of arbitrary channel has created peace in commercial and business transactions in Nigeria.

According to the Merriam –Webster Law Dictionary (2021), the act of conciliating is the settlement of dispute by mutual and friendly agreement with a view to avoiding

litigation. Individuals may also seek amicable settlement by conciliation and the party who wishes to use this method of alternative must first send a written request to the other party to conciliate as provided under Arbitration and Conciliation Act, CAP 18 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004. If the written application is accepted by the other party, the date of acceptance is said to be the date of commencement of Conciliation and thus referred to a body of conciliators who consist of one or three conciliators: where there are three conciliators, the parties have individually appointed their own conciliators and have jointly appointed the third conciliator. At the set date, the parties may decide to appear in person or through a representative while a report of their findings at conciliation is submitted to them with their terms of settlement. Only then is a record of settlement be drawn up and signed by the parties. Ujwala (2012) states that the process involves the conciliators appeasing the parties with the sole purpose of reaching peaceful settlement. According to section 37-42 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act 2004, where the parties do not accept the terms of settlement, conciliation fails, the matter is referred back to arbitration or the Court.

Negotiation: A Tool for Peacekeeping

Obviously, we negotiate for everything during our lives. Acquisition and the of skills of negotiation can save lives, de-escalate wars, enhance business or family relationships, promote peace and reconciliation, and perhaps reduce the need for litigation. Pruitt (1981) says that "negotiation is form of decision-making in which two or more parties talk with one another in their effort to resolve opposing interest…a process by which a joint decision is made by two or more parties" (p. xi-xii). Fisher and Ury (1991) observe it "to involve 'back and forth' communication designed to reach an agreement when one, and the other side has some interests that are shared and others that are opposed" (p. iv-vii). Negotiation is the act of building relationship through which participants jointly try to reach agreements on issues of individual or mutual concern. The process allows the participants to establish contact with each other directly by written words or symbols or through an intermediary. It creates at least a minimally positive professional relationship and identifies topics to be addressed and determined.

Negotiation as a culture of peace carries with it a bargaining process in which the disputants try to educate each other about their needs and interests with a view to shifting away from rigid positions which had hitherto made the conflicts difficult to resolve through informal conversation. According to Albert (2001),

> [a] negotiation provides the room for the disputants to exchange as parts of the efforts towards reaching a common ground. As easy as highly productive as it appears disputants are usually unwilling to negotiate each other. This derives from the emotional and substantive polarization occasioned by issues in the conflict (p. 73).

Oyeshola (2005) remarks that within the two poles of soft and hard negotiation lay variants of negotiation. Walton and Mckersie (1965) say "distributive bargaining refers to the activity of dividing limited resources" (p. 11). The soft negotiator is always willing to make concessions so as to reach quick agreement with the adversary. Desperation to make one party reach an amicable settlement of the problem can make him ready to be exploited by the other party. Thus, soft negotiation belongs to distributive and positional

bargaining.

Walton and Mckersie (1965) also maintain that hard negotiation is also called integrative or interest based negotiation. The hard negotiator sees every conflict as an opportunity to test his strength. He presses a hard position in the conflict in a desperate bid to get all he wants from the other party. The hard negotiator wants to win, but he often ends up producing equally hard responses which exhaust him and his resources and harmshis relationship with the other side.

Principled negotiation is a variant of negotiation and is most often recommended to professionals. It is neither hard nor soft bargaining but a combination of the two. Oyeshola (2005) says that this method was developed at the Harvard negotiation programme and that it is aimed at dealing with issues based on their merits rather than a haggling process. It is focused on having the conflict resolved based on their standards independent of the will of either side in the conflict.

Mediation as a Tool for Obtaining Peace

Mediation is a forum in which an impartial person, the mediator, facilities communication between or among the warring parties to promote reconciliation settlement of understanding. Oyeshola (2005) states that when mediation process is on, there is a wide opportunity to present evidence and arguments and to explore the interests of the parties. The mediator is neither empowered to render a decision nor concerned with 'right' and 'wrong'. He is interested in working with the parties towards a common goal that is a satisfactory agreement that settles the disputes holisticallyhough the overall relationship may not necessarily improve. Fortune (2017) remarks that mediation helps to reduce

hostility and establish effective communication. It creates the necessary atmosphere where questions that reveal the real interests of each side are raised. It goes beyond a mere problem solving or conflict management exercise. It is an opportunity to ease the emotional state of the disputant and change their core interests. This helps to provide for change of heart and mindset.

Mediation could produce positive results in some cases and in others, crashes. It all depends on the competence of the mediator as well as the readiness of the disputing parties to let their problems get constructively dealt with. Dana (2002) states that "mediation entails producing attitude change from me-against-you to us-against the problem" (p. 68). The mediator enters the mediation process as a listener and learner. The intervenor has to reflect deeply on things that the parties could find useful in reaching common grounds. As Albert (2001) rightly observes, "the third-party intervenor must have a thorough understanding of the primary, secondary, and shadow parties in the conflict and their specific interests. In addition, the intervener must move closer to the disputing parties to feel their pulse" (p. 40). He must be familiar with non verbal communication. Principally, non-verbal communication involves those forms of communication which are not audible but which make meaning and can be understood by another person.

Peacekeeping under the Instrumentality of Religion in Nigeria

I. African Traditional Methods for Peacemaking

Albert et al (1995) says that the formal courts are located in quiet places where the least amount of noise or irresponsible behaviour can put one in contempt and attract punishment. The ropes of the judge and lawyers are intimidating. The exchange of highly

technical legal vocabulary among lawyers, on the one hand, and judges and other court personnel, on the other, is alarming to the ordinary man. Until the judge hands down his verdict, the outcome of cases handled by the courts may seem unpredictable to the uninitiated. The man who believes he has a good case might end up in prison, especially if he is unable to pay the fine imposed on him by the judge. Also, the poor who live on their daily income findsthe legal proceedings to be time and income consuming. The rich also have advantage sover the poor in the formal legal system.

The customary courts provide 'common sense justice' that is characterized by simplicity and lack of formality. This justice relies on irrational mode of proof and decision as opposed to a legalistic approach to problem solving. Albert et al (1995),for example, finds that"[r]eligious and ritual beliefs are practices [that can be] made to bear upon the determination of legal responsibility. Parties in conflict are allowed to bring in their witnesses only after evidence has been taken from the two sides" (p. 7). In "common sense justice," judges play the role of counsel by cross-examining disputants and witnesses. The traditional court system allows circumlocution and digression unrelated to the original case, which might later help the determination of the case.

In the traditional judicial systems in Yoruba land, fines of damages are not usually awarded by the mediators in civil cases. The utmost aim is to restore peace by setting disputes amicably. In other words, restoration of harmony is what is paramount in the traditional judicial system. Sometimes, however, mediators award simple fines as a deterrent to particular anti-social behaviour. This may be demanded in the form of kolanuts or local gin, both of which have ritual significance. Some of the kolanuts are broken and passed round for everyone to eat as an indirect way of celebrating the resolution of the conflict. The drink is also passed round for all to taste. If no gin or palm wine is available, ordinary drinking water can be used. In some traditional settings, the palm wine or gin used to pour a libation to the gods and the ancestors of the people involved in the dispute. These actions according to Albert et al (1995) "help to reinforce the terms of reconciliation" (p. 26)

Olaoba (2003) says that "some cases might call for tendering apology…peacemaking and peace building facilitates mutualism which anchors on communalism" (p. 5). Peace-keeping paves the way for a good rapport between the living and the living-dead (ancestors). Such a rapport usually promotes harmony in the society.

II. Oath-taking and Religious Dimensions in Peacekeeping

Oath-taking is an appeal by words or acts to confirm the truth of one's statement or the fulfillment of a promise. It is pertinent in proving one's innocence in Africa. According to Sibani (2020), the suspect is taken to the shrine to swear in the name of a deity who is believed is a custodian of justice and peace to prove that he or she is not guilty as charged. If found guilty, there will be immediate judgment or response from the god(s) within the stipulated time, and the consequence will be death or epidemic as deemed fit for the offence. In the Old Testament, the Wycliffe Bible Dictionary (2001) posits: that"God's oath are solemn asseveration to His covenant people of the absolute truth of his word (Num 23:19) in order that they may put implicit trust in His word (Isa 45:20-24)" (p. 1218). In Christianity, although the Holy Bible discourages swearing but demands truth ,telling as a means of proving one's innocence is enshrined in Matthew 5:34-37:

> But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

> Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shall thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Some Christians still swear by the Bible to justify their stands on a matter. Christ, however, condemned the indiscriminate light or evasive use of oaths. He thought men should be so transparently honest in their speech that oaths between them were unnecessary. In his kingdom, the honesty of its members should eliminate the use of oaths (James 5:12).

III. Forgiveness as Instrument of Peacekeeping

During the mediating process, forgiveness is promoted and emphasized as being carried by the offended or both parties, as the case may be, to enhance peaceful co-existence. In Africa and of course in Nigeria, in some cultures a "peace-meal" is served during which both parties eat together as a mark of purity of heart and forgiveness. This is done to avert any ill intention that may be carried-out by any party concerned. According to Lund (2016), forgiveness is necessary in reconciliation. Until we have allowed ourselves to get beyond anger, to forgive, or rather to let God's forgiveness flow through us, we are burdened with injuries and complaint. We need to seek forgiveness, offer forgiveness and accept forgiveness, and resolve the conflict that poisons our creativity and spontaneity.

IV. Prayer as an Instrument of Peacekeeping

For Zartman (2000), people of faith, prayer is a powerful instrument in conflict resolution. True prayer challenges us to be ruthless in our sensitivity to be truthful in interactions with others, as well as in our intimate interaction with God in silence and solitude. Prayer enables human beings to love and transcend themselves, that is, to reach beyond themselves in relationship with others.

Conclusion

There are situations in which the application of force is utilized to foster peace and order in the society. This occurs when government has employed all options for peace and finds no positive results. Peacekeeping is a *sine qua non* to forestall anarchy in any given society especially in Nigeria. Peace is what gives every society stability and a conductive atmosphere to execute their projects and develop. To have peace, there must be understanding of one another. The process of mediation which ensures peace and order demonstrates that society really needs law and religion to ensure peaceful coexistence.

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Leadership Crisis and Migration in Nigeria: A Study of Chimamanda Adichie's "The Thing around Your Neck " and "The American Embassy"

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Abstract

The recent mass flight of Nigerians to more developed countries, particularly the United States of America, is a matter of concern. Those looking for the American dream are amongst the nation's best, particularly her best in academics, journalism, medicine, crafts, and technology. Some on arrival are bedeviled with life-threatening challenges, others excel beyond even their expectations. Surprisingly, Nigerians, hitherto perceived as lazy and failures at home, break records in their fields of knowledge. This American gain is certainly Nigeria's loss because no nation attains its full potential without human capacity development and availability. This paper interrogates the causes, challenges, and prospects of this exodus depicted in Chimamanda Adichie's short stories, "The Thing around Your Neck" and "The American Embassy."

Keywords: Leadership crisis, Chimamanda Adichie, Nigeria, Repression, Migration, America.

Introduction

Africans, particularly Nigerians, have embarked on mass migration from their native homelands to Europe and America. Their movement to faraway lands underscores unfavorable conditions at home which include unemployment, insecurity, lack of qualitative education, utterly corrupt and irresponsible leadership, lack of basic social and infrastructural amenities, and disparity in the distribution of the nation's wealth and privileges. Countless Nigerians have left in search of greener pastures and better living conditions, carrying with them, to borrow Sethis' words "the pains and struggles of their sites of origin" (23). A few of these migrants have been lucky to secure valid travelling documents through visas and DV Lottery for the journey, but the majority has not been able to do so. Many who did not possess legal travel documents to enter their American destination have lost their lives navigating the harsh conditions of the Sahara Desert or the Mediterranean Sea, and the majority of those fortunate to arrive their destinations have ended up being sources of cheap labour or in prison for illegal entry. Because of the

enormous risks taken, it is obvious that those fleeing want to be anywhere butNigeria. To them, migration is an act of survival and self-preservation.

When did this migration, particularly to America, begin? Following Nigeria's amalgamation in 1914 by Lord Lugard, during the nation's many years of colonization, her citizens contended with British exploitation, oppression, dispossession, and dehumanization. While the British occupation lasted, there was a huge chasm between the opportunities for the natives and their colonial masters. Coleman in *Background to Nationalism* records that

> [t]he salaries of the 3,000 odd European employees exceeded the wages paid the 100,000 odd Africans employed by the firm; the bulk of European salaries and firm profits were not reinvested or spent in Nigeria for industrialization, but were transferred to the United Kingdom" (89).

Coleman further notes that the high degree of dehumanization and exploitation of Nigerians was also evident in the contrast between the well paved roads, clean and well lit streets and luxurious homes in the European quarters on Lagos Island and the chaotic squalor of the native quarters. He remarks that "the luxuries of Europeans were supported by taxes paid by Nigerians" (91). This helped to pave the way to the struggle for emancipation by her nationalists, championed by the likes of Aba Women, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Madam Fumilayo Ransome-Kuti, and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

Irrespective of their gender or ethnic differences, these nationalists were united in their conviction that their nation's citizens would be on their way to rapid development if given the opportunity for self-rule and resource management. Unfortunately, over six decades of national independence, multifaceted challengeshave arise. They include political instability, war, irresponsible leadership, insecurity, corruption, greed, hunger, unemployment, criminal neglect of the poor, ethnic rivalry, and a lack of the will for peaceful coexistence on the parts of the federated units. Other challenges involve the lack of social security and essential amenities like electricity, tarred roads and decent housing for all. As in the days of colonization, everything good is reserved for the ruling elites, their families and friends—to the detriment of the masses. Commenting on the hopeless state of the Nigerian nation and her citizens despite the many years of independence, Meredith in *The State of Africa* declares that for over

> [f]orty years of independence, Nigeria presented a sorry spectacle. Despite an oil bonanza of two Hundred and eighty billion, the economy was derelict; public services were chronically inefficient; schools and hospitals were decaying; higher education had virtually collapsed; roads were pitted with potholes; more than half of the population had no access to safe drinking water. Almost one-fifth of children die before their fifth birthday; nearly half of under-fives were stunted because of poor malnutrition. Millions of people live in slums surrounded by garbage, without basic amenities. The record of successive governments had been abysmal (580).

Chinua Achebe decries this situation when he declares that "[t]he trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership…The Nigerian problem is the

unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership" (1). These unfortunate political realities as well as unfavorable conditions of living have necessitated a new struggle for emancipation.. Foremost is the desperation to escape from Nigeria. Corbet in his review of Ravenstein's "Laws of Migration" declares that "[p]eople escape in search of better life or to escape one that has become intolerable" (2). Writing about the desperation of Nigerians to escape from intolerable living conditions, Pongou observes that "Nigeria faces a number of complex challenges related to causes of migration. Thousands of Nigerians seek refuge and asylum each year and some also migrate illegally transiting through North Africa and then crossing the Mediterranean to Europe and America" (2011). Also, concerned with the recent surging population of contemporary Nigerians fleeing to America, Kolajo records that

> [o]ver 90,000 visa applications are received by the US Embassy in Nigeria every year. For the US Diversity Visa Lottery programme, 6,725 Nigerians qualified. This represents the highest number of DV Lottery immigrants from any African country and it's approximately 15% of the total number of successful applicants from Africa (3).

Kolajo decries the consistent dehumanization of Nigerians by the United States embassy staff when he declares that "the treatment given to applicants at the embassy is very appalling" (4). Nonetheless, the population of American visa applicants have continued to surge in comparison with those from other African countries. Homi Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture* describes those escaping from their homelands in such terms as voluntary "exiles" "emigres" and "refugees" whose exit portends their "gathering" in a foreign land (198). For Nigerians, the most preferred destination for diasporic "gathering" is the United States of America. Contemporary Nigerians, particularly the youth are in search of a system which offers subsidized and available food; qualitative education, including scholarships and student loans; employment opportunities; a regular power supply; good infrastructure; and social security. In this vein, *Punch* of 14th March 2020 reports the disappointment and desperation of Anthonia Nwosu and Emmanuel Egbikuadje who were refused entry visa to the United States. Not convinced that the family would return after the funeral, the embassy had denied them visas saying, "You have been found ineligible for a nonimmigrant visa under section 214 (b) of the US Immigration and Nationality Act" (7).

Sethi also emphasizes the challenges of these people whom he identifies as a "[migrant community in an alien country." He observes that despite the frustrations of racism and under-employment these emigres experience, they see themselves resisting the oppression and hegemonic leadership of their homelands (23).Chimamanda Adichie's "The American Embassy" and "The Thing around Your Neck" investigate the complex nautre of the Nigerian diaspora—giving us insights into the challenges faced by Nigerian migrants in their new country of convergence.

