CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN SELECTED MODERN AFRICAN NOVELS

BY

Abigail Obiageli ERUAGA
MATRIC NO: 147479
B.A. Hons. English (Jos), M.A. English & Literature, Laws (LLB) (Benin)

A Dissertation in the Department of English, Submitted to the Faculty of Arts in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

of the

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

AUGUST, 2014

ABSTRACT

Crime, an act that contravenes societal values, and punishment, the penalty attracted by such act, are issues that abound in modern African novels. Previous studies on these novels have often examined the authors' thematic pre-occupations such as poor governance and political disillusionment, without adequate attention to the novelists' depiction of criminal acts and the consequent punishment. This study, therefore, examined the portrayal of these crimes and the punishment they attract in selected novels in order to portray the nature of crime and the corresponding punishment in different regions of Africa.

Emile Durkheim's Deviance and Freud's Psychoanalytic theories were adopted due to their concern with the affirmation of cultural values and the motivation behind perpetration of crimes. Eight novels, representing four distinct regions of the continent were selected based on their thematic affinity and relevance to the study. They are: Ouologuem's *Bound to Violence (BV),* Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah (AS),* Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood (TJM),* Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain (AR)* (West Africa), Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (*SMN*), Mahfouz's *The Thief and the Dogs (TTD)* (North Africa), La Guma's *A Walk in the Night (AWN)* (South Africa) and Ngugi's *The River Between (TRB)* (East Africa). Four and two novels were respectively chosen from West and North Africa because they reveal more instances of crime and punishment. The data were subjected to literary analysis.

Political, moral, gender, cultural, racial and religious crimes are perpetrated in the four regions of Africa. These crimes attract varying natural, judicial and extra-judicial punishments depending on the region and status of perpetrator. Political and moral crimes cut across the regions. Gender and moral crimes are common to North and West Africa, but while they are punished in West Africa, punishment is lopsided in North Africa due to their Islamic/patriarchal beliefs. In *SMN*, women are destroyed for challenging unequal marital choices. In *TTD,* judicial punishment is lopsidedly imposed; one of the three moral criminals is punished while others escape punishment. In West Africa, natural justice is meted to moral and cultural criminals in *AR* and *TJM r*espectively. In *AR, BV* and *AS* while two political criminals escape punishment, judicial punishment is imposed on one. Racial crime is peculiar to South Africa where crimes are punished discriminatingly due to the segregated nature of the society. In *AWN,* crimes perpetrated by blacks attract judicial punishment while those committed by their white counterparts go unpunished. Religious crimes are peculiar to East Africa where the harsh Christianisation and land appropriation divide the community on religious affiliations. Supporters of western religion, attract extra judicial punishment by *Kiama,* a local group that upholds communal ways (*TRB*).

In modern African novels, crimes identified and punished in Northern and Eastern Africa are those which relate to the dominant religion, but in the more westernised South and West African regions, political and moral crimes attract punishments due to their cultural, religious and educational similarities. Therefore, cultural, political and religious beliefs of particular regions of Africa determine the kind of punishments imposed on crimes.

Word count: **499**
Key words: Modern African novels, Perpetration of crimes, Crime and punishment.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Abigail Obiageli ERUAGA in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, under my supervision.

_____ _____

Date **Supervisor**
Professor A.O. Dasylva
B.A., M.A. (Ife), Ph.D (Ibadan)

DEDICATION

To the immortal, invisible and only wise God who sees the end from the beginning and who calleth those things that were not as though they were. This Great God who has started a good work in my life surely knows how to perfect it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely appreciate my Supervisor, Professor Ademola O. Dasylva, for his painstaking efforts and useful suggestions. Even when the need arose for a brief relocation to the Redeemer's University of Nigeria (RUN), Mowe, Ogun State for his sabbatical, he still made out time to go through the pages of the work. I acknowledge Professor E.B. Omobowale, the Head of Department, for his immense concern, encouragement and friendship. Professor Remi Raji-Oyelade, former Head of Department and current Dean of the Faculty, is also not left out for being a prime mover and 'action man'. But for his constant 'wars', some of us would have been drifted ashore. I thank Dr. A. Odebunmi who as the Sub-Dean, revived my hope and restored what was almost a lost opportunity.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. (Mrs) Toyin. Jegede; to say that you are a 'deux ex-machina' and a mother in Israel is to say the least. I appreciate Doctors: Oriaku, Offor, Dada, Aguoru, Osisanwo, Sunday, Akinjobi, and all my lecturers in this great citadel of learning, whose love I can never forget. I am grateful for coming in contact with you and thank you for the enlightenment that always came from the brainstormings during seminar presentations which always left one intellectually wiser. I thank Mrs. Sola Raji for being a special friend and Vincent for assisting with library materials. I appreciate: Victor, Bassey, Gbenga, Iyabo, Shodeinde, Ayoola, and other staff of English Department, University of Ibadan. I am grateful to Mr. Charles and the Charles from Bayelsa for being a comfort to me and to many. I heartily appreciate Dr. and Dr. (Mrs) Damilola Lewis for being like the Biblical friends that stick closer than siblings and for providing a home far away from home. I thank Elizabeth and Fali for being dexterous on the computer.

I am thankful to Prof (Mrs.) Eghafona and Mr. Okukpon for providing assistance when it was direly needed. I cherish Dr. H. Oby Okolocha, Dr. (Mrs) S.I. Akhuemokhan, Kingston, Mummy Udoh, my colleagues in University of Benin, my brethren in the staff fellowship for their support, encouragement, love and prayers. I appreciate Professors: A. Afejuku, A.O. Ofuani, E. Chianu, N. Otakpor, Egbokhare,

V.U. Longe, R.N. Egudu, Ifidon, Yuka, A. Fakoya, D. U. Opata, E. Emenyonu, U. Ojinmah, O. Obododimma, A. Fashina, Kehinde for their concern and support.

AB, my special gift from above, you are a husband per excellence, my love and support through thick and thin, may the Lord bless you for always being a reliable friend and my bundles of joy: Faithful, Success and Courage, thank you for your care, love and support. To Mama Sister, Winnie, Harry, Aunty Nurse, Mama Oleghe, Daddy and Mummy Itobiye, all my Pastors and brethren, may God richly bless you for loving me beyond measure. And to God Almighty, my help in ages past and my hope for years to come, I give you praise and glory for your mercy, defence, protection and good health. Above all, I thank you for your miraculous deliverance from robbery incidents and for what would have been a fatal accident on Ikerre bridge in October, 2013. Thank you Jesus.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 History of the creative process, growth and development of literature in Africa

Crime is any act or behaviour that is contrary to the norms and values of any given society while punishment is the penalty or sanction attracted by such act. Africa like other societies of the world frowns at crime and punishes it because it hampers peaceful human co-existence and societal development. Instances of crime and punishment abound in modern African novels which is a reflection of the fact that African writers discourage injustice through their literary activism. The context of 'modern African novels' as applied in this study refers to the novels that were written in the fifties.

Africa has always been a continent with rich cultural heritage and immense oral tradition. This is evident in her body of oral traditions exemplified in her oral literary traditions and belief system. These preceded the continent's contact with western culture and colonialism. Simon Gikandi (2007:54) rightly observes that African literature had been produced outside the institutions of colonialism and cites the existence of oral literature in African languages and pre-colonial writing in Arabic, Amharic, Swahili and other African languages as an ample evidence of a thriving literary tradition in pre-colonial Africa. Caroline Faluse (2008:1) corroborates this by pointing to the history of African literature as dating back to the days before the advent of westernisation and traces the antecedents to the scribal tradition of ancient Egypt, the Arabic poetic tradition which began with the Arab conquest of Egypt in the 7th century. Thus African oral tradition and culture provide the major sources of African literature.

Beside African oral tradition, there are Africans who were taken into slavery to the western world where they later engaged in slave abolitionist writing. Their works expose the evils of slavery, and as a counter-discourse extol the beauty of African culture and a justification of Africa's ability to self rule. Through their works, they nudged the conscience of the colonialists and slave owners in order to negotiate

the freedom of the slaves and the African race. Among these writers were Olaudah Equiano, Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, Ottobah Cuguano and James Africanus Horton. Their works include: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African* (1789), *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1787) and *West African Countries and Peoples: A Vindication of the African Race* (1968) respectively. Patrick Williams (1997:31-32) observes that the sub-title of Equiano's work "Written by Himself", is remarkable because it counters the widely held view that Africans were incapable of writing anything worth publishing and also because it signals that the work is not co-authored or ghost-written like those of his predecessors. Williams commends these texts for "their role in helping to establish a tradition of black writing" as well as further the course of the emancipation of black people.

However, Caseley-Heyford's *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation* (1911) is particularly remarkable for its exploration of the themes of culture-clash and alienation – two themes that were later to be of immense concern to African writers. Williams applauds the erudite and polemical import of the text because it deploys western discourses such as history and philosophy, to critique what the West was doing to Africa. He argues that it uses "an early form of the stock figure of later twentieth century African fiction, the 'been-to' (usually intellectual) individual who goes to Europe and returns often alienated" (33).

Also on the African shores, there were pioneer writers who wrote in indigenous languages. These were literate Africans, many of whom were clerics, clerks, interpreters, and teachers with only a few years of education in African tradition of letters. These include: Bishop Ajayi Crowther, Samuel Johnson, Thomas Mofolo (Sotho), H.I.E. Dlomo (Zulu), D.O. Fagunwa and Amos Tutuola (Yoruba), and Shabaan Robert (Swahili). These writers ran into difficulty in getting their works published. The texts were repudiated by Christian Missionary press owners who saw them as propagating Africa's fetish ways and traditional practices that were in opposition to their missionary agenda. When they eventually got published, they had a limited audience since Africa is a multilingual society. In "Politics, Culture and

Literary Form", Bernth Lindfors (2007:23) captures the challenges that such writers encountered in getting an audience as a result of the fact that Africa is a multilingual society.

Fagunwa's *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole* translated by Wole Soyinka into English as *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (1968), a work which was written in Yoruba, author's mother tongue and patterned after the Yoruba folklore tradition, is another example of this indigenous literary effort. This work whose heroes emanate from Yoruba hunters' guild who embody the spiritual and the physical and which have morality, hardwork, stoic courage as their themes, also suffered a limited readership, until its translation into English. Amos Tutuola's *The Palmwine Drinkard* was commended in the *Observer* by Dylan Thomas on its publication in 1952. Though often condemned by some critics for its grammatical infelicities, this novel is very significant in the development of African literature. Apart from showcasing Africa's traditional values, her beliefs and mores, the work launched Tutuola as a promising writer. For instance, in *Hopes and Impediments* (1987:68-75), Achebe commends Tutuola's depth of imagination because the text celebrates such African values as industry, dignity and morality, and acclaims him as "the moralistic of all Nigerian writers".

However, with the introduction of literacy in Africa via colonialism, more Africans got exposed to Western education and European literary tradition. They adopted the colonial man's language and began to articulate their ideas in the new linguistic media – English, French, Portuguese and Arabic, according to the writers' geographical space and the colonisers. For Anglophone West African countries, the English language became the new vehicle of expression while French held sway among Francophone West African States. In other regions of Africa, it was English, Arabic, French or Portuguese depending on the language of the colonial masters that ruled the territories.

With the acquisition of literacy, literary activism gradually became entrenched in Africa. From Francophone Africa emerged Rene Maran's *Batouala* (1921), the first novel from that region. The text recounts the consequences of colonial rule by the

French. Other writers from the region and their works are: Bacary Diallo, *Forcebonte* (1926), Felix Couchoro, *The Slave* (1929) among others. However, Francophone African novel glided to limelight in the 1950s with the emergence of writers like Camara Laye, Ferdinand Oyono, Mongo Beti, Sembeme Ousmane etc., the themes of whose works revolve around the crises of colonialism, alienation and the dilemma of the educated Africans. Lindfors (2007:25) observes that these writers:

> would either show how a well-knit African community became divided after exposure to western institutions such as the church and school or else reveal how individuals suffered psychological distress because they had become men of two worlds who could not reconcile the African and western elements of their personality. (25)

Nonetheless, with the publication of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Africa not only became a continent with a promising depth of literary creativity, but also one with culture and dignity before her contact with the colonial masters. As a response to the disparaging African image in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson, Things Fall Apart* dwells on colonial encounter and the effect of such experience on Africans and their culture, a thematic trend that was later adopted by other African writers. It is noteworthy that works on slavery like Caseley-Heyford's *Ethiopia Unbound* and those of earlier African writers like Camara Laye's *African Child and Radiance of the King* and Yambo Ouologuem's *Bound to Violence*, among others provided the focus for Pan African leaders and nationalists who fought for freedom and independence of African countries.

North African literature covers the literature of North Africa and that of the Middle East in culture, language and content. Many of their writers portray the violence of inner-conflicts occasioned by the confrontation between the West and East through the theme of the relationship between a European woman and an Arab emigrant. This theme which was set in motion in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966), was to be explored by many North African writers. In the Maghrebian area colonised by the French, their novelists denounced the cultural alienation of the French colonial masters exemplified in their policy of cultural

assimilation. Some of their renowned writers and their works include: Kateb Yacine *Nedjma*, Driss Chraib *The Simple Past* (1954) and Albert Memmi *The Pillar* (1953). With the attainment of independence in the 1960s North African writers changed their style and revolved their themes on the uncertainties of the present.

In East Africa, writers explored the theme of conflict between African tradition and Christianity. Popular writers in this region and their works include: Ngugi *The River Between* (1968), *Weep Not Child, Petals of Blood* (1977), Legson Kayira *The Detainee*, Rebeka Njau *Ripples in the Pool* (1978), *The Scar* (1965) and Tsitsi Dangarembga *Nervous Conditions* (1988). In East and Central Africa, there is no marked difference between colonial and post-colonial writing but as Mpaliva Msiska (1997:62) has observed, "the dominant preoccupation throughout the history of the literature of the region has been with the place of African culture in the new cultural dispensation". African writers explore the situations, issues and experiences that are peculiar to their people and their regions.

In South Africa, writers were faced with the reality of apartheid, and they thus saw it as a burning social injustice to be addressed until it was brought to its knees in 1994. Obviously the political climate in the region did not promote the novel form. The writers who wrote did so as exiles in other lands. Notable novelists of South African origin and their works are: Alex la Guma, *A Walk in the Night* (1962) *The Stone Country* (1967), *A Threefold Cord, In the Fog of the Seasons' End, Time of the Butcher Bird*, Allan Paton, *Cry Beloved Country*, Peter Abraham *Mine Boy*, Lauretta Ngcobo *Cross of Gold*, Bessie Head *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968), *Maru* (1971), *A Question of Power* (1973), *The Collector of Treasures* (1977) and some others.

The themes of the African novel range from colonialism, alienation, clash of cultures, culture assertion to disillusionment. This post-colonial disillusionment arises from the dashed hopes of Africans whose rulers ironically stepped into the shoes of the colonial masters to unleash a worse form of repressive and oppressive rulership than the colonial masters. Disillusionment is a theme that is addressed by writers in all regions of Africa. This is evident in the angry tone that characterise such post-colonial works of writers like Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters*, Chinua Achebe's *A*

Man of the People, *Anthills of the Savannah* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born.*

African writers at this time became disillusioned with what African leaders had done with the continent's hard won independence that they shifted attention from other themes to portraying the ugliness of corrupt African leaders and their style of leadership. Soyinka who had been a renown playwright then switched to fiction birthing *Season of Anomy* (1973) and *The Interpreters*. According to Lindfors, Soyinka explains that the African writer needs an urgent release from the fascination of the past "if he is to fulfil his function as the record of the mores and experience of his society and as the voice of vision in his own time" (13). Aligning with Soyinka's view, Achebe, on his part, points out:

> Most of Africa today is politically free; there are thirty-six independent African states managing their own affairs – sometimes quite badly. A new situation has thus arisen. One of the writer's main function has always been to expose and attack injustice. Should we keep at the old theme of racial injustice (sore as it still is) when new injustices have sprouted all around us? I think not (26).

These "new injustices" that "have sprouted" all over the African continent border on various kinds of crime on the African soil. These are crimes perpetrated by the new African rulers who quickly stepped into the position of the colonial master soon after the former's exist. Apart from the rulers, the subjects are equally willing accomplices. African writers have always been in the forefront in the attack of injustice and crime, whether it is by the white man against Africans or by Africans against themselves. This is in fulfillment of their role as the guide and lightbearers of their society. They have never kept quiet right from the pre-colonial, colonial and to the present post-colonial days.

As has been earlier noted, cultural assertion was a thematic trend of the African novel during the pre-colonial and early colonial era, to debunk the white man's false picture of Africa as a continent devoid of culture and dignity. If indeed Africa has dignity, which she undoubtedly does have, the African writers perceive

crime, corruption and other forms of injustices going on in Africa today, under self-rule to be undignifying and despicable. Thus, as teachers, moral guides and society's conscience, post-colonial African writers believe that Africans, rulers and subjects alike, need to be re-educated and re-focused afresh on matters of dignity with the exit of the colonial master. As a result, they explore themes that punish crime in their works.

Achebe, Africa's foremost writer, believes that it is the duty of the writer to re-focus erring members of the society. In an essay, "The role of a teacher" (1981), he asserts that Africa had culture, dignity, philosophy and values before the coming of the Europeans and laments:

> It is this dignity that many African peoples all but lost during the colonial period, and it is this that they must now regain. The writer's duty is to help them regain it by showing them in human terms what happened to them, what they lost (57).

Achebe believes that writers cannot afford to stay aloof and watch as crimes inundate their societies because as the sensitive points of such societies, they have to rise to the challenge by exploring themes that punish the crimes perpetrated by criminals. In the above excerpt, he leaves no one in doubt about the calling of an African writer and the urgency with which such calling needs to be answered.

Africans and her writers have passed through the crucible of colonialism with all its injustices, through the struggle for political independence and now to self-rule. However, the privileged ruling class and their subjects are steeped in a worse form of vice than was obtainable during the colonial era. This vice is a crime and it is all embracing that African writers, as the conscience of their society now revolve their theme on this new social problem. They attempt to re-focus Africans on the much cherished African dignity by exploring the themes that punish every crime committed by criminals, rulers and subjects alike. The issue of crime has been with humanity from the creation of the world because man is imbued with beastly instinct which makes him to commit crimes against other members of the society. African writers understand that punishment should be commensurate with a committed crime in order

to: serve as a deterrent to future criminals, bring psychological satisfaction to the victim, reform the criminal and ensure the cleansing of society as well as the criminal.

In Africa, writers have written in condemnation of criminal and unjust attitudes of rulers, individuals, governments and other strong members of the society. Instances of crimes have reared up in many African literary works. In the pre-colonial time, it was the excessive and repressive governance of the traditional rulers as can be seen in Ouologuem's *Bound to Violence*. During the colonial period, it was colonial injustice seen in the attitudes of the colonialists which were reflected in the works of many African writers and in South Africa's apartheid regime, the criminal attitudes of the white minority are well articulated in the works of writers from that region. In this post-colonial era the way the government is run in Africa, the manner in which people are marginalised and still struggle for survival as a result of lack of proper structure to tackle such marginalisation, gender crimes and injustices are current issues in the society.

Coupled with the above is the sluggish legal system that takes several years in the adjudication of cases. Currently, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), a recently developed method of conflict resolution which settles cases out of court by mediating between the parties in conflict with the aim of avoiding the rigorous, tense and acrimonious situation that normally arises between the plaintiff and defendant in a formal court setting is strongly canvassed by the bench. The result of this will be a faster, cheaper and friendlier way of dispute resolution. This delay in the continent's judicial system has attracted the attention of African writers, and as products of their society with imaginative capacity, they creatively allot punishment for societal crimes which they see as poetic justice. Consequently, this study pays attention to some African authors who have tackled issues of crime and punishment in their works.

1.2 Research problem

Yambo Ouologuem, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Buchi Emecheta, Tayeb Salih, Naguib Mafouz, Okey Ndibe and Alex La Guma are popular modern African novelists by which is meant those that started writing from the 1950's.

Similarly, their novels in this study: *Bound to Violence, Anthills of the Savannah, The River Between, The Joys of Motherhood, Season of Migration to the North, The Thief and the Dogs, Arrows of Rain and A Walk in the Night* have equally elicited numerous critical appraisals. However, these existing studies had concentration attention on the authors' thematic pre-occupations such as poor governance, gender issues, culture clash, racism, colonialism, abuse of power and political disillusionment and so on, there by paying inadequate attention to the authors' portrayal of crime and punishment in them even though these novels are replete with instances of such. However, the authors' approach to the question of crimes and punishments in these distinct regions of Africa as portrayed in the novels, though similar, yet have distinguishing regional differences. This study, therefore, interrogates the depiction of crimes and punishments re-presented in these novels for the purpose of ascertaining the nature of crimes and corresponding sanctions in the selected novels and regions of the continent.

1.3 Scope and justification of study

This study will examine eight novels representing four distinct regions of the continent which are selected based on their thematic affinity and relevance to the study. These novels are: Yambo Ouologuem's *Bound to Violence (BV,* 1968*)*, Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (*AS,* 1987), Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* (*TJM,* 1994), Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* (*AR,* 2000) (West Africa). Others are: Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (*SMN,* 1969), Naguib Mahfouz's *The Thief* and *The Dogs* (*TTD,* 1984) (North Africa), Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* (*AWN,* 1967) (South Africa), and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* (*TRB,* 1965) (East Africa).

1.4 Aims and objectives of study

The purpose of this study is to examine the portrayal of crimes and the punishments attracted in the above eight selected modern African novels with a view to determining the nature of crime and the corresponding punishment in different

regions of Africa. The objectives of the study include to ascertain: whether crime is an alien concept in Africa; if there is bias in the administration of punishment to criminals whether there is uniformity in the perception of what constitute crimes in all the regions of Africa; whether there are attitudes in the subjects that encourage the perpetration of crimes by their leaders and whether there is a segment of the society that is more punished than the others.

1.5 Methodology

The above eight novels which were purposively selected from the four distinct regions of the continent based on their thematic affinity and relevance to the study will be subjected to literary analysis, using Emile David Durkheim's Deviance theory and Sigmund Freud Psychoanalytic theory due to their respective concern with affirmation of cultural values and the motivation for the characters' perpetration of crimes. Critical essays and materials from the library and the web, as well as other relevant materials to the topic will also be consulted.

1.6 Theoretical framework

The study adopts Emile Durkheim's Deviance theory and Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory owing to their concern with the affirmation of cultural values and the tendentious motivation behind the characters' perpetration of crimes. The concept of 'deviant behaviour', according to Deviance Theory refers to any type of human behaviour that is contrary to the socially prescribed standards of behaviour in any social system (e.g. a human group, an organisation, a community, or a society). It is a generic concept that refers to many different types of deviant behaviours such as: stealing, robbery, assault, rape, adultery, amongst others. These and other similar behaviour connote some kind of departure of the individuals and groups so involved from some socially prescribed standards of behaviour of the particular social system concerned (Clark, 4).

Sociologists emphasise that human beings live in social groups and that those groups and the social structure they create influence behaviour. Most sociological

theories of crime causation assume that a criminal's behaviour is determined by his or her social environment. The Deviance theory is an aspect of structural-functional theory, a framework sociologists use to understand the world. The structural functional theory's central idea is that society is a complex unit, made up of interrelated parts. This theory explains the expectations of a society and the inability of the members of that society to stray away from those expectations. It focuses on the organisation of a society and the relationship between the social units that make up that society. The theory provides general law and guidelines by which individuals are governed. Sociologists who apply this theory study social structure and social function.

Durkheim, a French Sociologist (1858-1917), based his work on this theory. According to Durkheim, deviance was a normal and necessary part of social organisation because it contributes to social order (Macionis and Gerber, 2011). Durkheim wrote four major works: *The Division of Labour* (1893), *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), *Suicide* (1897) and *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912). It is from these books that the basic principles he had to offer the social sciences were drawn. Durkheim identified four specific functions that deviance fulfils but the first two which are relevant to our study are as follows: Affirmation of cultural norms and values. According to Durkheim, seeing a person punished for a deviant act reinforces what a society sees as acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. For instance, sentencing a thief to prison affirms our culturally held value that stealing is wrong. "Deviance affirms cultural values and norms. Any definition of virtue rests on an opposing idea of vice. There can be no good without evil and no justice without crime" (Macionis and Gerber, 2011:200).

The second function, according to Durkheim's theory, is clarification of right and wrong. Responses to deviance can bring people closer together. A serious form of deviance forces people to come together and react in the same way against it. Deviance promotes social change, encourages the dominant society to consider alternative norms and values besides its ability to push society's moral boundaries which, in turn leads to social change. Until Durkheim's work, social science was not

studied empirically. He transferred his academic success from the university into his sociological research. This approach earned him a respected position in the field. Durkheim introduced the theory of structural functionalism early in his career and this theory is a foundation for other principles (Gamble, Durkheim, his Principles….). Durkheim's work is considered the foundation of functionalist theory in sociology.

Psychoanalytic theory on the other hand, is a clinical and interpretive science pioneered by Sigmund Freud in 1886-1939. It offers a genetic theory of the evolution of the human mind as 'psychic apparatus'. Central to this theory is Freud's compartmentalization of the human mind into conscious and subconscious. This is premised on the principle of the unconscious mind, in which the body and the sexual history of the human subject persist in all productions of the conscious mind. Freud's experiments with hypnosis while working with Jean Martin Charcot in the 1880s led him to conclude that the unconscious mind reveals itself in actions, words and mental images which meanings are barred from conscious knowledge as a result of repression.

Through Freud's early work with hysterical patients, he theorised that the contents of the unconscious mind derive from the sexual body and are driven by a dynamic energy which strives to bring them into consciousness (*Studies in Hysteria*, with Josef Brever, 1893-5). The force of repression, however, demands that any release of unconscious material assume[s] a disguised character. Hence, it is in physical symptoms, dreams, jokes, parapraxes (Freudian slips), and accidental gestures that the unconscious manifests itself, disguised, in everyday life (*The Psychopathology of Everyday Life 1904*).

Consequently, Freud insists that by virtue of the artists openness to the power of fantasy in the production of their work, that they have always had a privileged relation to the unconscious. Though originally a therapeutic method, the psychological theory which evolved from Freud's clinical discoveries is deeply indebted to the insights he gained from the study of literature and culture chief among which is his discovery of the Oedipus complex, a name derived from Sophocles'

tragedy *Oedipus Rex (Three Essays or the Theory of Sexuality 1905*). Throughout his career, Freud resorted to literature to verify his clinical findings.

The pioneer attempt by Ernest Jones to interpret *Hamlet* from a Freudian point of view, a work entitled "The Oedipus Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery", in *The American Journal of Psychology* in 1910 exposed most writers to the approach. These works were of special interest to writers because they provided the key to the processes of art, the unconscious intentions of artists and the motives of fictitious characters. The total personality of a person, as Freud conceives it, consists of three major systems, namely the id, the ego and the super ego. In a mentally healthy person, these three systems form a unified and harmonious organisation by working together cooperatively to enable the individual carry on efficient and satisfying transactions with his/her environment. The purpose of which is the fulfillment of his/her basic needs and desires. Conversely, when the three systems of personality are at odds with one another the person is said to be maladjusted, is dissatisfied with him/herself and the world, while his/her efficiency is reduced (Hall, 22).

Psychoanalytic critics at first focused on the author but later shifted to the reader and the text. Norman Hall was more concerned with the reader and not the text while Jacques Lacan focused on language and language-related issues. Barry in Faluse applauds Freud's interpretation which he notes has "been of considerable" interest to literary critics" (102). Uche Mowah (1996) identifies a common point to all psychologists, namely that the mind, psyche or personality of man consists of the conscious and the unconscious components, and that man's behaviour and his conscious state can only be explained by referring to the unconscious sources of motivation.

Psychoanalytic criticism is three-dimensional because it can generate three kinds of illumination. It can focus the text by providing a language with which to discuss the creative process. It can focus the author by studying the life of the author as a means of understanding his art, and it can also centre on the characters by explaining the behaviour and motivation of the fictitious characters.

This study adopts the character-focused model of psychoanalytical criticism because it gives the researcher an insight into the behaviour and motivations of the fictional characters. The study is interested in using character- centred psychoanalytic theory to explain the factors that inform the actions, behaviours, utterances and responses of the characters in the selected novels. Using this theoretical framework, the study explores the motivations behind the crimes committed by the characters and the punishments meted to them. The next chapter focuses on a review of relevant literature.

1.7 Organisation of study

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction. In it, the history of the creative process, growth and development of literature in Africa, a background to African literature and the literature of different parts of the region is examined. It also interrogates the research problem and the theoretical framework. Besides, the chapter reviews the concepts of crime and punishment, as well as the concern of African writers with the pursuit of justice for their various societies. Chapter two reviews the authors' respective ideologies, relevant literature and also examines the possible root cause of crime in Africa. Chapter three explores the novels drawn from the Western region while chapter four examines the ones from the Eastern, Northern and Southern regions. Chapter five takes care of the findings, conclusion, summary and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The concepts of crime and punishment

Crime and punishment are concepts that are as old as human history of which possible foundation is traceable to religion. The fact that the phenomena constitute a major thematic focus in the Holy books justifies our suspicion and underscores their relevance to human existence. For instance the Biblical statement "punishment that hurts chases evil from the heart" also finds correspondence in the Quranic precept "whoever works evil will be requited accordingly".[1] Crime and punishment are crucial issues in the society and punishment is a necessary consequence of crime because it helps to contain and/or rehabilitate the criminal and preserve the values of the society. The fact that numerous scholars in the fields of Law, Sociology, Arts, Religion, Psychology, Philosophy, Ethics, among others have offered definitions of the terms is an evidence that the concepts cut across every field of study and society. This is evident in the expressed views of the following scholars:

A renown Sociologist, Irving Zeitlin (1981), conceives crime as acts that "are universally disapproved of by members of the society in question. Those acts are crimes because they shock the collective conscience". He identifies some obligatory qualities that must be present in an act to qualify it as a crime and submits that for any act to go by the nomenclature 'crime', that such an act: "must offend strong and intense sentiments and break precise rules," and contends: "A crime, therefore, is an act which antagonises the powerful and well-defined sentiments of a collectivity." (304) Zeitlin also defines punishment as: "[…] first and foremost a passionate reaction against the offender." He observes that "[…][it] is a form of vengeance which may appear socially useless and unnecessarily cruel," but opines that the value of punishment is that "[…] it enables the community to do something vital for itself," as according to him, "By means of punishment society heals the wounds inflicted upon it by the offender; it restores its moral integrity and reaffirms its most fundamental values". (304)

From this postulation, crime is seen to be repudiated by a good percentage of the society whose sensibility is assaulted by the criminal act. Consequently, to restore the values and morality of the injured society and its people, punishment has to be meted to the offender or criminal. What is evident from Zietlin's definition of punishment is that it is a reaction or response to crime. Secondly, it shows that the degree of punishment is of no consequence. What suffices is that the criminal or offender attracts some discomfort to him/herself as a result of unleashing some moral wound on the society and its citizens or on a single individual in the society. Consequently, the society, through the means of such punishment, regains its morality and integrity which have been eroded by the crime or offence. In the view of A.G. Karibi-Whyte (1986), the meaning of crime is not far removed from that of Zeitlin's. Karibi-Whyte, a former Chief Judge of Nigeria, submits:

> The word 'crime' and 'criminal' conjure up emotional attitudes and are used as words of reproach, of condemnation, of obloguy and of stimulation to action. Thus, in its popular connotation, "crime" is any anti-social behaviour which falls within the general disapproval of the community (23).

Apparently, from the above submission, crime is an act that is negative in nature and condemnable as it contravenes the values of society. Crime arouses the condemnation and disapproval of the majority. The *Black's Law Dictionary* (1990) defines crime in the following way:

> … any act done in violation of those duties which an individual owes to the community, and for the breach of which the law has provided that the offender shall make satisfaction to the public. A crime or public offense is an act committed or omitted in violation of a law forbidding or commanding it, and to which is annexed, upon conviction… punishment (370).

Again, in a similar vein, it defines punishment as:

> Any fine, penalty or confinement inflicted upon a person by the authority of the law and the judgment and sentence of a court, for some crime or offense committed by him, or for his omission of a duty enjoined by law, (370).

The above definition adds a new light to the import of the concepts of crime and punishment. It implies that the act of refusing to carry out a duty amounts to crime in much the same way as an act done in violation of a duty. Secondly, it shows that both acts of abdicating a responsibility and those done in its violation tantamount to crime to which punishment must flow as a consequence. Going by this definition, it then means that acts of silence or unresponsiveness of leaders to the plights and predicaments of their subjects amount to crime.

Many societies recognise that man is a free moral agent who is at liberty to make choices. However factual this may be, he is also restricted from making such choices that are opposed to the acceptable standard of behaviour in his society and those that infringe on the rights and freedom of others. Where the choices he makes or fails to make infringe on the freedom and rights of others or violate the norms of his society, he will be called upon to account for such breach of conduct through the instrumentality of punishment (Labeodan, 2004: Moral responsibility and punishment in Yoruba society, 29, *Encyclopedia Americana,* 1988:211).

Crime, is therefore, any act that violates the acceptable standard of conduct in a given community to which punishment is meted. Thus, it is obvious that the essence of punishing crimes is to enable a society affirm its cultural norms and values and to also evolve justice for its citizens. George Outa (2012:2) associates punishment with Aristotelian concept of 'Catharsis', which he implies, "affords one the opportunity of self-redemption through repentance…." There is a strong nexus between 'crime' and 'injustice' because criminal acts are unjust acts while those acts and conducts that are void of crime are termed 'just' acts. Some scholars actually equate crime with injustice.

Otto Bird (1967:11) understands justice as "a social norm, that is, a directive for guiding men in their actions toward one another." On his part, Thomas Hobbes (1947:34) equates injustice with crime which he identifies as the "committing, by deed or word, of that which the law forbids, or the omission of what it commands." The term 'law' here includes both the constitutionally instituted legal provisions and the unwritten moral codes of non-literate societies. It is obvious then from the

foregoing that criminal acts and conducts are unjust while those that are void of crime are just.

Writers in many societies and through all ages, have been pre-occupied with the issues of crime and punishment in their quest for justice. Such pre-occupation is predicated on the fact that man as a social being, does not exist outside his society and fellow humans. Consequently, his actions and inactions should be directed in such a way as not to jeopardise the interest of others in the society.

2.2 Literature and the question of crime and punishment

Literature as a discipline in the humanities, concerns itself with positive transformation of man and society. Literature imitates, records and reproduces the events, growth, changes, challenges and actions of man and society because apart from documenting the past, it holds up a mirror of what the society ought to be. This is so because writers see themselves as the moral guides and conscience of their society. As Akachi Ezeigbo (2008:20) puts it, writers are "… imbued with the passion to change and redirect their society." Matters of crime and punishment occupy the attention of writers through the centuries in many societies. This is because they understand that it is only by punishing criminal attitudes and acts that society can preserve its values and attain justice for its citizens in a world fraught with greed, selfishness, egoism and inequalities. As the popular writer and critic, Fyodor Dostoevsky (2012:np) rightly observes:

> Scenes of transgression and consequences inform western cultural discourse going back to the first story of mankind in the Bible, so it is not surprising that crime and punishment form the basis of a number of literary works….

The literary landscapes of the Western world and many societies are replete with works that border on crime and punishment. Such prose narrative as Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Naguib Mahfouz's *The Thief and the Dogs*, Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* to

mention just a few evidence this claim. Charles Nnolim (2010:7) has also noted that "Literature… deals with sin, morality and crime and punishment as much as the Bible does." The deployment of literature as a tool of awareness for the punishment of crime and promotion of social change has been a recognised practice of writers. This is so because in recent times, writers and the society have begun to lose confidence in the legal profession as the hope of the common man and society in the evolution of justice.

This is occasioned by such factors as: the often delayed or denied justices, the long period of time associated with legal procedures, the expensive nature of litigation and the corrupt nature of the judiciary with its preponderance for tilting justice in favour of the higher bidder, a practice that robs the poor of justice. As far back as 1984, Zeitlin (1984:323) had lamented what he observed as the practice of the wealthy in employing skilled attorneys to influence the administration of justice, escape of arrest and conviction by the wealthy and the application of laws in "a special way to offenders (criminals) from the upper socio-economic classes." Almost three decades later, in what sounds like a re-echo of Zeitlin's lament and from a different clime and source, Nigeria's ex-President, Olusegun Obasanjo (2012:np) paints an ugly and failed picture of the legal system, the legislators and the law-enforcement agents as the instruments of justice in the following words:

> Integrity is necessary for systems and institutions to be strong. Today, rogues, [and] armed robbers are in the state Houses of Assembly and the National Assembly. What sort of laws will they make? The judiciary is also corrupt[…] if the judiciary becomes corrupt, where is the hope for the nation? Justice, no doubt, will go to the highest bidder[….] The Police are even worse.[2]

It is evident from the above that the judiciary has failed the society and that writers, as people with roving lens with which they record human actions stand no chance of being bribed in their literary 'adjudication' of justice, and are therefore, better placed to judge human conducts and appropriately apportion sanctions. This is a serious assignment and they, like Lionel Trilling (1996: 85), believe that as with every

"serious book," their novel should "hold before us some image of society [and individual] to consider and condemn." Inculcation of virtues and abolition of vices remain their chief purpose and concern in Africa and elsewhere. In Africa, our oral tradition, the spring board of written literature, is replete with didactic tales, stories and dramas which artists created to teach some moral lessons. Commenting on the moral import of drama, Jeremy Collier (1963) argues:

> The business of plays is to recommend virtue, and discountenance vice, to show the uncertainty of human greatness, the sudden turns of fate, and the unhappy conclusion of violence and injustice: it is to expose the singularities of pride and fancy, to make folly and falsehood contemptible, and to bring everything that is ill under infamy and neglect (97).

Through their creative works, writers tend to re-make a world that is overtaken in violence, injustice, vice, falsehood, greed, pride and avarice. Whether as poets, or as playwrights or as novelists, they pursue this common cause.

As Ezeigbo (2008:20) further makes us to understand, "the agenda of [most] writers is primarily to 'humanise' their 'dehumanised' societies". Creative works have the efficacy of ushering new experiences that sharpen the readers' and the society's understanding which can culminate in fresh perceptions and attitudes. Charles Dicken's *Bleak House* was effective in nudging the conscience of the English society, thereby, leading to a change in its attitude toward the poor in their midst in the same way that Achebe's *A Man of the People* precipitated a military coup in Nigeria that toppled the crassly corrupt civilian government of the period. In *Issues in African Literature* (2010), Nnolim, describing creative writers as "merchants of light[…] in our darksome era" and observing the need for them to explore ethical values in their works submits:

> Dwelling… on ethical and moral issues in our literature is… imperative in these times when society has benumbed itself with the inordinate quest for materialism, when worship of ill-gotten goods has become our non-Sunday religion. We, therefore, need a moral tone in our literatures to teach the youth… that

> evil doesn't pay, and to stress moral probity, honour and integrity as goods worth cultivating (166).

Okenimkpe has equally argued that literature is a vital catalyst in the re-ordering of the reader's orientation. In her view, the creative works of great writers enables us "to sensitise the efficacy of literature for opening our eyes to the realities behind experience and perceptions which we had taken for granted and for stirring us to re-order our orientations." (33)

Such onerous task before writers denies them the privilege of trifling with their assignment but rather to use their art for societal transformation. Today, with the emergence of diverse forms of social injustices such as oppression, exploitation, ethnic cleansing, kidnapping, child rape, human trafficking, embezzlement, and all forms of corruption and other unconscionable attitudes especially on the African continent, writers, especially those of African extraction, are even more alive to their duty. They, as Emmanuel Ngara (1990:201) has noted, are "committed artists" whose "obligation include not only to draw attention of the reader to the evils, injustices and abnormalities of the existing social order but also to point the way to a new and more humane society."

Consequently, literature, especially African literature, is functional in purpose as African writers strongly shun their Western counterparts' theory of "art for art's sake". The late literary icon, Achebe, referred to this concept as "… just another piece of deodorised dog-shit" (1975:19), contending that art is a product of society and must be attuned to the service of man and society. Thus, in their works, African authors are faithful in the use of their art to attack social, political, economic and other aspects of injustices bedeviling Africa and her people. In their works, they explore the experiences, challenges, failures, feats, and fears of the populace in their daily existence in a continent that is steeped in bad governance, injustice, unemployment, brutality, corruption, insecurity and lack of accountability even in a democratic dispensation.

As has been noted in the previous chapter, African literature is divided into different periods such as: pre-colonial, the colonial and the post colonial periods. But

however different the periods, the writers are united in their quest for justice, equality and human rights and have faithfully applied their creative efforts towards achieving these. In this wise, literature shares a close affinity with law in its quest for justice. But unlike their legal counterparts, African writers neither use the gavel nor the court. As wordsmiths, words and pens constitute their instruments. Olalere Oladitan, (2011:20) juxtaposing lawyers and writers in their concern for justice states, "indeed, justice as a major concern identified for our authors is in the same field of law-literature".

One of the writers' ways of sustaining justice lies in ensuring that characters who indulge in criminal acts do not escape the commensurate punishment in their fictional world. Right from the pre-colonial era to contemporary period, African writers have used their fiction to attack, condemn and challenge injustice, crime and other inhuman attitudes and their perpetrators. During the colonial era, they wielded their literary sword at the colonial master for his obnoxious acts of subjugation, oppression and exploitation of the continent and her peoples. Gikandi (1977:10) sees the "African novel as a creative interpretation of history, beginning at the time of the colonial occupation of the continent." Talking of the need for African writers to correct the negative image of the continent adumbrated in European authored texts and colonial injustice experienced by Africans, Steve Ogude (1991:8) observes that "the very nature of African history, its tale of subjugation and oppression, and the consequent effects on the African society, make a compelling demand on the African writer."

Part of such demand is apportioning punishment where crime is made manifest so that justice can be seen to be done. In their quest for justice, African writers do not hesitate to apportion blame and mete out punishment to guilty characters. This is a subtle but salient feature of their art. For instance, in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, in addition to the theme of post-colonial abuse of power is that of crime and punishment. For instance, Sam, His Excellency ends the tragic way he does for going against the operational and guiding principles of the Idemili myth in refusing to wield power in an altruistic manner to benefit the people and owners of the power.

Similarly, the protagonist of Mahfouz's *The Thief and the Dogs* dies in a cemetery for clinging to his revenge mission and refusing several opportunities offered him for self redemption. In Ngugi's *The River Between*, Joshua's absolutism and high-handedness make him incur immense losses in addition to becoming a miserable man in the end.

In La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* and *The Stone Country* is also a mixture of the themes of apartheid and crime and punishment. In apartheid South Africa, consequent upon the biased legislation against the black, the latter evolved a peculiar but subtle notion of justice by way of "redemptive violence and subversion" (Dasylva, 2007), which perceives obedience to the law and government's legislation as a crime. Sophia Akhuemokhan (2008:80) notes that to the black South Africans, any "act of non-compliance" with the government is "morally justified… while 'wrong' is synonymous with conformity and demands punishment".

In what tantamounts to a corroboration of Akhuemokhan's observation, Sylvia Tamale (2011:7), in her reference to Ramose, identifies a concept of living that is peculiar to South Africans. This is the *ubuntu* concept, which she points out, is the South African philosophy of humanness that correlates with "personhood, morality, human dignity, respect, solidarity, companion and other related ideas." She expresses the difficulty of an omnibus term that encapsulates all the ideas associated with the *ubuntu* principle. However, in a classic exposition of the meaning of this philosophy, Justice Mokgoro (2009:106-7) submits:

> In its most fundamental sense, it translates as personhood and 'morality'. Metaphorically… [it describes] the significance of group solidarity on survival issues so central to the survival of communities. While it envelopes the key values of group solidarity, compassion, respect, human dignity, conformity to basic norms and collective unity, in its fundamental sense it denotes humanity and morality. Its spirit emphasizes a respect for human dignity, marking a shift from confrontationalism to conciliation.

South Africans, like natives of other world's communities, cherish human dignity, morality and humanity and detest anything, anyone and any law or practice that erodes such human virtues. Consequently, South African writers observe everything

about the *ubuntu* principle as enunciated in Mokgoro's view. However, the shift from confrontationalism to conciliation is a recent idea that came with the collapse of apartheid system as works that were written during the obnoxious apartheid system favoured confrontation. Reading the texts set in that period, there is evidence that such novels are characterised by subtle confrontation as most of the characters are covertly confrontational rather than conciliatory. By the ubuntu philosophy, it appears that the punishment of acts that violate the u*buntu* concept is justified by black South African writers.

This explains the hostility between the blacks and the whites and the degree of crimes and punishments in the texts drawn from that society. In La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* as in his other novels, there is deliberate subversion or defiance of the law by the characters who believe that the law is an instrument of oppression and repression of the blacks by the white minority. Thus, these black characters resist the law in a subtle manner to buttress their belief in the *ubuntu* principle rather than taking the path of cowardice by licking the boot of the white just to wrest transient freedom. In most apartheid black South African authored novels, those characters who align with the white are repudiated and sanctioned. This method of characterisation emanates from what Ebele Eko (1982:46) calls "the growth of [the writer's] political awareness and commitment to freedom…." Freedom, of course, translates to justice and La Guma, his South African counterparts and indeed, most African writers, are committed to the freedom question.

In the African novels of the post-independence phase, the writers' attack is tilted to a new direction. The butt of their attack shifts to Africans as the causes of their own tales of woes, pain, misery and agony evidenced in the political, economic, social and emotional life of the continent and her citizens. The emergent novels of this period are crafted in such a way that parties directly or remotely connected with the commission of crimes are called to account for their roles. Novels of the era are replete with protagonists and characters with such criminal qualities as corruption, exploitation and so on. The emergence of dictator characters and the frequency of coups are the stock in trade of such novels. However, majority of such characters end

badly since the writers believe that punishment is the consequence of, and must be meted out to crime.

For instance, in Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, the humiliating experience of the protagonist in making him escape arrest through a lavatory at the outbreak of the coup that topples his regime compensates for the high level of corruption he and his ilk entrench in the society. In a similar vein Achebe's Chiefs Koko and Nanga, agents of corruption in *A Man of the People*, meet with punishment in a coup that topples their rigged-election regime and a similar punishment characterises the end of Major Sam in his *Anthills of the Savannah*.

Crime and punishment are *leitmotifs* in the works of African authors. This is so because the various acts of vices, crimes and injustices on the continent arouse an impelling urge in the authors to seek for justice through their art. In Africa today, even under democratic governance, cases of oppression, marginalisation, justice denial, embezzlement and discrimination are still rife. Expectedly, African writers have equally risen to the occasion as they explore different forms of crimes in their texts and mete sanctions to deserving characters. This trend is present even in contemporary novels of African origin. In Binwell Sinyangwe's, *A Cowrie of Hope* (2000), the evil characters in the novel, Chiswebe and Gode Silawe are punished for their immoral actions. The former, for oppressing and disinheriting Nasula, his daughter-in-law and the latter, for robbing the indigent and struggling widow. In Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones* (1996), Chibuka suffers a shameful and silent death for his crime of matrimonial brutality. In Helon Habila's *Measuring Time* (2007), Lamang, the philandering husband is also punished for marital irresponsibility evidenced in spousal neglect and abdication of paternal duties.

In an essay, "Identity crisis in the tragic novels of Isidore Okpewho" (1983), Virginia Ola approaches the issue of crime and punishment in observing that the character, Obanua, the cause of the calamity that engulfs his entire family and the occupants, is not left unscathed in the problem he ignites and avers:

> That Obanua, the husband, is not allowed to go free testifies to the novelist's belief that the human person in any tragic work is expected to suffer in some way for

> having been the source of evil and for having brought untold suffering on his fellow human beings(57).

Ola's contention demonstrates that African writers have a long-standing concern with crime and punishment since they believe that all actors in the chain of crime must be punished. In *Victims*, the novel being referred to here, though the calamity is directly caused by Nwabunor's fight for their husband's favour, being the first wife in the polygamous marriage, Obanua and other members of his household share in the tragedy as a result of the former's inaction in failing to put off the fire of jealousy ignited by the first wife as the head of household and holder of authority thereby turning his entire family to victims of destruction. This novel clearly demonstrates the application of crime and punishment in its stark reality.

Referring to the socio-political situation in La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* which he sees as being responsible for the immense level of crime in South Africa, Gikwandi (1977) notes that the "physical violence and decay of the whole area becomes the objective correlative of the moral and social disintegration of South African society"(25). The submission of this critic is that violence, hate and brutality of the black South Africans by the white in that society is responsible for the crime and punishment that pervade the novel and that society.

In addition to identifying the metamorphosis of Achebe's father figure characters from the status of "homestead dictators to national tyrants", Inyama also makes a pertinent submission about their abuse of privileges which culminates in national tragedy when he notes: "A misperception of the privileges, responsibilities and significance of power and authority will inevitably degenerate into the abuse of such power and authority, culminating into individual or group tragedy" (223). Inherent in this observation is the suggestion that tragedy is a result of power abuse just as punishment is a corresponding response to crime. Such abuse of leadership privileges and tyranny are evident in Okonkwo, Ezeulu and Major Sam in *Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God* and *Anthills of the Savanna* respectively. What this points to is the fact that African writers engage the issues of crime and punishment in their creative works.

Flowing from the foregoing is the evidence that African literature concerns itself with matters of justice, humanity and fairplay. Consequently, characters who disappoint these expectations are brought to book for their actions and inactions. Olalere Oladitan (2011:21-22) corroborates this long standing task of writers in the continent in the elaborate citation below:

> […] I hold that [African] writers have painted in literature a sorry state of the African situation, from colonisation and post-independence, to neo-colonisation and beyond; that specific entities are specifically accused of the misfortunes and that the texts of the literature studied raise matters of human rights denial in every area of life. We hold that the indictment of specific entities is patent, and that everyone stands accused[….] Everybody stands condemned. The authors call for a redress of the injustice. The struggle for liberation is then a permanent cause, even till today, half a century after the lowering of the colonial flags (20-21).

From the above quotation, it is correct to conclude that African writers have constantly attuned their creative talents to evolving a humane and just society for Africa and Africans. This effort may appear futile when the violated socio-political landscape of Africa is taken into consideration as one that is fraught with greedy and dictatorial leaders who are impervious to criticism. Nevertheless, when carefully analysed, one sees that the effort still yields some positive result however little. Achebe, for instance, was arrested after the coup that engulfed the nation as a result of the relationship between his projection in *A Man of the People* and the actual one that took place in Nigeria shortly after the publication of the novel. Soyinka was also arrested and incarcerated for his literary activism which the Nigerian government of the time saw as an affront while Ngugi suffered a similar fate in Kenya. Naguib Mahfouz of Egypt Alex La Guma of South Africa, to mention a few writers, passed the same arduous route in their quest for justice for their various societies.