Theoretical Grounding

Ernst Georg Ravenstein's theory of migration offers is a foundational document when consideringAdichie's treatments of the emigre in "The American Embassy" and "The Thing around Your Neck." In"The Laws of Migration," presented to the Statistical Society

in England in 1889, Ravenstein's Laws of Migration include the following:

1. Migration is mostly due to economic reasons;
2. Migration is governed by "push" and "pull" factors: unfavorable condition in one place (unemployment, oppressive laws, conflict, heavy taxation, economic stagnation, insecurity etc.) push people out, and favorable conditions in an external location (job opportunities, freedom, peace, social security, etc.) pull them in;
3. Migration involves two sites namely site of dispersion and site of absorption for migrants;
4. Migration occurs in steps;
5. Migrants going long distance generally go by preference to the large centers of commerce and industry;
6. Migration is age selective: economically active groups migrate more than children and the aged.

In her stories, Adichie particularly brings to the fore the "push" factors in Nigeria which have made America one of the most preferred destinations of Nigerian emigrants. These push factors include poverty, unemployment, insensitive leadership, and insecurity.

Discussion and Analysis

In *The Thing around your Neck* (TTAYN hence), Adichie harps on the debilitating "push" factor of an unfavorable economic atmosphere, particularly that of lack and poverty in the Nigerian homeland of Akunna the protagonist. In accordance with Ravenstein's laws which postulate that migration is age selective and governed by economic reasons, we encounter this twenty-two-year-old young Nigerian woman with a poor background who has just won an American visa lottery filled out for her and other family members by her uncle who resides in America. She is the lucky one out of the lot and very happy and eager to "escape" amidst the envy and admiration of friends and family. She looks forward to the American dream of boundless opportunities and a comfortable life in which she owns big cars, a comfortable house, and even a gun if she desires it. She tells us that in the period before her departure, people scuttle in to say goodbye in loud voices which is immediately followed by demands for all sorts of American goodies in low voices. Each of them has huge expectations of what Akunna should send to them on arrival in America: "handbags, shoes, and bags and perfumes and clothes" (TTAYN 115).

Unfortunately, on arrival, Akunna is disappointed. She soon realizes that America is not the bed of roses fantasied by those back in Nigeria. Realizing this, she slips into disillusionment, loneliness, and nostalgia for Nigeria. These uncomfortable feelings constitute the choking effect in her neck at the end of each day. The burden of the protagonist's struggle to survive in this alien country creates the uncomfortable and choking thing around her neck. Akunna engages the second person pronoun, "you," to tell the truth about her disappointment and illusory nature of the so-called American dream. She says to herself,

> [y]ou locked yourself in the bathroom … you left walking the long windy road … you saw him drive past … you wondered what he will tell his wife why you have left … you ended up in Connecticut … you walked into

the restaurant and said you would work for two dollars less than the other waitresses. The manager Juan, he'll pay you a dollar less, but under the table … you could not afford to go to school …. (117)

Akunna's story is one of poverty and lack, sexual abuse, dejection, estrangement, suffering, exploitation through low wages or underemployment, and nostalgia for Nigeria. As the narrative begins, the reader is confronted with the vivid picture of poverty in Akunna's family which suggests their dire need for financial assistance from abroad. In the second paragraph of the story, she tells us about their overcrowded place of habitation in Lagos. They all live in just one room in Lagos, where "you lived with your father and mother and three siblings… there weren't enough chairs" (114). She further informs us that her mother is a cleaner in an office, and her father is a junior driver in a construction company. In spite of all their hard work, her parent's income is unable to offset their basic financial needs. Indeed, her mother's earnings are unable to pay the school fees of her brother in the secondary school. Poverty daily stares them in the face. She describes the nauseating effect of poverty on her father during a road traffic incident in her own words:

> [t]he car your father rammed into was big, foreign and dark green. Your father started to cry and beg even before he got out of the car and laid himself on the road. 'If you sell me and my family you cannot buy even one tire of your car'. The big man sat at the back of the car and did not come out … At last he let your father go. When your father came into the car, you refused to look at him because he was just like the pigs that wallowed in the mashes around the market. Your father looked like *nshi*. Shit. (122)

Because of the debilitating economic poverty in Nigeria, she is obliged to send almost all of the pittance she makes in America back home to assist her family. She tells herself in the second person that "you send your month's earning to your parents at the address of the parastatal where your mother was a cleaner; you always used the dollar notes that Juan gave you because those were crisp … Every month you wrapped the money carefully in white paper but you didn't write a letter. There was nothing to write about" (118). She also expresses her frustration with her inability to meet the huge expectations of those in Nigeria:

> [i]t wasn't just to your parents you wanted to write, it was also to your friends, and cousins, and aunts and uncles. But you could not afford enough perfumes and clothes and handbags and shoes to go round and still pay your rent on what you earned at the waitressing job, so you wrote nobody. (119)

The protagonist's psychological and sexual abuse by her uncle in America evokes our pity. She describes this uncle in the typical African style of fraternal relationship as a "brother of her father's sister's husband". He was the one who filled in her name for the visa lottery, picked her from the airport, and accommodated her in his home. She enjoyed a good relationship with him before his immoral advances. She gives us a glimpse into this cordiality:

> [y]ou laughed with your uncle and you felt at home in his house. His wife

called you *nwanne*, sister, and his two school-age children called you aunty. They spoke Igbo and ate garri for lunch and it was like home. Until your uncle came into the cramped basement where you slept with old boxes and cartons and pulled you forcefully to him, squeezing your buttocks, moaning, after you pushed him away, he sat on your bed … it was his house, after all—and smiled and said if you let him, he would do many things for you (117).

Akunna's rejection of uncle's sexual advances results in her eventual homelessness. She bemoans her loneliness and dejection as she continues her search for the elusive comfort that America holds for Nigerian immigrants. She decries her helplessness and hopelessness when she declares that "[n]obody knew where you were. Sometimes you felt invisible and tried to walk through your room wall into the hallway, and when you bumped into the wall, it left bruises on your arms" (119). When she is forced to leave her uncle's house she ends up in Connecticut where she secures a tiny room with a stained carpet as well as a low wage job as a waitress in a restaurant.

During her long sojourn in the United States Akunna still holds dearly to her people and the memories they share. This nostalgia for her home-land is evident in her constant reminiscences and her expressions of how much she misses everything that represents Nigeria. She tells us that in her sober moments in faraway America

> [s]ometimes you sat on the lumpy mattress of your twin bed and thought about home – your aunts who hawked dried fish and plantains, cajoling customers to buy and then shouting insults when they didn't; your uncles who drank gin and crammed their families and lives into single rooms; your friends who had come out to say goodbye before you left, to rejoice because you won the American visa lottery, to confess their envy; your parents who often held hands as they walked to church on Sunday mornings. (117-118)

These thoughts tfurther tighten the choking wrap around her neck at night, but the narrative ends on an optimistic note. Akunna's relationship with an unnamed white man once again gives a sense of belonging. It is thenthat she tells us that that debilitating choking feeling "that wrapped itself around your neck that nearly choked you before you fell asleep, started to loosen, to let go" (125). The sad news of her father's demise gives her as a good opportunity to return to her beloved homeland. At the point of her departure, she is not sure of how long she would be gone from America, her possession of American green card notwithstanding.

Set in Nigeria during the authoritarian military regime of General Sanni-Abacha, Adichie's "The American Embassy" is permeated by themes of poverty, displacement, repression, oppression, brutality, and annihilation. Martin Meredith describes the Nigerian state at this point in time being one in which

> [h]alf of the population lived on only 30 Cents a day. Embezzlement and bribery were rife. The police acted as occupying forces, routinely extorting money from civilians, Mobile police were so notorious for brutality that they were nicknamed "Kill and Go". Underfunded, ill equipped and poorly

> trained. The police were no match for criminal gangs. The justice system was chaotic. Even worse were the vast sums are siphoned off through corruption. Abacha's greed exceeded that of all his predecessors …. (580-581)

In "The American Embassy", Adichie paints a vivid picture of Nigerians "pushed" away from their homeland, and their frustrations, anxieties and travails at the American embassy in Nigeria while seeking an asylum visa, immigrant visa, visiting visa, students' visa, [or an] American lottery visa. With many flashbacks and narrated from the third person omniscient point of view, the story revolves around an unnamed female protagonist who is in need of a visa to reunite with her husband in America where he has sought asylum from Abacha's repressive military regime. We are told that four nights before this day of her visa interview, her four-year-old son Ugonna was brutally murdered, 'shot dead' in her presence by government agents hunting her journalist husband. Determined to wreak havoc, as they barged in through her back door and fiercely interrogated her, shouting, "*Where is your husband? Where is he?* Her husband is wanted because of the story he wrote in the New Nigerian Newspaper. In the story entitled "The Abacha Years So Far: 1993 to 1997", he had compiled the numerous killings and failed contracts and missing money under Abacha's watch as the military leader of the nation. The armed men confirm the reason for the attack on their family home thus, *You know about the story your husband wrote in the newspaper? You know people like him should be in jail"* (132). Adichie's Every Woman ruminates about her loss and frustrations:

> [t]wo days ago, she had buried her child in a grave near a vegetable patch in their ancestral hometown of Umunnachi, surrounded by well-wishers she did not remember now. The day she had driven her husband in the boot of their Toyota to the home of a friend who smuggled him out of the country. (131)

As she awaits her turn in the queue as the forty-eighth person in a line of about two hundred persons at the American embassy for the day's interview, we are given a glimpse into the chaos, brutality and dehumanization of Nigerian visa applicants by both armed law enforcement officers and embassy staff. The soldiers batter the visa applicants at the least provocation: they had all woken up early – those who had slept at all to get to the American Embassy before dawn; because they had all struggled for the visa line, dodging the soldiers swinging whips as they were herded back and forth before the line was finally formed … look at his face, all bleeding. The whip cut his face" (130). She is perturbed by the soldiers' brutality irrespective of the applicants' age and status. She wonders about the "glower of a grown man who could flog another grown man if he wanted to, when he wanted to" (131). Adichie bemoans the attitude of the American embassy staff towards the visa applicants. First, they do not open the embassy on Wednesdays; second, they decide not to open their gates to visa applicants on any other day and on the days they are open, they do not attend to more than fifty persons irrespective of the number of applicants queuing outside their gates; third, they are indifferent to the sufferings, maltreatment and brutalization of the applicants by armed soldiers. The man behind the protagonist in the queue confirms this when he declares that "Sometimes I wonder if the embassy people look out of their window and enjoy watching the soldiers flogging people" (131). He also bemoans the absence of a comfortable waiting area at the embassy

which exposes the applicants to the vagaries of the weather: "Ah, this sun is not gentle at all. These American Embassy people should at least build a shade for us. They can use some of the money they collect for visa fee" (138).

The dehumanization of the visa-seeking Nigerians continues during the interview. American Visa interviewers hardly believe Nigerians' reasons for visa application irrespective of their age, gender, or status. There is intermittent drama and shouting bouts between interviewers and applicants. The narrator observes that:

> [t]he American interviewer was speaking loudly into the microphone", "I'm not going to accept your lies, sir!" The Nigerian visa applicant began to shout and to gesture. "This is wrong! How can you treat people like this?" I will take this to Washington! Until a security guard came and led him away (141).

The protagonist's submission for asylum in America for security reasons following the brutal killing of her son by government agents is doubted by the interviewer who insists on proof. She says,"Can you prove it? Do you have any evidence to show that?" She replies, "Yes. But I buried it yesterday. My son's body" (140). The narrative ends on with her desire not to relocate to America. Despite the good life and security that America is said to hold for her, she refuses to hawk her beloved son Ugonna for a visa to safety. She decides to stay in Nigeria and plant ixora flowers at Ugonna's grave side. Even when the interviewer seems to have changed her mind, the protagonist does not flinch. She walks out of the American Embassy.

Conclusion

In *The Thing around Your Neck*, Adichie takes us to America where we feel the pain and frustration of Nigerians who believed that America was the solution to their economic challenges. The Thing around Akunna's Neck" is the emigre's feeling of discomfort, strangulation, suffocation, and loneliness experienced during her struggle to rise above the poverty of her Nigerian family. In *The American Embassy*, Adichie takes us on a trip to the American Embassy in Nigeria where she reveals the government's oppression, repression, annihilation, and criminal neglect of its citizens. She indicts the American Embassy staff for dehumanization of the visa applicants and indifference to their frustrations. The sad experiences of Nigerian emigres in America and Nigerian visa applicants in these texts recommend a re-orientation on the part of the nation's leadership. Adichie insists that the nation's leadership should shun selfishness, corruption and criminal neglect of the masses and channel the nation's resources to fixing the push factors of poverty, unemployment and lack of basic amenities.

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From Street to Internet: A Textual Analysis of Political Protests on Facebook among Nigerian Social Media Users

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Abstract

Political protest is common feature of democracy. Social media following the technological revolution that gave birth to web 2.0 has added a new dimension to political protests in Nigeria. Nigerians now use social media to express their dissatisfaction with political events. This paper analyses textual posts on Facebook. Its findings reveal that communication between political leaders and the citizenry has altered significantly. Nigerians no longer simply receive political communication, they also send political information, and the majority of their protest posts are anti-authoritarian.. With this in mind, further studies of other social media platforms and examinations of participants' demographics influencing political protest posts on Facebook are recommended.

Keywords: Internet, Political protest, Facebook, Social media users, Political participation.

Introduction

Political protests have, over the years, become one of the central ways in which people express their dissatisfaction about political events. Before now, people took to the streets to voice their feelings, usually with placards conveying different inscriptions about the theme of the protest and it aims. However, with the emergence of the social media, political protests have taken on another dimension. Social media platforms have offered fertile ground for political protests to flourish. This paper examines the changing face of political protest in Nigeria and investigates how the social media, especially Facebook, has been deployed as a tool for activists and aggrieved groups to express political dissatisfaction.

Political protests have become part and parcel of contemporary societies. Eesuola (2015) notes that political protests can hardly be avoided because it is impossible for humans to get all the things they wish to get. This sad reality paves the way for reactive protest, be it political or otherwise. Since it is not possible for citizens to get all the dividends of politics – usually dividends of democracy, where the form of government is democracy – the propensity for political protest is high. Auvinen (1996) describes political protest as "demonstrations, riots and strikes which have an expressed political target and/or involve conflict behavior against the political machinery" and attrubutes political protests to unfavorable economic situations, ethnic dominance, authoritarian political regime, and low levels of economic development. Quaranta (2015) claims that it is preferable to define the concept of political participation before defining political

protest and, consequently views political participation as "the set of activities which aim to change the current state of affairs". This definition of political participation makes the line between participation and protest very thin. Kaase and Marsh (1979a) corroborate that political participation overlaps with political protest and that political protest in particular, does not necessarily assume anti-regime protests but may form one element of an expanded repertory of political action. Kaase and Marsh (1979b) further submits that "political protest is considered an avenue of political expression using strategies like petitions, demonstrations, boycotts, rent or tax strikes, unofficial industrial strikes, occupation of buildings, blocking of traffic, damage to property, and personal violence" (p. 59). Norris (2002) avers that such strategies as those listed by Kaase and Marsh have become very popular in the political dynamics of many countries. In this paper, political protests are defined as any expression of dissatisfaction that is targeted at political leaders, both elected and appointed, with the ultimate aim of drawing attention to a bad policy, ill treatment, negligence, abuse of power, or emergency needs. Such an attention catching strategy is classified as a protest, if it does not follow the formal channel of communication with the authorities, and when it is carried out via the Internet, it is called Internet political protest.

In the current dispensation, the Internet occupies a central position as a meeting point for people across the world. The Internet has not only proven to be a co-ordinating tool, it is also a prominent host for different organizations and groups who desire global attention. In addition, technological revolution has considerably altered the face of politics. In contemporary times, political mobilization and participation are deeply rooted in the power of the Internet. Political gladiators and their supporters take to the Internet to express their views, canvass for votes, and educate voters on their programs and policies. Citizens have also greatly made use of internet-powered media, such as social media to express their political views. Although researches have responded to these changes, significant studies focusing on the use of Facebook for political protests, especially in developing democracies like Nigeria, are few. The general objective of this study is to break new critical ground by examining the use of the Internet for political protest among social media users in Nigeria, determining the nature of political protests among Facebook users, and finding the experiences of Facebook protesters.