The quest for justice and citizens' rights have been long standing tasks before writers. This brings literature to the realm of Law, Religion, Ethics and Criminology. Like these fields of human study, literature convicts and punishes offenders. But

unlike them, literature pursues its justice agenda in a more subtle but succinct manner through the deployment of such devices as satire, ridicule, lampoon, parody, allegory, paradox, humour, metaphor and so on, such that the criminal characters are compelled to account for their actions. Sometimes, the punishment comes in the form of arrest, detention, imposition of fine, handling a hard task, imprisonment, banishment, nemesis, suspension, placing of a curse, sickness or death.

2.3 The Authors, their ideologies and writings

Modern African literature is a response to the subjugation, oppression and misrepresentation of the continent and her people by the colonisers who arrogated to themselves the right and duty to 'tame' what they saw as a 'savage' continent and her people. Thus, modern African writers answered back with the kind of literature that depicted the urge and urgency to liberate the continent and her people and also correct such misrepresentations. Consequently, but unconsciously, irrespective of their regions, these authors pursue a humane vision in their art. For instance, in a subtle but striking way, the authors under study possess a similar ideology which basic features are characterised by the pursuit of justice, humane vision and fellow feeling. An exploration of their novels betrays an unconscious transfer of their individual belief into such works. In an essay "The African writer and the Biafran cause" (1975), Chinua Achebe had declared:

> If an artist is anything he is a human being with heightened sensitivities; he must be aware of the faintest nuances of injustice in human relations. The African writer cannot therefore be unaware of, or indifferent to the monumental injustice which his people suffer. (79)

In the above excerpt, Achebe identifies the artist as a highly discerning individual who must not only be quick at perceiving subtle shades of injustice suffered by his people but one that must also combat such injustice in any way he/she can, which of course happens to be through his/her art. It is also certain that a writer's degree of commitment is always informed by his/her level of awareness or consciousness. Thirteen years after the above pronouncement, in an address he presented at the

memorial service of James Baldwin documented in *Hopes and impediments* (1988), Achebe made his social vision clearer in the following words:

> As long as injustice exists, whether it be within the American nation itself or between it and its neighbours, as long as a tiny cartel of rich, creditor nations can hold the rest in iron chains of usury; as long as one third or less of mankind eats well and often to excess while two thirds and more live perpetually with hunger; as long as white people who constitute a mere fraction of the human race consider it natural and even righteous to dominate the rainbow majority whenever and wherever they are thrown together; and – the oldest of them all – the discrimination against women, as long as it persists; the words of James Baldwin will be there to bear witness and to inspire and elevate the struggle for human freedom. (121)

Flowing from the above submission is the author's aversion to injustice, oppression, marginalisation, domination and repression of human beings. This, to him, is even more condemnable when it is exerted on the weak by the strong. Achebe frowns at and condemns obnoxious practices like colonisation, racism, foreign financial aids to developing nations which always tend to further encourage the impoverishment of the latter (developing nations) and marginalisation of women. The latter is given prominence in an interview he granted *The Guardian Newspaper* in 1989 where he noted:

> If I'm going to talk about feminism, it has to be an African feminism which is always there in my books, in my studies of women; their role which is somehow understated, somehow not brought out there in front but in the background; which is the way our people deal with the problem of women. And all the hypocrisies which men have brought to bear on this; the fact that in Igbo society, they praise women by word of mouth… and yet try to put them down when it comes to practical things, these are issues which have been with me from the beginning. These are African as well as universal.(12)

In the above citation, Achebe considers the oppression and marginalisation of women as unjust practices. He condemns men's and society's unfair attitude to women and

acknowledges it as not just an African problem but a universal one. Since women are constituent part of the society, it shows that Achebe is not discriminatory in his pursuit of justice. Much as the reader does not have to judge a literary work by what the author proclaims to be his intention, the artist's ideology is not entirely divorced from his/her art.

Although some female critics like Helen Chukwuma (1989:2) and Flora Nwapa (2007:528) have criticised Achebe for what they perceive to be his negative portrayal of women especially in his first two novels, some scholars have upheld a contrary opinion. Nelson Fashina (2006:157) is of the view that Achebe's ridiculous presentation of "the patriarchal order" is "a means of subverting and not privileging it." Eruaga and Okeke (2011:267) are equally of the view that Achebe's portrayal of "society's negative images, treatment and conception of women" in his novels is geared towards an advocacy "for a change of such attitude." Their argument

> African society is patriarchally structured and the stereotypical image of women in [Achebe's] earlier novels, is what [Achebe] considers to be a record and evidence of such "crime" and as such, an appeal for a change of such negative attitude towards women. (267)

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Achebe's writing is influenced by a number of factors like colonialism, racism, sexism, etc. It is however in his latest novel, *Anthills of the savannah (*henceforth *Anthills* or *AS)*, that the author obviously empowers women by consciously engaging Beatrice Okoh, the only female among the three protagonists, as not only a voice of the oppressed but also as a veritable force of change and repairer of the wreck wrought on society by a long history of vicious male rule. In his writing, he seeks to entrench such noble ideals as justice, fairness and freedom and this transcends class, gender, culture and borders. This is evident in *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* where the protagonists end tragically as a result of their unjust treatment of their subjects. Referring to these four novels, Inyama (1996:217) observes: "From the earliest novel to the latest, we observe a gradual evolution of the image of the

father/protector figure from a homestead dictator, through an autocratic clan/father-figure, to a national tyrant."

Achebe exposes and punishes unjust and inhuman actions of his fictional characters, especially those of his heroes who deliberately exhibit unconscionable behaviours. In his essay, "The artist in search of the right leadership…" (1996:17), Nnolim accuses Okonkwo, the hero of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* of excesses and, hinges his failure as a leader on such vices as "exaggerated notion of the masculine ideal[…]" lack of "reasoned dialogue with himself or his peers"[…] too hasty "to inquire into whys and consequences of things," too proud of exhibiting "love and affection," and "too afraid of being thought weak". He concludes;

> Okonkwo fails because he is not a leader of his people whose mores he breaks, whose wise counsel he does not seek, whose caution he squanders. A hero who lacks humility may be patriotic but his was a patriotism of the iconoclast, of the foolhardy. It is, in the final analysis, not the common good that Okonkwo dies for but in the pursuit of narrow selfish interests. (17).

Okonkwo, as is rightly observed by Nnolim above is an embodiment of excesses, self-centredness and individualism. These vices which also manifest in Ezeulu, the hero of *Arrow of God* and in Sam, His Excellency, in *Anthills* obviously contrast with the right leadership qualities, such as love for their subjects, communal spirit and selflessness exhibited by Beatrice the female protagonist in *Anthills*. Achebe is of the view that every form of power derives from the people and that as such power must not be wielded absolutely and selfishly. The tragic end of Okonkwo, Ezeulu and Chiefs Nanga and Koko are cases in point. Furthermore, the Idemili myth copiously explored in *Anthills* and subtly touched in some of the short stories in the author's collection of short stories entitled *Girls at War and other Stories*, buttress this fact. In *Anthills*, the reader is privileged with the aetiology and cultural significance of this female deity known as Idemili:

> In the beginning power rampaged through our world, naked, so the Almighty, looking at his creation through the round undying eye of the sun, saw and pondered and finally decided to send his daughter, Idemili, to bear

> witness to the moral nature of authority by wrapping around Power's rude waits a loincloth of *Peace and Modesty*. (*AS*: 102, emphasis added).

The implication of the above is that arising from the privileges and authority that power accords its wielder, it becomes obvious that such persons who hold power are almost certain of wielding it indiscriminately, selfishly and abusively. It is for this reason that the Idemili deity is put in place to ensure the judicious, humane and modest application of power by those who hold it on trust for the rest. Exploring the Idemili concept further, the reader realises that if the power seeker is discovered to be unworthy by the deity or if the power wielder abuses it that in each case the offender is visited with death by Idemili's sacred python – the harbinger of justice. This is demonstrated in the case of Nwakibie (*AS*, 103-5).

Okonkwo, Obi, Ezeulu, Nanga, His Excellency (Sam) and Nwibe in "The Madman" all exhibit this vice and thus end badly. In his art, the punishment for abusers of power, a practice which the author considers unjust and vicious, could be instant death or a relegation to the position of irrelevance, or what Caroline Lyons Innes calls "displacement from the centre to the periphery", a "plot" structure which she asserts, "informs almost all of Achebe's "fiction" (124).

In his essay, "Cultural heroes in the novels of Chinua Achebe" Kester Echenim (1996), interrogates the various instances when Okonkwo infringes on his society's customs and mores such as beating one of his wives during the weak of peace and comes to the conclusion:

> Okonkwo's paroxysmal and excessive reactions not only attract condemnation from his kinsmen, but constitute a fundamental infringement on the solidarity between man and the gods[….] The constant provocation of the gods through inconsiderable acts and utterances results in the divorce between Okonkwo and his *chi* the catalyst in his earlier triumphs and his intercessor in the pantheon of the gods (4)

Though a great man going by his physical possessions, Okonkwo's actions and individualism negate the principles of true greatness. This is because among his people, there is premium on group, rather than individual existence. Okonkwo complies with this pattern of living only when he wants to achieve his selfish motive. He did so when he needed it to climb to the top rung of the socio-economic ladder but scoffed at it after achieving his ambition, thereby proving himself an exploiter. For instance, exploiting the spirit of communal co-existence, he runs to Ogbuefi Nwakibie for yam seeds (*Things Fall Apart*,15-16). After he has achieved his ambition as a great man, he turns violently impatient with the less fortunate.

Echenim further condemns Okonkwo and Ezeulu, the protagonists of *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* respectively both of whom exhibit anti-clan tendencies, contending that, "[…] Okonkwo and Ezeulu, in their various actions, have *unintentionally* given scope and expression to their individual aspirations. But the manifestation of this individualism goes contrary to the golden rule of harmonious existence and group survival[…]". Unlike the Greek tragic hero, Okonkwo refused to be redeemed or ennobled through what he suffers nor does he purge his excesses and flaws through his experience, as would a Greek tragic hero. (Dasylva, 2004:38)

It may not be correct to describe the duo's individualistic tendency as "unintentional". This is because both are strong-willed, adamant to counsel, impervious to criticism and in the case of Ezeulu, it offered him an opportunity to use it as a weapon of reprisal against his people. Francis Ngwaba (1996) in his analysis of Achebe's method of characterisation, notes that the novelist juxtaposes each of his protagonists with a close friend who possesses divergent, albeit complementary view and approach to things. He observes:

> In each novel, we get a protagonist who is given a close personal friend who proves to be an *alter ego* of the central character. These characters have what may seem to be divergent views of how life should be lived, how things should be, how society should be organised. When however we look carefully at these views, we discover that behind their apparent divergence is a complementarity of type[….](368)

He goes on to identify such complementary pairs as: Okonkwo and Obierika in *Things Fall Apart*, Obi and Joseph in *No Longer at Ease*, Ezeulu and Akuebue in *Arrow of God*, Nanga and Odili in *A Man of the People* and Ikem and Chris in *Anthills* and asserts that each *alter ego* is an embodiment of the values that are absent in his friend. One may also add that each alter ego possesses rational, sane and humane values with which he attempts to temper the excesses of his protagonist friend and re-direct him. However, almost always, each protagonist shuns such superior counsel and guidance to his tragic detriment. One would have thought that Okonkwo, great as he is among the members of Umuofia community would escape punishment. But such would be a grave injustice in Achebe's literary wordview. Ademola Dasylva (1994:143) rightly postulates that the recognition and tolerance of Okonkwo's choleric nature by the Umuofia people do not insulate the hero from being punished because when he ''over reaches his bounds and breaks some religious and social taboos, he is made to pay dearly for it''.

Damian Opata(1987) takes an entirely different position from many critics in his judgment of the unconscionable act of Okonkwo in his killing of Ikemefuna, his foster son. He argues that Okonkwo is thrown into a dilemma by the gods in instructing that the lad Ikemefuna be killed and leaving Okonkwo without a leeway to escape from the assignment in the provision of a substitute as in the case of Abraham and Isaac in the Bible. He concludes that though the slaying of Ikemefuna by Okonkwo may be unconscionable, he however, maintains that the act in itself is not an offence having emanated from an eternal order, and notes;

> Undoubtedly, within the level of private morality, his action is unconscionable, but that does not *necessarily* mean that he has committed an offence. Actions could be unconscionable without *ipso facto* being offences, and in the near-fatalistic world view with which we are dealing, we have unconscionable acts that our failure to execute could constitute an offence against the gods(79)

Opata appreciates the tight and almost inescapable situation in which Okonkwo finds himself regarding the injunction of the gods. Nevertheless, he seems to lose sight of the fact that Okonkwo is not issued a specific directive by the gods to be the

instrument through which the order must be executed. After all, there are other elders and titled men in Umuofia who could have done so. Secondly, the years of bonding between him and Ikemefuna with the resultant filial affection is enough to restrain him from having a hand in the killing of the lad. Most importantly, by running to Okonkwo for protection at the striking of the pot of wine on his head, Ikemefuna hopes to elicit some protection from the one he calls a father and nothing less. Okonkwo, as the reader gets to understand, yielded himself for the assignment because he was afraid of being thought a coward. On the contrary, the gods have provided him escape through the counsel of Ezeudu his friend, the oldest man in the community who admonishes him to have nothing to do with Ikemefuna's killing because he calls him "father." With the benefit of hindsight, Okonkwo would have been able to apply the wisdom in that admonition at such a critical time. But being a rash, an irrational and proud hero, he betrays the bond of paternity recognised by the very society he claims to serve (Dasylva, 1994:146) by striking Ikemefuna to exhibit his selfish bravery.

Achebe's moral vision of art is not in doubt. He has emphasised it repeatedly in some of his interviews and also in his essays that are documented in *Morning yet on creation day*. Shatto Arthur Gakwandi (1977) aptly summarises Achebe's moralist vision and literary concern when he asserts:

> Whether he is handling polemical issues as in *A Man of the People* or is concerned with cultural dilemma as in his first and Third novels, the pivot on which the fictional world revolves is moral concern. As a moralist, Achebe tends to paint an uncompromising view of the world. (36)

These, indeed, form Achebe's literary agenda.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is another African writer with an unquestionable moral disposition. As a victim of oppression, repression, unlawful detention and injustice (Lindfors,1982), Ngugi believes that writers have a duty to use their art in the interrogation of human and societal weakness, foibles and errors in order to wrest a

positive change. In a newspaper interview with Nairobi's *Sunday Nation* (1977), he states:

> I do believe that criticism of our social institutions and structures is a very healthy thing for our society. I believe that we can move forward only through open and healthy criticisms. Writers must sincerely examine all aspects of our national life. If writers did not do this anywhere in the world, they would be failing in their duties. (10)

Ngugi believes in the deployment of literature to correct the evils in individuals, society and institutions. Ngugi, like Achebe and Soyinka, has criticised political systems of his home government for its exploitation of the masses and for denying them freedom (Micere Githae Mugo, 26). He condemns colonial rule which he sees as an immoral practice. In a newspaper interview quoted in Cook and Okenimkpe (1983), Ngugi opines: "We Africans who have been under colonial rule for many years believe that colonialism […] is basically immoral. For anyone of whatever country to be content with alien rule […] is to be less than human" (206).

Ngugi's writings are influenced by colonial injustice manifested in the expropriation of Kenyan land by the white settlers and the exploitation of the masses and crass corruption by the Kenyan political class who took over the reins of power from the colonial masters at independence. Thus, in his writings he emphasises the need for the masses to wrest their freedom and their land that was 'stolen' by the white settlers. In his novels, he indicts the above two classes of people for their complicity in entrenching hardship and oppression in Kenyan society. In his acceptance speech during his award of the Lotus Prize in Literature, he pointedly attacked the white missionary, the settler and the colonial governor whom he called the "three imperial missives of the western monopoly-capitalist," noting that,

> The settler grabbed the land and used African labour. The governor protected him with the political machinery and with the gun. And the missionary stood guarding the door as a colonial spiritual police man. As black people were taken to work on the tea and coffee plantation for the settler or conscripted to fight in European wars, the

> missionary had the audacity to tell them to lift up their eyes unto the Lord and sing halleluyah – Aaamen! (1974, 67-8).

In accordance with his socialist Marxist ideology, Ngugi constantly pitches his tent with the masses, thus resulting in his use of the first person plural pronoun "we" in most of his novels. Coupled with this is his adoption of the author – narrator style to show his audience that he is one of the masses on whose behalf he fights and speaks. Furthermore, he has a penchant for drawing his major characters from the peasant class (Gakwandi: 111).

Following Africa's colonial experience and anti-imperialist struggle, Marxism has attracted a pride of place in the literary works of some African writers. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is one of such authors. Linda Onwuka (2008:20)[3] identifies the "exploited" and the "exploiters" as two categories of people in Ngugi's characterisation. She notes that the author uses such terms as the 'hunted' and the 'hunter', 'eat' or be eaten' and such animals as Hare, Lion, Leopard and Hyena. She further observes that Lion, Leopard and Hyena symbolise predators, capitalists and exploiters while the Hare stands for the masses who are their prey. Onwuka's observation is apt and finds correspondence in Ngugi's confession of Gikuyu folktales as what influenced his characterisation. In *Language and Literature*, Ngugi acknowledges:

> The stories with mostly animals as their main characters were all told in Gikuyu. Hare, being small, weak, but full of innovative wit and cunning was our hero. We identified with him as he struggled against the brutes of prey like Lion, Leopard, Hyena. His victories were our victories and we learnt that the apparently weak can outwit the strong. We followed animals in their struggle against hostile nature […]often forcing them to search for forms of cooperation in the confrontation with nature. But we also followed the animals in their struggle against one another, and particularly the struggle between beasts of prey and victims of prey (85).

Apart from his reliance on Gikuyu oral tradition for his characterisation, Ngugi endorses the use of violence in order to change an intolerable and unjust social order.

Consequently, he justifies the existence and the activities of *Mau Mau* movement which some writers have referred to as savagery. In his *Homecoming*, he clarifies the fundamental aims of *Mau Mau* revolutionaries as the struggle to drive out the Europeans, seize the government and restore to the Kenyan peasants their lands and property (28). In his characterisation, themes and narrative techniques, Ngugi as a result of his Marxist ideology, believes in the group and not in the individual. He accords immense respect to women in his writings whether as individuals or as a group because he recognises their strength, inspiration and spirituality. Above all, he believes that women are indispensable in the smooth running of society (Kolawole, 94). Ngugi has written several novels and other creative works.

In *The River Between*, he explores various forms of conflicts that are direct result of colonialism which undermined the unity, peace and stability of Kenya and her people. Among these are: religious conflict, political conflict, conflicts between parents and children and between friends and lovers. These themes of conflict and destruction of peace and unity of the people are re-echoed in *Weep Not Child*. Both novels underscore the destructive effect of colonialism. They also explore the fight by Kenyans through the *Mau Mau* movement to reclaim their land from the settlers turned land-owners. In the introduction to *Weep Not Child*, Ikiddeh has described the novel to be about "the growing up of Njoroge" and about "the hopes and disappointments and sufferings of a whole people growing under the tensions of emergency as shown in Njoroge's experience" (xii). *A Grain of Wheat* portrays the emergency declared by the British in order to contain the *Mau Mau* insurgency. It is not, therefore, surprising that violence, repressive measure and brutality pervade the novel. The independence of Kenya emerged through "violent upheavals started by the *mau mau* insurgency, and the violence was fuelled in the show of force by the British and sealed by the blood of martyrs" (Nnolim, 1982:72).

Gakwandi (1977) maintains that Ngugi's novels are committed as a result of the fact that colonialism remains its constant butt of attack. He notes that *A Grain of Wheat* concerns itself with the independence war and observes that though the liberation struggle was successful, the attainment of independence made the Kenyan

society disquietingly aware of its own weaknesses. He stresses that the general tone of the novel is,

> One of bitterness and anger. The painful memories of *mau mau* violence still overhang the Kikuyu villages as the attainment of independence fails to bring the cherished social dreams. The celebration of Uhuru breaks up in confusion and disappointment (108-9).

It is noteworthy that other African writers like Achebe, Armah, Soyinka and many others and their societies also share in Ngugi's and Kenyans' experience. It is true that Africa has succeeded in driving away the colonialists but those who stepped into their shoes have exhibited a very poor leadership style that nauseates the living and betrays the memory of the dead.

Naguib Mahfouz is an Egyptian writer with over sixty works to his credit. He is one of the foremost writers in modern Arabic literature and is in fact considered the leading Arabic novelist. Until he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in August, 2002, little was known in the West about him and his literary accomplishment. In awarding the 1988 Nobel Prize for Literature to Mahfouz, the Swedish Academy of Letters noted, "through works rich in nuance – now clear sightedly realistic, now evocatively ambiguous – Mahfouz has formed an Arabic narrative art that applies to all mankind" (Nobel Prize for Literature). Mahfouz naturally writes in Arabic but being an acclaimed writer, his works always find willing and ready translators.

Mahfouz is committed to social justice and national redemption. He is highly critical of religious fundamentalism and has expressed this throughout his writing career. As he once pointed out, "in all my writing, you will find politics. You may find a story which ignores love, or any other subject, but not politics; it is the very axis of our thinking" (Louis Proyect, 6). In 1994, he was stabbed in the neck with a kitchen knife by Islamic fanatics who took objection to his representation of Mohammed in less flattering terms in his "Children of Gebelawi." The two Egyptian Islamic fundamentalists were sentenced to death in 1995 for attempting to kill him. In his works, Mahfouz offers critical views of British colonialism and modern day Egypt, social issues, and political prisoners.

An appraisal of Mahfouz's literary output reveals his fiction to have passed through four distinct stages. But in the novels he wrote in the later stage, especially in *The Thief and the Dogs* (1982), he radically switched from his style and concentrated on the inner working of the individual's mind in its interaction with the social movement. Although his novelistic technique has passed through recognisable stages, his worldview has remained static. A sociopolitical view of man's existence is at the root of all his works. To him, individual morality is inseparable from social morality. His moral code is clearly stated in his belief that people who only seek their own individual salvation are damned. To him, the universe is a collective state. Conversely, "characters who are saved in Mahfouz's work are only those with altruistic motives, those who show concern for others and demonstrate a kind of awareness of their particular predicament being part of a more general one" (A Biography, 8).

Mahfouz portrays the condition of the poor and oppressed in a realistic and classically Arabic style. His commitment to Egypt's, Africa's and global justice and freedom is encapsulated in his Nobel speech:

> You may be wondering: This man coming from the third world, how did he find the peace of mind to write stories? You are perfectly right. I come from a world laboring under the burden of debts whose paying back exposes it to starvation or very close to it. Some of its people perish in Asia from floods, others do so in Africa `from famine. In South Africa millions have been undone with rejection and with deprivation of all human rights in the age of human rights, as though they were not counted among humans. In the west Bank and Gaza there are people who are lost in spite of the fact that they are living on their own land…. They have risen to demand… their proper place recognized by others as their own… they were paid back… by killing with bullets… and torture in prisons…. This threatens the area with a disaster if it is not saved by the wisdom of those desirous of a just and comprehensive peace (Nobel Speech, 6).

Proyect (2003) points out that a decisive factor in the ongoing war against Arab people is the general lack of knowledge about and sympathy for their culture. This is because in her view, it is easier to destroy a people under a cloak of ignorance and misrepresentation. This contempt and lack of sympathy for the Arab and their culture by the West resonate in Mahfouz's speech quoted above. When Mahfouz was awarded the Nobel Prize, "he was probably regarded with contempt in some quarters as just another obscure figure from the third world selected on some sort of affirmative action basis" (3).

Raymond Stock, in *The Kenyon Review* (2001) notes that Mahfouz, in his over sixty published books, covers virtually every style and genre of fiction. His subject has always been mankind's fate, depicted in scenes from his native Egypt. Though his themes are modern and universal, Mahfouz draws from the neglected body of works set in, or using devices from the Pharoahnic age (136). In 1961, Mahfouz published *The Thief and the Dogs* in which he depicts the fate of Said Mahran, a Marxist thief and protagonist of the novel who has been released from prison and plans revenge but ultimately gets murdered in a cemetery. In this novel, Mahfouz demonstrates that humanity is moving further away from God. Akhuemokhan and Okolocha (2012) perceive Said, the male protagonist of the novel, as a man who allows his negative situation to thwart his every virtue and rational thinking. Juxtaposing him with Nur the prostitute and female protagonist, they observe that though both are social deviants and experience similar unfortunate circumstance, Nur does not compromise the virtuous aspect of her personality like Said. According to them, Said "is raised by affectionate and pious parents whose solitary entertainment is attending prayer meetings," and though he is "thrown on a pitiless world" when his parents die, they are of the opinion that "neither the early death of his parents nor the callous world can be held liable for Said's [warped] personality" and come to the conclusion that Said has "a split in his psyche" (6).

Tayeb Salih is a Sudanese writer whose exposure to the international community with its economy of power relations among states, coupled with his

education and international employments, deeply influenced his writing Abayomi Okanrende (2009, 59) notes that,

> Salih's concern of [sic] revising the orientalist imprint of 'The Story of Sinbad the Sailor' in the European travel text[…] was informed by cultural and environmental factors which sha(r)pened his intellectual responsiveness to the urgency of decolonization[…] (59).

Salih, like his counterparts in other parts of Africa, is deeply concerned with the issue of decolonisation. His access to Western texts, his embrace of classical Arabic tradition as well as the rich Islamic literature prepared him for his works. His works include: *The Wedding of Zein* (1968), *Season of Migration to the North* (1969) and *Bandarshah* (1996). Kole Omotosho notes that the first two works above mean to the Arab authors series what Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is to the African writers series (55). In the same way that Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* responds to Conrad's colonialist misrepresentations of Africa in *Mister Johnson*, so does Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* address colonial issues raised by Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* and *Nostromo*. Salih acknowledges such intertextual influence in a 1980 lecture he gave in Beirut. In that lecture, he noted that with regard to the question of "form," the major foreign influence on him remains "Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* and *Nostromo*" (Amyuni, 1985:15). Byron Caminero-Santangelo (1999), juxtaposes Conrad and Salih in an article in which he undertakes the task of investigating Conradian influence on the style of Salih in *Season of Migration to the North*. He arrives at the thesis that Salih deliberately imitates Conrad's style but for a different purpose. He identifies Salih's intention as that of exploiting Conradian binaries to expose the perpetuation of colonialism in the Sudanese post colonial society by the privileged elitist class to which belongs the hero of the novel.

Byron postulates that the novel interrogates the nexus between "European colonialism" and "Sudanese traditionalism" and the various binaries that exist between them, and submits that such "dualism" ironically conceals "the link between traditionalism and colonialism" as they both embody "one of the primary binaries they both endorse." He observes that such dualism always turns to a key means of

perpetuating "neocolonialism" thereby "preventing a more nuanced understanding of oppression and exploitation" (14) and justifies his postulation by stressing that

> […] binaries legitimate exploitative power structures within Sudan by suggesting that resistance entails both the conquest of the foreign and the reassertion of a pure, national, and personal identity uninfected by the foreign. The language of infection tied to the language of traditionalism in Salih's novel, prevents the recognition that the nation is exploited by elites within Sudan who are allied with European economic imperialism (14-15).

Byron in the above submission is of the view that colonialism as far as Africa and Sudan are concerned, cannot be exclusively linked with white skin. Secondly, he also implies that political independence does not mean the end of political hegemony by Europeans. Lastly, he asserts, as many post-colonial African writers have done, that present in Africa today are some privileged rulers, who work in concert with Europeans in their capitalist, imperialist and neo-colonial agenda in Africa. This resonates in Ngugi's observation in *Moving* (1993) where he observes that the white and black symbols were exploited in all African languages in their resisting the colonisers but states that those symbols no longer represent what they used to be because today, there are: "Black skins, white masks? White skins, black masks? Black skins concealing colonial settlers' hearts" (65)

South Africa's Alex La Guma was born in District Six, a poor and depressed area of Cape Town to parents who made an impact in his life. His father, especially, exerted great influence on him being a leader of the coloured community and left wing politician. This, coupled with the domestic environment in his formative years with the political climate in South Africa, contributed to La Guma's commitment to the fate of man under an oppressive regime (Asein, 2). With his family background, love of the political lessons from his father on Lenin's Marxist dialectics, and such early political career, he reveals in an interview with Serumaga: "I bought a leather coat and cloth and romantically called myself a 'revolutionary'" (91). That was also the time when he joined the Young Communist League (YCL), where they "debated youthfully and fervently". Owing to his political activities, La Guma suffered series

of arrests, detentions and imprisonments by the South African apartheid authorities like his father. He was awarded the Lotus Prize for Literature in 1969 and has been unequivocal in his vision of literature and literary artists as harbingers of freedom, justice, and peace in a situation of political siege, such as existed in South Africa under the apartheid regime. He believes in literature as an important medium for enlightenment and mass mobilisation. La Guma's social criticism focuses on man, the interplay of literature and society and the writer's responsibility. His creative ideology is rooted in his belief that the writer has a vital socio-political role in his society.

Asein observes that La Guma's personal ideas "provide a valuable backcloth for his fictional realisation" as they help to define the literary "ethos on which he bases his sympathetic" fictional personnaes that he often chooses "from South Africa's underworld of deprived non-whites and degraded whites" (8-9). La Guma argues that a writer cannot divorce his art from the social, political and physical realities around him. Consequently, his cause is "geared toward social justice and the restoration of the all but lost dignity of the non-white population in South Africa." (10) Asein describes him as "a radical humanist who has a primary commitment to man," and states that the epigraph in La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* reflects the "existential dilemma of degraded humanity which is in constant search for fulfillment" (13-14). Talking about *A Walk in the Night*, Asein observes that the author's perpetual depiction of "wandering youths and their constant reliance on drink, sex and violence" reveals the implication of the apartheid "system" (29) and further notes that La Guma in this novel, focuses on the conditions and experiences of deprivation of representative characters who share a common heritage of deprivation and oppression" (45).

Praising La Guma's style, Ebele Eko (1982) observes that the author has risen above "journalistic" style of some writers to a point where he skillfully "harnesses art and imagination in his novels in such a way as to "recreate blood-cuddling scenes of oppression and violence" and also give his audience "a glimpse into the changes wrought in his mind and those of his protagonists." She submits that through such craft, the reader is made to witness the "slow but steady" transition of the protagonist

from "confused, resigned impotence, through faith in passive resistance to the acceptance of the inevitability of armed struggle" (46). Concerning *A Walk in the Night*, Eko further states,

> [it] is an imaginative description in five words of the violence, the crime, the cruelty, the confusion, the frustration, the utter lack of direction that dominate and permiate [sic] every page of that famous but notorious novel of life in the sixth District of Cape Town (46).

The novel then is the testimony of the intense violence, repression and inhumanity which black South Africans had to contend with under the apartheid era.

Buchi Emecheta is another African writer who believes in the pursuit of justice for an oppressed segment of the African society – the women. She believes that the patriarchal structure of the African society poses stifling oppressive measures against the women. In an interview with Adeola James (1990), Emecheta takes a swipe at women whom she blames for providing what she considers the lunch pad for men's perpetuation of feminine oppression through women's bickering, petty jealousy of one another and refusal to unite as 'sisters' with a common cause. She notes that this practice has been overcome by European women who see themselves as sisters by applauding the efforts of their fellow women and contrasts it with the condemnatory remarks made by Nigerian women about their successful female counterparts and women's role in the perpetuation of certain obnoxious practices against their own gender. She states:

> Well, as I am beginning to say in some of my later novels, half of [women's] problem rests with women. They are so busy bitching about one another, the men say the women are acting just as expected. But when you deal with foreign women… all you have to do is give a talk and they appreciate you and express solidarity with you. But it isn't so in our country. The usual reaction is, so she has written a book? I know who did it for her. This type of cynicism is still here, especially among the educated class… if we as women don't put one another down, things should work out better… women who have gone through [repressive widowhood rites]… insist that

> their daughters-in-law mourn for nine months as they have done (36).

Emecheta condemns in very strong terms these feminine jealousies, fossilized thinking and antagonism against their own very sex and advocates for a positive attitude as well as individual and group struggle for freedom. Above all, she admonishes women to contract bonding relationships with one another since that accords them self-fulfillment, healthy relationship, support for one another as well as unity with one another. She postulates that when women are united among themselves, they will be able to fight men who are the agents of their oppression. This seems to be her position in her acclaimed feminist essay, "Feminism with a Small 'f'" (2007) in which she asserts:

> In my book *Joys of Motherhood* I describe a family in which the women went on strike and refused to take the housekeeping money because they knew that the husband was drinking the greater part of his income. I also describe a life of another woman who was so busy being a good mother and wife that she didn't cultivate her women friends. She died by the wayside, hungry and alone… we form, we are told, over half of the world's population. And yet we are on the lowest rung. Men did not put us there, my sisters. I think sometimes we put ourselves there. How often do you hear colleagues say: "Oh, I don't know anything I am only a housewife?" (555-556)

It is evident then that Emecheta recommends bonding relationship in her novel, *The Joys of the Motherhood* or what Carole Boyce Davies calls "sisterhood." The two female protagonists of the novel, Nnu Ego and Adaku fall short of heeding this call and this is caused in the main by the former who perceives the latter as an enemy and a husband snatcher rather than as a friend. Consequently, all Adaku's friendship attempts are spurned by Nnu Ego who ends tragically at the end of the narrative. Emecheta by her thesis in this novel, recommends feminine unity. Rose Mezu (1997) observes that "In Emecheta's worldview, all men – husbands, fathers, and brothers –

are slave masters and tyrannical oppressors," and sees the only option "open to women" being "to choose the lesser of all these evils" (143).

Okey Ndibe is a new entrant into the literary world but from his first novel, *Arrows of Rain*, it is not difficult to decipher his literary pre-occupation. Ndibe is concerned with socio-political justice and individual commitment in nation building and personal relationship. The novel "dramatises the relationship between an individual and the modern African state". The author "examines the erosion of moral insight in both public and private life, drawing out the complex factors behind the near-collapse of a nation" (Thelwell, Novel's Back Page). In *Arrows of Rain*, Ndibe interrogates the implications of duty abdication by those entrusted with such responsibility and the supposed beneficiaries of such duty. Like other authors in this study, he deploys the technique of crime and punishment to project his artistic vision. He detests injustice as is evident in the unhappy end of characters that exhibit such negative traits.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the African writers being studied are committed to the justice question and this makes them to tilt their work along that line. As products of colonialism in their various countries, they have known the evils of oppression and injustice and as such, attack these vices in their works.

2.4 The possible root of crimes in Africa

Pre-colonial Africa had her fair share of criminal and atrocious activities emanating from the unconsciousnable actions of the subjects and their rulers. Examples of the latter are: family heads, clan heads, village heads, provincial heads, chiefs, serfs, among others. Often times, such rulers who may have come to power through popular demand as a result of their altruistic and humane dispositions suddenly metamorphosed into oppressors, tyrants and predators over their subjects due to greed, avarice and vicious nature of humanity. Though their subjects also manifested such viciousness, the rulers surpassed them because on them were conferred the privileges of power which they exploited for their selfish interest.

Such criminal activities which were not initially pronounced, assumed an alarming crescendo with the arrival of the Arabs and the Europeans on the African soil for reasons such as evangelism, merchandise and colonialism. In no distant time, events unfolded to reveal that the 'visitors' had come for purposes of slave trade, colonisation and exploitation of the continent and her people. Consequent upon this contact with Africa, crime assumed a heightened proportion as the gift items they brought with them turned African kings and rulers into mindless beings who preyed on their subjects in order to source for slaves for the foreigners. Many factors contributed to the success of this vicious enterprise.

The continent's hospitality, sunshine, lush vegetation, abundant raw materials and high population of able-bodied people turned out to work against her. As a result of these, the Arab and Western invaders considered Africa a viable continent for exploration and exploitation. The Arabs who came for slaves got a far better deal than they bargained for through the connivance of the local rulers. Yambo Ouologuem graphically captures the outrageous and awe-inspiring criminal activities of the Saifs in their bid to supply slaves to the Arabs in *Bound to Violence*.

In the same manner that Ouloguem's Mali threw her arms open to the Arabs in an unquestioning show of Africa's characteristic hospitality, so did Kenya to the white colonialists who came, first to evangelise them, but who later turned around to colonise them and also appropriate their land. Ngugi wa Thiong'o explores this treachery and the pathetic land question in almost all his novels ranging from *The River Between to The Wizard of the Crow*. Kenya's land question remains Ngugi's pre-occupation in most of his writings. He holds the white missionary, the settler and the colonial governor responsible for his country's situation. In his acceptance speech during his award of the Lotus Prize in Literature, Ngugi accused these three elements as "the imperial missives of the western monopoly – capitalist.":

> The settler grabbed the land and used African labour. The governor protected him with the political machinery and with the gun. And the missionary stood guarding the door as a colonial spiritual police man (1974:67).

In South Africa, the situation was not different. The Boers, acting on Hegel's racial superiority theory, made an incursion into South Africa and dismissed the black natives as inferior and sub-standard beings. They entrenched apartheid, an obnoxious governing system that accords privileges and rights to individuals based on their skin pigmentation. The apartheid system of government recognises white as being superior to black. Thus, in South Africa, the lighter the skin the more acceptable and the darker the more rejected and shorn of rights and humanity. The South African blacks were the worst hit as they had to obtain passes to enable them move around in their own country. Alex la Guma portrays such excruciating dehumanisation in: *The Stone Country, In the Fog of the Season's End* and *A Walk in the Night*. Western domination and exploitation were not peculiar to Mali, Kenya and South Africa but stretched to the entire Arab nations as well.

North African countries, from Morocco to Egypt, also had their fair share of western colonisation and exploitation. The transformation of Arab society in the modern period (late 18th and early 19th centuries) brought major changes in its socio-political life. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 altered the historical situations of the Arab world as it opened the gate for increasing contacts between the East and the West. These contacts took the form of military and cultural control over Egypt and the rest of the Arab world. The European military presence came with their interest in Arab culture as Orientalist scholars of Archeology and Painting undertook a study of the Oriental world producing distorted image of the Orient which had no resemblance with reality except to assert the superiority of the West over Arab civilisation (Edward Said in Talahile, 15).

Arising from the increasing influence of European culture on the Arab way of life through the presence of explorers, traders, educationists and technicians, a new class of Egyptians arose most having been trained in the schools set up by the colonial authorities. Naguib Mahfouz, an Egyptian author, explores the influence of western contact with the Arab world in his novel *The Thief and the Dogs*, stressing the value of religion in the spiritual constitution of a nation and the individual and the need to find strength in one's cultural and spiritual heritage. Said Mahran, the protagonist of

the novel, spurns the religious piety of his Islamic parents, choosing the path of crime and revenge until he meets a terrible fate in the cemetery. Sudan also had a sour experience in the hands of western colonisers. The Sudanese people had their culture and way of life altered by their western colonisers who also erected their structures and had total control over them. Tayeb Salih interrogates the damage which colonial crimes and inequities could wrought on the psyche of the individual and the nation at large. Sa'eed Mustafa, the protagonist of his novel, *Season of Migration to the North,* becomes a phenomenal Sudanese subject who seeks vengeance against the colonial masters symbolised by the European women whom he sexually exploits and kills after contracting relationships with them. Sa'eed perceives them as representatives of the system that relegates him and his nation to a second class position.

CHAPTER THREE
NOVELS FROM THE WESTERN REGION

Ouloguem's *Bound to Violence,* Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah,* Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* and Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*

3.1 Crime and punishment in Ouologuem's *Bound to Violence (BV)*

In his semiotic analysis of Yambo Ouologuem's *Bound to Violence*, Yesufu Maiangwa maintains that the novel incorporates varied "symbols, metaphors, linguistic and non-linguistic sign-systems which are closely woven and built into" the novel's structure. He goes on to note that such structure which is compact and flexible at the same time enhances the interpretation of the novel (73). He further opines that the novel is fraught with violence, some of which he perceives, appear to serve no useful purpose. The Zairean critic, Mbelolo ya Mpiku (1971) also conceives the novel to be "a sequence of violent acts, erotic deeds and unexpected turns of events", brushing it aside as a "sure-fire formula of sex and violence" (Ogungbesan, 75).

This latter scholar seems to be at logger heads with the author of the novel for painting an ugly picture of the African continent to the world. He considers Ouologuem's vision and enterprise to be a contradiction of the "African Reality" (8). Addressing journalists in France several years ago, Yambo Ouologuem stressed that his novel was centred on leaders who pretended to be "bawling revolutionaries while opening their tattered purses to capitalism", and concluded that his aim in the novel is "to do violence to the misconceptions of Africans so that we can realise what the real problems are and concluded: "This is our duty of violence" (Ogungbesan, 73).

These three scholars: Maiangwa, Mpiku and Ouologuem are right in their assessment of the novel. A close reading of the novel sets the reader retching considering the magnitude of violence, wanton destructions, heightened brutalisation of humanity and thoughtless acts of sexual carnivals in the novel. However, these criminal activities which assume animalistic proportions are symbolic in themselves. The novel foregrounds the horrible history of the black race who are referred to as the

"nigger trash" by the novelist in the opening part of the work in the section entitled "The Legend of the Saifs" (*BV* 3). Indeed, the novel recounts "the bloody adventure of the niggertrash" (*BV*, 3) under the rulership of the Saif dynasty in Nakem empire, a microcosm for Africa or the black race and an anagramic version of Kanem.

The reign of the Saif dynasty is fraught with immense negativities as all of them from Saif Moshe Gabbai of Honain to Saif Isaac al-Heit, are indicted as allies of the West's and Arab's despoliation of Africa and Africans through slave trade, colonialism and imperialism. Each of the Saifs symbolises ugliness in the true sense of the word. Saif is an embodiment of many concepts. He is Africa's super intelligentsia and proper match for Arab and western plunderers of Africa. He is the fox-tortoise in Africa's oral tales respectively famed for destruction and cunning. He also symbolises the tyrannical despot and father of modern day neo-colonial African leader and agent of imperialism. The Saif is also a ruthless slave driver, exploiter of human and material resources, a ruler that never relates with anyone on normal terms except for the person's exploitable value. Through the services of his killer squad comprising Wagouli, Kratonga, Sankolo, Wampoulo and Yafole and his locally invented *Dabali* and trained asp, the Saif exploits, dumps and kills his victims without scruples (*BV*, 43). In the following excerpt, the ignominious activities of the Saif, propelled by Western forces, are set in motion:

> […] separated from one another by all manner of tribes[…] torn by internecine rivalries and warring with one another for the *imperial power with a violence equaled only by the dread it called forth*. By way of reprisal *the Saifs[…] stained their assegais in crime and tribal exactions*. In that age of feudalism, large communities of slaves celebrated their overlords by forced labour and by looking on inert as multitudes of *brothers, smeared with the blood of butchered children and of disemboweled expectant mothers were immured alive[….]* (*BV*, 4-5 emphasis added).

In the above excerpt, Ouologuem invites the reader to witness the onset of the maddening criminal activities of the Saifs under the feudal system, who, in a bid to acquire the privileged position as imperial authority, set their subjects on inter-

communal wars to procure slaves for the colonisers. The feudal subjects, in their unthinking quest to please their overloads, embark on damaging inter-tribal wars where they 'butcher' one another, leaving the corpses "smeared with the blood of butchered children" and disemboweled "expectant mothers", thus enriching the worldly wealth of their Saifs who have "stained their assegais in crime and tribal exactions" (*BV*, 4) as they source for slaves to sell to the Arab invaders. This is an indictment of indigenous African rulers who fanned the embers of slave trade as a result of greed. The Saifs protect their trade by entrenching terror in their territories in order to forestall possible rebellion or uprising by their subjects:

> […] others [stories] relate how *terror enslaved the population* and *stifled every attempt at rebellion* throughout the Empire. *For two more centuries* the heart of Nakem bore such *humiliations* and ignominies with patience; *the crown forced men to swallow life as a boa swallows a stinking antelope*, and rolled from *one inglorious dynasty* and sibylline geneology to *another, falling lower* with each *new act of vileness*[…] (*BV*, 5, emphasis added).

The Feudal Saifs insulate themselves and their acts by repelling possible rebellion through the terrifying treatment of anyone who dares to rebel. Thus, terror reigns supreme in the empire as human life is made to worth less than a stinking antelope and rebels made to be swallowed (annihilated) as a boa swallows an antelope. This is achieved through the activities of the killer squad of the five men earlier mentioned. The inglorious activities of the Saifs linger for as long as two centuries and become worse with the enthronement of each Saif.

Part of Saif's evil atrocities include compelling husbands to forcefully rape their wives publicly and watch them as they commit suicide being afterward, "overpowered by shame" (*BV*, 4). Though such acts of violence lead the village chiefs to conclude "that human life was vain" as they are shaken to breaking point, nevertheless they must maintain their duty to "discourage rebellious minds by displaying, on a fan plaited from reeds, the ear lobes of other rebellious men from the neighbouring village" whose flesh has been cremated and poured into the river (*BV*, 4-5).

Ouologuem's novel demonstrates that crime is not an imported concept in Africa. It had existed albeit on a low scale but with the Arab and western incursions into Africa, it assumed a heightened scale as violence was encouraged to achieve the goal of the foreigners who needed slaves from African rulers. Consequently, the latter who craved for the exalted position of their Arab and Western cronies outdid themselves by sending their subjects on human raids over other villages to procure slaves for their Arab and Western allies, thus setting the stage for slave trade, colonialism and imperialism from which Africa still groans till date. Religious bodies like Islam and Christianity equally share in the author's indictment as well because it was through them that the imperial powers made an inroad into Africa.

The novel is suffused with disgusting scenes of erotic display. Under the reign of Saif al-Haram, "unprecedented orgy of violence ensued" as "rebel tribes" are captured and the flesh of their chief is feasted upon while the skulls of their fallen men are taken to the heroes' houses (*BV*, 14). Moreover, "the brains and the women's sexual parts" among these captives, "were set aside for the eminent men, with clearly aphrodisiac intent", just as the testicles of the chief "were sprinkled with pepper and strong spice to be relished by the women in their communal soup" (*BV*, 15). Though other Saifs escape justice, the ugly end of this brings some level of comfort to the reader as the authorial voice reveals his sudden and shameful death in the course of making love "with his four stepmothers…":

> Saif al-Haram, performing his conjugal "duty" with his four stepmothers seriatim and all together, had the imprudent weakness to overindulge and in the very midst of his dutiful delights gave up the ghost… (*BV*, 16).

The regime of each emerging Saif is no less horrible and violent as can be seen in the following. The author continues:

> … in those [days] saturnalia incest was permitted, and even recommended; human sacrifices were performed, followed by acts of incest and coitus with animals: as though a Black had no voice… but to be a savage (*BV*, 20).

These acts which occur in the reign of Saif Jacob, a man "as humble as he was luminously poor[…] who dies counting the stars" eight years after his coronation (*BV*, 20) underscores the fact that all the Saifs are guilty of crime and violence. It is no wonder that the empire becomes a jungle one where "Moslem landowners [and], a few powerful families survived" to exercise "power in its limited sphere" such as "a province, a district, a county… thus fragmenting authority, a situation that "made the colonial conquest possible[…]" (*BV*, 21). African rulers are here held responsible for offering the West and Arab the opportunity to colonise the continent.

It is at the peak of such violent "slave trade that was devouring all Africa" that the white man with "the duty of national charity, the duty to bring civilization" (*BV*, 21) came to Nakem Empire. Though the Saif welcomes western civilization by the French, he endeavours to tailor it to the feudal serfdom system of slave ownership and absolute power-wielding over the people, refusing to cede his absolute authority but rather modifying it a little to resemble the "true freedom and full citizenship" (*BV*, 22) as enunciated by the French colonisers. Exploiting the Islamic tenets of obedience and voluntary labour, the Saif cunningly wins the obedience and loyalty of his subjects through the following way. In collaboration with the tribal chiefs all the slave raids cease, necessitating the reign of peace to deceive the colonisers. However, as soon as such peace is achieved the chiefs, desiring to consolidate their power, under the guise of "progressivism",

> […] promised their serfs, servants, and former captives that pending the hostilities which the neighbouring tribe was no doubt plotting, they would be 'looked upon[…]as provisionally free and equal subjects.' Then once peace was restored among the various tribes[…] the same notables promised the same subjects that after[…] a brief 'apprenticeship' of forced labour, they would be rewarded with the Right of Man[….] As to civil rights,[…] no mention was made[….] Thus in every province of Nakem Empire[…] of kinglets[…] forced labour became the main-stay of economic life. The religious aristocracy, however (in cooperation with the notables), proclaimed to the overjoyed populace that forced labour was at an end, replaced by 'voluntary labour', […] which would bring them all[…] 'true freedom and full citizenship'[…] (*BV*, 22-23).

Through such carrot-dangling tactics and craftiness of the Saif and his chiefs many of the subjects, hoping for the promised freedom, make themselves willing slaves under Saif's captivity. Moreover, on the social rung of the ladder, the notables are accorded more privileges and honour than other non-notable subjects and they live in the outer courts of Saif's premises. These willing slaves work themselves like baboons to please the Saif who gives them food and shelter in return. It was by such means that Kassoumi and Tambira who latter become husband and wife and parents of Raymond Kassoumi, the weak hero of the novel, were procured as slaves. Through this subtle and deceptive method, the Saif successfully escapes every suspicion of dealing in or harbouring slaves by the resident French Governors and administrators sent to Naken empire by the home government.

From the above elaborate quotation, it is evident that religion, especially Islamic religion, and its teachings, lend support to the flourishing of slavery in Africa as the Saif dynasty exploit it to further enslave their already brutalised and dehumanised subjects. This aligns with the postulation of Soyinka who observes that "[…] Ouologuem pronounces the Moslem incursion into Black Africa to be corrupt, vicious, decadent, elitist and insensitive" (35).

Desperate for power the Saif, exploiting the privileges of Islamic religious aristocracy, consolidates his hold on power and bleeds his subjects. This, coupled with native wisdom, the use of sorcery, witchcraft, *Dabali* (ground poisonous powder with which he poisons perceived enemies) and a charmable asp, he transforms himself into a tyrant, despot, trickster and invincible and lecherous old man. He becomes a phenomenal mystique to Jean Chevalier and Major Vandame, representatives of the French Government in Nakem. He murders the former (using *Dabali* and the asp) and emasculates the latter's authority in Nakem.

Before the massacre in Governor Jean Chevalier's premises, the author foreshadows the impending tragedy in his detailed reference to the vicious look and gesture of Saif the evil genius as he arrives the premises of his host/victim in the company of his body guard. Talking about him, the authorial voice observes:

> There was dignity and strength in Saif's long, slow strides[…] he caressed his square forehead[…] *the forehead of a warrior far more than of a religious leader[…]* indeed, *his every feature smacked unmistakably of vice* (*BV*, 58 emphasis added).

On arriving the entrance to the house, we are told that the Governor's orderly appears with a tensed face and casts "fearful angry glances at Saif, as though with his watchdog's instinct he had foreseen the massacre augured by this visit" (*BV*, 58).