Street vs. Internet Protests in Nigeria: The Paradigm Shift

Nigeria has and still plays host to several street protests by aggrieved citizens, individuals and groups who have protested against different decisions taken by those who wield political power. Among the street protests considered here that were reported on social media are the September 9, 2011 protest staged by members of the Nigerian Bar Association against the decision of the then President, Good Luck Jonathan, to suspend the President of the Federal Appeal Court, Justice Isa Ayo Salami. The protesting lawyers matched through the streets of Lagos to express their dissatisfaction with the decision of the president. Also, on February 14, 2013, a protest by civil society groups led by Nigeria's Nobel laureate Prof. Wole Soyinka was reported on social media. The protesters expressed dissatisfaction with the N4 billion set aside for the construction of a mission House for the then First Lady, Dame Patience Jonathan, in the 2013 national budget. The street protest was held in Lagos and issued a clarion call for the scraping of the office

of the First Lady. Another prominent issue that has generated several protests and sit-ins is the abduction of the over 200 school girls from Chibok, Borno State. Different groups and individuals have and continue to hold protests, accusing the politicians involved of gross negligence. In one of the Bring back our Girls campaigns/protests held on 25th August, 2016, protesters demanded the resignation of President Mohammadu Buhari, claiming that he cannot rescue the girls. They are quoted as saying

> Many Chibok parents voted you because we believed that you would ensure the return of our daughters. You promised us that you are a military man and that you cannot lie. You said the war will not be over until the girls are back. Now we hear shouts of victory and you turn around and say you do not know how to get our daughters back. Former President Sani Abacha told us that no country can fight war for up to 24 hours without its government knowing about it. If the president lacks intelligence to bring back the girls let him resign. (para. 5&6)

The submission above expresses the protesters' angry dissatisfaction with the leadership of the country. Perceiving negligence, they feel that the President should give way for a more responsible leader who can address the problem. During the days of fuel scarcity crisis, Nigerians also turned to social media to express their dissatisfaction. In the Internet- dominated world, the social media has changed the face of political protests in Nigeria.

Citizens now turn to various platforms powered by the Internet to express political dissatisfaction. *The Vanguard* has reported that political dissent is the dominant theme on the hash tag #ChangeToChains. Some of the posts read: "#ChangeToChains there is famine in Nigeria, nothing is working in Nigeria – from Alhaji Suleiman. Peoples Democratic Party break every #ChangeToChains of All Promise Cancelled party in Jesus Name – from Akinseye Sani. Nigerian Govt Unbundles State Oil Company, NNPC, Into 7 Units #ChangeToChains #codeofimpact #NNPC – from Okezie Ikpazie. Please can someone help me check the dictionary maybe change means something else #ChangeToChains – from Francis Tochi Nwafia. My loyalty is with Nigeria before anything else. I am a nationalist. Sadly, same can't be said about most Nigerian politicians, #ChangeToChains – from Philip Asuquo. All promises broken – APC 27). Full implementation of the National Identification Scheme to generate the relevant data #ChangeToChains – from Ikenna. Buhari let me tell you something, God pass you #ChangeToChains- from Peter Cleve Eke" (http://www.vanguardngr.com /2016/03/changetochains-reactions-on-social-media-as-fuel-scarcity-bites-harder/).

The implication of these posts is that people do not necessarily need to take to the street to air their grievances or carry out political protests. They do not need to organize them themselves in one place before they can carry out the protest with placards and inscriptions. Although different social media platforms, like twitter and blogs, offer avenues for people to protest on the Internet, Facebook appears to offer unique opportunities, because it also allows users to create Facebook pages to protest what they perceive as political short comings. Good examples of such pages include *#Saraki Must Go, #Occupy NASS, and #Bring Back our Girls*. These pages are meant to mobilize the masses for protests with a view to correcting perceived ills in the Nigerian body politic. During the 2012 anti-fuel subsidy removal protest, social media was significantly used by

Nigerians to mobilize themselves for protests as well as express their dissatisfaction about government decisions.

Facebook, Political Mobilization and Participation in Nigeria

Facebook has proven to be an essential tool for political mobilization and participation in Nigeria. According to available statistics, as of January 2016, Facebook monthly active users reached 1.55 billion, or 22 per cent of the global population. Other Facebook services equally boast massive patronage—900 million users (WhatsApp), 800 million users (Facebook Messenger), and 400 million users (Instagram). Results released by Facebook also indicate that 7.2 million people in Nigeria visit Facebook daily (See more at http://www.financialnigeria.com/facebook-records-16-million-active-users-in-nigeria-news-344.html#sthash.C1HEM6Va.dpuf). Nwabuzor and Gever (2015) argue that Facebook is the most popular social medium in Nigeria. Indeed, Facebook is a central point in Nigeria's social media, because it has a large followership of young people, youth networks or groups, as well as youth appeal for information gathering and dissemination (Dagona, Karick and Abubakar, 2013; Ehiemua & Omoera, 2015).

The use of the social media in general and Facebook in particular for election purposes, is credited to the 2008 Presidential election in which President Barack Obama heavily deployed social media to seek votes in America. Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carr, Ellison, and Lampe (2009) tested the relationship between the use of Facebook and political engagement among 683undergraduate students in the Midwestern United States a month before the 2008 election and found that political activity on Facebook was a significant predictor of political participation. In Nigeria, the use of Facebook for electioneering began in the 2011 general election. During that election, politicians heavily deployed social media, especially Facebook, for the purpose of reaching the electorate, educating them on their manifestoes, and seeking for votes. Opeyemi, Olusola and Itsekor (2014) recall that during the 2011 election, political gladiators relied on social media like Facebook to achieve their political aims. Opeyemi et al (2014) submit further that most political aspirants in Nigeria, including President Good Luck Jonathan, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu and Pastor Chris Okotie, used Facebook, Twitter, NaijaPals, and Naijaland to engage the youth by discussing their political programs and policies.

Since that time, Facebook and all other social media platforms have become fertile campaign grounds. Udejinta (2011) claims that "the use of Facebook as a campaign tool featured greatly during the 2011 general elections. Facebook was a central platform for political participation both for the electorate and politicians". Adibe, Odoemelam and Chibuwe (2011) note that the decision of former President Good Luck Jonathan to express his intention to vie for the office of the President through Facebook painted a picture of the role of the social media in the 2011general election. It will be recalled that Jonathan told about 217,000 supporters on Facebook about his desire to vie for the position, and after about 24 hours his support based increased by 4,000. This only goes to show the central role that the social media played in the conducting of the 2011 election in Nigeria.

The effect of the social media on the 2011 election in Nigeria has been investigated by different studies (Dagona, Karick & Abubakar 2013, Opeyemi, Olusola & Itsekor 2014, Okoro & Nwafor 2013), and their findings indicate that Facebook significantly

influenced political mobilization and participation in Nigeria. Consequently, Facebook has become a pivotal pillar in Nigerian political and electioneering campaigns, because the citizenry has adopted the medium as an avenue to express political views. This adoption takes place not only during campaigns. Citizens also register their approval, dissatisfaction with, or rejection of political issues. More important, citizens use Facebook as a ground for political protest. Each time the government makes a decision that does not go well for the citizens or there is an issue that the people feel the government should have handled better, they promptly take to Facebook to express their feelings through protest posts. For instance, court judgments which are perceived to be linked to or are influenced by political authorities attract swift political protests on Facebook. A prominent case in point ocurred when the Supreme Court ruled on a disputed governorship election result in Kogi State. Many aggrieved citizens took to Facebook to protest the judgment, perceiving it being influenced by the presidency. Below is a screen shot of one such protest on Facebook:

Source: Screen Shot of Protest Post on Facebook, 2016.

In the post, the protester blames the President for the judgment and expresses complete dissatisfaction not only with the outcome but also casts aspersions on the integrity of the Chamber.

Theoretical Underpinning

This study draws from two theories of communication, Frustration Aggression Theory and Technological Determinism Theory. The frustration aggression theory was propounded in 1939 by Social Psychologists Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears. Dollard et al (1939) observe that "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always pre-supposes the existence of frustration and on the contrary, the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression. Scholars like Leonard Berkowitz (1962) and Aubrey Yates (1962) later expanded the theory (Olley & Ekareafo 2013). The basic assumption of the theory rests on the "Want and get ratio" and the difference between expected need satisfaction and the actual need satisfaction. In short, when people's needs are not met, they are very likely to be aggressive. When polticians do not meet the expectations of Nigerians, they protest on Facebook. Technological determinism, propounded by Marshal McLuhan in 1962, posits that media technology decides how people in a society think, feel, behave, and how societies operate as they move from one technological age to another (McLuhan 1962).The revolution in technology that has given birth to Facebook has significantly influenced the communication pattern among citizens, and the face of political communication has significantly changed the mode of information exchange between the government and the citizenry. The social media have become recognized channels through which political appointees and elected officials make information of

public interest known. The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Mohammadu Buhari has a Personal Assistant on New Media in the person of Bashir Ahmad. Many State Governors (i.e Ekiti State) have personnel manning their social media platforms. This change in our communication patterns is indicative of change in our behaviour . Today, governments at all levels in Nigeria take their ratings on social media platforms seriously, because the citizen's first point of protest is social media. Facebook even offers a more unique avenue for such protests, because it is a community with different people coming together. With features like group chats, the posting of comments, reactions to posts, and liking of and sharing of posts, Facebook not only allows for but also enhances the free flow of information and discussion. It is a fertile ground for political protests. The screen shot post as displayed above has some comments and likes. Political protests are now held on Facebook as people do not necessarily need to gather on the streets to air their grievances.

Methodology

This investigation embraced a dual methodology approach, employing Textual Analysis Design and Descriptive Survey Design. Frey, Botan and Kreps (1991: para 1) define textual analysis as "the method communication researchers use to describe and interpret the characteristics of a recorded or visual message". Frey et al further list the four approaches to textual analysis as rhetorical criticism, content analysis, interaction analysis ,and performance studies. Content analysis was used to identify, enumerate, and analyze specific messages and characteristics embedded in texts (written, audio, video and photograph messages posted on Facebook expressing dissatisfaction with the actions and inactions of those in authority). Qualitative content analysis, which involves paying more attention to meanings associated with text other than the number of texts, was also used.

The descriptive survey research design describes and explains the experiences of political protesters on Facebook. To sample participants for the descriptive survey, purposive sampling, the most preferred technique for qualitative research and provides the avenue for respondents to give detailed description of their experiences, was used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 1987 both cited in Maggi et al 2014). This study purposively sampled social media users, preferably those with Facebook account and who are active users. Potential respondents were screened for eligibility with questions like: Do you use Facebook on social media? What type of issues do you post on Facebook? Do you express your dissatisfaction on political issues via Facebook? Do you read political posts on Facebook? A total of 204 Facebook users were screened and found eligible as respondents for the investigation. The sole aim of sampling respondents was to get Facebook users who either participate in or read Facebook political protest and not merely to obtain a representative sample of Facebook users in Nigeria.

Data Collection

The research collected data for the investigation in two phases. Its first phase was the collection of political posts by Facebook users. A total of 204 posts were obtained and subjected to eligibility screening to determine if they actually expressed political protests. In addition, two Coders were requested to code the posts on the basis of

- Whether they suggest dissatisfaction with political authorities;
- Whether they mobilize people to protest against political authorities;
- Whether they protest against those protesting against political authorities;

The aim of this data collection method was not to have a representative data of protest on Facebook, but to provide insight into the nature of political protest on Facebook. Consequently, posts expressing dissatisfaction with actions of political authorities are categorized as anti-political authorities Facebook protest. Posts mobilizing people to protest against political authorities were categorized as anti-authorities mobilization Facebook protest. Finally, posts countering those protesting against political authorities were categorized as pro-authorities political protest.

The second phase of gathering data involved the use of semi-structured interviews with the participants which lasted between 30-50 minutes. Each interview started with an explanation of the aim of the study to learn about the experiences of Facebook users regarding political protests. Consequently, respondents were requested to sign a consent form. The interview began with a broad question: Can you relate your Facebook experiences about political posts? Follow- up questions were intended to guide participants and elicit further clarifications from them.

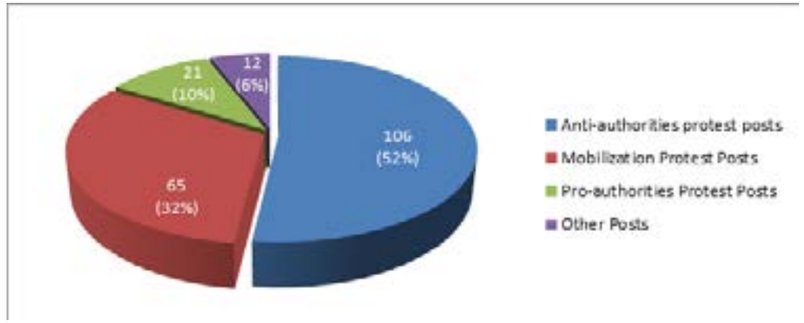
Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out in two phases using dual approaches – Critical Discourse Analysis and Thematic Analysis. In the first phase, the investigation employed critical discourse analysis of texts posted on Facebook to analyze data obtained. Their aim was to avoid misinterpretation of texts. Johnstone (2008) defines critical discourse analysis as a form of discourse analysis that studies the relationship between discourse and ideology (a set of belief), attitudes, and perspectives of the world. It dwells on critiquing social injustice and has strong links to the study of language and power. The investigation used this approach to study texts posted on Facebook along the line of the ideologies expressed with emphasis on the objectives of the study. In the second phase of analysis, the investigation adopted the thematic analysis approach to examine opinions expressed in the interviews conducted.

Textual Analysis of Findings

The results of the investigation revealed that among the three categories of posts (anti-authorities, mobilization, and pro-authorities) on Facebook political protests, an uneven direction existed as most of the protests tiled towards the anti-authorities posts. This is graphically represented in the Chart 1 below:

Chart I: The Direction of Facebook



Source: Field Investigation, 2016.

The data presented above displays a textual analysis of Facebook political protest

among social media users in Nigeria. A total of 106 (52%) posts were anti-authorities, 65 (32%) posts were political mobilization protests, 21 (10%) posts were pro-authorities political protests, while 12 (6%) were categorized as other (non-protest) posts. It is important to add here that the initial code sheet had no option for other posts, but the coders included this in the process of coding. Although most of the protest posts criticized politicians, there were cases where political authorities were favoured. For example, a Facebook page with the name, 'Saraki must go' had most of its posts protesting against the continuous stay of Nigeria's Senate president in office, but some other posts opposed the anti-Saraki protests. For instance, the following protest chats are found on this page:

Protest Post: *The fight at the CCT is for the survival of Nigeria. Saraki must go.*

Reaction: *Saraki kwnwercme 2019 u see hw we mke use of our chance?*

Protest Post: *Nigeria must be. Saraki* must go.

Reaction: *Where is he goin?*

Protest Post: *Let him go to Kwara state or the US where he was before coming to Nigeria to become Governor in 2003. Saraki must go*

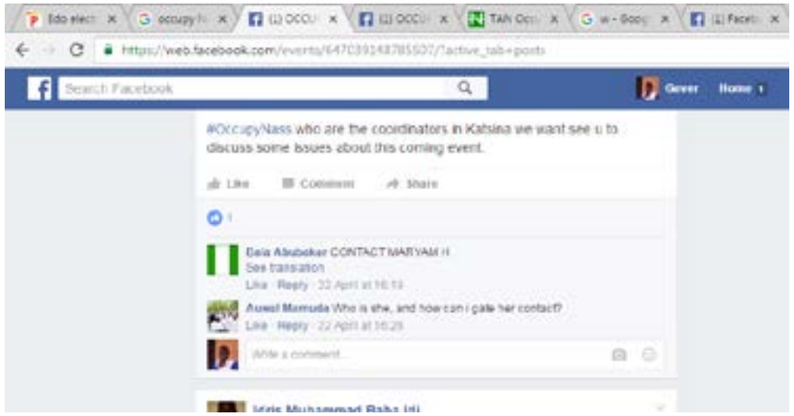
Reaction: *May be u wel bede 1 too tauje him jere.*

The manner of political protests and counter protests evidenced in the conversation above suggests that that social media users are hardly united in their Internet protests. Often, protesters are protested against. This also happens in street protests in which there are pro and anti-protests. Protests on Facebook also show that some Nigerians often advocate for caution and avoidance of bias. For example, on the Occupy NASS Facebook page, a protester wrote:

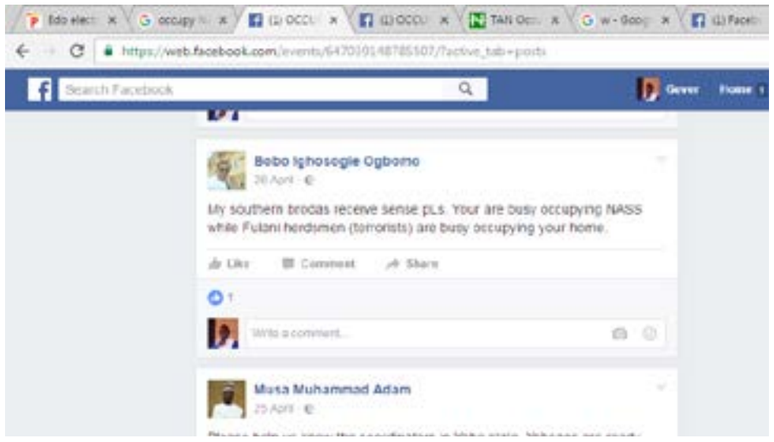
> I stand with you guys in all your effort. But don't call for resignation of senate president solely, call also those good for nothing senators to come back home, some of them don't know what they were sent to do. We the masses are suffering from hunger and starvation but their aim is geared towards enriching themselves, buying new cars and allowance. Let us send zealous ones, those who will work for their compatriots.