The incident which consumes Chevalier and makes the wife run mad, has a streak of irony though because through the assistance of Bouremi the sorcerer, Chevalier had applied *Dabali* into the glass of drink meant for the Saif. However, Saif outsmarts his host whose motive he suspects by subtly upsetting the table in what appears like an accident, spilling the drink, blowing off the light and commencing a secret assassination plot with his bodyguard. Under the cover of the dark, his bodyguard makes a deep cut through his *dashiki*, giving the impression that his boss has been cut while he stabs Chevalier to death. Three of them fall but while Chevalier is actually dead, Saif and his accomplice only pretend to be dead. Horrified and afraid of being accused of murder:

> […] the orderly [Chevalier's]… took to his heels[….] The next moment a sentry shot him down like a dog. *He had paid for his crime.* That was the general opinion. No one suspected that Saif was the murderer or that his body guard have [sic] slashed his master's magnificent *dashiki* by design, to give the impression that the assassin had tried to kill Saif by stabbing him in the back (*BV*, 64, emphasis added).

Much as Saif combines the attributes and image of the indigenous African fox tortise to outsmart and overtake the French colonialists in their colonising mission, his actions leave much to be desired. They are in bad taste as he also oppresses and suppresses his own subjects that he is supposed to protect and defend. He is a negation of a true leader and African nationalist as his antecedents do not arouse any iota of pride in the African and his root. In alignment with the observation of the

astute Ghanaian critic and scholar, Kwame Appiah, the novel is "a murderous antidote to a nostalgia for *Roots*" (351).

Instances of crime abound in the novel. For instance, the reader observes that women suffer more than others. For instance, the Saif has to sleep with the wife of his servants on the first night of their marriage to obtain their virginity and women have to undergo the practice of infibulations (the sewing up of the vagina) to prevent them from being unfaithful to their husbands (*BV,* 48). Sankolo slaughters his fiancée, Awa, like a goat because he catches him watching lustfully Saif's son and Shrobenius' daughter making love (*BV*, 90-93). "He beats her, slits open her belly and licks the knife before covering the corpse". For reporting the incident, Sankolo ensures that he obtains a pound of flesh from Tambira, Kassoumi's wife for her husband's action. Thus, after the sorcerer has sexually abused Tambira whom she gets under a spell, Sankolo completes the act of rape and dumps her corpse in a pit toilet (*BV,* 130). Tata, the fair girl and Raymond's fiancée is killed by Saif for no just cause save for the fact that "she knows too much".

Major Vandame, wiser and more diplomatic than Chevalier, his predecessor, addresses a letter of appreciation to Saif for his leadership efforts in Nakem while prevailing on his home government to accord him and all his notables some privileges, part of which is to send his children to France on study programmes. Raymond Spartacus, one of the quintuplets born by Mr. and Mrs. Kassoumi, (Saif's slaves) fills this position. Saif sends him to France for his own selfish reasons and not for his love for Raymond or his family, because he later eliminates all of them through one vicious means or the other.

Raymond's sojourn in France is characterised by homosexuality, sexual orgies, squalor, rejection and frustration. Though he manages to obtain a degree in Architecture (*BV,* 151-154). He inadvertently commits incest with Anna-Kandida Kassoumi, his prostitute sister and only surviving member of his family. In the course of the encounter, Kandida brings to Raymond's knowledge several acts of Saif's injustice to the Nakemians such as: Saif's murder of some members of their family including his fiancée Tata, for "knowing too much" and his other numerous atrocities.

She also reveals to his brother how she had to flee to France in order to escape from Saif's evil traps and how she had to take to prostitution as a means of survival. Raymond becomes bitter and resolves to rebel against the West/France and Saif once he returns to Nakem empire. Part of the revolt is getting married to a French woman against Saif's wish.

In the spirit of emancipation initiated by the western nations, as a reward for their colonies' participation in the Second World War, Nakem is asked by France to elect one of theirs for the position of a deputy governor in Nakem. This period coincides with the return of Raymond Kassoumi from France. Saif effects Raymond's election. Raymond falls for the bait believing it to be the proper time for him to pay back Saif, his old master in his own coin. Raymond miscalculates as Saif is still in total control of his empire. It is Bishop Henry, the disdained but kind-hearted white man that puts Raymond on notice and warns him to be on his guard in order to avoid being murdered by Saif.

The same Henry is the only person that is able to outsmart Saif in his asp game by throwing his tricks, inhumanities and antics in his face in a riddle-ridden diction dialogue (*BV*, 173-181). Though shaken, Saif, nevertheless, does not discard his evil habits. Bishop Henry's efforts and achievement, albeit minute, demonstrates that all humanity is united in its quest for justice and morality. Though white, he does not pursue the colonisation agenda of his racial brothers nor does he applaud Saif's atrocities against his own people. Dejected and humiliated, Raymond demands oral sex from his French wife as a means of repaying her the evils and mental tortures he underwent as a struggling student in France where he lived as a second class citizen (*BV*, 168). The reader finds a correspondence in this and in the retaliation of racial injustice as reflected in the treatment of white women by Mustafa Sa'eed, the protagonist of Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. Both Raymond and Sa'eed vent their racial experience on white women.

Saif's role in the imperialist Nakem empire reflects the role of African leaders in the exploitation of the continent. The artefacts of Nakem are carted away by Shrobenius the German, after giving Saif many gift items and money (*BV*, 85-88).

Bound to Violence ends on a pessimistic note since the novelist does not envisage a change in Africa's leaders who, like Saif, have carved out a first class position for themselves and their cronies. Even in these postcolonial days, cases of dehumanisation, oppression and tyranny similar to the ones in Nakem, still pervade the political landscape of the continent. Ouologuem ends the novel despondently:

> Often, it is true, the soul desires to dream the echo of happiness, an echo that has no past. But projected into the world, *one cannot help recalling that Saif, mourned three million times, is forever reborn to history beneath the hot ashes to more than thirty African republics* (*BV*, 181-2).

Yes, Saif and his likes have unfortunately been reborn on the African soil.

3.2 Crime and punishments in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah (AS)*

In his inter-textual examination of Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, Uzoechi Nwagbara (2011) contends that with reference to Achebe's "political fiction on militarism" that *Anthills of the Savannah* "has a lot" in common with the author's "earlier fiction in texture and perspective" (86). He is of the view that Achebe's political fiction has a trace of earlier ones at least indirectly, especially his post colonial fiction which refracts Nigeria's "postcolonial disillusionment" (86). The scholar notes that Achebe had foreshadowed military experience in Nigeria right from his *A Man of the People* (1966) to his short story collection, *Girls at War* (1972) and then to *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Thus, he maintains that there has been "aesthetic consciousness in the author's craft to reconstruct militarism in postcolonial Nigeria" (88). Nwagbara opines that all works on military dictatorship in Nigeria have a common streak as they synthesise the horrors of brute force and tyranny, which have been articulated in earlier texts. He identifies a strong nexus between *Anthills,* Achebe's political novels on military dictatorship, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Habila's *Waiting for an Angel.*

Umelo Ojinmah's (1995) observation of Achebe's position on individuals aspiration to power in his fiction is very apt to the situation in *Anthills of the*

Savannah where Sam, His Excellency, attunes the power reposed in him for personal agrandisement. Ojinmah argues in this regard: "Achebe believes that no individual or group in the new nations of Africa aspires to power to use it for the benefit of the society. It is always out of self interest" (95). Ojinmah's submission above finds correspondence with that of C.L. Innes who with reference to *Anthills of the Savannah*, posits:

> While the novel *(Anthills)* is chiefly concerned with the abuse of power, and particularly male power, it also suggests the need for women to acknowledge and take upon themselves aspects of maleness (158).

The submissions of Ojinmah and Innes summarise the character of Sam, His Excellency and protagonist of the novel, and scenes of power abuse, negative use of power, violence and brutality in Kangan, a post colonial African state where the novel is set.

At the centre of the novel is His Excellency, the military Head of State who comes to power through a coup d'etat that topples another inglorious regime that is founded on tyranny, greed and violence. His ascendance to the throne of the Kangan state is due neither to his strength nor his brightness (*AS*, 46). Before laying hold on power, he used to be a humane and cultured person as Mad Medico (MM), his university school mate relates: "I told you this boy was such a charmer when I first met him. I'd never seen anyone so human, so cultured" (*AS*, 56). Sadly enough, this same embodiment of humanity which quality had influenced the younger coup plotters who had toppled the previous regime to invite him to become His Excellency, the Head of State (*AS*, 12) soon gives way to a vile and vicious one.

In a meeting of the Presidents and Heads of State under the auspices of the Organisation of African Unity, OAU, Sam falls in love with a certain President-for-life, Ngongo, an unsmiling octogenarian whose despotic and dictatorial leadership style holds much attraction for him and from whom he picks the exclamation "Kabisa", meaning not to be contested (*AS*, 52-3). On return to Kangan, he begins to manifest the leadership style of his mentor, President-for-Life Ngongo on the entire sectors of the Kangan State.

His first targets are the members of his cabinet, the "eleven intelligent, educated men…" (*AS*, 2) for whom life has become a nightmare as a result of their ordeals at the hands of Major Sam. These "eleven civil commissioners are intimidated to the level of trepidation and stupendous behaviour in the presence of His Excellency" (Afejuku and Eruaga, 105). He addresses them in the manner a boss addresses his servant and ensures that they swallow his ruling on every subject (*AS*, 1). They are intimidated to a breaking point where they lose their ego, confidence and personal judgment. Chris, the information commissioner and one of the narrators laments:

> Days are good or bad for us now according to how His Excellency gets out of bed in the morning. On a bad day, such as this one had suddenly become after many propitious auguries, there is nothing for it but to lie close to your hole, ready to scramble in… (*AS*, 2).

From the above excerpt, the reader is invited to witness the kind of torture sessions which the state executive meeting has become for the commissioners. Whether or not such meetings will be successful or marred depends on the mood of His Excellency. And as the narrative unfolds, we discover that the "bad days" are more frequent than the good ones as the Head of State is given to mood swings. In another cabinet meeting Chris again reveals:

> On my right sat the Honourable Commissioner for Education. He is by far the most frightened of the lot. As soon as he had sniffed peril in the air he had begun to disappear into his hole, as animals and insects do, backwards. Instinctively he had gathered his papers together and was in the very act of lifting the file-cover over them and dragging them into his hole after him when his entire body suddenly went rigid (*AS*, 2-3).

Through the use of such words like "frightened", "sniffed", "peril", "hole" and "rigid", Achebe demonstrates the high level of psychological trauma to which these cream of the society are subjected by His Excellency. He, through the medium of tyranny, is able to cow his subjects and his cabinet members into submission. Umelo

Ojinmah (1995) has observed that the use of such "animal imagery" in the above excerpt by the author evokes the impression of "the hunter and the hunted" (95).

Through the sudden transformation of His Excellency from good to bad, the author illustrates the damage which abusive use of power can inflict on its wielder. His Excellency's attendance of the OAU meeting turns him into a villain and psychotic tyrant. This explains why he aspires to be like the unsmiling, ruthless and brute octogenarian whose vicious leadership he copies and applies.

It is noteworthy that shortly after his return from the meeting that he, plans to become a life president in Kangan. But for the opposition of the Abazon people, his ambition would be a fait accompli. Having issued the threat of detention to his commissioners should any of them oppose his ambition through resignation, he is already on the road to accomplishing his ambition (*AS*, 119). However, for daring to withhold their support to this evil ambition, the people of Abazon are denied all forms of social amenities and infrastructural development. Even the borehole project in the province is abruptly brought to an end.

Left with no option as their area becomes drought prone following the stoppage of the borehole project and cowed to submission by thirst, the Abazonians are forced to send a delegation to also give their support to His Excellency's Life presidency ambition. Thus, through the instrument of denial and force, he obtains support from this sector of the state. The old man from Abazon presents the incident in the following graphic picture:

> When we were told two years ago that we should vote for the Big Chief to rule for ever… my people and I said no…. Because you said no to the Big Chief he is very angry and has ordered all the water boreholes they are digging in your area to be closed so that *you will know what it means to offend the sun. You will suffer so much that in your next reincarnation you will need no one to tell you to say yes whether the matter is clear to you or not…. So we came to Bassa to say our own yes and perhaps the work on our boreholes will start again and we will not all perish from the anger of the sun* (*AS*, 126-7, emphasis added)

The equation of the Head of State with the sun by the old man and member of the delegate from Abazon symbolises the ruthless, oppressive and dehumanising rulership style of His Excellency's who exercises his authority arbitrarily and abusively over his subjects. The stoppage of the borehole project at Abazon is meant to obtain their endorsement of Major Sam's life presidency quest. Thus, as the sun, he will both scorch them to death or withhold illumination from their lives to show them how not to offend an emperor. Either way, the people must succumb because there is no alternative to the 'sun'. This is exactly what happens in the case of the Abazonians. It is noteworthy that the vast majority of the subjects give their approval not because they like the leadership style of His Excellency but in order to avoid such a negative fate as the Abazonians before coming to give their belated endorsement.

So abnormally ruthless, draconian, tyrannical and oppressive is this regime that Mad Medico confesses that "… the most awful thing about power is not that it corrupts absolutely but that it makes people so utterly boring… and … just plain uninteresting" (*AS,* 56). Obviously, the negative thing about power is that it equally consumes those who wield it arbitrarily, in the same way that it rubs off on the subjects. Shortly after his return from the OAU meeting, His Excellency's radical transformation is evident to all because,

> He spoke like an excited schoolboy about his heroes; about the old emperor who never smiled nor changed his expression no matter what was going on around him[…] 'I wish I could look like him', said His Excellency wistfully (*AS*, 52).

It is irksome and unbelievable to any right-thinking person as it is to Ikem, the second narrator, that a young man of His Excellency's age can aspire to be like a tyrannical octogenarian. The obnoxious leadership style of Major Sam's rubs off on the military in such a way that human life becomes worthless to them like that of a dog. The incident at Gelegele market is a case in point. The driver of an Army car drives recklessly that he almost rams into a young man selling clothes. The incident sets onlookers panicking and after the man manages "to scrambles out of the car's vicious path" and finds his voice, he timidly asks the driver, "Oga, you want kill me?" The

cold insensitive reply: "if I kill you I kill dog", (*AS*, 48) reveals how depraved and inhuman His Excellency and his cohorts have become. The implication of the army driver's statement is that the death of the trader cannot matter just the same way as no noise is made when a dog is crushed by an automobile. Such, indeed, is the reign of terror which His Excellency's regime signifies as a result of his psychic transformation at the OAU meeting.

The authorial voice locates the imperialist influence of America as the reason for the emergence of such despotic rulers that pervade the African continent and also traces Sam's degeneration to the association he has with another equally tyrannical despot, the President-for-life Ngongo at the OAU meeting. He traces Africa's leadership failure to the greed of her leaders which always makes them enter an alliance with the western world with whom they turn around to despoil Africa. Another cause of such imperialist influence is the financial aids African leaders attract from such nations. Achebe, speaking through Ikem Osodi, the second narrator notes:

> The real danger today is from that fat, adolescent and delinquent millionaire, America, and from all those virulent misshapen freaks like Amin and Bokassa sired on Africa by Europe[….] I think that much of the change which has come over Sam started after the OAU meeting (*AS*, 52).

Vicious rulers the world over are averse to truth and criticism. As the editor of the National Gazette, Ikem Osodi, one of the three narrators and witness and a childhood friend of Sam's just like Chris, criticises the oppressive policies of His Excellency's. When he could still get access to him, he used to advise him to initiate people-friendly policies. However, after the OAU meeting, Major Sam decides to insulate and isolate himself from the subjects who legitimise his rulership, and as such Ikem can no longer visit the state house freely. Information is passed to him from His Excellency through Chris Oriko the Information Commissioner.

He engages in several running battles with Chris who constantly informs him that the head of state is angry with him over his crusading editorials, but Ikem refuses to heed the warning, choosing rather to be on the side of the masses. After his lecture to the students union where he sensitises them on the ills and corruption in the

Kangan state, a microcosm for Nigeria, the students swing into action by producing handbills to condemn the scourge. Ikem is arrested for incitement and is killed by the state on the pretext that he seized the gun from one of his arresters and got killed by a bullet in the scuffle that ensued. Though not deserving of death, having committed no crime, Ikem dies as a matyr and his death gives birth to the united force which gives rise to revolution through another coup.

Ikem's death jerk's Chris into action as he had been on the fence not approving of His Excellency's actions and afraid to publicity condemn it for fear of what will befall him. However, on the news of Ikem's death, Chris resigns his appointment and goes into hiding with the help of Emmanuel Obete, the SUG president, Braimoh, the taxi driver and with the co-operation of Captain Abudul Medani Chris is hidden for some days but when the search party for him becomes formidable, the group decides he should be smuggled incongnito to Bassa, a remote village of Kangan. The plan is almost a fait accompli as they are able to beat all security search through the skill of Braimoh and Emmanuel.

It is at one of the police check points where Chris decides to save a nursing student from being raped by a drunk police sergeant that he meets his death. Though he acts as a deux-ex-machina to save the girl's (Adamma's) life, Chris loses his like a matyr. The incident which can only happen under an oppressive and lawless regime is as gruesome as it is awe-inspiring:

> The girl's desperate shriek rose high over the dense sprawling noise of the road party. The police sergeant was dragging her in the direction of a small cluster of round huts not far from the road[…]He was pulling her by the wrist, his gun slung from the shoulder. A few of the passengers, mostly other women, were pleading and protesting timorously[…] Chris bounded forward and held the man's hand and ordered him to release the girl at once[…] if you no commot for my front I go blow your head to Jericho, craze man' 'Na you de craze' said Chris[…] The other said nothing more. He unslung his gun, cocked it, narrowed his eyes while confused voices went up all around[…]Chris stood his ground looking straight into the man's face, daring him to shoot. And he did, point blank into the chest presented to him […] He

> [Chris] shivered with his whole body and lay still. The sergeant had dropped his gun and fled into the wild scrubland […] The crowd on the road saw him […] continue his run[…] into a red sunset (*AS*, 214-6).

The above excerpt reveals the way in which the police in His Excellency's Kangan take advantage of people without any scruples. This is the same manner in which His Excellency, the symbol of authority, also exploits and oppresses his subject for being restrained from raping a helpless girl, the drunk Kangan police sergeant takes his life just as the reckless army driver at Gelegele market would have run over a poor trader if the latter had not been able to scamper to safety. What is evident from all these is that tyranny is let loose on the people.

Expectedly, another coup d' etat occurs at the end of the obnoxious regime but again, the people are not convinced that the regime which topples His Excellency's will be any better than the one it has come to replace nor the one before that one for we are told:

> Even the gullible people of Kangan, famous for dancing in the streets at every change of the government, were asking where this loyal officer was hiding in the first twenty four hours after his commander was kidnapped from the palace by unknown persons' tortured, shot in the head and buried under one foot of soil in the bush (*AS*, 218-9).

The novel ends in disillusionment because neither the author nor the Kangan citizens are convinced that the "lachrymose Major-General Ahmed Lango" (*AS*, 218) who succeeds Major Sam has something better to offer the people. Though the crisis of poor leadership is not resolved in the novel, the reader is at least happy that Major Sam the tyrannical ruler ends badly, thereby suffering for his numerous crimes. He must have died a slow and painful death having been kidnapped, tortured, shot in the head and finally denied a decent burial. At least innocent victims of his brutality like Ikem and Chris are mourned by loved ones, and given proper burials. For instance, the new head of state ordered a state funeral for Chris (*AS*, 218).

3.3 Crime and punishment in Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain (AR)*

In an essay, "Defying armies: protesting military oppression in *Arrows of Rain* (2010), Niyi Akingbe undertakes a semiotic investigation of the novel in which he links the destiny of the central character, Ogugua, with post colonial Nigeria where Ogugua's introspection, he contends, "empowers him to narrate the military preoccupation, torture and repression leading to the narrator's alienation" (3). Akingbe's thesis centres on the extent of damage wrought on a nation and its citizens by military rule. He submits that "military repression of the citizenry could fragment and damage the psyche of an individual" (4).

Abigail Eruaga in "Oral traditional elements in Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain"* (2012), interrogates the writer's resort to the Igbo oral traditional elements as veritable keys in the interpretation of the novel. She argues that the theme and incidents in the novel are "decipherable from the myths, proverbs, superstitions and legend employed by the author in the text" (82). In a book review, "Identity and narrativity in postcolonial context: Okey Ndibes's *Arrows of Rain*", Wunmi Raji identifies a nexus between this novel and Oguine's *The Squatter's Tale* and contends that both novels examine the implications of Nigeria's "developments of the nineties." He concludes that both novels are concerned with the socio-political identities in Nigeria advanced in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*. Priscilla's Review, an online website, opines that *Arrows of Rain* tackles the "pain and sorrow of not only individuals facing the truth of who they really are but also of a nation on the verge of collapse".

The society of *Arrows of Rain* (*AR*) is a modern one and Madia is a disguise for Nigeria, a post-colonial nation under the yoke of repressive military rule. Madia has two groups of population, the elderly and the youth where the former is the repository of wisdom, decorum, discipline, morality and sanity while the latter is engulfed in the corrupt influence of the military junta. Among the sagacious citizens of Madia are the father and the grandmother of the narrator and Pa Matthew Ileka Ata, an eighty-three-year old octogenarian and father of Honourable Reuben Ata, Minister for Social Issues, under Major Isa Palat Bello's regime (*AR*, 117, 116).

Madia is in dire need of a deliverer from the oppressive and repressive shackles of military rule and Ogugua, a graduate, journalist and descendant of fearless orators/speakers, is saddled with that role. Coming from a family of artists, his paternal clairvoyant grandmother always reminds him of his role:

> You must always remember that you come from a line of speakers. Your grandfather was the town crier [...] your own father [...] went to the whiteman's country and learned to become a new voice... Remember, [....] a story never forgives silence [....] The odour that makes a man want to run away from himself carries death (*AR*, 97, 55, 59*)*.

Ogugua disobeys such wise and well meaning counsel as a result of a stifling fear of the government of the day. This restrains him from championing freedom crusades through his newspaper columns and editorials, even when he is aware of Major Bello's fear of the press as a strong force in moulding people's and especially the western world's view of Madia as a pariah state. This pariah image of Madia by the international community is a situation that Major Bello, the military usurper of power is willing to give anything to avoid. Unfortunately, Ogugua is too awe-striken to pen "corrective or condemnatory editorials that can change the status quo", (Eruaga, 84) even after having once benefitted from such campaign carried out by Ashiki in a foreign journal, an act that compelled Major Bello to spare Ogugua's life against his earlier decision to "waste it". Aware of the fact that "memory outlasts power's visciousness" (*AR*, 248), one expects Ogugua to swing into action rather than abdicate his duty by keeping silent, disguising as a lunatic and pitching his abode among the elements at the Bar Beach.

Ogugua the self-centred hero sees his privileged closeness to Honourable Reuben Ata as an avenue to unwind at night parties rather than as an opportunity to correct the gross corruption, embezzlement and abuse of power evident in every sector of the Madian state . The first time he is introduced among the circle of ministers by Honourable Ata, Chief James Amanka, Madia's External Affairs Minister berates him for an editorial in which he had launched a subtle attack on the

Minister. Mr Ata intervenes by explaining, "He's here as a friendly force", and another Minister, Professor Yaw enthuses: "He's a young man... He was obviously misled. We must forgive him". (*AR*, 113). Ogugua chooses not to protest. He is too tongue-tied for a social crusader. This impotent hero-narrator only explains, "I shook with rage, but my tongue stayed cold" (*AR*,113). He definitely does not take up the challenge of his grandmother who warns him that "a story does not forgive silence".

The most grievous of his crimes are seen in his failure to save Iyese, his lover and their son (Ogugua Jnr otherwise known as Femi Adero) from molestation and murder by Major Bello. The second is his denial of Femi's paternity when it matters most. Iyese, after a failed marriage, relocates to Langa, a fictional name for Lagos, for prostitution. In Langa, she and Ogugua meet and strike a romantic relationship which results in a pregnancy. Through sheer military force, Major Isa Palat Bello forces himself on Iyese, turning her into a mistress whenever his wife travels or is indisposed. On discovering that she is carrying another man's baby, Major Bello negotiates with her, again using force, to claim the paternity of the baby if it turns out to be a boy, having begotten seven female children.

Iyese rejects the repugnant proposal and repeatedly sends letters to Ogugua who deserts her out of fear of Major Bello. She eventually gives birth to a baby boy and still informs her lover, opting to name the baby as Ogugua Junior after his father. On the fateful day when he eventually summons the courage to visit Iyese, he arrives in time to witness the brutalisation of Iyese by Major Bello and three other soldiers with whom Bello rapes her in turn, for daring to deny him the paternity of the baby boy after much entreaty. Iyese receives cuts in her private parts and the baby gets a gash on his leg and is dumped on top of his mother, both swimming in their pool of blood. Ogugua abandons mother and child and scampers into safety. Iyese bleeds to death before help comes but through the help of her friend, Violet, Ogugua Junior is taken to an orphanage while Iyese's lifeless body is deposited in a mortuary before being buried in a cemetery.

Baby Ogugua Jnr. is adopted by John and Margaret Adero a physician/teacher couple respectively who rename the baby Femi Adero. Femi's adoption is shortly

followed with the arrival of the couple's biological children. For long, Femi, his four siblings and parents, dwell in harmony but after some years, a fight with his troublesome sister, Eda, who calls him "Bastard! Son of the gutter [...], Bastard picked up from the latrine!" (*AR*, 235), opens the can of worms. His attempts at getting to the root of his real paternity both from his adoptive parents and a sorceress fail. His fiancée, Sheri, who had earlier sworn that not even his unknown parentage would separate them, soon writes him to state that her parents, "[...] are adamantly opposed to a suitor for me whose biological roots are uncertain" because she is their only child (*AR*, 230).

At this time Ogugua/Bukuru is already plunged into prison for his confession in court that Major Bello is a rapist and murderer and that he and other military men bring prostitutes to the Bar Beach in military trucks where they rape and kill them afterwards under the cover of the night (*AR*, 55-60). Femi, (his son, now a journalist), with the assistance of Ashiki and Mandi, offer to help get him out of prison by smuggling his written evidence to the media. It is from Ogugua's life history which he documented as an evidence and handed over to Femi that the latter is able to unravel the mystery surrounding his paternity. This prompts him to return to Ogugua in the cell for corroboration. What Femi needs is just to know the man that sired him even if such a person is an imbecile, in order to: know his root, stop people's taunting remarks, and desist from calling himself a "bird" while he, actually, is a "butterfly" in the manner of Ola Rotimi's Odewale.

Once again, Ogugua's silence which his grandmother warns him, "does not forgive a story", gets the better of him. He squanders such a rare opportunity for self redemption and succour to the aches he had inflicted on his son through his long abandonment. The dialogue between the two is annoying as it is tear-provoking. The reader feels some measure of anger with this irresponsible, duty-abdicating and pretentious father:

> Handing the sheets of paper back to me, Bukuru
> Avoided my eyes. A fit of anger stirred inside me.
> 'What kind of man would abandon his child?'
> He coughed lightly, but did not speak[...]

'you're certain Iyese's son was removed to the Langa Orphange?'
'Yes', he answered[...] That's what Violet told me".
'Isn't Ogugua an Igbo name?' I queried.
[....]'why do you ask?
'My adoptive mother said I had an Igbo name
When they adopted me[....]'
[....]you wrote about a gash in the baby's
right leg. I carry the scar of such a wound'
'A coincidence', he said, still evading me.
[....]'could you be my father?'
He leaned against the wall and shut his
Eyes. Silence. That familiar cap-out. Silence again! *(AR, 241-2)*

This callous betrayal which is reminiscent of Ikemefuna's by Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* attracts the intervention of supernatural forces that deal with Ogugua/Bukuru for this act of abdication of filial duty. He loses his peace of mind, and is haunted by the ghosts of such dead people like Iyese, his father, his paternal grandmother and others whose love, affection, counsel and memory he betrays. Eventually, unable to cope with the load of guilt, he opts to take his own life as can be gleaned from the suicide note captioned FINAL SILENCE which he addresses to his son, Femi:

Dear Femi,

I had wanted some time to reflect on our last painful meeting. But soon after your

departure a powerful silence engulfed me[....]it displayed before me array of dead things:

people betrayed, hopes dashed, dreams unfulfilled, roads forsaken, paths not taken[....]

whose ghost was it visiting me, I wondered, on this dark day? My father, perhaps[...]

speak, I whispered to the ghost, if you are my father[...] Are you my grandmother?[...]

or my mother? Or Iyese, returning to reproach me for a desertion of so long ago?[....]

Femi, I began to think about you. I felt a tightening in my chest and interpreted it as

grief. But grief was at once too complicated and too simple a word for the

tearing I felt inside of me[....]'could you be my father?

That was the question you asked me. I evaded it, but I should have given a simple

> answer: yes. I am the man who abandoned you on a rainy day in a room where blood
> flowed from your wounded leg'[....] I live with the shame of that abdication in this cell.
> I am here by many years ago I fooled myself that the counterfeit coin of silence was
> good enough to buy peace of mind [...] 'Could you be my father? Henceforth, that
> question will haunt every breath I draw. (*AR*, 244, 245, 246).

It could be seen from this suicide note that more than anything else, Ogugua's continued silence in the face of trouble where he ought to speak up, or indifference to people's plight, is borne out of deep seated self-centredness. He is selfish and self-seeking. Consequently, he is paid back is his own coin. He elects the same medium of silence to annihilate himself when the ghosts of all his betrayed relatives and acquaintances haunt him. Bukuru/Ogugua attracts deserving punishment for abdicating his paternal duty to his son and for betraying the memory of Iyese.

3.4 Crime and punishment in Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood(TJM)*

From the foregoing, it is evident that the novels of our study are suffused with scenes of crime and punishment. Though some characters attract punishment deservedly or unjustly, it appears that women fare doubly worse because these novels are set in patriarchally structured societies where men dictate the operational terms of human interactions. Ironically, women themselves willingly accept and encourage these patriarchal stipulations that work against them. This is aptly portrayed in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* where Nnu Ego, the protagonist pursues the patriarchal and cultural dictates of her society to her own tragic end.

In an essay, "Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price and The Slave Girl:* A Schizoanalytic Perspective" (1997), Rose Mezu identifies a nexus between Gilles Deleuze's postulation in his "Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia" in which the French scholar defines Oedipus as the "figurehead" of imperialism which endorses the "agencies" or territorialities of "power and paranoia" such as the laws of the fathers, family, community and culture with Emecheta's creative worldview.

Mezu is of the opinion that most of Emecheta's writings apply Deleuze's views and aptly compares the concept of Deleuze's Oedipus as implying the same thing as Emecheta's worldview. Mezu submits:

> In Emecheta's cosmology, "Oedipus" serves as a metaphor for the baggage of cultural myths and superstitions which over the centuries have sent African females on such guilt-trips that they usually become pliable conformists, while the rebellious non-conformists struggling with sentimental and socio-philosophical problems are trapped within a system of alienation and end up as neurotics (132).

The above observation by Mezu is true with regard to Emecheta's heroines. However, in *The Joys of Motherhood*, it is the conformist heroine, Nnu Ego that ends up as an abandoned neurotic having been consumed by the same patriarchal cultural values that she seeks to promote. But, it is Adaku, her non-conformist co-wife who summons courage to rebel against the system that survives, thus agreeing with Maurice Blanchot's opinion that "courage consists[…] in agreeing to flee rather than live tranquilly and hypocritically in false refuges" (in Mezu, 137).

In *TJM*, Emecheta presents the plight of women in the Igbo patriarchal society of Ibuza where women are seen as the appendage and property of the male. The tragedy of it all is that most women yield to such ugly practice and even labour to uphold it. For instance, Ona, the mother of Nnu Ego is torn between two men – her father and her lover. Ona "grew to fill her father's expectation". He had maintained that she must never marry… she was free to have men, however, if she bore a son, he would take her father's name, thereby rectifying the omission nature had made" (*TJM*, 12). Ona, in this case, is free to fall in love and beget children who must belong to her father should they turn out to be males.

When Ona eventually falls in love with Nwokocha Agbadi, "she had to be loyal to her father, as well as to her lover Agbadi" (*TJM*, 17). The reader is repulsed by such an unjust practice which demands that a woman procreate for her father. In another novel of hers, *The Slave Girl*, the author's heroine laments: "All her life a woman always belonged to some male. At birth, you were owned by your people, and

when you were sold, you belonged to a new master" (112) while Nnu Ego in *TJM* cries out: "when will a woman be free and not an appendage of a man?"

The death of Agunwa, Agbadi's first wife, is caused by the heartbreak inflicted on her by her husband's philandering with Ona his mistress. The unrequited love of the senior wife who dotes on her insensitive husband sets the former pining through the night while her husband and his mistress give each other pleasure. The emotional heartbreak which claims Agunwa's life is captured below:

> Agbadi's senior wife, Agunwa, became ill that very night. Some said later that she sacrificed herself for her husband: but a few noticed that it was bad for her morale to bear her husband giving pleasure to another woman in the same courtyard where she slept and to such a woman who openly treated the man they all worshipped so badly. (*TJM,* 21)

It is bad enough that Agbadi does not care for his wife emotionally but it is disappointing to know that such emotional neglect is as a result of another woman. Ona does not enjoy such a situation but why she continues in the path carved for her by her father is baffling. However, the selfishness of Obi Umunna is dashed as Ona is never blessed with a male child. After his death, Ona, not having enjoyed her own life when she is at the point of death, passionately pleads with her lover not to allow their daughter Nnu Ego pass through what she herself passes through. She tells him: "[…] please[…] see however much you love our daughter Nnu Ego you allow her to have a life of her own, a husband if she wants one[…]" (*TJM*, 28).

When she grows up, Nnu Ego gets married to Amatokwu and the marriage is happy except for the fact that she is unable to procreate for him. Unable to bear with her, Amatokwu takes a second wife who conceives immediately. Then begins her life of hell in the hands of her once loving husband who now tells her: "You will go and work with me on the farm today. Your young mate may be having my child any time now. She will stay at home with my mother" (*TJM,* 32). On reminding him of how he used to love and desire her presence by his side before now, her husband retorts:

> What do you want me to do?" Amatokwu asked. I am a busy man. I have no time to waste my precious male

> seed on a woman who is infertile. I have to raise children for my line. If you really want to know, you don't appeal to me anymore. You are so dry and jumpy. When a man comes to a woman he wants to be cooled, not scratched by a nervy female who is all bones". (*TJM*, 32)

From the above excerpt, it is evident that Amatokwu's marriage to Nnu Ego is solely for utilitarian purpose. She is to bear children for her husband and since she is unable to fulfil that expectation she has to become a farm hand for her husband. Though Nnu Ego decides to cope with such demeaning position, the beating she receives from him on a fateful day for playing mother to the son of her co-wife by breastfeeding him in order to placate him and stop him from crying, sends her back to her father's house.

She gets married again to Nnaife, a choice made for her by her father. She is willing to put up with the poverty and the ugly looks of this second husband if only he can make her a mother. Thus, her attempted suicide on the death of her son does not come as a surprise considering her psychological trauma from her previous marriage. After mourning her baby, the flood gate of children opens and Nnu Ego begins to have them, mindless of the poor living condition of her household whose only source of income is the meagre salary of her steward husband and the little income that accrues from her petty trade in firewood. Though they live in a room apartment defined by squalor, Nnaife goes ahead to inherit Adaku, the young widow of his late brother.

Adaku comes to join Nnaife and his family in their one room apartment amidst immense animosity and antagonism from Nnu Ego the senior wife. All Adaku's efforts to warm herself into the heart of her senior mate are rebuffed by the latter. Nnu Ego revels in her ability to produce babies, especially male children. On the birth of Oshia, Nnu Ego is not only happy but imbibes her patriarchal society's belief that children guarantee the future happiness of their parents and that the more of them one has, the better for one. "She was now sure as she bathed her baby son and cooked for her husband, that her old age would be happy, that when she died there would be somebody left behind to refer to her as 'mother' (*TJM*, 54). This expectation is dashed as we see in the end.

Nnu Ego is threatened by Adaku's youthfulness believing it will attract her to their husband thereby making her lose his favour and her position. Consequently, she spurns Adaku's bonding and friendly moves and flaunts her male children before her, ensuring that she gives birth in quick successions. Nnu Ego is only comforted when all Adaku sires are two girls. On one occasion, she boasts to Adaku: "whereas you chose money and nice clothes, I have chosen my children…" (*TJM,* 160). The author also tells us that Nnu Ego "… did everything she could to make Adaku jealous of her sons" (*TJM*, 162). She neglects herself, lives in abject poverty and places too much confidence in the future comfort she hopes to derive from her children when they are grown. She is so psychologically consumed by such hope of joy that she cares less about her squalid condition. The author says of her:

> Nnu Ego was like those not-so-well-informed Christians who, promised the kingdom of Heaven, believed that it was literally just round the corner and that Jesus Christ was coming on the very morrow. Many of them would hardly contribute anything to this world, reasoning, "What is the use? Christ will come soon". (*TJM,* 162)

Nnu Ego turns herself into a successful procreator but great failure in other spheres. Adaku on the other hand, makes up her mind to forget about giving birth to more children and concentrates on giving proper education to her two daughters with the money that accrues from her lucrative business: " I will spend the money I have in giving my girls a good start in life… I shall see that they get enrolled in a good school. I think that will benefit them in the future" (*TJM,* 168). In addition to that, she also resolves to quit the marriage:

> "I'm leaving this stuffy room tomorrow, senior wife"[…] my *chi* be damned! I am going to be a prostitute[…] I am leaving here tomorrow with my girls. I am not going to Ibuza. I am going to live with those women in Montgomery Road[….] As for my daughters, they will have to take their own chances in this world. I am not prepared to stay here and be turned into a mad woman, just because I have no sons. (*TJM,* 168-9)

In the above excerpt, Adaku takes a realistic view of things. She refuses to be consumed by the yokes of tradition the way Nnu Ego does. Though the author does not sanction her option of taking to prostitution, at least she breaks away from the shackles that have fettered her and other women. Nnu Ego on the other hand, suffers for obeying the patriarchal order. Ironically, she is neglected by the children (sons) in whom she had put her hope and spent all her life bringing up.

Reduced to poverty, she relocates to the village. Meanwhile Oshia her son wins scholarship to America while Adim, her second, travels to Canada. She is neglected by these sons in whom she invests all her life and dreams. Oshia marries a white woman and none of the male children takes care of her. Heart-broken and deserted, she loses her senses and dies by the way side at Otinkpa square at night. Oshia that refused to send money to cater for his mother when she was alive borrows to give her a decent burial. Whereas Nnu Ego suffers unjustly, Nnaife's punishment is well deserved for his crime of championing ethnic disunity.

His opposition to the union between his twin daughter, Kehinde and Ladipo, the Yoruba butcher's son borders on ethnic difference. He almost commits murder but for the quick intervention of his son, Adim and other kind neighours. His rejection of the union is borne out of hatred for the Yoruba ethnic group. He threatens murder on hearing about his daughter's love for the man and their willingness to contract a marital relationship. His reaction is thunderously negative. He retorts "My daughter with a Yoruba husband? She is better dead. Kehinde! My daughter! The butcher I'll butcher him! (*TJM*, 209). With such utterance and in such a smouldering mood, Nnaife grabs a sharp cutlass, "so wild" and "so determined," and dashes into the compound of the prospective son-in-law, brandishing his cutlass. Though he is intercepted before getting to his targets, Nnaife's cutlass nevertheless, lands on the young man who jumps on him in an effort to recover the cutlass from him, making a deep cut on the man's shoulder.

A police ambulance arrives to convey the casualty to hospital while Nnaife is driven to a cell in the Black Maria, still swearing: "I shall still kill you" [….] "I shall be released in a day or two, but I shall come and kill you" (*TJM,* 2010). His detention

and subsequent prosecution make him unable to carry out his threat. Moreover, what he perceives as a little misunderstanding with his Yoruba neighbor becomes a big case leading to his conviction. However, his lawyer pleads for leniency on the ground that he committed the crime under the influence of alcohol thereby securing the committal of the sentence from murder to manslaughter and reducing it from a-five-year jail term to three months, albeit at the price of Nnaife's gratuity. The author puts it this way:

> [Lawyer Nweze] told [Nnu Ego] that there was some likelihood of Nnaife being released from prison after serving only three months, because some "important" people had decided that he had not been responsible for his actions when he had attacked the Yoruba butcher. *He would lose a great part of his gratuity*, but they would give him a small pension[….] The family was to keep quiet about it, otherwise people would think that the lawyer defending them had done some underground deal (*TJM*, 220, emphasis added).

Nnaife's is embittered and devastated by this situation. Apart from losing a great part of his gratuity, he also cedes his position to Nnu Ego, the senior wife of the household. Having been relegated to the periphery by his imprisonment, it becomes ironical that he not only loses the bride price of Kehinde but is also unable to preside over the marriage of Taiwo and collect the bride price. Earlier in the novel, the author had told us that "Nnaife quickly approved of this man [for Taiwo], knowing that his daughter was striking a good bargain, and he was in a hurry to get as much money as possible from his children before returning" (*TJM*, 203). Secondly, he had been grateful "he had no older brother, so the whole bride price would come to him" (*TJM* 203-4). However, with the misfortune of his imprisonment, though the bride price is paid to Adim who represents Nnaife, it is actually Nnu Ego and Adim who preside over the ceremony and dispense the money on Nnaife's behalf (*TJM*, 220-1).

Emecheta in an interview with Adeola James (1990:36) has condemned the bickering and petty jealousy of women against one another. She advocates that women bond with one another, stressing that with such unity they can easily rise

above the forces that work against them. In her essay, "Feminism with a small 'f'" (2007:555), making reference to *The Joys of Motherhood* and Nnu Ego, she states: I[…] describe the life of [a] woman who was so busy being a good mother and wife that she didn't cultivate her women friends. She died by the wayside, hungry and alone[…]" (555). She is of the opinion that women, rather than men are responsible for putting themselves on the lowest rung of the societal ladder. Stephane Robolin describes Nnu Ego's life as being "saturated with pathos" (2004:77), stressing that she encounters a lot of obstacles "in her struggle to achieve the ideal of motherhood".

Nnu Ego, indeed is a victim of patriarchy and an encapsulation of Emecheta's example in her essay above. She comes to the realisation of the trick played on her mentality by her patriarchal society too late. As we see towards the end of the novel, her spurning attitude to Adaku who is earlier seen by her as an enemy, changes and she re-examines her erroneous belief in children as the source of their parents' joy, having begun to suffer neglect from her own sons. Moreover, her husband's nasty attitude and constant verbal assaults point to her that she has been lured by her male controlled society to place herself on such a high pedestal where she does not actually belong.

In the court premises, she apologises to Adaku who has come to solidarise with her, "Try to forgive my condemning your leaving Nnaife when you did. I am beginning to understand now" (*TJM,* 218). She regrets to realise too late that the values of her society had begun to change and that a woman with many children could face a lonely old age and may die a miserable death all alone, just like a barren woman" (*TJM,* 219). Oshia who graduates from a good secondary school securing a well-paying job is reluctant to offer financial assistance to his family (*TJM,* 191). He plans travelling abroad for further study. It is after he bluntly tells Nnu Ego that he cannot help any family member yet and that he does not want to be like his father (*TJM,* 193) that she becomes "subdued" and her "enthusiasm" begins "to flag" (*TJM,* 193), leading to the deterioration of her health. Oshia's indifference makes Nnu Ego ill and leads to the still birth of her seventh child

Nnaife is also frustrated by Oshia's selfishness and transfers the aggression on Nnu Ego whom he blames for any mistake of the children's just as he disowns Oshia: "He is no longer my son. Regard his [sic] as one of the lost ones" (*TJM,* 201). "Nnaife had looked at her with so much venom…" (*TJM,* 219). In Nnu Ego's throes of regret, she tells herself that "she would have been better off had she had time to cultivate those women who had offered her hands of friendship" (*TJM,* 219). It is ironical that two of Nnu Ego's sons Oshia and Adim (in USA and Canada respectively) from whose neglect Nnaife is "broken" and Nnu Ego "goes downhill fast" (*TJM,* 224), send money to accord Nnu Ego "the noisiest and most costly second burial in Ibuza" whereas she died "with no child to hold her hand" (*TJM,* 224). Nnu Ego's life and time are indeed, suffused with "pathos" as Robolin rightly observes.

It is not surprising that Nnu Ego's shrine refuses to honour the fertility prayers offered to it by barren women. She decides to requite her society which she conceives deceives and betrays her in its own coin. In Ibuza, the shrines erected in the names of other productively fertile women like Nnu Ego are famed for granting the petitions of their barren supplicants but Nnu Ego's "never did" however passionately "people appealed to her to make women fertile" (*TJM,* 224). In other words, Nnu Ego elects to visit punishment on the society for what she considers to be its crime against her.

CHAPTER FOUR

NOVELS FROM THE EASTERN, NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN REGIONS

Ngugi's *The River Between (TRB)*, Mahfouz's *The Thief and the Dogs (TTD)*, Salih's *Season of Migration to the North (SMN) and* La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* (*AWN*)

4.1 Crime and punishment in Ngugi's *The River Between (TRB)*

In his thematic study of the novels of Ngugi wa Thiong'O, Olawale Awosika (1997) identifies four major themes as being central to Ngugi's novels. These themes, according to him, are: "the theme of the messiah/savior, the politics of decolonization, culture conflict, and the theme of betrayal" (104). In further pursuit of his argument, Awosika submits that the theme of culture conflict is limited to the *River Between*. However, a close reading of the novel discloses that besides the above are other themes such as: jealousy/envy, foolishness, crime and punishment and unreasonableness. These themes are respectively reflected in the attitude of Kabonyi to Waiyaki, the latter's acquiescence to Kabonyi's risky suggestion that he take the *Kiama* oath of allegiance, and Joshua's unreasonable curse upon his two daughters for the latter's deflection to the tribal ways.

Set in the early days of Kenya's colonisation and christianisation by western colonialists, *The River Between* reflects the division of the Gikuyu people along tribal and religious lines following the advent of white Christian missionaries under the leadership of the Reverend Livingstone. The novel derives its title from the river which separates the Gikuyu christians that pitch their tent of abode in Makuyu and those who stick to the tribal way and remain in Kameno. The administrative headquarters of the new Christian religion is Siriana, the same place where the white man builds a school for the education of the natives.

The events in the narrative revolve around Waiyaki, son of Chege, the sagacious man who prophesies of the coming of the white man, and who, like Ezeulu's advice to his son, Oduche, in Achebe's *Arrow of God*, admonishes his son Waiyaki to identify with the white man's school in Siriana in such a way as to

understand the wisdom of this stranger in order to conquer him. He charges Waiyaki thus:

> 'Salvation shall come from the hills. From the blood that flows in me[…] a son shall rise. And his duty shall be to lead and save the people'[….] 'Arise. Heed the prophecy. Go to the Mission place. Learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man. But do not follow his vices. Be true to your people and the ancient rites'. (*TRB*, 20)

This, combined with other such admonitions in the past and Waiyaki's conception of himself shortly after his circumcision/initiation into the tribal way as "Demi, bravely clearing the forest, a whole tribe behind him" (*TRB*, 12) makes him believe that liberation and salvation will actually come to his people through him. He is obsessed by such belief to the extent that he sleeps, wakes, eats and walks with it. To him, he is Demi, the Gikuyu founding father and deliverer, and perceiving education as the fastest and only means of achieving such onerous tribal assignment, he dives into imbibing and spreading education.

Chege's admonition leaves his son in an ambivalent position since it is difficult to imbibe western education without imbibing other things that come with it. Thus, it proves difficult for Waiyaki to be totally loyal to the "people and the ancient rites." Just as Achebe's Oduche gets indoctrinated by the white man's religion and imprisons a sacred python in a box, Waiyaki also commits a related blunder which his enemy, Kabonyi, capitalises on to undo him.

The composition of the educational curriculum imparted to Waiyaki and other students at the missionary school in Siriana is such that opposes the traditional beliefs, cultural rites and native philosophy of the Gikuyu people. Part of such teachings is the forbidding of circumcision, a basic traditional custom of the people. Expectedly, there arises a rift between the believers in the new religion and those committed to the traditional practices and in the purity of the tribe with the former clustering in Makuyu and the latter in Kameno. Kabonyi who comes to limelight on the death of Chege, leads the tribal people while Joshua heads the products of the new faith.

Consequently, families, friends and groups get divided on this ground as violence, mistrust, suspicion and hatred become imminent and inevitable.

Already, Waiyaki is engrossed in the task of spreading the white man's education among the people of the ridges, oblivious of the gulf that tears his people apart. Also unknown to him is the fact that Kabonyi is envious of him believing that he is the one through whom salvation will come to the tribe as prophesied by Chege. Kamau and Kinuthia are teachers while Waiyaki is the headmaster of Marioshoni, the first indigenous school after the break with Siriana, a school built solely by Waiyaki's effort. This success gets Kabonyi more incensed against Waiyaki. The death of Muthoni, the daughter of Joshua from the wound brought about by her circumcision further widens the gulf between the Christians and the non-Christians and alters the status quo in Siriana school. Henceforth,

> the children of those who defied the laws of the church and continued with their tribal customs would have to leave Siriana. And no child of a pagan would again be allowed into school unless the child was a refugee. Even then the child would have to renounce circumcision (*TRB*, 60)

When she eventually dies from the wound, Muthoni's death is interpreted by all, even by herself as emanating from the curse laid on her by, her father for disobeying him and deflecting to the tribal custom. We are told that her "revolt had rung from hill to hill…" Waiyaki himself challenges her in these words: "You are a rebel"… why did you do it Muthoni? The elders conclude that her unfortunate case is as a result of "A father's curse… since all the other girls have left, their wounds nearly dry scars." Muthoni justifies her father and her suffering thus: "I disobeyed him. I chose my way and when he called me back, I refused to go" (*TRB*, 40, 43, 47, 49). Though she disobeyed her father, it seems that her punishment is too grave for her crime.

The hostility between these two camps further circumscribes the freedom of Waiyaki who has all along been committed to the educational upliftment of all. The situation becomes compounded as the white people encroach on the natives' land quitting the original owners, and increasing their own population in Siriana region.

With such action, it becomes obvious that "the conquest of the hills was well under way" as "some people were already working on the alienated lands to get money for paying taxes" introduced and imposed on them by the white man (*TRB,* 62). In view of such development, the natives who favour the tribal ways decide to form an organisation through which activities the white man's injustice can be countered and the purity of the land and its custom preserved. This was how the *kiama* came into existence.