The occupy NASS Facebook page evidently provided a fertile ground for off line gatherings for the purpose of planning and re-planning. Social media users often mobilize political protests through the instrumentality of Facebook. Find below screen shots of some of the posts on Occupy NASS.

Source: Screen Shot of Protest Post on Facebook, 2016.



Source: Screen Shot of Protest Post on Facebook, 2016.



Source: Screen Shot of Protest Post on Facebook, 2016.

Interview Results

Social media protesters who took part in the study reported that their participation in Facebook protest influenced them in the areas of offline protest, political participation, and political mobilization. The participants revealed this information spontaneously, because the investigation did not specifically mention these areas in the interview questions. This was broadly categorized as the influence of online protest on offline activities.

Influence of Facebook political protest on offline Activities

Generally, respondents were of the opinion that their participation in Facebook political protest, either as readers or writers of protest posts, influenced their offline activities. They reported that when taking part in offline protest educates them about issues of national interest with political undertones which eventually spur them to action. Examples of such offline activities include the holding of meetings to discuss how to address perceived injustices of political authorities, participating in street protest, and attacking political leaders. This result is a reflection of what is happening in Nigeria recently as politicians have been physically attacked. Some of these attacks are also celebrated on the social media in general and Facebook in particular. For instance, one protest posted on Facebook *@OccupyNass&reclaimNigeri*a reads: *Sen Isa Hamma chased & Stoned in Ningi.* The Senator was reportedly stoned in Bauchi State over his support for the embattled Senate President Bukola Saraki. Hamma's attack is not the only one in recent memory, as Nigerians are demanding accountability from their representatives.

Also, it was discovered that Facebook political protest influences mobilization and participation. The respondents were of the view that with the instrumentality of Facebook, they were able to mobilize for political protests and eventually participate in them. One respondent reports: "With the aid of Facebook, you know when meetings of importance are to be held, where they are to be held and how to co-ordinate yourself".

Throughout the interviews, most participants mentioned mobilization and participation at regular intervals.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of this investigation revealed that 106 (52%) of protest posts on Facebook were anti-authorities. This suggests that among every 204 political protest posts on Facebook, 106 will be against the authorities. The result of this study also revealed that online political protests have influence on offline behavior in the areas of offline protests, political mobilization, and participation. The findings suggest that in the present- day-Internet-dominated- world, the social media is offering a fertile ground for people to express their frustration and aggression. Nigerians have found Facebook meeting their needs with regard to expressing their frustration and political views. This perceived benefit keeps them glued to Facebook to satisfy that desire. In contemporary Nigeria, as soon as somebody has a reservation about a political authority, their action/inaction, the next point of call is social media and predominantly Facebook. When Nigerians are satisfied, they also express solidarity via the Facebook. For instance, when the President's 56th Independence Day Speech to the nation was shared on Facebook, it generated the following comments:

> Thank you Mr. Preside, May Allah be your strength.
>
> The speech alone gives me hope. Ride on Mr. President, I de ur back.
>
> Walahi, Dis Man Knows De Problem Of Nigeria. God is ur strength. May He Continue to Protect U with more Wisdom to Rule Dis Nation.

Before the advent of the social media in general and Facebook in particular, political protests were only held on streets with people carrying placards. Today, the Internet not only offers a veritable platform; it also extends opportunities for people to hold political protests and display their placards. Improvements in technology have shaped the thinking and attitudes of many people all over the world. The way Nigerians coordinated the Fuel Subsidy Protests of 2012 and the 'Bring Back our Girls' campaigns on social media point to a changing society. Bray (2007) corroborates that "society has always been impacted by technology because its activities are mostly driven by technological advancements".

The theoretical implications of the findings on political communication, political behavior, policies and programs aimed at promoting political mobilization and eventual participation are also significant. First, the results suggests a paradigm shift in political communication. Social media in general and Facebook take the communication gap between political leaders and the citizenry into a new dimension. Nigerians have become more active in Internet political communication than ever before. With a mobile phone and a mere subscription of N100 with a telecommunication network provider, data can be obtained to access the social media. This scenario has upgraded the political behavior of Nigerians, encouraging them to express their opinions and mobilize for political participation. Nigerians now mobilize for political activities on Facebook, votes are canvassed for, and the rating of political candidates is executed on Facebook. Today, Nigerians monitor election procedures and results on Facebook. Ezeah and Gever (2015) conducted a study on emerging trends in political communication and found a drastic change in the pattern, frequency, and theme of political communication in Nigeria. They

observe that "in present day political communication, the audience has changed from being passive receivers of political communication to active senders of political information". They find that efforts aimed at enhancing political communication, mobilization, and participation should also take into account the instrumentality of the social media as a means of reaching the vast majority of the populace and/or audience. Their findings imply that campaigns aimed at creating political awareness should consider making good use of the social media.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that political protests have expanded beyond the streets to the Internet. Amongst other platforms of the social media, Facebook acts as a fertile ground for such protests. Facebook, however, has not eroded political protest on the streets, seeing that both the streets and the Internet still serve as protest grounds. Indeed, protests on the streets are not only mobilized by, but are more often than not, also reported on the Internet. Consequently, social media powered by the Internet serves three basic purposes: to sensitize people for political protests on the streets, to mobilize political protesters, and to report street protests on Facebook. In part, this study provides a guide for the planning and implementation of campaigns aimed at promoting political awareness, mobilization, and participation by offering of insights into the nature of political protest-posts on Facebook in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Further studies that investigate the relationship between political protests and the social media generally and Facebook in particular are recommended. Future research also should expand the scope of this investigation to cover more social media platforms like Twitter, Youtube, and MySpace and examine the influence of demographics like gender, age, occupation and religious persuasion on Facebook political protest.

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Using the Online Space as a Battle Field: An Exploration of the Effectiveness of Social Media Usage for the #EndSARS Protest in Nigeria

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Abstract

Social media platforms have redefined citizens' engagements with government and those in positions of authority. In the Middle East, social media platforms have been used to coordinate what is popularly referred to as the Arab Spring. In Africa, people are deploying platforms to protest against injustice and demand good governance. One recent example is the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria, an organised social movement against police brutality which has resulted in several well-coordinated mass protests that started with a call for the Federal Government of Nigeria to disband the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), established to effectively fight armed robbery. Charged with deviating from its mandate and intimidating, harassing, detaining and extorting the citizens (especially the youth, with particular focus on those with expensive smartphones, laptops, and cars) by the protestors, this unithas also been accused of extra-judicial killings. In some States, these protests went beyond calling for ending police brutality to ending bad governance. The protesters also saw the online space as a battle ground which provided them with advantages. Different social media platforms carried out the protests. There were messages, pictures, and videos on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and in Blogs. These platforms were effectively utilized by the #EndSARS protesters to press home their demands not only to the Nigerian authorities but also the world at large.

Keywords: Social media platforms, #EndSARS, Police brutality, Youths, Nigeria.

Introduction

Drawing on various online social movements that occurred at the start of the 21st century, Castells (2015) theorizes that social media offers a new path for reconstructing humanity by empowering social movements. It has also been argued that social media may eliminate top-to-bottom governance in which leadership alienates the people and does not instill trust in them (Moreno-Almeida & Banaji, 2019; cited in Dambo, Ersoy, Auwal, Olorunsola, Olonode, Arikewuyo, & Joseph, 2020). In the wake of the Arab spring, social media has been recognized as a catalyst for change. Like the Arab Spring, the Bring Back Our Girls (#BBOG) campaign, which captured global media attention creating pressure to find the missing Chibok girls. is regarded as a prime example of empowerment social media creates (Dambo, Ersoy, Auwal, Olorunsola, Olonode,

Arikewuyo, & Joseph, 2020).

The #EndSARS protest to disband the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) also demonstrates he power of social media. In 1989, After several coups and political unrest, which included a civil war (1967-1970), armed robbery became rampant as Nigeria's socio-economic conditions deteriorated In 1992, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigerian Police was formed as a dedicated unit to combat armed robbery and other serious crimes. The squad functioned under different conditions from the regular, militarized police—wearing plain clothes, carrying specialist weapons, and operating covertly in unmarked vehicles. SARS units were also used as a rapid response teams (Ruppel and Arowobusoye, 2020). Unlike other police officers, SARS operatives were allowed to work in unconventional ways in their fight against organised crime. Allegations of SARS abuse, ranging from extortion, kidnapping, rape and extra-judicial killings by SARS operatives, led to the #EndSARS movement which began on Twitter in 2016 as a protest against police brutality. The most recent round of these protests began on 3 October 2020 after a video was shared on Twitter purportedly showing SARS officials killing a man and fleeing with his vehicle in the Delta region of Southern Nigeria. Before long, decentralised and youth-led protests against police brutality spread within and outside Nigeria (Obia, 2020).

In SARS' early days, law abiding citizens rarely encountered SARS operatives, who effectively tackled crime, particularly armed robbery. Gradually, SARS became more visible in daily life as men in plainclothes carrying sophisticated weapons in public, mounting roadblocks, and stopping public and private vehicles for 'stop and search operations.' Then the extortion began. SARS operatives began stopping young people, men and women, particularly those dressed in trendy clothes and driving expensive cars or those with body tattoos or fashionable hairstyles, carrying laptops or expensive phones. Cybercrime, known in the Global North as 'Letters from Nigerian Princes' and 'Business Email Compromise' and locally in Nigeria as 'Yahoo' or '419' (from Section 4.19, of Nigeria's Criminal Code outlaws the practice) was rampant in Nigeria. SARS men became more violent and dangerous than the armed robbers the squad had been created to curb and were known to brutally beat and detain innocent citizens and many times allegedly shot several innocent people to death.

This gave rise to the #EndSARS movement on twitter (Igbo, 2017; Dambo, Ersoy, Auwal, Olorunsola, Olonode, Arikewuyo, & Joseph, 2020).There also have been several calls on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for the government to put an end to SARS, but the Nigerian government paid little attention such calls. However, the recent killing of the young man in Delta state resulted in nationwide protests, popularly referred to as #EndSARS. Facebook, Instagram, and chief amongst them, Twitter, were pivotal in this protest which began with the demand by young Nigerians for the government to dissolve SARS, end police brutality, and reform the Nigerian police force. Then it became a demand to reform Nigeria (Ekoh and George, 2021).Responding to various outcries over the years, the government promised and announced largely ineffective measures (Ruppel and Arowobusoye, 2020).

The #EndSARS protest provides insight into social media serving as coordinating platforms for oppositional discourse and activist campaigns in Nigeria. Twitter was used

in at least three ways: to co-ordinate protests, to amplify the voice of the campaign globally, and to berate brands and public figures deemed to be opposed to the movement. Coordinating the protests, social media platforms actively shared information regarding protest venues and to update protesters on breaking news events. Without social media platforms like Twitter, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for protesters to spread across the country, to coordinate themselves in highly organised and effective ways, and to feed off each others' energy (Obia, 2020).

Police Brutality

The history of police brutality in Nigeria dates back to the colonial period. the police promoted the economic and political agenda of the colonizers (Human Rights Watch, 2005)**.** In many communities where colonial rules were resisted, the police were engaged in brutal attacks to suppress that resistance. The police force was created for the Lagos colony in 1861, and other constabularies were then created in what was then called the Northern and Southern protectorates. The use of violence disconnected the people from the force; this has defined law enforcement practices in Nigeria since that period (Oloyede and Elega, 2019). The Human Rights Agenda (2005), as cited in Oloyede and Elega (2019), asserts that

> [t]he same basic structure was retained after Nigeria gained independence from Britain in 1960. By this time, public perceptions of the police were firmly grounded in their experience of the use of the police to extend colonial domination. Examples are the suppression of demonstrations from the late 1920s, workers strikes in the 1940s and communal violence from the 1950s. Post-independence successive military regimes used the police to enforce authoritarian rule, further entrenching a culture of violence and inhibiting the development of democratic institutions, founded on the rule of law.

The Nigerian government's response to the public outcry over police brutality and excessive force has unfortunately further widened the growing distrust of Nigeria's young population for government. During the month of October 2020, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, recorded over 180 demonstration events associated with the #EndSARS movement. The majority (86%) of these events were peaceful protests. An estimated 10% were met with excessive force (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2021). Local reports of incidences in which officers of the police force compel motorists to stop at checkpoints and threaten and sometimes shoot at those who refuse to pay bribes as low as 50 naira. FIt is not surprising that the average Nigerian has a negative perception of as well as low confidence in the police force (Oloyede and Elega, 2019s).

Since 2017, Nigerians have been advocating for the abolition of the unit, pointing to alleged abuses, executions, hangings, beatings, sexual assaults, and even waterboarding. Several nongovernmental organizations, including Amnesty International, have documented more than 80 cases of SARS abuses. There may be many more abuses that have yet to be documented or accounted for. Groups like Amnesty International have insights from people on the ground in Nigeria, who have described SARS as operating with impunity despite the numerous attempts that have been made to raise this issue at

the local and federal levels whic include the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari. Several videos showing alleged crimes by the SARS unit have gone viral. The most disturbing one which was shot on October 4, 2021, show SARS officers dragging two limp bodies from a hotel compound into the streets before shooting one of them. In the aftermath of these events, the head of Amnesty International in Nigeria stated, "[H] orrific acts of impunity by SARS and similar tactile police units have continued unabated" (Fraser-Rahim, 2020).

Over the last five years, Nigeria has seen a significant increase in violence targeting civilians by state forces. More than half of all events involving excessive force against protesters by state forces in in the year 2020 recorded at protests were associated with the #EndSARS movement. These acts of excessive force resulted in over two dozen reported fatalities during the month of October. Most occurred in Lagos State on 20th October, when Nigerian military forces fired live ammunition at demonstrators. It remains to be seen whether the panels of inquiry set up by the government will result in police reform and if this will help the government regain the trust of its young citizens (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2021).

Prior to the #ENDSARS movement, police brutality had not been protested in Nigeria. Amnesty International and other civil societies had been acting as lonely voices, and most CSOs protested isolated cases. For years, Amnesty International has reported on and campaigned against the use of torture by law enforcement agencies in Nigeria. In November 2014, its report, "Welcome to hellfire": Torture and other ill-treatment in Nigeria, revealed that the use of torture and other forms of ill-treatment was widespread

and routine in military and police custody. In the years following the publication of this report, torture has remained widespread across police units, but especially in those of SARS. Two Nigerian human rights organizations, the Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) and the Human Rights Social Development and Environmental Foundation (HURSDEF), have also accused the Nigerian police of using torture to force confessions out of suspects and using those confessions in courts as bases for conviction (Amnesty International, 2016; Dambo, Ersoy, Auwal, Olorunsola, Olonode, Arikewuyo, & Joseph, 2020).

The ENDSARS Protest

The #EndSARS movement saw a majority of Nigeria's marginalized youth, 35.6% of the total population, participate in one of the largest demonstration movements since the country's democratic transition in 1999. This social movement became not only a rallying call for comprehensive police reform, but also a symbol of hope and change. First, the movement was free from the ethno-religious tensions that usually plague the framing of Nigeria's domestic security and political issues. Young Nigerians in all six geopolitical zones united around a common goal to end police intimidation, oppression, and brutality. Demonstrations were held in at least 25 of the country's 36 states (see figure below), with events recorded in Lagos, Abuja, Rivers, Enugu, Kano, and Plateau. Second, it showed young Nigerians it was possible to create an accountable and transparent civil society, responsive to the needs of its citizens. Women's groups, such as the Feminist Coalition formed in July 2020 with a mission to advocate for women's equality, offered their platform to fundraise and disburse funds towards

social services such as food, shelter, healthcare, physical security, and legal aid in sustaining #EndSARS demonstrations across the country. Third, with about half of the registered voters in Nigeria, aged between 18-35, the movement highlighted the need of more young people to exercise their civil and political rights to speak out against injustices and demand change from their elected state leaders (National Bureau of Statistics; New York Times, 13 November, 2020; Reuters, 13 February 2019; Punch, 18 October 2020; Washington Post, 4 November 2020).

The EndSARS protests' international visibility was due to the under-35 population leading the movement and a coordinated effort by various activists to mobilize celebrities, influencers, and others to speak up. Past protests such as the campaign to rescue girls kidnapped from Chibok by Boko Haram, which was led by Michelle Obama and other international figures, show that movements in Nigeria on the behalf of the vulnerable do succeed. Notable Nigerians and members of the Nigerian diaspora such as novelist Chimamanda Adiche, actor John Boyega and music sensation, Burna Boy, have commented on the #EndSARS movement. Burna Boy argued that "the most important moment in Nigeria's history … is what we are witnessing right now because if nothing changes after this, if this doesn't work, then it is over." Even American and Canadian singers and artists like Beyoncé, Rihanna, Cardi B, and Drake, have lent their names and reputations to the cause (Fraser-Rahim, 2020).

In 2019, Nigeria's Inspector-General of Police launched a review of the Force order 237, which regulates the rules of engagement when fighting crime. This review which wascarried out collaboratively with the International Committee of the Red Cross was initiated to control the excessive use of force by members of the Nigerian police. A comprehensive document with guidelines that recognized citizens' right to life was released. However, the abuse and extrajudicial killings by SARS operatives continued, and the #ENDSARS campaign continued until the year 2020, when the Nigerian soldiers opened fire and shot at protesters at Lekki Tollgate in Lagos State, Nigeria (Dambo, Ersoy, Auwal, Olorunsola, Olonode, Arikewuyo, & Joseph, 2020). Accordingly, #ENDSARS protesters launched a #5for5 demand, asking for: 1) Immediate release of all arrested protesters; 2) Justice for all deceased victims of police brutality and appropriate compensation for their families; 3) Setting up an independent body to oversee the investigation and prosecution of all reports of police misconduct (within 10 days); 4) In line with the new Police Act, psychological evaluation and retraining (to be confirmed by an independent body) of all disbanded SARS officers before they can be redeployed; 5) Increase police salary so that they are adequately compensated for protecting lives and property of citizens. There were hundreds of thousands of Nigeria's youth on the streets demonstrating in various parts of the country (Ruppel and Arowobusoye, 2020).

Social Media and the #ENDSARS Protest

Because digital technology mskes it possible for people to get information in real-time and often with digital video evidence, protests are changing with digital technological advancements. Many protests have been influenced by digital technology (Ekoh and George, 2021). Observers of social movements agree that new media provides new opportunities for collective action. Social networking sites and the internet are equally important for social change movements (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2002; Kur, Agudosy

and Orhewere, 2015; Goodwin and Jasper, 2009).

In early October this year, particularly graphic images of SARS brutalizing young people in various parts of Nigeria appeared on social media. Nigerian youth moved their peaceful offline protests to major cities, particularly in Lagos and Abuja. Using social media and these graphic images, young people organized their protests. Some used social media to gather money for the protests in the form of Bit Coins, US dollars, and the Nigerian Naira. Heaviily mobilized, they started garnering international support from international media, international figures, sports and music personalities, institutions and international celebrities of Nigerian and non-Nigerian descent, international organizations, and various critical and prominent segments of the Nigerian population, which finally attracted the attention of the government (Ruppel and Arowobusoye, 2020).

There had been several calls on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for an end to SARS and their unjust activities, but the Nigerian government had paid little attention to them until the recent killing of a young man in Delta State of Nigeria and the #EndSARS protest, which generated potential for serious civil unrest in the country. Facebook, Instagram, and chief amongst them, Twitter, were pivotal in the protest which started with the demand by young Nigerians for the government to reform the Nigerian police force. Many Nigerians shared stories of their experiences with SARS and those of their family and friends on social media to fuel the protest. The protest took place on two fronts: online, via social network sites, and on the ground, in the streets of Nigeria. Although the Inspector General of Police as well as the president stated that SARS would be dissolved immediately and the Nigerian police reformed, their promises did not stop

the protest because such statements had been previously made without implementation The internet also was flooded with posts about other injustices and corruption that had plagued Nigeria for years and demands for immediate change with new hashtags such as #NassSalaryCut, #EndSWAT, and #EndBadGovernanceInNigeriaNow (Ekoh and George, 2021).

In short, the #Endsars campaign started with the publication of a petition by convener Segun Awosanya. It was signed by 10,195 Nigerians and submitted to the Nigerian National Assembly to scrap the police unit. The Twitter campaign started on the 2nd December, 2017, when the footage of police officers attached to SARS shot and killed a man surfaced online. This campaign became a trending topic on Twitter with over 400,000 Tweets8 within twelve hours. Hidden damages caused by police brutality were discovered and the level of rot within the police unit was exposed, according to the convener of the campaign. The campaign revealed that the officers' actions were based on self-will with little or no regards for fundamental human right for citizens, especially vulnerable youth (Oloyede and Elega, 2019; Gonzalez-Bailon, Borge-Holthoefer, Rivero, & Moreno, 2011; Gidengil, 2014). During the protests, Twitter was used to amplify the voice of the campaign globally, and to berate brands and public figures deemed opposed to the movement. Twitter users also amplified conversations around the hashtags #EndSARS, #SARSMustEnd, #EndPoliceBrutality and #EndSARSNow. It was clear that users wanted coverage of the protests by international news outlets and they selebrated every clip of international media coverage. Their agenda was to “get the word out there”, for people to retweet widely, for celebrities and influencers to use the hashtag, and for

news on the protests to be widely circulated. On 9 October 2020, #EndSARS was the top trending hashtag in the world with over 2 million tweets, and it continuously trended in other countries including the United States and the United Kingdom (Obia, 2020).

On 11th October, 2020, the Nigerian police force announced it would dismantle SARS i response to the mass protests. However, in recent years, the government had made similar public statements after alleged extrajudicial overreaching. Young and internet-savvy Nigerians and members of the Nigerian diaspora around the world, including those in Washington, D.C. and London, continued to coordinate with one another via the social media, staging regular protests and sit-ins (Fraser-Rahim, 2020).

Conclusion

Affirming and unveiling the ability of the social media to redefine protest and empower protestors was clearly demonstrated by #EndSARS protesters who presented their messages in a manner that was overwhelming and compelling. Obia (2020) remarks that "overall, the #EndSARS movement has made apparent the power of social media." After the successes on the social media during the Arab Spring, the Black Lives Matter, in the United States, the Bring Back Our Girls campaign, and recently, the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria, it is obvious that social media is the new and most favourable battle ground for oppressed, marginalized, harassed, and brutalised people.

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Old Cold Water

Sue Matheson

from WHEN WE WERE THERE

Amy Lilwall & Rupert Loydell

‘A lifetime of travelling has taught you that nothing is as bad as it seems at first, that every curious space you have ever spent time in will become part of your own inner landscape.’

– Cees Nooteboom, *Venice. The Lion, The City and Water*

‘There are many stories, not one; stories that do not yet know their place; stories where the compass is spinning in every direction.’

– Rod Mengham, ‘Stephen Chambers: Spinning the Compass’

‘A road trip with the imagined passenger does not need a destination’

– Amy Hempel, ‘Cloudland’

‘A city is only a city when over the course of time so many contradictions have accumulated there that it defies explanation’

– Cees Nooteboom, *Venice. The Lion, The City and Water*

LOS ANGELES

It’s a cliché but it seemed true when we were there, everywhere was concrete and cars. You thought nothing of driving 50 miles to see friends, 30 to take us for a meal. You worried about our safety, if we knew where to go, were bemused when we asked to spend an afternoon watching a surf championship or visit another museum. Years later, Brandon said there was plenty of life downtown, plenty of locals who didn’t drive, it was mostly what people decided to do and we believed him. Our hosts lived differently, we spent our week inside cars until we got to our destination, then drove back to the suburbs where your beautiful house had a convenient electric garage door and hummingbirds ate oranges in the garden. I mostly remember the freeways and our friends, an exhibition where curators had recreated Sam Francis’ studio, hung hundreds of tiny works around the room, in the same place they had been before he died: splashes and pours of glorious colour in contrast to the bleached sunshine outside.

Petrol shimmer, heat haze, no pedestrians or peace

MILAN

(or is it Madrid?)

Who else would have a date with thousands of music fans in a football stadium? I always get the two places that begin with M mixed up, still do. Which gallery is where, which country eats so late I couldn't face it… Mostly, I remember acres of cathedral roof and the nearby shopping arcade, vaulted ceiling and marble floor, clear warm skies and a chance for the two of us to be alone. I don't know if we saw some art or just walked around together, then caught a bus out to the stadium to collect guest tickets. We queued for what seemed like hours, then got directed around the back to a discreet window with no line. Our tickets were there as promised and later the lights lit up the sky and our friend's words flashed on the biggest screen we'd ever seen. The whole city stamped their feet, cheered and clapped, and sang along. Before we flew home we visited a toy shop and brought peace offerings for our time away, bribes to help put aside our guilt for leaving you back home.

A few days break, your favourite band, seems so long ago

NASHVILLE

Yeehah! I wish we'd seen more of the city and had a chance to buy some tat. After all, now I am forever without Elvis Presley socks or a Dolly Parton mug; what is a man to do? When we arrived we sat in a bookshop coffee shop with our painter and musician friends. Debbie warned us that sometimes singer-showman Steve got approached by over-eager fans. But when what we assumed was one came over it was Sue who was his target. 'I am not who you think I am,' produced a doubtful 'Are you sure?' in reply. 'I think I know who I am,' said Sue, 'and I've just flown in from England.' 'Ah, ok,' she said, and walked off with suspicious looks behind. We laughed about it for several days, shared the story with Steve's band, even as we avoided downtown and any hint of country music. Did we miss anything? I still don't know, am still unsure if Sue is not a woman in disguise, famous in another life.

Tourist queues and autographs, places we had heard about but never went to

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

It is an adventure waiting to happen, an industrial gathering that I want to explore. At the moment it is a student suburb where my daughter lives, a nearby park and glimpses of bridges above water. It is late night walks after dark, looking at the closed doors of shops and resisting the lure of a micropub with its own ales and the offer of only six seats. It feels like another country when you get there, having driven for hours, stopping for lunch in Birmingham or York, braving the slow traffic weaving between traffic cones and speed camera for miles and miles on end. It is at a distance, it is a shopping centre by the university, a market hall, your small studio in a maze of academia, it is your city, your place, your adopted home. I do not need to know but would like to. There must be walks by the river, and you have mentioned an independent cinema. We have visited the modern gallery, had lunch at the restaurant up top, but there are smaller venues too; bands and art shows, places to frequent. You will find them all, I know.

I hope you are happy, keeping well, can dream some paradise

NEW YORK

I am reconstructing a dream of tall buildings in a city where they perform miracles, a place full of secret energy and events, my favourite place in the world. It is funkytown, it is chin stroking jazz and litter blowing down the streets, cheap jeans and hipster bars. Down here on the ground you can only look up, up there on the viewing platform I can't bear to look down. Once it was snowing on the fortieth floor but not even raining down below, once I watched you slide off a barstool onto the floor, suffering from a combination of jetlag and gin. First time, I skateboarded everywhere and watched free films in Central Park, lived off bagels and juice; other trips we stayed in a hotel where every room was painted by a would-be artist (submarine interiors, magic signs or kaleidoscopic dreams) and the shower was tepid water from a rubber hose. I have walked from north to south, have walked across the island and back to where I know. There is always something new to see, somewhere new to go, paintings to reacquaint myself with in the galleries and museums on free visit nights. This dream will never end.

When God comes back he will reside here with all the tourists and strangers

O

Paraskeve exits the boat. She looks at the chimney smoke as it feeds into sepia clouds. This is a rooftop city that is at its best when one can see equal proportions of sky, rooftops and sea. Paraskeve will only know this when she leaves and watches this, exact view receding. But this won't happen now. Not today. She drags the pavement backwards as she treads and lets the street envelop her. There are cyclists around – she can hear their bells – but no pedestrians. The deep brown street doors remind her of coffee beans and, as she thinks this, she notices a shop window and an aproned barista beyond it, pushing at the brass buttons of a cash register. She wants to see properly. She crosses the road at the same time as a low-flying, patchwork hot air balloon. She only feels its shadow before it disappears over the rooftops; her eye is drawn to a cup swirled high with cream. Behind her, six men in black uniforms head down the street towards the port. She listens as their echoes intensify under the clock-tower arch, then continues up towards the town square. Crows wait on the steps of the theatre.

OSLO

Oslo is lost in my memory, unattached to anything meaningful. I went to the city but I don't remember it, may as well have not been there. The girl I met took me to a student bar for an hour and then it was time for me to leave. It was a quiet place, time moved along but not much else. I took the bus to Moss to see the grey houses and the grey water and the grey light and realised I couldn't afford a hotel room. I slept at Rygge airport on a bench, under my coat, and ate peanuts from the vending machine. When the lights came up in the morning, I walked around the canteen and took pictures of the plates of prawns and salmon, then left, wishing I'd booked an earlier connecting flight. I remember the security guard talking to me in Norwegian and I was pleased that I blended in. Looking back, I don't think I could have done anything differently, but Norway still holds all its secrets and pulls me back towards it as if I have left a piece of myself on that airport bench.

Lost in transit, grey bus journeys through pine forests
Home yet unknown, bold yet furtive, closed brown doors

PARIS!

I came here fifteen years ago, my heart in pieces in my pocket. There is a French language school on Rue de Trevise where I enrolled for two weeks. I fixed myself in museums and along the banks of La Seine. I took photos of strangers and ate jewellery-box cakes in les Jardins de Luxembourg. I watched chess players in the March light. It was St Patrick's night when we slipped away from the pub and rushed along the pavement. We decided to swap shoes – do you remember that? I had heels, you had trainers. The Sacre Coeur was closed for the night, so we scaled the fence and found the carousel inside. Someone was there, sitting in a teacup like a character from Alice. We took something from him – wisdom, I think – then went up to the cathedral with it. As I remember, the stars hung low and pointy in puffs of red-tinged cloud and we were inspired to dance (a waltz?) to the crackling drum and bass from your phone. You wrote your number on my arm… Now Paris exists beyond the window of Gare du Nord, above the Eurolines station at Gallieni, at the top of the escalator at Montparnasse. It is a place that exists while I rush through; maybe I will need it again one day. I have no idea who you are.

Red windmill sails, Haussmannian streets popping with neon

PHOENIX

It is a grid. It is air-conditioned. It is ordered. It is hotter than I have ever been. It is the strangest place I have ever stayed. It is running from the car to the restaurant or mall. It is dry heat sucking the sweat so it cannot cool you. It is the view shimmering. It is Linda driving a jeep, top down, fast enough to blow away the heat. It is Sheila's hospitality, her art and books. Her haibun, her way with flute and words. It is desert culture, it is lizard skin and snake boots, it is misters spraying evening meals where it is 90 degrees in the shade. It is my eyeballs bubbling, it is Southern cooking in pans and on griddles, it is wood smoke and distant lights in the clear air. It is a 4am start to see the Grand Canyon light up at dawn, it is warehouse bookstores and the worn-out summer house that Frank Lloyd Wright designed. It is the small condominium pool that was not cool enough to swim in until dusk, it is writing friends we haven't seen for years.

Charcoal canyon drawings, experimental poems, slap of heat and miles of sand

POITIERS

I first discovered the umbrella maker's shop when I was a student. I vowed that I would buy one when I was richer. That year makes me think of low evenings, cups of vin chaud and my grey pea-coat. It is a city for autumn and winter. In the summer the students leave and it sleeps. Ramshackle, beamed houses of all different heights laze along the sloping streets, their shutters almost closed. Large, maisons de ville with their long, rectangular windows and light brown walls also doze throughout the day. I have been in enough of them to know that they are mostly split into bedsits for young people. In the evenings, the conversation swirls out through the open shutters and down onto the street. That was us once. We used to cram against your kitchen window and smoke menthols. Some Sundays, we'd go to the market and buy fresh tourteaux – goats milk cakes with blackened tops – and little pyramids of cheese. There is too much to say here, the city's pieces come from different jigsaws. One day I will return for my umbrella.

Quiet grandeur, another chapter, another life

PRAGUE

We ambled over Charles Bridge and back again, looked over the many, many heads up towards the Orloj. Renaissance, Gothic, Baroque. I tried to find the imperfections and found one hidden restaurant with chipped floor tiles and grease in the air. We ate cheese and beer and mustard mashed together and thought we had discovered the real Prague. I took you to the Kafka museum and wondered how the ticket vendor could bear to sit in underground darkness with rows of fizzing televisions. It reminded you of a console game you don't really play. We found an old cinema with an open lift. The security guard warned us to get out at the top – 'otherwise it will…' and he gestured with his hand to show it turning upside down. We hopped out just in time and ended up in a rooftop bar where they filled the beer glasses mostly with Pilsen foam. We leaned against the wire barrier taking in the different levels laid out like a cruise ship's stern. In the middle of the Danube is an island that pumped with house music, that time. We looked over at it from the bridge and agreed it was most incongruous, but I think we would have gone.

Birdsong in paved backstreets, finding the unfound

PREŠOV

The town centre is somewhere to escape to. We take the bus from your house on the outskirts of the city and get off by the theatre. From there, you tell me where you used to go when you were younger: the posers' restaurant where they served you beer in a sundae glass; the club you sat in with friends on a trip back from England. We were like kings, you said. Then the medical faculty – you are still friends with your classmates. There is a pyrozki shop on Svatoplukova that you remember going to with your mum. It costs 10 cents for a pyrozki and the flavour depends on the day. When we go, it is jam day but any of the flavours would suit me fine. In summer the Hlavna is heat-hazy with blots of outdoor seating. In winter the smell of medovina pervades log-cabin market stalls and brick-vaulted cellar hideaways. You see people you know, then lament their weight gain, their baldness. We're not what we used to be, you say. There would have been no homeless during communism, you say. It's sad to see the city so quiet, you say, but I suspect that time didn't wait for you and you don't like that. How can you not smile in this city of orange roofs and pastel walls?