Unknown to Waiyaki, the *kiama* is subtlely targeted at him by Kabonyi and his son Kamau both of whom are envious of his reputation and popularity, afraid that he will emerge the eventual saviour of the tribe (*TRB*, 63). "Perhaps Kabonyi would not have been so hostile had [Waiyaki's] place been taken by Kamau, his own son…. Nobody could guess the extent to which Kabonyi resented the rise of Waiyaki…. Kabonyi knew of the prophecy. He feared Waiyaki might be the sent one. And he hated this" (*TRB*, 92-3).

After Muthoni's death following Joshua's (her father's) curse, unforgiveness and unreasonable tenacity to the feud between the Christians and non-Christians, Nyambura, his second daughter and younger sister to deceased Muthoni re-examines the situation. Nyambura is in love with Waiyaki but is restrained by her obedience to her parents from making an open declaration. She is like Waiyaki, who is also torn between his love for her (Nyambura) and his commitment to the *kiama*. But with the passage of time, Nyambura decides to obey her passion. Through an interior monologue, the reader is conveyed the turmoil in her heart:

> If the faith of Joshua and Livingstone came to separate, why, it was not good. If it came to stand between a father and his daughter so that her death did not move him, then it was inhuman. She wanted the other. The other that held together, the other that united […] (*TRB*, 134)

Courageously, Nyambura renounces the religion that forbids her father from mourning his dead daughter (Muthoni), and concludes that such religion is bereft of love and different from the one the Bible preaches. Consequently, she openly declares her love for Waiyaki, an act that attracts, the ire of her father. Expectedly, Joshua her

father denounces her: "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord', he declares, pointing at Nyambura… 'You are not my daughter. Yet let me warn you',… 'you will come to an untimely end. Go!" (*TRB*, 136) Joshua ruins the lives of his two daughters for being a religious fanatic. While he elects to be a devout Christian, he ensures that his entire household toe his line and thus places curses on her two daughters who respectively choose to follow the way of the tribe and to fall in love with a non-Christian. Ironically, religion which is supposed to be a unifying force separates Joshua from his family while his attitude also makes him lose his two children. He loses Muthoni and then Nyambura.

Though Waiyaki wants to be a bridge builder between the Christians and the supporters of the tribal way, he goes about it in a suspicious manner. His visits to Siriana to source for teachers for the school established for the tribe after the Reverend Livingstone drives away pagan children from Siriana school is misconstrued as friendship with the white man. Moreover, he squanders several opportunities where he could have explained his mission to Siriana and his part in the hospitalisation of Muthoni before the elders. Consequent upon this and the immense envy that Kabonyi bears him, the former misrepresents Waiyaki before the elders, bringing several accusations against him. Kabonyi's position as the head of the *Kiama* and former follower of Joshua the crusader of Christian religion make his words authoritative and credible.

As he faces the elders, Waiyaki is unable to defend himself against the allegations of being unclean and impure by the tribe's standard, having conveyed Muthoni, an unclean "dying woman, a dead body" (*TRB*, 125) without being cleansed afterwards and thereby spreading the *thahu* (curse, abomination, impurity) to "the stem and root of the tribe" (*TRB*, 125). Secondly, he is accused of deliberately working against the tribe by attending Joshua's church, an act considered a grave betrayal (*TRB*, 126). His response to these accusations are unconvincing.

Even if the tribe forgives this, his involvement with Nyambura, the second and only surviving child of Joshua is unforgivable by them. The allegation of his betraying the tribe to the white man is sustained when Waiyaki is seen in Joshua's

house by Kamau and four other men sent to capture and try Nyambura for "corrupting Waiyaki thereby shaking his loyalty to the tribe". Waiyaki who has gone to warn Joshua to be careful as evil is determined against him and his household that night by the *kiama* is, in fact, confirmed to be a traitor. Having taken the *kiama* oath to be faithful to the tribe. He is pitched against the tribe and he and Nyambura are left at the mercy of *kiama* (headed by Kabonyi) to determine their fate.

Waiyaki allows his emotion come between his loyalty to the tribe. He would not have faced the wrath of the *kiama* if he had withdrawn from the tribal ways and declared for the white man's religion. But his ambivalent position in supporting the tribe and subtle support for Joshua at the same time causes him some harm. Waiyaki, on his part, is torn between his love for the tribe and Nyambura, and whichever he settles for, danger lurks in wait for him. Kabonyi and Kamau plot against him out of jealousy.

He and Nyambura are judged without regard to due process. Recalling what transpired between the two on their first day of close contact, the fate of Nyambura and Waiyaki both of whom had stood "as if she and he were together standing on an altar ready for sacrifice" (*TRB*, 104) becomes prophetic as Waiyaki's fate under his enemies' judgment can only be imagined. The verdict of this jungle trial is harrowing for both Waiyaki and Nyambura.

4.2 Crime and punishment in Mahfouz's *The Thief and the Dogs (TTD)*

Naguib Mahfouz, a foremost Egyptian writer is the author of *The Thief and the Dogs* which was first published in Arabic in 1961 and translated into English in 1984. The novel deals with betrayal, especially "the betrayal of revolutionary ideals once power, with the privileges that come with it, is achieved" (El-Enany: 102). The work revolves around Said Mahran, a freed Godless prisoner who is revenge drunk against the society and individuals whom he perceives have injured him. He is a man with fragmented personality and identity. Against all reasonable wise counsels he embarks on his revenge mission which misses its targets on each occasion. Trevor Le Gassick, translator and writer of the novel's introduction describes it as a,

> Psychological novel[…] [which] moves with the speed and economy of a detective story. Here Mahfouz uses the stream-of- consciousness technique[…] to show the mental anguish of his central figure consumed by bitterness and a desire for revenge against the individuals and the society who have corrupted and betrayed him and brought about his inevitable damnation. (*TTD*, 8)

Le Gassick's comment above summarises the novel which opens in a prison where the protagonist regains his freedom after a four year jail term "taken from him by [the] betrayal" (*TTD*, 13) of his wife Nabawiyya who sells him out to the police to enable her get married to Ilish Sidra, Said's apprentice in a crime organisation, a man with whom she has been locked in an affair unknown to her husband, Said. Before his sentence, Said had flourished as the controller of a crime network and as he leaves the prison gates, he resolves to "strike like fate" at the right moment against "those who had betrayed him" who "would despair unto death when treachery would pay for what it had done" (*TTD*, 13)

Said bolts out of the jail with the venom of vengeance in his mind. "Homeless and hounded, with his soul devoured by the desire to avenge himself on those who wronged him" (El-Enany: 102), he visits the home of Ilish Sidra his arch enemy and now foster father to his five year old daughter, Sana. Mr. Mahran's visit is two-pronged: to see his daughter and to "test the strength of Sidra's "fortification" as he hopes to attack him later despite his being guarded by a police detective (*TTD*, 18). Said is so obsessed with his revenge mission that he remains adamant to the counsels of his friend, Mr. Bayaza, two others and his enemy, Ilish Sidra all of whom respectively advise him in the following words:

> […] But there's a solution to every disagreement. In the sacred law" [Said Bayaza]. "And its best to reach an understanding", said someone else. "Said, you're fresh out of prison", a third man added in a conciliatory tone. "*A wise man learns his lesson*".[…] and the atmosphere was tense until Ilish continued:
> "What's over is done with, these things happen everyday; unhappiness can occur, and old friendships

> often break up. *But only shameful deeds can shame a man*" (*TTD*, 17, 18 emphasis added).

Pretending to heed the advice, Said surveys Ilish Sidra's house while sitting in the living room with the others, amidst immense turmoil which is conveyed to the reader in italicised words as internal monologue in the manner of Joycean stream of consciousness style. He waits patiently for the appearance of his five year old daughter, the only possession he has on earth having lost his wife to Ilish.

Sana is brought forward and prodded to meet Said who is described as her "Daddy". The child finds it difficult to reconcile this "new paternity". She refuses to shake Said's outstretched hand and keeps calling for her "mommy". "I am your daddy, come to me", laments Said, trying to draw her close by force. "The child struggled and wept more violently, and finally the detective intervened: "Easy, easy, the child does not know you" (*TTD*, 23). Said's frustration is climaxed by this filial rejection as he "suddenly felt crushed by a sense of total loss" (*TTD*, 21) and heads to the house of Sheikh Ali al-Junaydi for shelter.

Through a flashback and the dialogue between Said and the Sheikh, the former's early happy childhood and his adult crime-infested life are brought to the reader's knowledge and the contrast between these two identities are, indeed, worlds apart. As he approaches the house of Sheikh, the holy man and confessor, he recalls what the Sheikh's house had symbolised for him as a child when he used to accompany his father there on prayer rituals. "His heart beat fast",

> Carrying him back to a distant, gentle time of childhood, dreams, a loving father and his own innocent yearning. "[…] look and listen, learn and open your hearts", his father used to say. *Besides a joy like the joy of Paradise that was aroused in him by faith and dreams, there had also been the joy of singing and green tea*. (*TTD*, 25-26, emphasis added)

Feeling secure in the four walls of the Sheikh's house, Said narrates his story to his host who has known him well from childhood and can tell his behaviour with

unmistaking accuracy. The dialogue between them is as revealing as it is informative about the attitude of Saif, the ex-convict:

> "Forgive my coming to your house like this. But there's nowhere else in the world for me to go". "*You seek the walls, not the heart"*, he whispered. […] "I got out of jail today". [...]"*You have not come from jail*". The voice was sorrowful [….]
> Said smiled again… and asked, "Do you remember me?"
> "Your concern is the present hour"
> Said asked for reassurance: "*And do you remember my father, Mr. Mahran… what wonderful days those were!*"
> "*Say that, if you can, about the present*"
> "Master, I have come to you now when my own daughter has rejected me".
> The Sheikh sighed. "God reveals His secrets to His tiniest creatures!"
> "I thought that if God had granted you long life, I would find your door open."
> "*And the door of Heaven? How have you found that?"*
> "[…] my father used to seek you out when he was in trouble, so I found out myself[…]" "*You seek a roof and nothing else"*
> […] "I want more than that I would like to ask God to be pleased with me."
> The Sheikh replied as if intoning. "The celestial Lady said, *Arent you ashamed to ask for His good pleasure while you are not well pleased with Him*" (*TTD*, 27-29, emphasis added)

Said narrates his catalogue of woes to the Sheikh – his rejection by his daughter, his betrayal by llish with Nabawiyya's collusion, his imprisonment, the infidelity of his wife, the devastation of his worldly wealth and subsequent displacement by Illish, whom he refers to as a "dog", "layabout" and "a mere pupil" of his, and the Sheikh repeatedly tells him to "take a Koran" and "wash and read" (*TTD*, 30-32). Describing the Sheikh's counsel as the "words that cannot be understood by someone approaching hell, Said contemplates "what other refuge" is available to him (*TTD*,33), thereby foreclosing any possibility of self redemption, transformation and integration to the society.

Since Said seeks: only the roof and not the heart of the occupant, God's good pleasure and not a relationship with him, since his concern is with the ephemeral and the immediate and not with the inner and lasting, so long as he spurns the pious ways of his God-conscious father and chooses to be hell-bound in his revenge mission, so long will he remain in his jail of torment, anguish, identity crisis and pain as we infer from the dialogue.

Sheikh and Said symbolise two different and parallel universe. The former has through the pursuit of God, attained tranquility from a harsh world from which he has completely insulated himself while the latter is engulfed in its scourging and scorching unfriendliness compounded by his unyielding and unforgiving heart that has taken the path of self destruction. As he rightly tells Rauf Ilwan, his one time revolutionary mentor after his release from jail: "In my whole life I've mastered only one trade… [Burglary] is most rewarding you know" (*TTD*, 44).

Clinging to this "one trade" that he is not willing to drop, Said attacks Rauf the night of the very day he visits him in the office and in his house. After the lavish entertainment given him by Rauf, he returns at night to burgle his house and get some money. He says: "my profession will always be mine, a just and legitimate trade, especially when it's directed against its own philosopher… Rauf, your pupil is coming to relieve you of a few worldly goods" (*TTD*, 48, 50). Unfortunately for him, Rauf had anticipated the nocturnal call since he "can read" him "like an open book", and had waited for him. Thus outsmarting him and threatening to call the police, Said makes futile efforts to lie concerning the purpose of his visit. Disbelieving him and rightly prophesying his damnable end Rauf retorts: "it's no use. You'll always be worthless and you'll die a worthless death," and sternly charges him never to "show" him his "face again". (*TTD*, 52, 54)

But Said the unrelenting vengeance-seeker leaves Rauf's house to Mr. Tarzan's café where he procures a revolver, with which he alters his identity from a burglar to a murderer. He, in a maddening fury, attacks the supposed residence of Ilish Sidra and shoots Shaban Husayn the new occupant, supposing him to be Mr. Ilish Sidra, unknown to him that the Sidras had anticipated the attack and had moved

out of their residence the same day Said had visited them and was rejected by his daughter. Having boasted: "There's no escape from me! I'm the devil himself" (71), and realising his graduation from taking "precious goods" to taking "worthless lives!" (72), Said soon understands that "Nowhere is safe for" him "now or ever after" (73). With the elaborate publicity given his burglary case by the papers which dug into his past life, he becomes a man on the run as he has "to put up with the dark, the silence and the loneliness" (*TTD*, 95).

So inexplicable is Said's drive for vengeance, his distorted views of things, his bitterness and his contrasting life from that of his loving and God-fearing father. Perhaps the explanation offered by Sophia I. Akhuemokhan and H. Oby Okolocha (2012) offers a clue to the puzzle. These scholars describe Said as a character "whose consciousness is not integrated" as a result of "a disturbing kind of split in his psyche". They argue that there is "an unnatural demarcation between Said the man (the ex-convict), and Said the boy", stressing that when juxtaposed with Nur, the prostitute in the novel, that the latter is a more admirable character as a result of her "personhood" and positive identity than the former, in spite of Said's advantage of an enviable home background. In further pursuit of their argument, they note:

> Said is raised by affectionate and pious parents whose solitary entertainment is attending prayer meetings. When they die, their son is thrown on a pitiless world, but neither the early death of his parents nor the callous world can be held liable for Said's personality crisis. The problem is his broken identity. He betrays it himself when he admits his perverse belief that he is 'compelled to forget everything good in life' (94). 'Everything good' embraces all the good feelings that ever were' (95), which are predominantly his childhood and adolescent attachments. 'Everything good' equally has to do with the good things of life before his four-year jail sentence (6).

This 'compulsion' to forget everything good is what prods Said into crime. The instinct also makes him disregard the wise counsels of the Sheikh, Messers: Bayaza, Ilish, Rauf, and Nur the prostitute and his doting lover who offers him shelter and

consciously does all within her power to rehabilitate him and reintegrate him into the society. He spurns all of these and rejects *Nur's open and sincere love thus* choosing the path of perdition instead.

Having lost the chance of killing Ilish Sidra, and aware that death hangs on his neck whenever caught by the police, he etches his hope on killing Rauf. With this utterance: "Rauf, the only hope I have left is in you, that you won't make me lose my life in vain" (121), he makes a second visit to Rauf's house, but this time to kill, having procured a revolver and an Army officer's uniform for disguise. Now as before, he misses his target, kills Rauf's doorkeeper, having been disorientated by "a shot" fired "from within" Rauf's garden" (124), barely escaping the chase and gunfire of the neighoburhood and police that have been aroused by blown whistles.

After his failed attempt on Rauf's life, the papers carry an indepth account of his crime-prone life with reference to his antecedents, accusing him "of being mad, craving for power and blood" and insinuating that "his wife's infidelity had made him lose his mind", thus making him to kill at "random" (130). Detectives cordon off all the streets and Said's nuisance value to the entire society becomes apparent (154), making it necessary to pluck him off to ensure society's peace and survival. Realising that neither the desert road nor anywhere else is safe for him, he decides for "the Valley of Death" (the cemetery) from where he hopes to "fight" the police "to the death" (154). His flight to the cemetery is symbolic of the fact that he is already condemned to death or rather that he is already a dead man.

Moreover, his foolhardiness in choosing to engage a retinue of police detectives in a shoot out demonstrates that his "life was a proven failure" as all his efforts at killing his enemies "had all been in vain" while "all the malice and vengefulness he'd been running from would be breathed right into his face" (156). Expectedly, unable to match the detectives, his life comes to a sad end under the bullet of the police at the cemetery in fulfillment of his own remonstration that "A world without moral is like a universe without gravity" (126). Said Mahran is without morals, and therefore, not fit to dwell among other sane individuals whose lives and society are anchored on gravity.

Morality is at the root of all Mahfouz's writings. "Nearly all [his] novels carry a moral message,[…] in his own quietly philosophical way, he is at one and the same time a passive observer of the society he describes and a zealous critic of the malaise affecting it" (Abu-Haidar, 232). The author, an adept believer in morality, justice and altruism, crafts his novels in such a way that characters who embody such virtues come out unscathed while those who manifest vice are damned. Briefly, his moral code is depicted in the words of Edward Said (2009):

> According to Mahfouz's moral code, those who only seek their own individual salvation are damned [….] Characters who are saved in Mahfouz's work are only those with altruistic motives, those who show concern for others and demonstrate a kind of awareness in their particular predicament being part of a more general one (3).

The above explains why ex-criminals like Ilish Sidra and Rauf Ilwan who drop their criminal attitudes after the revolution and reintegrate themselves into the society through honest vocations survive while Said that spurns all moral and reasonable behaviours, choosing vengeance with the viciousness of a demon, gets damned. Compelled to erase every good memory including his happy childhood under the loving care of his parents, he disregards their holy and loving ways, growing into a criminal adult. These notwithstanding, Saif is offered opportunities of self-redemption by the Sheikh, Nur and Rauf. Rauf is willing to offer him an honest trade but the only trade he understands is stealing, thereby perpetuating the image of one who has been doomed for destruction. Having rejected all honest options, it is inevitable then that he must end the way he does. For after all, does Said himself not say that "[…] for the living to enjoy life it is imperative that criminal and vicious elements be eradicated"? (*TTD,* 70). As a criminal element that metamorphoses from stealing goods to taking human lives, Said, indeed, deserves what he gets.

4.3 Crime and punishment in Salih's *Season of Migration to the North (SMN)*

Tayeb Salih, the Sudanese author, is considered one of the best short story writers working in Arabic today. Having studied both western and Arabic literature,

philosophy, and society, he intermingles aspects of both cultures in his works. Salih's works are mainly political, dealing with such themes as colonisation and gender. His popularity came to limelight with his publication of *Season of Migration to the North* first published in Arabic in 1966. Thirty five years later, (in 2001), the work was declared "the most important Arabic novel of the 20th century" by the Syrian-based Arab Literary Academy in Damascus (OBIT, BBC, Wikipedia).

Salih completed three other novels and a collection of short stories. His novella, *The Wedding of Zein* was made into a drama in Libya and a Cannes Festival prize-winning film by the Kuwaiti film maker, Khalid Siddiq, in the late 1970s. For more than a decade, Salih wrote a weekly column for the London-based Arabic language newspaper, *al Majalla* in which he explored various literary themes. Born in the Northern Province of Sudan, he studied at the University of Khartoum before leaving for the University of London in England. He died in London on 18 February, 2009.

Tayeb Salih, in *SMN* like Achebe and other African writers, engages in a response to Conrad's negative image of Africa in his *Heart of Darkness* a novel that justifies western colonial enterprise in Africa. Salih acknowledges the influence of Conrad's novel in *Season*. Mona Amyuni notes that Salih had made reference to such intertextuality in 1980, at a lecture in the American University in Beirut, where he stated that a major foreign influence on him with regard to "form" was "Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* and *Nostromo* (1985, 15). Most African writers who engage in post-colonial discourse write back to correct or deconstruct the ugly image of Africa and her people as postulated in western texts, major examples of which are Joseph Conrad's two novels above and Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson*.

Chinua Achebe, the originator of the reconstruction of Africa's image in colonial discourse, "has repeatedly asserted that much of his own work has been inspired by his desire to write back to representations of Africa by Conrad and other early twentieth century British authors, and his well-known characterisation of Conrad as a racist appears in his essay, "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's

Heart of Darkness" (Byron, 7). Achebe's view of the nexus between Conrad and postcolonisation is resonated in Saree Makdisi's argument:

> Just as Conrad's novel was bound up with Britain's imperial project, Salih's [*Season of Migration to the North*] participates (in an oppositional way) in the after life of the same project today, by 'writing back' to the colonial power that once ruled the Sudan (805)…. [Season] deliberately confronts [*Heart of Darkness*] from within (815).

Lending his voice to the argument on the postcolonial discursiveness of *SMN*, Abayomi Okanrende opines that the novel,

> could be described as a postcolonial inscription not only subverting the imperialism of European… texts but also enquiring into the puzzle of Oriental postcoloniality, for it, in a deconstructive fashion, signposts the socio-cultural contradictions of Oriental intercourse with Europe as much as it repudiates European politico-cultural dominance over the Orient (60).

The above scholars have rightly pointed out the Conradian style and influence in *Season*, however, Salih deliberately deploys such style with a different intention. He purposely resorts to this Conradian bent with a view to deconstruct the Occidental air of superiority to the Orient in their texts in which the former created images of a Savage Africa and her people in dire need of civilisation, via colonisation with its attendant conquest and destruction of the Orient/Africa and Africans.

Consequently, Mustafa Sa'eed, the protagonist of Salih's novel, and product of British educational system, embarks on a Northward journey with a liberating mission as the uppermost thing in his mind. "I'll liberate Africa with my penis" (*SMN*, 120) he vouches. He goes to Europe, determined to destroy her through his destruction of the white women with whom he contracts relationships. To him, Europe becomes metaphorically projected through these women. In the novel, Sa'eed is symbolised as "a thirty desert, a wilderness of Southern desires" (*SMN*, 38) who is on a conquering/consuming/destructive mission against "the memory of European

imperialism, its economic and human crimes and its cultural allurements, symbolised in his female English victims" (Okanrende, 63). As the protagonist says:

> The city was transformed into an extraordinary woman with her symbols and her mysterious calls; towards whom I drove my camels till their entrails ached and I myself almost died of yearning for her. My bedroom was a spring well of sorrow, the germ of a fatal disease. The infection had stricken these women a thousand years ago, but I had stirred up the latent depths of the disease until it had got out of control and killed (*TTD*, 34).

In London, the protagonist turns his bedroom into a female-tourist centre through the fragrance of the incense he uses, the exotic Sudanese artefacts and such other pictures of the "Savage" Orient. These, combined with the deceptive half truths he tells them, makes him the toast of his white female victims. Jean Morris and Isabella Seymour are some of his numerous victims. He capitalises on the exotic savage picture of Africa, created in early European texts (like Conrad's) which justified western devastation of Africa through colonialism, to achieve his deception and destruction of Europe through his women, using his sex organ. Salih, in an interview with Berkley and Ahmed (1982), explains Sa'eed's vindictiveness against Europe in the following words:

> In Europe there is the idea of dominating us. That domination is associated with sex. Figuratively speaking, Europe raped Africa in a violent fashion. Mustafa Sa'eed, the hero of the novel used to react to that domination with an opposite reaction which had an element of revenge-seeking. In his violent female conquests he wants to inflict on Europe the degradation which it had imposed upon his people. He wants to rape Europe in a metaphorical fashion (15-16).

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the root of crime and punishment in these novels is racially motivated. The exploitation of Africa and her people via colonialism affected the psyche of the continent and her subjects in a very negative way. The results of that violent control of Africa by Europe are numerous. Some of these are revenge-seeking mission against Europe or her symbol as seen in *SMN* or against

fellow Africans who replicate the actions of the colonial master as seen in *TRB* between Joshua with his fellow adherents of the white man's religion and Kabonyi with the natives who revere the ways of the tribe.

In *SMN*, Mustafa, the hero goes to Europe with a venom of revenge against Europe via his sexual exploitation and murder of all the white women he relates with. His bedroom becomes a trap from which no white woman returns unscathed. His revenge mission is grave and self-destructive as he, himself, does not survive the onslaught. Sa'eed, an intelligent, educated African above the level of any ordinary Sudanese, goes to Europe with a secret agenda to liberate Africa by conquering Europe symbolised by her women. His high pedigree of educational qualification and dexterous mastery of the English language mark him out for this onerous assignment. This is akin to the method used by Europe to colonise and subdue Africa. They sent their intelligent and crafy technocrats who could accomplish their colonising mission. Mamur, an ex-school mate of Sa'eed's testifies of him thus:

> *He was the first Sudanese to be sent on a scholarship abroad.* He was the spoilt child of the English and we all envied him [….] We used to articulate English words as though they were Arabic and were unable to pronounce two consonants together without putting a vowel between, whereas Mustafa Sa'eed would contort his mouth and thrust out his lips and the words would issue forth as though from the mouth of one whose mother tongue it was […] *with a combination of admiration and spite we nicknamed him "the black Englishman"* (*SMN*, 52-53 emphasis added).

The choice of Sa'eed as the liberator of Africa is thus understood from the above. His role as a liberator of Africa has a double connotation. The initial assignment is the one thrust on him by Europe to study there and bring back the light of civilisation to Sudan as a star of the continent. The second is the one he assigns himself to insidiously exploit Europe in a retaliatory way through the sexual exploitation of her women. His un-paralleled intelligent quotient and mastery of the English language make him the favourite of the European colonial masters in Sudan at the time qualify

him for a scholarship abroad. Okanrende has argued that "Sa'eed's rape of Europe' just as Europe raped Africa",

> is effected through an authorial ingenuity which confers on him an element of the colonialist's intellectual mobility, an appropriation of the means by which Europe was able to subdue and control the Orient. This element in colonial discourse, was the means of gaining attention, legitimacy, mobility (male) authority and consent. In Sa'eed, it mutates into a metaphoric weapon of Oriental liberation, the chief of which is his academic altitude and his arresting mastery of English (64).