Pinks and yellows, aging faces, my holiday, your home

RIGA

How many times have I been here? I have lost count. When you bought me a box of chocolates with a picture of the bridge over the Daugava, I knew I had to go. We drank Balsam with hot blackcurrant in the old square with its ice-cream coloured buildings. At sunset we sat in a high-rise bar and watched the gold ignite on the onion domes of the orthodox church. The evening dropped new snow. We happened upon a floodlit park without snowmen or footstep traces and took it in turns to roll down the hill. There was an oil painting in the apartment that we rented. A previous guest had stuck a slice of sausage where the sun should have been. We were delighted when we realised this. Another time, we celebrated your birthday and your elderly father struggled to climb the flights of shadowed stairs. One year, we brought my mother who was pleased to finally see where you come from. Once I passed through alone and held my bag very close to me at the bus station. You moved to Worthing but you have always longed for home. England is too polite, too drab, and constantly misunderstands you. I remember when people thought we were sisters.

Cold bright light, laughter, back when we were always travelling

SAN FRANCISCO

(i.m. David)

I mostly remember you arriving late at the airport, jolly and laughing. Sue kept asking me what you looked like and I couldn't remember; she was convinced we'd missed you, that you had forgotten, that we would be stranded. But 40 minutes after we entered Arrivals, there you were; we remembered each other perfectly well. A friend of a friend, like several others, you'd put me up on a previous whirlwind tour of the West Coast, fed and watered me, introduced me to other musicians, artists and writers, and got me back to the airport when I was scheduled to move on. Your apartment was near several secondhand bookshops, bars and record stores; I stuffed my bag full of paperbacks and music I had been searching for for many years. Now you'd moved over to Oakland, and we were attending a conference. The sun was out, there were so many old friends to meet and new ones to make, but the bookshops had started closing down, the record stores had seen better days. And now you've shut up shop: Clif emailed to say you'd had a stroke and after consideration your life support was being switched off. He'd sat and talked to you, read a poem and said goodbye.

International friendships, long distance mourning, sunshine, bridges, fog, craft beer

SOMEWHERE ELSE

Drove through it, round it, across it, by it; never stayed there, even once. It was just another place we needed to avoid, another marker on the way to somewhere else; the trip was about the journey not the stops. We went over the mountains, down coast roads where it seemed every other car before us had fallen over the edge, round badly-signposted ring roads, on empty dual carriageways, on expressways that cost us good money but saved us hours. One day we got sent on a 300 mile diversion because a bridge was down, saw parts of Yugoslavia where no-one normally went. We drove sideways across Italy: it looked easy on the map. The road atlas became more battered and irrelevant as time went on, we'd kind of got the hang of following our noses, of finding places to stay: quiet campsites with shade and streams, empty B&Bs where we conversed with other travellers about obscure musicians and our favourite songs. Most of these places I have never seen again and didn't look properly when we were there. She kept our travel journal after we broke up and I don't know where I've been.

Pins in the map, forgotten roads, discarded motorbikes and dreams

TALLINN

Our apartment had low beams, a sauna and a view across the snow. We kept telling you it was much nicer than Riga, and you laughed along but seemed affronted. The truth was, I thought I'd opened up a Grimm's fairy tale and stepped into the pages. Gothic architecture, winding cobbles, pink turrets, New Year. It was the first time I'd heard a non Indo-European language, I said to you all, feeling very clever. There was a sword fight in the medieval restaurant we ate in. We listened to the table next to us shouting protests as the Russian national anthem was played. You were very quiet, had already been told not to speak Russian in the street. I sipped beer and wondered how on Earth people could shout in a restaurant; then we bundled into a pub singing Auld Lang Syne and were told to pipe down. Outside, people let off fireworks in the crowd; I didn't feel particularly safe. A wine waiter offered me the cork from a bottle and I admired it before giving it back. You all laughed and told me I had to smell it. We read in a tourist guide that Estonia had once experienced two days of independence. We were six. We are now four. The other two started new lives and I wish them well.

Christmas market, world-weary fairy tale town

TOYTOWN

Toytown is a sprawling city that can pop up anywhere. In Italy and France it was often packaging re-purposed for a week or two, at home it could be a street of cardboard houses or a treehouse and a cave for a family of trolls. Once, on a flight back to England, the spikey penguins moved in to an igloo encampment on a fold-down tray: styrofoam cups with cut-out doors. I helped you build an art gallery, an Eiffel Tower, an Italian house, a futurist house, a minimalist house, a town house, a garage, and stations for your wooden railway tracks. Strawberry Lady never made it back to the Lego box, Mister Beak was a wayward toucan who spent his time upsetting Wolfie and Red Ken; in the other room there were bunk beds for Mia and Babar, a kennel for a floppy dog, and a row of friendly bears on top of the bookshelf. Polly Pockets and Teeny Tiny Families vied for your attention and, before we moved, there was a canal system in the garden with real water and plastic boats that could transport small figures to the sandpit. Toytown is a sprawling city that can pop up anywhere but just as quickly be discarded or abandoned as children grow up, but there are new developments in other homes.

Sealed bags and boxes in the attic, dusty toys on bedroom shelves, muted memories and dreams

TRURO

The smallest city in the UK. We used to wave at each other from our top floor flat – I, as I watched you leave and, you, when you saw me coming home. The town centre is rich yet sparse. I don't remember it ever being busy, do you? The stone buildings look wet even when they are not; the little coloured cottages are shabby in the mizzle but brighten in the sun. In my mind I trace our Sunday routines, from the Catholic church, to the breakfast place where they serve extra-large omelettes and free coffee, to the co-op, then back up the hill. Sometimes there was a tented market on Lemon Quay where we could buy scented candles and craft gin. I imagine little lines following our paths, forever imprinted into the tarmac. One time we walked out to St Clement, all the way around to the flat water at Malpas and back to the town centre. One time you bought me a ring. One time we got married. I used to write in cafés back then; they were all good. Funny how somewhere only feels like home when you move on. We have both agreed on that, I think.

Stone, rain, coffee, space, love becoming comfortable

VALENCIA

You can park your car in the street then reach straight up to pick an orange from a tree. We didn't eat the orange as we concluded that it had absorbed too many exhaust fumes. It stayed on your dashboard until it started to shrivel. You were hungry. You asked me to phone ahead and reserve the paella as per the website instructions. The waiter had buttoned his shirt to the collar and had a low, smooth voice. He brought us a bottle of Rioja from a temperature-controlled wine store at the back of the restaurant and opened it without telling us the price. The paella was too salty – frozen – but we ate it and mourned our hard-earned cents as we left the waiter a tip. We drove past the bullring and agreed that it was a cruel place. There is a glass sea-life centre – a feat of architecture – I went there once without you and ate fish while more fish swam in aquariums around me. I explored a stretch of the sunken park that surrounds the city. Then I walked through the old town, peering into cave-like tapas bars and leaning my head back to see the crosses on church steeples. That was before I knew you – unthinkable now.

Smoggy warmth, orange avenues, future unknown

VENICE

We went to Venice when Dad died, to just be you and I and see how that felt. The red and white poles were the first clues, leaning into dirty water. We were stung by a water taxi when we disembarked. It didn't matter though, you saw the Bridge of Sighs from the outside and were then elated to walk over it. I stood on the balcony of the Palazzo Ducale and watched yachts froth along the canal. We went to Murano and on the return joked about not wanting to see another piece of blown glass. At night, St Mark's square fills with water so that you can hardly tell what is up and what is down. We watched a man carry a woman though it, the water parting splashily at his shins. On the final day, we checked out of the hotel and sat in a fenced garden to wait for our transfer. We must have sat without speaking for hours; I wonder what you were thinking about. If I could play them back I wouldn't ask you, I wouldn't try to make conversation. Silence is good sometimes and I think we knew that.

I'm not sure, He would have, Liked it there, Anyway

WARSAW

When you whisper it slowly it sounds like the wind – in English at least. The waiter brought me a plate with a whole fish on it. It peered up at me and I had to get one of you to remove its head. I think it was P who did it. G and A quarreled and stayed home that evening. Empty dining chairs held their absence. When we sat in the park I asked you, G, how many pairs of shoes A had brought with her. 'Four,' you said, without thinking. I suppose it's not so strange that you would know that. You have always retained details. I had never hung out in a park before. Nor eaten a fish with head. F was tiny then. I think she could stand up and cling to A's back, pressing kisses into her shoulder. P and P cracked jokes in the evening while I straightened O's hair. You were told not to speak Russian there too – isn't that right? We had a flat just around the corner from the Old Town Square and you swore about the early morning singers. You probably don't remember that; even I had to search for that memory. Later, we listened to them while eating salmon and dill butter on a nearby terrace. M was there. Unusual that so many of us should be together, sitting straight-backed in a row on the grass, watching the rollerbladers. I think there was some tension but with family that's not such a big deal. There is a high rise with a steeple that reminds me of the Ministry of Truth from *Nineteen Eighty Four*.

Siblings, glass facades, tall wooden door with a cast iron key

YORK

Another city I could live in, where bookshops and boutique shops, museums and a cathedral, cluster together. Our friends live a few miles away, and there are always things to do. One year we rented an apartment by the river and the girls loved their secret attic room, a spiral staircase up to crowded eaves. They rollerskated on the towpath, went swimming at the baths, and we all got lost in the newly opened art and ceramics museum. Months later we watched a video online of flood water creeping up the embankment steps next to where we stayed, but it hasn't dampened our nostalgia for the big sitting room and its bay window where we watched the river traffic over breakfast during our stay. The first time I visited alone, I innocently asked my friend what the Railway Museum was like; he said he'd never been, no-one ever wanted to go. We spent an afternoon breathing in oil and steam, inspecting polished machines and enjoying being together without social expectations or familial pressure. Next trip, our accommodation was nearby and I learnt I could be first in, for free, and see a few locomotives before my family were awake and wanted cups of tea.

Return trips, home from home, other people's lives

Where's Wally?

Sue Matheson

FILM REVIEW:

Perception, the Past and Free Indirect Discourse in László Nemes' *Sunset*

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On the surface, *Sunset* (*Napszállta*, 2018), László Nemes'[1] second film after his much-debated debut *Son of Saul* (2015), appears to be quite different from its predecessor. The setting of a concentration camp in *Saul* has changed to 1913 Budapest, a cultured metropolis at the height of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (and on the brink of World War I). Rather than the morally-haunted Sonderkommando of *Saul*, the protagonist this time is Irisz Leiter (Juli Jakab), a young milliner who has arrived in Budapest looking for employment at the reputed Leiter hat store. The name is no coincidence for the store was founded by her parents, who died in a fire while she was still a baby, but, as one character affirms, nothing remains of the old Leiter days except the name. Irisz hopes her stay in Budapest (the narrative takes place over five days) will allow her to reconnect with her roots. Instead, things descend into a menacing nightmare of confusion and paranoia when she learns of an older brother she never knew existed, and who seems to be the leader of an underground group of violent nationalist-anarchists. This is also, of course, just a year before Gavrilo Princip assassinated Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo.

However, despite its differences in setting and subject matter, *Sunset* employs a similar formal strategy to Nemes' earlier film. The camera is constantly with Irisz, who is our proxy and narrating agent: she is in every single sequence and we do not see or hear anything she is not privy to. Irisz explores, navigates, asks questions and is the instigator of both the narrative and the mobile camera which constantly tries to keep up with her, typically just behind her shoulder. This mode of subjective perception takes us through the looking glass with Irisz. The more she tries to learn about her brother, or about the rumors of a conspiracy being run out of Leiter's (Human trafficking? A prostitution ring? Nemes purposefully leaves it ambiguous), the less she (and therefore the viewer) knows for sure. Despite her strong-willed personality, hers is a restricted viewpoint and the film's rigorously disciplined formal ploy never lets the viewer go beyond Irisz's limitations. We must share with her the sense of being marooned within a contradictory world without any certainty whom to trust.

The deliberate disorientation and limited subjectivity of *Sunset*'s narrative led many reviewers to dismiss it as over-complicated.[2] Typical assessments of the film claim that it "challenges us from start to finish simply to make head or tail of what's going on"

1. László Nemes (1977-) is a Hungarian director and screenwriter. He initially worked as assistant director for Béla Tarr before rising to acclaim with his 2015 directorial feature debut *Son of Saul*, which re-ignited long-running debates about the cinematic representation of the Holocaust.

2. Many of these reviews arguably belie their submission under tight deadlines as part of the critics' hectic festival schedules, whereas *Sunset* is a film that requires at least a second viewing. On the other hand, a more thoughtful examination of the film is presented in Isabel Jacobs' "The Future of Nostalgia" in *East European Film Bulletin*.

(Romney) or that "Nemes loses sight of the basic mechanics of plot and scene work" (Lambert). However, closer inspection suggests that, firstly, Nemes' plot, rather than hole-riddled, might be more appropriately termed 'impressionistic,' leaving just enough of a spine for the audience to fill the gaps. Secondly, and more importantly, it becomes evident that the director's interest does not lie in the generic expectations which *Sunset* builds up as a mystery thriller, expectations that he deliberately thwarts. Nemes has created a misleadingly alluring artistic object (much like the extravagant hats in Leiter's store), which simmers with subconscious tension under the surface. The choice to limit our knowledge of events is not intended for suspense but, rather, as a rejection of omniscient narrativization of the world around us. *Sunset* favors a conceptual and deliberate ambivalence which not only reflects Irisz's limitations as our proxy, but also forges more philosophical and political points in its depiction of the historical past. The past is turned into an experience that forces us to make sense of a barrage of sensory elements, a sinuously choreographed cinematography, the use of extremely shallow depth of focus, disorienting elliptical editing, and a densely immersive sound design.

Inevitably, the past is always viewed through the prism of the present, but here it is also seen from the perspective of a single individual. The treatment of Irisz's subjectivity recalls the literary strategy of free indirect discourse and its cinematic equivalent Pier Paolo Pasolini, among others, wrote about. The cinematic apparatus, mechanically objective, is used to achieve a subjective effect by restricting image and sound to what Irisz can and does experience, taking us into her psyche throughout. This was picked up on by several of the film's reviews, some going as far as saying that by "keeping our focus so transfixed on the face and movement of [Irisz], we *become* that person" (Fagerholm, 2018). Less

evident in the reviews is a connection between the director's choice of cinematic free indirect discourse and his wider aims. By abandoning objective storytelling for relativistic subjectivity, and embracing Pasolini's claim that no two gazes are the same (551), Irisz's subjective consciousness shows the perception of reality as a social construct, dependent on gender, class and family background. Whether it is her status as a young woman, her surname and the baggage it carries, or her ability as an outsider in Budapest to roam between 'high' and 'low' society, all of these characteristics necessarily shape the protagonist's perception and hence the film's outlook.

If Irisz's perception of reality is fluid, her identity likewise proves equally malleable. At the end of her odyssey, she who had come to Budapest seeking to re-discover her lineage, has morphed into the persona of her brother. One brief image, just before the film's middle point, suggests a journey of self-discovery for Irisz: after she has witnessed a shocking assault inside an aristocratic mansion while hiding behind a door frame, a young boy (the most innocent of all the characters in *Sunset*) suddenly emerges from a door opposite her. The staging of Irisz, the boy and the two parallel door frames suggests a mirror, as if the protagonist is watching her own reflection as that of an innocent thrust into a guilty society. Later on, after having witnessed things she could never forget, Irisz's participation and guilt are less debatable and she becomes the mirror image of her own brother. Again, one brief moment succinctly suggests this realization: a montage of five still shots of elaborately intricate hats designed by Irisz eventually cuts to Julia Jakab's expressively skeptical face while looking at the hats. She seems to be questioning these artifacts, unable to continue viewing them as the simple products of her vocation. She has come to understand the truth behind what one character says of the Leiter hats,

symbolic as they are of social propriety and maintenance of appearances: "The horror of the world hides beneath these infinitely pretty things."

By the time we reach the film's epilogue in the trenches of WW1, Nemes' point is made explicit: just as Irisz's own hereditary potential for violence was ingrained, so too were the roots of Europe's self-destruction already present before 1914. The turn-of-the-century Budapest recreated in *Sunset* is a precarious milieu on the cusp of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's twilight, a sophisticated civilization only one strike of a match away from igniting into self-destruction. Appropriately, fire imagery abounds in *Sunset* through the depiction of oil lamps and torches, and one of the main structural dichotomies of the film is day versus night. Irisz's burning need to know the truth is perpetually extinguished without being satiated: darkness engulfs her without providing answers to the questions she so desperately wants to shed light upon. "Help me see clearly" she implores at one point, having realized the personal toll of her search for truth and understanding. The fire symbolism and 'light versus dark' motif serve as reminders that everything is double-edged in Irisz's partial view of the world. Fire is a source of light as much as a cause of incendiary danger. It becomes tempting to find parallels with the internet and social media in our age, as both potential illuminators and suppressors of knowledge and truth. Nemes' portrayal of the complex turmoil of a past, where believing what one wishes to be true only adds to the threat of self-destruction, may be envisioned as a mirror of our own contested media landscape of fake news, viral conspiracy videos and growing distrust of experts in favor of populist orators. Closer inspection thus allows a sobering warning to be perceived under the surface of *Sunset*.

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FILM REVIEW:

Broken and Defeated: Abortion and the Patriarchal Order in Cristian Mungiu's *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*

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It is no secret that Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime (1967-89) was heavily marked by an era of oppression in Romania, with its citizens being controlled in every aspect of their lives. One of the more aggressive approaches that the communist regime in Romania had taken was the idea of "family planning" (Adam and Mitroiu 2). As a result of this policy, to increase the population (and possible workforce for the future), the regime forbade any kind of contraception and abortion. In an already patriarchal world, women had no control over their everyday lives, as they simply had "no right to bodily privacy" anymore (Batori 1). Although Romanian films made after Ceaușescu's time understandably took any opportunity to condemn the previous regime and what was forced on people, either by political allegories or use of violence in their plots, yet the Romanian New Wave Cinema, represented by the likes of Cristian Mungiu and Cristi Puiu among many, attempted at recollecting the past but "without falling prey to uncritical nostalgia" (Parvulescu). In other words, these filmmakers tend to refrain from getting emotional about what happened; instead, they re-create moments and situations in order to critically analyze the social and political issues in Romania, both the past and the present. The universality of themes and issues helped these films to be seen globally, and some of the concerns and debates represented in Romanian New Wave films have remained unchanged as they still exist, not only in Romania, but all around the world.

4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days (2007), directed by Cristian Mungiu,[1] is set in a time when Ceaușescu was in power, in the last years of his dictatorship (1987), when abortion was illegal. In the film, a pregnant college student, named Găbița (Laura Vasiliu), and her friend Otilia (Anamaria Marinca) are looking for a man who is willing to abort the fetus illegally for an unknown price. Găbița and Otilia leave their dormitory on a cold snowy day that seems to be endless, to have the abortion performed, but this is the beginning of an uncontrolled storm of misery and pain. The already-defeated protagonists of Mungiu's film are two girls that have been figuratively beaten by patriarchal society, and have been trampled under the foot of a regime that does not allow individuals to have any kind of personal freedom and privacy. Mungiu brilliantly, and with a harsh realism, narrates a simple story of a pain that represents the misery of ordinary women who were trying to have a normal everyday life amidst all the hardship they had to endure.

1. Cristian Mungiu is a Romanian filmmaker who started his career with *Occident* in 2002, but it was his critically acclaimed film *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* that brought him to the spotlight as the film won several awards at prestigious film festivals, including the 2007 Palme d'Or at Cannes Film Festival. Mungiu further attempted to depict the lives and problems of women in Romania in *Beyond the Hills* (2012), a harrowing portray of moral decay. His most recent film is *Graduation* (2016). Mungiu's style is noted for its raw realism and a minimalistic approach to filmmaking (especially through the use of cinematography, editing and sounds). The director has always focused on social issues in Romania while refraining from getting emotional in his depiction of the miserable situation in which his characters are trapped.

Things are so bad that it is not about social protests anymore, but mere survival. Without showing any form of exaggeration, futile glorification of the female characters or elegiac representation of the past, Mungiu paints a picture of the miserable life of Romanian people under Ceaușescu's dictatorship, and perhaps hints at how this situation could be applied to the world we are living in today. His film becomes a tale of helpless women, who are not able to make the most private decisions of their lives. By means of the simple cinematography—which "constructs the film's visual universe as an object on display" (Parvulescu) in order for the audience to observe the struggles of the protagonists—the director uses realism to capture the essence of the time.

As mentioned earlier, *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* might not show its protagonists actively protesting against the laws that forbid women to have abortions; however, they (especially Otilia) are quietly rebelling against the system, against the law, to do what must come naturally to them. Although Mungiu's film is not political in and of itself, and although the story is set in an era when a dictatorship was ruling over Romania, his depiction of the issue of abortion, and whether it is a decision to be made by individuals or governments, and his depiction of women being underpowered can be generalized and extended to the present time when these controversial debates have not been settled yet. It was only recently that the abortion ban was put into effect in the United States (in Alabama), a ruling that basically criminalized "providing an abortion at any stage during a pregnancy," with the law considering "no exception for rape or incest victims" (Higgins). Although these two stories (that of Găbița in the film and the court ruling in Alabama and other areas) are miles and years apart, yet they highlight the fact that the problem still exists within contemporary societies, and women (and women's bodily privacy, in this case) are still being controlled by the governments.

What makes *4 Months 3 Weeks 2 Days* so unique is that Mungiu approaches this topic with an almost neutral, indifferent tone, and refrains from making the audience feel sorry for the characters. In other words, Mungiu "relinquishes all obvious tools of emotional manipulation, going for an essential, ruthless intensity" (Uricaru 14). The film does not attempt to make the audience cry and simply sympathize with the characters, and it does not try to block the audience's rational opinion on the subject by using useless sentimentalism. On the contrary, it shows the bleak reality of each situation as it occurs, without any extra layer to decorate the story. Indicative of such an approach are the absence of film score and the director's decision not to use fast-paced editing (even though the film's pace is relatively fast itself). Mungiu's style is extremely realistic, as it is evident in the scenes where the girls are buying bus tickets or booking the hotel room as much as in the hard-to-watch sequence of Otilia agreeing to prostitute herself to make up for the rest of money they need to have the abortion done. These scenes become bleak and horrifying experiences for the audience to feel what the protagonists are going through, as the case of the sequence at the end of the film when Otilia wraps the fetus in a towel and leaves the building to bury it somewhere further demonstrates. As Anna Batori observes, on this occasion

> [t]he handheld camera work, the over-the-shoulder shots that track Otilia, the dark, rainy streets—which can hardly be seen due to the lack of public lighting and the girl's resounding steps and sighs all create the atmosphere of constant surveillance. While carrying the child in her bag, she is again

constantly followed by the omniscient gaze that monitors her actions. (8)

It seems as if Otilia cannot find a 'safe' place to put the fetus, anywhere in Romania, perhaps because citizens are being watched and controlled, and the film thus suggests that the world is not safe anymore, even for a fetus. Eventually, she puts the fetus in a trash chute somewhere hidden from the eyes of the world.

The issue of abortion (and the debates that follow) still exists, perhaps even more than before. In 2020, American director Eliza Hittman focused on other aspects of the same problem with her film *Never Rarely Sometimes Always*, the story of a seventeen-year-old pregnant girl named Autumn and her cousin, who go on a journey to get the abortion Autumn needs. Although Hittman has another angle on this issue and attempts to reveal the "rotten fruits of toxic masculinity" (Handler) where sexual and physical abuses are exposed, still the center of the problem is the same, and the protagonists in both films (and in almost all similar films) are chained to a patriarchal world order and are controlled by men (and their laws). In the end, they are defeated and barely manage to stay in a narrow space designed for them by society, tradition, and even religion.

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FILM REVIEW:

Locating Contemporary Māori Masculinity in Taika Waititi's *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*

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Taika Waititi's 2016 box-office hit, *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, is a warm-hearted exploration of contemporary ethnic identity and the mythologies that surround the human being's relationship with landscape.[1] Contextualized as a coming-of-age comedy, the film follows young Māori orphan Ricky (Julian Dennison) forging a relationship with his foster father, Hector (Sam Neill), following the sudden death of Hector's wife, Bella (Rima Te Wiata). *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* demands continued public and critical attention due to its examination and ultimately, celebration, of indigenous cultural identities. Waititi subverts orthodox mythologies relating to landscape and ethnicity throughout the film, which results in an ultimately hopeful outlook on the future of Māori, as well as Pākehā, masculine and cultural identities.

Ricky, an urban Māori youth with an extensive criminal record, is fostered by Bella and Hector who live in the New Zealand wilderness. Ricky opposes the Māori myths of being connected with the land, and a self-identity constituted by a sense of tribal heritage (Linnekin and Poyer, 251). Instead, he represents a hybridity of cultures, particularly through references to Western popular culture such as his dog's namesake, Tupac Shakur.[2] His relationship with landscape, or lack thereof, is asserted from the beginning of the film when social services worker, Paula Hall (Rachel House), says: "maybe a change of scenery will straighten him out," alluding that he is not suited to a urban environment due to his heritage. Hector also addresses the traditional Māori connection with landscape when he asks Ricky if he has worked on a farm before, or if he is "just ornamental." His lack of capability in his new bush environment is a theme throughout the film, as when he runs away into the bush, but only ventures "two hundred metres" from Bella and Hector's house.[3] Ricky's lack of connection with nature expresses a literal and metaphorical isolation and dislocation as he is removed from the familiarity of a city environment, but also acknowledges his dislocation from his Māori heritage.

Bella's role in the film is significant despite her short screen time, as she represents the Kiwi myth of the female: a figure who tames the masculine, while the latter tames the landscape (see Phillips, 87). Bella, who is presumably from a similarly difficult background, aides Ricky's reconnection with his heritage by creating a myth of her own history. She tells Ricky how she grew up in the bush, and that her "people's" spirits go to a lake called

1. Waititi's most notable works include: *Boy* (2010), *What We Do in the Shadows* (2014) and, in more recent years, *Thor: Ragnarok* (2017) and *Jojo Rabbit* (2019). His films have a distinct style in their use of vibrant colour, and their exploration of themes concerning identity. The director is known for depicting dramatic and tragic narratives in a comedic fashion, most notably his parody of Adolf Hitler in *Jojo Rabbit*, a film that follows a young boy struggling to navigate his Germanic identity during the Second World War. Waititi's earlier work centres exclusively around the cultural identities of New Zealand, whereas his more recent "Hollywood" films are more often concerned with broader representations of national identity.

2. Tupac Shakur was a prominent American rapper, who died in 1996.

3. Bush environment" refers to the natural and rural landscapes of New Zealand and Australia.

Makutekahu when they die. This myth is not questioned until Hector and Ricky visit such a place and Hector reveals that Bella had no family or heritage. The notion of myth is an important theme of the film and reflects Roland Barthes' theories surrounding cultural mythologies. Barthes argues that the creation of a myth does not deny a truth, but "purifies" it (143). In this sense, myths are not lies but are representations of an idea that is "rooted in one variation of truth" (Barthes, 143). Bella's myth is affirmed as truth when Hector and Ricky travel to the lake, as they make the journey Bella claimed her tribe did, solidifying their bond as a family. The bond of family and community established by this myth is symbolic of New Zealand's national identity, specifically the Māori custom of *Whāngai*, which describes a familial situation where a child is not raised by their birth parents, but by other members of the community. The concept of *Whāngai* serves to strengthen community bonds, and to foster a feeling of *Whānau*, meaning "extended family" within said community (Metge, 145). Therefore, the myth of Bella's family and Ricky's status as a foster child clearly expresses these notions of *Whāngai*.

Another myth that has become a stereotype is that of "man alone." Man alone, as defined by John Mulgan in the novel of the same name (originally published in 1939), explores masculinity and landscape, and loneliness in landscape. This relates to Pākehā masculine identities, rather than Māori, despite both placing an importance on landscape (Challenger, 30). The concept of "man alone" or the "Kiwi bloke" is personified in the film through Hector, who is presented as an isolated figure using landscape to escape authority literally and metaphorically. This is exemplified by Hector's first appearance. Indeed, when he is introduced to Ricky, he enters from the bush, whereas Bella enters the scene from the house, articulating Hector's isolation in nature. As the film progresses, Hector is continually identified as an outsider, key instances being his criminal history and minimal speech. He is also presented as being self-sufficient within the landscape, although, this, and by extension the stereotype of the Kiwi bloke, is contested when he and Ricky leave Hector's farm following Bella's death to prevent Ricky being reclaimed by social services.

When in the bush, the comical incompetence of Ricky and Hector subverts the aforementioned Māori and Pākehā myths of masculinity and nature. This is evident in the sequence when Hector injures his ankle during a fit of rage towards Ricky, which is significant as Waititi confronts the violence of masculinity, and, by having Hector injure himself, makes a comment about how violence is not what should encapsulate Kiwi masculinity. Instead, the director presents wilderness as connected to contemporary myths of identity. Waititi thus suggests that identity can be remoulded and rediscovered through the aid of the landscape, similarly to how Ricky and Hector rediscover the Huia bird. As noted throughout this review, landscape, for New Zealand, is a unifier of identity. Not only does it feature in both Māori and Pākehā myths of origin, but, for the director, it redefines contemporary identities. In *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, Waititi celebrates the bi-culturalism of New Zealand through Hector and Ricky's transformative journey in the bush. The film ultimately ends on a hopeful note as the pair return to the bush—a landscape that unites them where, once, it isolated them (Rueschmann, 154).

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FILM REVIEW:

A Satire on Fascism: A Review of *Look Who's Back*

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Look Who's Back, by German writer Timur Vermes, was published in 2012 and adapted for film in 2015 by director David Wnendt.[1] In the latter's story, Hitler (Oliver Masucci) wakes up without remembering his suicide or his last minutes, as if he has just been kicked out of hell. However, 21st-century Berlin is very different, Germany having become one of the most prosperous and culturally plural nations in Europe thanks to the unification. Frightened by the sight of this new country, full of immigrants, democratic and economically fertile, Hitler takes a while to adapt, initially settling himself in a newsstand, where he spends his days reading the periodicals to catch up. However, his anachronism is precisely what gives him power: taken as an excellent actor for never breaking his role, he gradually regains space, power and fame. He starts to participate

1. David Wnendt is an award-winning German director and screenwriter, winner of German Academy Awards for Best Screenplay. In addition to *Look Who's Back*, Wnendt also directed *Kriegerin* (*Combat Girls*, 2011) and *Feuchtgebiete* (*Wetlands*, 2013). The former film as well is related to contemporary Nazism.

in television programs, until receiving his own show. His jokes about immigrants become a phenomenon, his popularity grows across the country, especially after he starts participating at protests over frivolous subjects. After an attack by neo-Nazis who leave him hospitalized, Hitler starts to receive invitations to join several parties. At a time when a party such as Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) is gaining ground in Germany, the discussion raised is quite relevant: any nation, at any time, can produce a new Hitler. Perhaps not the genocide, but the extremist figure basing his discourse on a return to the mythical past, the hatred of minorities and a paranoid fear of conspiracies.

Fiction creates and modifies the real, bending it at will. In the post-truth era, where the boundaries between fact and fiction are increasingly blurred, literature—and political literature in particular—is flexed with reality, sometimes becoming more believable than reality itself. The boundary between fact and fiction, which was never very well set (Seligmann-Silva 375), is even more attenuated. Political literature appropriates or precedes the facts, composing scenarios that often end up actually happening. *Look Who's Back* was published two years before the creation of the AfD in Germany, a party whose co-chairman said publicly that "Nazis were no more than bird poop in German history" (Deutsche Welle) and which currently counts eleven members in the European Parliament and 89 members in the Bundestag (2020), it being the third largest party in the German chamber. The film portrays a Germany that makes the same mistakes as in the 1930s: a political establishment ignores the force of fascist populism and Hitler's political rise, which was enacted through the exploitation of popular grievances and frustrations as well as through the arbitrary choice of objective enemies. Those who believe that lightning does not strike twice in the same place are wrong, and Germany is

an example that this can happen.

Look Who's Back depicts a Germany that believes it has created enough antibodies against fascism after the trauma of 1940. At this point, the film adaptation is more incisive than the book: questioning the barriers between reality and fiction, the film puts, in fact, an actor dressed up as Hitler through the streets of German cities, interviewing their inhabitants. The reaction by the Germans to the false Hitler is surprising, to say the least, as they are easily ignited by a small spark. The false Hitler purposely raises questions about racism, immigration and democracy, picking up absurd testimonies wherever he goes. One of the interviewees says that "The IQ of Africans who come to live in Germany is, on average, between 40 and 50." In another scene, Hitler manipulates football fans steeped in nationalism during the 2014 World Cup to beat up another actor. All of these scenes actually happened in real life. According to the production, during the entire recording only on one occasion a man questioned the actor back and showed indignation. It is therefore not without reason that the book ends with Hitler saying "it is possible to work with this," referring to the German people themselves.

But one of the most interesting points of *Look Who's Back* is its humor, the transformation of the absurdity of fascism into laughter. In both Vermes' book and its cinematographic version, humor is slapstick at times. As a satire, Vermes purposely exaggerates the creation of his literary real: under the veneer of hyperbole, his satire allows for a critique of the resurgence of fascism in the world. Political satire plays with the limits between the real and fiction, it being openly inspired by the politics of the real to purposefully treat it absurdly. The absurd is the heart of satire, for it aims to produce a performance, or, as Charles Knight affirms, "The performative nature of satiric drama

produces, in turn, a performance by its characters that reveals the evil or silliness of society" (203). For is it not absurd that Gulliver encounters a race of horse-men or that Hitler reappears alive in 2012? Satire's humor resides in such an absurdity, in the dialogue with the impossible, with what is admittedly unreal. Therefore, it devours the real to give back a version that is purposely deformed and bordering on nonsense. It certainly sounds insane that Hitler is kicked out of hell and elected again to fight traffic tickets; just as the cockroach plan to reverse the entire basis of the economy and turn consumption into work in Ian McEwan's novella *The Cockroach* (2019) is equally absurd. But would it not sound insane in the early 2000s to talk about the resurgence of nationalism that led to the UK 's exit from the European Union? Or the resurgence of fascism that leads Germany to deal with a party like the AfD? Political satire only absorbs the insane we are used to in order to exponentially elevate it to an idea that seems absurd to us.

Look Who's Back intentionally travels across the borders between real and fiction, putting actors in contact with common folks. In one of the most memorable scenes, Hitler manages to mobilize the emotions of a group of fans during the 2014 World Cup to attack another actor, playing an anarchist, who passes by the group cursing the country. The group of fans, filmed and applauded by many others, call him a traitor, forcing him to wear a shirt of Germany. In the very next scene, another group of fans takes a picture with Hitler, in which everyone makes the Nazi salute, followed by a woman saying "I love Hitler."

The story does not end with Hitler being democratically reelected or carrying out a coup, but ends with his realization that it is possible to work with this human material and grow politically with it. At a time when political scientists and journalists insist on the epithet of populism—turned into a warcry to classify the left or center-left and the far right as synonyms (Schargel)— is essential for its sobriety in realizing that fascism did not die in 1945. More than an attack on fascism, the film is a criticism of the inability to treat the bacillus by its true name, and the consequences that follow it. To contradict the axiom that says that those who do not know history will repeat it, perhaps it is precisely the memory of fascism that hinders their contemporary identification..

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Northern Plutonium

Sue Matheson

BOOK REVIEW:

Just skip to the first page and dive right in...

Kyokutei Bakin, *Eight Dogs* **or** *Hakkenden*. Part One: *An Ill-Considered Jest, Chapters I through XIV of Nansō Satomi hakkenden*, trans. Glynne Walley. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021.

In English literature, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a profusion of lengthy, serialised novels by people such as Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray and Elizabeth Gaskell. In Europe Marcel Proust wrote his seven-volume *A la recherche du temps perdu*, which took him fourteen years to write (1913-27), and of course there's Tolstoy with *War and Peace* and Dostoevsky with *The Brothers Karamazov*. These authors were rank amateurs compared with one Kyokutei Bakin,(1767-1848), the Japanese writer who managed to churn out what must be the most mind-bogglingly monumental novel in the history of literature, the *Hakkenden*, the first part of which, presented here (the translator promises a complete version), came out in 1814. It was finally finished in 1842 and filled 106 volumes; poor old Bakin went blind before he'd finished; like Milton before him, he got his daughter to take dictation, and, again like Milton, produced a great classic, although I suspect *Hakkenden* has a much larger audience than *Paradise Lost*. Nowadays, you can watch the movie or buy a manga version, but it's really much more fun to sample the original novel, due to the way Bakin employs language and the translator's acute awareness of how he does so, not to mention his attention to Bakin's

sudden changes in style (he employs both formal diction and colloquial language), which jolt readers and keep their attention. As Glynne Walley explains, "It is, in many ways, a shaggy dog story, a seemingly endless tale whose very length and convolutedness turn it into a joke." I'm just hoping I live long enough to read the rest of it!

The "Eight Dogs" part of the story begins when Lord Satomi Yoshizane, a virtuous samurai who has taken charge over most of the district of Awa after his father's death in battle and whose family are the heroes of the story, helps out his neighbour Lord Anzai Kagetsura with a supply of rice during a famine. Kagestsura does not reciprocate when his own rice crop flourishes the next year and it's Yoshizane who needs help. The evil Kagestsura also takes advantage of the famine in Yoshizane's lands and invades Awa, attacking two of Yoshizane's castles. This is where the "ill-considered jest" comes in. Yoshizane, whose territory is in a bad way, is on the brink of suicide and finds himself talking to his dog Yastsufusa, who is devoted both to his master and, even more, to Yoshizane's teenage daughter, Princes Fuse. "How well do you know your ten years' debt of gratitude?" Yoshizane asks the dog, "If you know it, then make your way by stealth into the enemy camp and bite the enemy general Anzai Kagetsura to death." Yoshizane jokingly offers his dog rather bizarre rewards, including land and rank (well, Caligula made his horse consul), but gets no response; it's at this point that he jokingly suggests that his teenage daughter, Princess Fuse, would marry Yatsufusa if he can kill Kagetsura. "If you do not desire rank or property," Yoshizane says, "shall I make you my son-in-law—marry you to Princess Fuse?" The dog likes the sound of that idea (he wags his tail); he duly brings Kagetsura's head back, and Fuse marries him so that Yoshizane can keep his ill-considered promise. She obviously has a high sense of Confucian filial loyalty, besides which her name "Fuse" contains the characters for "person" and "dog," so it's fated. After

an initial fit of anger which makes him threaten the dog, Fuse intervenes, and Yoshizane resignedly realises that "The character for concealment that I used to write 'Fuse' consists of the character for human followed by that for dog. . .Well might it be said that the name names the thing."

So where do the "Eight Dogs" come from? Fuse and Yatsufusa go off together, live in the wilderness and eventually attain enlightenment. But Fuse has set conditions, and one of them is that she won't have sex with Yatsufusa; she finds herself pregnant anyway, but not in the usual fashion, and Bakin doesn't tell us how she managed to do it. He does, however, describe her giving birth. The Eight Dog Warriors, are "the spiritual descendants" of Fuse rather than actual biological ones; when she gives birth it's accomplished by her own hand, namely cutting open her belly in a *seppuku* ritual. As she does so, "out from the wound came flashing a cloud of white vapour. It enveloped the crystal prayer beads that hung from her neck and then was seen to climb into the air." At the same time, as the beads fall, eight of them remain suspended, until they are scattered in eight different directions by a gale from the nearby mountains. "Truly was this a harbinger of the appearance, years later, of the Eight Dog Warriors," the narrative states, and that's all we get for now. However, it's the most important part of the tale—we have to wait for subsequent installments, though, to see what becomes of all this.

Between these two episodes there's an enormous amount of action and many new characters are introduced, but there is more to *Hakkenden* than samurai action. The work is, of course, a family saga featuring the Satomis, but it's also part historical romance (they were real people) and part morality play. The morality part was important to Bakin, and he uses Princess Fuse to make it come alive in a memorable character who combines Confucian and Buddhist virtues, and, as Walley puts it, "her star turn is highly dramatic, full of action, beautifully narrated and in all other ways satisfying to read, but it is also legible as moral teaching." The moral teaching here is known as *kanzen chōaku*, which means "encouraging virtue and chastising vice," a common trope one can see in pretty much all world literature. Fuse might end up dead, but morally she wins out and her spirit lives on. The Confucian part of her virtuous character was derived by Bakin from the Chinese classics which she reads avidly, quotes from which are liberally sprinkled throughout the book; her samurai background supplies her strength, both mental and physical. Fuse also reads the *Lotus Sutra*, in which Shakyamuni expounds on the nature of Buddhahood and what one must do to attain it. As Walley points out, Fuse demonstrates compassion, one of the main tenets of Buddhism, in the way she treats Yatsufusa, a "lower" life-form. The Dog Warriors each get one of the eight prayer-beads, which symbolically combine Buddhist and Confucian virtues within them, coming as they do from Fuse's womb and each standing for one of the cardinal virtues.

The details of this and other literary devices employed by Bakin are discussed in Walley's very valuable introduction as well as his approach to translating, in which he explains how he decided on what sort of English to use. In addition to "readability and naturalness of expression, which might convey the fascination of Bakin's story," he has to deal with "the dazzling play of his style," which he feels might make some readers see the translation as "stiff and archaic" or "flowery and convoluted." However, that's the way Bakin intended the book to be read; Walley employs an English which was used by writers who would have appreciated the kind of style Bakin had, citing Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen as examples. He also mentions more modern writers employing archaic style, such as J. R. R. Tolkien. This approach to language works, because, after

all, Bakin isn't a modern writer, and readers of such books as this have probably read early nineteenth-century writers and won't be put off by a few archaisms, especially when they understand the protean nature of Bakin's style, its idiosyncrasies and oddnesses. A passage expounding Confucian morality, for example, will require different language than a description of fighting samurais rushing madly around trying to behead one another. And it's there because Bakin's readers were familiar with it.

These days it's good to see a translator who aims for a literate audience without striving for a "modern" feel to a book that definitely isn't modern, which in some cases is little more than pandering to a non-literary audience or making readers feel like they're being talked down to. As I noted above, there's always the manga version for them; at the same time, however, Walley includes many illustrations from the various editions of the book, the power of graphics wasn't lost on Bakin and his publisher, so the visual aspect is taken care of. The extensive introduction also supplies all the background information a reader might need, but, as Walley tells us, *Hakkenden* "can be enjoyed with little or no background; just skip to the first page and dive right in."

—John Butler

Independent Scholar

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BOOK REVIEW:

Why is it so difficult for us, as a species, to accept one another?

Andrew Scott, *Under the Bright Sky: A Memoir of Travels through Asia.* Halfmoon Bay, BC: Caitlin Press, 2021.

COVID-19 may have killed off a lot of actual travel, but fortunately there are still many books about travelling still being issued, and this one, relatively short at 200 pages, makes one look forward to shedding the caution and dusting off the suitcases. It's a lively romp through various Asian countries, with just enough seriousness when it's needed, and the congenial Scott is always sensitive to the people he meets, refreshingly non-judgmental and patient, although he admits that this insouciance sometimes took a good deal of effort on his part to maintain. Scott's "philosophy" of travel is straightforward; "most serious travellers," he says, "were internationalists. The spirit of co-operation fired them up." It's "nationalists" who presented a problem, people who emphasise the importance of physical borders; for Scott, "to risk one's life defending a line on a map. . .was a sad fate. A flag was just a flag." Unfortunately, these words were written before the Ukrainian war, but are still, in a general sense, true enough. In any case, Scott says "I recognize the need for borders, but prefer invisible ones instead of barbed wire."

In this book Scott takes us to China, Japan, Laos, India (twice), South Korea, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Indonesia and Turkey. For me, the most interesting

chapters were the ones on Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Laos, amongst the least visited of the Asian countries covered by Scott. Laos in 1991, particularly, stood out as a country almost stuck in a 1953 time-warp because of its awful history of internecine conflict and the rule of the communist Pathet Lao with its attendant repression. Hill tribes were still, with aid from the United States, were still fighting the communist government and growing opium. Vientiane, the capital city, still had its "stately, tree-lined avenues" and "rundown colonial buildings erected by the French," but not much new construction. Travel-arrangements, Scott had been told, were "haphazard," especially of you wanted to fly to Luang Prabang, the old royal city; "Sometimes tourists could go there, sometimes they couldn't. Sometimes the plane flew; sometimes it didn't. Sometimes two planes flew." When he finally gets a flight, it "mysteriously doubled in price." A minor pedantic correction cropped up—it was king *Savang*, not *Sisavang* Vatthana who abdicated in 1975 and later murdered by the communists—Scott confuses him with king Sisavang Vong, who reigned from 1904 to 1959.

In spite of various vicissitudes, which included an encounter with "a hairy tarantula as big as my outstretched hand" and finding a wad of unclaimed cash in his hotel room, which he spends, Scott leaves us with a picture of "a huge Buddha. . .protective but alien" and the sound of chanting monks. The visit to Laos was important because it was undertaken at a sad period of Scott's life, soon after his Chinese-Canadian wife had died of cancer at thirty-seven. "I don't know what had possessed me to think that travelling around Southeast Asia would help me get over my loss," he tells us, "but I was wrong. It was too soon. I was travelling like a ghost, unable to connect or engage, a prisoner of my delusions." Laos didn't provide closure, but "this forgotten country," as Scott calls it, made him realise that "my sorrow would pass—or not. It was time to rejoin the world."

Here one is reminded of Peter Matthiessen's *Snow Leopard*, an account of a journey to Tibet which was also occasioned by the death of the author's wife and may be seen, perhaps, as in part a meditation on death. Scott does not go into his grief quite as far as Matthiessen did, but there is a rather melancholy tone brooding over his Laotian journey which he can't escape. It's an extension of his account of China, when he took his wife, already ill in 1987, to visit relatives she had never met and to see her ancestral village; sadly, it turned out that his wife's aunt was also suffering from cancer. Scott's Vancouver-born wife, Shiane, wanted to make the journey to China "for self-awareness. . .she was determined to see, for the first time, the world of her ancestors." Other trips were taken in the company of his partner Katherine, beginning with India in 1995; they married in 2010 after numerous travels together, which Scott saw as a good way to test the strength of a relationship. The visit to Laos showed Scott that in spite of "the vast differences between us of place and race, of wealth and social condition," yet "here we all were, under the same bright sky, doing the best we could."

Scott's experience in Sri Lanka evoked a different response, although in the background, as in Laos, there was conflict, this time between the Sinhalese and Tamils. However, "Nothing on this trip was turning out the way I'd expected," he tells us; "in truth, everything was better than expected." Again, Scott's trip had more than just traveller's curiosity behind it—this time he was accompanied by his father, who had been there fifty years before serving with the Royal Artillery and was "raring to check out his old haunts," one of which was the famous Galle Face Hotel in Colombo (built by the British in 1864), where they were staying. Scott's relationship with his father had been somewhat rocky in the past, but he's "just along for the ride, hoping to get to know him—and thus of course myself—better," referring to them both as "old souls." Again, Scott discovers something

he didn't expect, as the journey doesn't turn out to be the usual father-son bonding story, "but was simply about friendship. About reinvigorating ours." They do this by going to places that neither has visited as well as Scott's father's "old haunts," and includes a visit to the science-fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, "sitting at his keyboard in a sarong." The Sri Lankans, Scott writes, are "a gentle, outgoing, physically beautiful people," who are the real attraction of this country, in spite of the numerous beautiful temples, shrines and old colonial buildings.

In addition to the usual traveller's tales about interesting people, food (there's a lot of that) and places, Scott also manages to make readers feel the physicality of the places he visits by his descriptions of landscapes, both urban and rural, as well as providing just enough historical background for readers to contextualise. In Thailand he writes of a "valley bottom" which "was matted with low willow and birch shrubs. There were wildflowers in profusion: monkshood, paintbrush, red columbine, bluebells, harebells, fireweed and river beauty." We are shown "brave armies of gnarled, stunted white spruce and subalpine fir," which "marched up the mountainsides, but soon surrendered, leaving the terrain to marmosets and rock ptarmigan." Scott's lyrical descriptions of vegetation and flora are sometimes so lush and detailed that they make one think he was channeling Alexander von Humboldt in his *Personal Narrative*! He is aware, too, of the differences between travellers and locals; after dining on "wonderful seafoods" in India, he "became very conscious of the contrast between our tourist lifestyle and that of the people who lived here," and relates a story about a man sleeping on cardboard who asks him "in stately English" whether he has eaten well, and when the "startled" Scott says he has, merely replies "That is good to hear," and goes back to sleep. It's vignettes like this which make Scott's book stand out somewhat from the usual travel narratives.

This is definitely a book worth reading, even if the essays in it are short. Scott's mind is wide-ranging, and the touch of personal grief adds a poignancy to the sections on China and Laos. I missed Cambodia (he does mention Angkor Wat) and wondered why Turkey should be included in a book concerned largely with Southeast Asia, but these are minor carping criticisms. Scott includes some colour photographs as well as black-and-white illustrations in the body of the text; I noted particularly the elephant orphanage in Sri Lanka, the floating village at Ayothaya in Thailand and the pictures taken in China showing the rural village and stone house in Guangdong where Scott's wife's family originated. Scott's acute sense of the humanity that we all share shines throughout this book as he tries to answer the questions "Why is it so difficult for us, as a species, to accept one another?" and "how long were we likely to survive without mastering the basic skill of co-operation?" These are simple, even obvious questions, but perhaps "internationalist" travellers can suggest some answers, as Andrew Scott admirably does in this book.

—John Butler

Independent Scholar

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Overflowing Rver #1

Sue Matheson

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Overflowing River

Sue Matheson

call for papers

***the quint's* fifty eighth issue is issuing a call for theoretically informed and historically grounded submissions of scholarly interest—as well as creative writing, original art, interviews, and reviews of books and films. The deadline for this call is the 15th of May 2022—but please note that we accept manu/digi-scripts at any time.**

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Essays should range between 15 and 25 pages of double-spaced text in Word, and all images (JPEG) and source citations. Longer and shorter submissions also will be considered. Bibliographic citation should be the standard disciplinary format.

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