The scholar posits that Sa'eed's educational feat enables him to "unravel the 'mysteries' of the Occident" (Europe) and "to discipline it" (64). Sa'eed's project of disciplining and demystifying the Occidental mystery is effected by sustaining the fabricated stories of Africa's savagery in European texts. The hero perfects this enterprise by lying about himself, the Orient (Sudan, his native land), thereby making a mockery of such negative images of Africa in western fictions. He tells Europe symbolised by her women whom he dates, what Europe likes to hear about Africa, thereby perpetuating such savage and exotic images of Africa to achieve his conquest (destructive) agenda against Europe. An example is seen in his encounter with Isabella Seymour, one of his white female victims, Sa'eed relates that enticing meeting in utterances laced with lies, untruths and semi-truths:

> I related to her fabricated stories about deserts of golden sands and jungles where non-existent animals called out to one another. I told her that the streets of my country [Sudan, an African country] teemed with elephants and lions and that during siesta time crocodiles crawled through it. Half credulous, half disbelieving, she listened to me, laughing and closing her eyes, her checks reddening (*SMN*, 38).

Sa'eed convinces his victim through lies just as the European colonisers lied about their superiority to Africa to justify their colonisation of the latter. Having won her through his fabricated tales, he enthuses:

> The *Nile, that snake god,* has gained a new victim. The city has changed into a woman. It would be but a day or week before I pitch tent, driving my tent peg into the mountain summit (*SMN,* 39, emphasis added).

The above reference to the tent peg demonstrates how totally and presently Sa'eed will destroy his victim, who has obviously been taken in by his lies. Consequently, she will become 'food' to the metaphoric Nile, a phenomenon connected to Sa'eed as one from the Orient. According to his prediction, in another month's time the "feverish desire" aroused in Isabella Seymour by the protagonist's lies lures her to "his bedroom where her lungs are filled with the smell of burning sandalwood and incense – a perfume she little knew was deadly" (*SMN,* 48). He relates the incident in the following words:

> […] I knew that the short road along which we walked together to the bedroom was, for her, a road of light redolent with the aroma of magnanimity and devotion, but which to me was the last step before attaining the peak of selfishness (*SMN,* 43).

In this lopsided situation the ignorance of the victim lends strength to the success of the actor's plot as he has the full knowledge of his bedroom and what it symbolises. Thus, subtly but perfectly, he claims another victim through the deadly allurement of his own space which appears harmless to the unsuspecting victim(s). Such is also the lopsided relationship that gave success to western colonisation of Africa as she exploited the unsuspecting hospitality and ignorance of the latter to achieve her enterprise. Salih, therefore, exploits the Western/Conradian style to deconstruct and parody it by making the West assume the position of Africa, while the former becomes the subject and actor.

Salih does not exonerate the Sudanese fossilised attitude to women, its religious fanaticism and patriarchal tenacity. Nor does he justify the criminal agenda of the protagonist even though it is targeted against white women. As a writer committed to social justice, he criticises the Sudanese society's negative disposition in these areas. Effendi, Mustafa Sa'eeds double and narrator of the story, a London

educated man like Sa'eed, returns to his village, Wad Hamid, and discovers to his chagrin that he has been dislocated as he cannot reconcile the negative traditional/religious practices of his people which, to him, are contrary to what obtain in other places.

For instance, Effendi is irked by the fact that women are still regarded as chattels in his society. For instance, another husband is chosen for Hosna Bint, Sa'eed's widow by her father. The man's name is Wad Rayyes, a man forty-years older than herself. To escape such "marital hell", Hosna proposes to marry the narrator who turns down her request. To avoid the ugly marital proposal of her father's, she kills Wad Rayyes and commits suicide. Rather than locating the cause of this tragedy within their fossilised patriarchal tradition, the whole village turns against Hosna Bint, describing her as an "impudent hussy!" and condemning her modern lifestyle: "That's modern women for you!" (*SMN,* 123). The narrator's grandfather is wrath with all women whom he utterly condemns: "God curse all women! Women are the sisters of the Devil. Wad Rayyes! Wad Rayyes!" (*SMN*, 123)

Another disturbing thing to the narrator is the fact that just by the mention of the clause: "I divorce you" three times to his wife that a man earns a right of divorce against his wife. All these make him consider his village an unfit place for him to live in as his exposure to the world has made him know the difference. Thus, through an internal monologue he declares. "There is no room for me here. Why don't I pack and go?" (*SMN*, 130)

Salih's thesis is that crime consumes its actor. This is evident in the tragic end of the hero who drowns in the Nile, unmourned and unburied. A man so driven to revenge and crime, no matter against whom it is carried out is bound to end in no less a tragic way. Thus, like Said Mahran in Mahfouz's *TTD,* who is also revenge-driven, both protagonists end tragically. Effendi, Sa'eed's double who "had lived with them [the whites in London] superficially, neither loving nor hating them" (*SMN,* 49) is only permitted a dislocated space as he is neither integrated to his people nor fully absorbed by the white. He is an alienated person as his many years of living with the white does not bring him to fully accept and love them, while his people's ways are repulsive to him. Thus, he is eventually between and betwixt. Thus, Salih's narrator encapsulates the submission of Helene Tissieres who opines:

> In early 1950s, Maghrebian and sub-Saharan African writers, formed by a common French colonial school system, began to describe the life of the African hybrid whose double acculturation – European and African- resulted in an ambiguous adventure (51).

Effendi, Salih's narrator, like (Camara Laye's protagonist) in *The African Child*, cuts this picture of the adventurous and alienated African hybrid.

4.4 Crime and punishment in La Guma's *A Walk in the Night (AWN)*

Alex La Guma is persistently committed to the fate of man under an oppressive regime (Asein, 2). He was among the South African writers who sought for the prose genre which they felt was better suited than poetry to relate the narrative of the South African people's struggle. Their effort resulted in the evolution of a kind of novel which Jane Watts calls "Literature of combat" (211).

The novel opens with a play on the different shades of colour that dot different parts of the protagonist, Michael Adonis, thus foregrounding the segregated socio-political setting of the work-apartheid South Africa's District Six where one's social privileges and rights are determined by one's colour pigmentation. The authorial voice carefully gives a detailed colour description of each part of the protagonist's body:

> […] he had *dark* curly hair [….] And a complexion the colour of worn leather… His eyes were very *dark brown*, the *whites* not quite clear [….] The backs of his hands, like his face, were *brown*, but the palms were *pink* with tiny ridges of *yellow-white* callousness. Now his *dark brown* eyes had hardened a little with sullenness (*AWN*, 2, emphasis added).

The above excerpt sets in motion the political atmosphere around which revolve the events and actions in the novel. The colour question in South Africa is the root of all the crime and injustice witnessed in the novel. In the socio political apartheid setting of the novel, the odds abound against the black majority against whom the law and the justice system are tilted while favouring their white minority counterparts.

To return to the play on colour in the novel, Michael Adonis, the black protagonist loses his factory job for the simple reason of going to ease himself in response to nature's call. To underscore the social inequality in the society, the author, through Adonis, relates this incident to Willieboy in a most pathetic way, still calling in the colour question. Willieboy poses the question and the dialogue ensues:

> 'How goes it with you?'
>
> 'Strolling again. Got pushed out of my job at the factory'
>
> 'How come then?'
>
> 'Answered back to an effing white rooker. Foreman'.
>
> 'Those whites. What happened?'
>
> '[…]Well, he picked on me for going for a leak and I told him to go to hell'.
>
> 'Ja', Willieboy said. 'Working for whites. Happens all the time, man. Me, I never work for no white John. Not even brown one. To hell with work. Work, work, work, where does it get you? Not me, pally'.

Adonis, in the above dialogue, narrates his bitter experience to Willieboy, an incident which has everything to do with his blackness as the case would have been different if a white was the one involved. He is embittered and frustrated by this situation that makes him not only vouch to retaliate but also to recount the disappointment till the second chapter of the novel "white sonofabitch. I'll get him" (*AWN*, 4) 'I'll get him', Michael Adonis said (*AWN*, 5). 'I'll get him. Anger seemed to make him ravenous and he bolted his food' (*AWN*, 5). "They fired me" (*AWN*, 6). Adonis' unjust dismissal sets him looking out for an opportunity to vent his bitterness on his oppressor, symbolised by the white factory foreman or on the society should he miss his target.

The segregated world of the novel turns blacks to criminals as a result of the harsh conditions meted to them. Through the lens of Adonis, the reader sees the world of the novel. His encounter with Willieboy is an encounter between people of like

minds, united by their common situation and their quest for crime, occasioned by what they suffer. Willieboy boasts that life goes on all the same, even as he swears he does not need to work since it does not get one anywhere (*AWN*, 4). Describing the relationship between the two characters, the author notes: "They were not very close friends, but had been thrown together in the whirlpool world of poverty, petty crime and violence of which that café was an outpost" (*AWN*, 4).

The café in the above serves as an escape from the harsh conditions of the blacks as they go there to dull their dehumanised reality in alcohol. It gives them false hope and courage (*AWN*, 20). Willieboy adorns a crucifix more for decoration than as an act of religious devotion and takes pride in being an ex-prisoner and ex-reformatory inmate for charges of assault. The import of this is that they are thrown in a society that cannibalises the blacks and erodes their morality and humanity. Even their belief in God is shaken as they do not see God in their oppressors.

The blacks in the novel are presented as people without ancestry and family ties. Joe is adorned in weather-beaten attire and has no background. He just "seemed to have happened, appearing in the District like a cockroach…"(*AWN*, 9) and so are most other black characters. They are a group of homeless people whose lives are as worthless as that of a cockroach as a result of their society and its operating legal system, because as Sophie Akhuemokhan (2008) rightly points out: "The evidence is everywhere manifest that South Africa's judiciary is not cut out for the black South African" (78).

The discrimination, dehumanisation and degradation of black South Africans in the South African apartheid society are as disgusting as they are stifling. Rotten fishes are sold only in the black living quarters as the city council prohibits it in the town where the whites live. The beaches only admit whites (*AWN*, 10). Their constant harassment by the Boer police who are symbolically personified as "the law" is equally unsettling. In their encounter with Adonis towards the pub, they are described as people with "…hard, frozen faces… and hard, dispassionate eyes, […] cutting a path through the stream […] like destroyers at sea" (*AWN*, 11). In the dehumanising

search that ensues, we learn that the "voice" of one of the two police "was hard and flat as the snap of a steel spring […]" just as it is "deadly to look into their eyes".

> It was only the very brave, or the very stupid, who dared look straight into the law's eyes, to challenge them or to question their authority (*AWN*, 11 emphasis added).

The South African blacks, nevertheless, challenge this obnoxious governing system and the police-their agents of death, in some covert and subtle manner. As Adonis slowly empties his pockets for their scrutiny, "without looking up at them" and with each movement, he curses inside of him: "You mucking boers, you mucking boers" (*AWN*, 12). Also in his reply to their questions, set in an aside, the reader notices the blacks' resilience, rebellion and undying spirit. In response to the "humourless, deadly and serious" question of "where he stole" the money on him, after the response of "Didn't steal it, baas" as in other replies in an aside, Adonis says," you mucking boer" and in the last response, still in an aside, he proclaims: "you mucking bastard boer with your mucking gun and your mucking red bead" (*AWN*, 12).

The police as the symbol of the law in South Africa's apartheid regime are as powerful as they are discriminating. They arrest and prosecute the blacks under any false pretext. Whatever they say is wrong becomes wrong and whatever they deem right stands so. They work to protect the whites and accord them the rights and privileges inaccessible to the blacks. Consequently, the blacks in this novel evolve their own means of survival under the system that seeks to annihilate them. They resort to crimes and violence to retaliate their brutalisation and dehumanisation by the white, and this is more applauded when unleashed against the white than against their fellow blacks. For instance, while in the pub, Adonis smarts over his unjust dismissal, and then, "Three men came into the café […]" looking for sockies because they "got a job on tonight" (*AWN*, 5,6) which turns out to be a robbery. They talk about it freely and without any iota of remorse.

Akhuemokhan again, notes that the apartheid government parades "vicious Boer police, an arrogant judiciary, and a pampered white citizenry dominating a

debased African citizenry" (76). She further observes that the law which is the backbone of South Africa's social organisation is biased in the discreet fashion in which it determines and allots "'rightness', or and acceptability to one sector of the community, and wrongness', or unacceptability, to the other" (77,78). As a result of such inequality, she submits that the black South Africans have subverted this obnoxious legal code in favour of a clearer one suitable to their situation. "According to this new guideline, she opines, "crime is simply 'cooperat[ion] with evil'[…]; that is, the government". This scholar notes that,

> Any act of non-compliance is morally justified [….] Similarly, 'wrong' is synonymous with conformity and demands punishment, even if it is purely instilling a sense of disgrace in the wrong-doer. [….]"Violence is morally better than passive sub-mission […]acquiescence is evil" (80).

Though Akhuemokhan's submission is with reference to Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold,* it is also applicable to La Guma's *A Walk in the Night.* This new Black South Africans' moral code also identified by Tamale and Justice McGoro in chapter two of this work as the *ubuntu* philosophy, is deployed by the characters in *AWN.*

For instance, during the investigation of the death of Old Doughty, John Abrahams, a black, is enthusiastic in his giving of evidence to Constable Raalt and another police. But the enthusiasm fizzles out after the condemning look of other blacks and the bold interjection of Frank Lorenzo. The author tells us:

> John Abrahams was now beginning to feel the effect of the abrasive stares of those around him and his bravado commenced to collapse, falling from him like dislodged coloured paper decorations (*AWN,* 63). Before Abraham could answer Franky Lorenzo said to him from the crowd in the corridor: 'You've said enough already, Johnny' (*AWN,* 62).

It is evident then from the above that the blacks frown at co-operation with the law. The abrasive look of the crowd is the "sense of disgrace" instilled in John Abrahams, the wrong doer which calls him to order and makes him identify with his black race at once in a subtle manner.

Their frustrated situation which makes them resort to violence is responsible for Michael Adonis' vicious treatment of Doughty, the Irish widower and ex-actor who lives in the same compound with him. To prove that the crimes in the novel are racially motivated and a direct response to the biased application of rights and justice, Adonis rebuffs Doughty's show of friendship. He is too embittered by and engrossed in the injustice associated with his job loss and the unjust treatment by the white "effing" with whom he associates Doughty, the latter being a white man himself. Relapsing into the sorrows of his misfortune, Adonis prophetically laments: "I'll get even with them, the sonsabitches. They'll see (*AWN,* 23). It is symbolic that just shortly after his extension of his planned reprisal of "sonabitch" to sonsabitches" that he encounters Doughty who, though a white, extends a hand of friendship and fellowship to him.

Old Doughty's numerous friendship overtures to Adonis are greeted with rejection, hatred, bitterness and disrespect. When Doughty, on one occasion, notices Adonis' bad mood, he cajoles him, offering placatingly that they "…sit down in this room and have a drink", Adonis' curt reply is: "I don't want to drink your wine… I got money to buy my own booze with" (*AWN*, 25). Making further attempts, he says, "come on. Give your uncle a hand". But then the sharp and pointed reply: "You're not my uncle either… I haven't got no white uncles" (*AWN,* 25) underscores the fact that Adonis' anger is rooted in racial difference like that of the other blacks. Doughty's avowal of his love for and acceptance of blacks, a situation that motivated his marriage to his late coloured wife, does not change Adonis' position as his misfortune has curdled "…into a sour knot of smouldering violence inside him" (*AWN,* 26) waiting to be vented on someone. Before now, we are told that as he climbed the stairs to his house that he "had cursed […] nursing the foetus of hatred inside his belly" (*AWN*, 26).

As he and Uncle Doughty share the bottle of "cheap liquor" offered by the latter, Michael Adonis is again transported to the event that culminated in his dismissal, and like an obsessed child, yells out his anger: "can't a boy have a bloody piss without getting kicked in the backside by a lot of effing law?" (*AWN*, 28). It is no

where recorded in the novel that the duo were ever embroiled in a misunderstanding or quarrel of any kind previously. If anything, their existing friendship is reflected in Doughty's reference to him in such endearing pet names as "Michael boy" (*AWN*, 24) "Give your uncle a hand" (*AWN*, 25), "Michael me boy" (*AWN*, 26). Conversely, Michael's responses include such vituperative language and insults: "you old white bastard, you got nothing to worry about" (*AWN*, 27), "you old spook" (*AWN*, 28).

His sudden unfriendly attitude to Uncle Doughty, is therefore, connected with the fact of Doughty's whiteness and accessibility to the privileges denied him and his own racial group, thus making him to vent his anger on Doughty as the symbol of his misfortune. Though he does not set out to kill Doughty his inadvertent murder of the old white man symbolises the enemity between the blacks and the whites in South Africa's apartheid society. Doughty, thus, becomes a scapegoat for attempting to bridge the gap between the two races in a social orgnisation that favours one race at the expense of the other. For as Michael Adonis himself observes, though the law don't like white people being finished off, Mr. Doughty "[…] didn't have no right living here with us coloureds" (*AWN*, 29). Through an internal monologue conveyed to the reader in his soliloquy, it is revealed that Adonis only entertains a transient guilt feeling for the manslaughter and thereafter rationalises his action:

> What for did he want to go on living for, anyway. To hell with him and the lot of them. May be I ought to go and tell them [the law or that is the police] [. …] You know what the law will do to you. They don't have any shit from us brown people. They'll hang you, as true as God. Christ, we all got hanged long ago. What's the law for? To kick us poor brown bastards around […] he was a whiteman […] well, what's he want to come and live here among us brown for? To hell with him […] stay alive […] and get kicked under the arse unitl you're finished, too. Like they did with your job. To hell with them. The whole effing lot of them (*AWN*, 43-44).

In the above excerpt, Adonis presents a historical catalogue of the White/Black question, the harsh reality of its operation and the biased and ruthless disposition of the law to the blacks. The truth is that Old Doughty's fate would have been different

if his colour were different. Thus, for violating the colour tenement code in this society, by pitching his tent with people of different colour from his, he has to pay the ultimate price by dying as a scapegoat. Willieboy also dies as an innocent black victim whose blood is used to expiate the death of the white Doughty. The white police are drunk with the hunger to kill the blacks having been indoctrinated by the apartheid regime, a condition which also instigates the blacks against the whites as seen in the former's bitterness against the latter, Michael Adonis' case is illustrative here.

There is a streak of irony and satire in the modus operandi of a law which attaches more importance to the corpse of a white man than to cater for his well being when he was alive. Perhaps, it is just to ensure that a white corpse claims a black victim to demonstrate how high the white rank in the social ladder against black. It is laughable to know that the late Doughty was full of complaints about his neglect by the law when he was alive. But then his neglect is meant as punishment for not only marrying a coloured but also for choosing to cohabit with the blacks long after his wife's death. Consequently, he is made to suffer the same fate as the blacks. While alive he had lamented to Adonis:

> What's my white got to do with it? Here I am, in shit street, and does my white help? I used to be a great actor [….] I toured England and Australia [….] We're like Hamlet's father's ghost [….] That's us, us Michael, my boy. Just ghosts, doomed to walk the night (*AWN*, 27 & 28).

By his reference to 'us', it shows that Doughty had, on his volition, elected to tie his fate with that of the black community and though he lived like them and with them all his life, he is only recognised as a white at death, if only to symbolise their desire for the perpetuation of the social status quo. Murdered by a product of the race he chooses to spend his life with, and rejected by his own race which only claims him at death, Old Doughty is really a scapegoat and a pathetic one at that. In the course of investigating the cause of his death, the police who drove the vehicle had said: "A white man, too what would a white man be doing living in a place like this?"

(*AWN*, 61). Willieboy's vicarious death also reveals the miscarriage of justice in this apartheid social system. What we see in the novel is the presentation of a group of people who are not only walking in the night (Ebele Eko, 49) but who also do not know how long this night walk will last as the novel ends with no hope of salvation for the blacks.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

5.1 Findings

The study unearthed the fact of the existence of six kinds of crime namely: political, moral, gender, cultural, racial and religious crimes perpetrated in the four regions of the continent where they attract varying natural, judicial and extra judicial punishments depending on the region and the socio-political status of the perpetrator. Political and moral crimes cut across the regions. Gender and moral crimes are common to North and West Africa, but while they are harshly punished in North Africa, due to their Islamic and patriarchal beliefs, punishment is lighter in West Africa because of their socio-religious beliefs and practices even though both regions are patriarchally structured. Instances of this are seen in *TJM* and *SMN*. In the latter novel from North Africa, women are destroyed for challenging unequal marital choices unlike in the former. However, cultural disunity is highly discouraged in West Africa as evident in the punishment of Nnaife.

In *TTD*, judicial punishment is lopsidedly imposed; one of three moral criminals is punished while others escape punishment. This is not surprising as Ilish and Rauf who escape punishment have access to power unlike Said Mahran, the punished character who also sticks to his revenge mission after other criminals in the same crime network quit the obnoxious trade and take to society's approved means of livelihood. In West Africa, in *AR* and *TJM*, natural justice is meted to moral and cultural criminals respectively. In *AR, BV* and *AS* while two political criminals (Isa Bello and Saif) escape punishment, judicial punishment is imposed on one (Major Sam). This demonstrates that the powerful in these societies insulate themselves from punishment through the instrumentality of such power. Racial crime is peculiar to South Africa where crimes are punished discriminatingly due to their segregated society. In *AWN*, crimes perpetrated by blacks attract judicial punishment while those committed by their white counterparts go unpunished to illustrate the racial segregation in that society. Religious crimes are peculiar to East Africa where the harsh christianisation and land appropriation divide the tribe on religious affiliations.

Supporters of western religion, attract extra judicial punishment by *Kiama*, a local group that upholds tribal ways (*TRB*).

In North and East Africa, crimes identified and punished are those which relate to the dominant religion but political and moral crimes attract punishments in the more westernised South and West African regions due to their cultural, religious and educational similarities. Therefore, cultural, political and religious beliefs of particular regions of Africa determine the kind of punishment imposed on crimes.

The study shows that though there were instances of crime in Africa prior to her contact with western and Arab colonisers, the situation was exacerbated with the arrival of the latter on the Africa soil. These African leaders like the Saifs (*BV*), Major Sam (*AS*), Major Palat Bello (*AR*) exercise tyrannical and oppressive leadership style to cow their subjects into submission and perpetuate themselves in power. They silence every opposition and claim many victims and with the subtle connivance of the western world, rape economy of the continent. Though the western world is indicted for Africa's poor leadership, the authors do not exonerate Africans and their leaders because they believe that African post-colonial leaders are not different from the colonial master as we see in the tyrannical activities of Major Isa Palat Bello (*AR*) and His Excellency (*AS*).

The study further reveals that women are double victims because besides their living in a society that is suffused with crimes, like other members of their community, in most cases, they are also victims of patriarchal injustices. This is as a result of the fact that African society is patriarchally structured. It is further shown that silence and inaction give strength to tyranny and crime while confrontation and criticism discourage them. In *BV*, Saif's atrocities are unabated because nobody is courageous enough to challenge him. But the moment Bishop Henry gives him an insight into his own secrets though in a subtle manner, he is made to recoil if only for a while. Ogugua's silence gives vent to Isa Palat Bello's tyrannical 'rains of arrows' against his subjects in *AR* while Chris' silence also encourages the oppressive activities of His Excellency's in *AS*.

It was equally shown that crime could be committed as a result of hate, injustice, wrong-doing, bias, discrimination and other wrongs which make the victims to take revenge against other members of the society. This is true of Said Mahran in *TTD*, Michael Adonis in *AWN*, Sa'eed Mustafa in *SMN* and Kabonyi in *TRB*. There are however, characters who take to crime in order to hold on to power and oppress others. His Excellency in *AS* fulfils this category. There are yet others who derive sadistic joy in seeing other characters suffer.

5.2 Conclusion

Any society that dispenses justice to its subjects selectively only asks for violence from those it marginalises. This is demonstrated in the situation of the black South Africans in AWN who have to evolve their own crime and violence-prone survival strategy in the face of an obnoxious legal system that seeks to consume them.

5.3 Summary

In Africa, the determination of what is conceived as crime and administration of punishment are informed by the religious, cultural and educational peculiarities of each region. Consequently, what one region sees and punishes as a crime may be permitted and rewarded as a noble act in another.

5.4 Recommendations

It is hoped that this study will spur other researchers to examine the portrayal of crime and punishment in more recent African novels, especially those written by very recent writers. A comparison of the works of these selected African novelists with those of authors from developed countries may reveal the disparities and the neutralities in existing crimes and the punishments imposed on them in such divergent cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, an interrogation of such recent novels may also reveal whether the growth and changes under gone by a society also affect the conception of crime and imposition of punishment in such society.

Endnote

1. Proverbs chapter 20:30 *The holy Bible, the Qur'an chapter 4:123.*

2. Nigeria's ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo in a statement during the past and present Nigeria's leaders' forum which was broadcast by Silver Bird Television News at 10pm on Tuesday, May 22, 2012.

REFERENCES

Abu-Haidar, F. Reviewer. *Naguib Mahfouz: The pursuit of meaning*. Review. Research in African Literatures. Vol.26. No.2, Summer, 1995, 230-232.

Achebe, C. 1981 Africa and her writers, *Morning yet on creation day*. London: Heinemann, 19-29.

_____ 1981. The role of a teacher. *Morning yet on creation day*. London: Heinemann.

_____ 1987. *Anthills of the savannah*. London: Heinemann.

_____ 1973. The role of the writer in a new nation. *Africa writing on African writing*. Killam, G.D. Ed. London: Heinemann, 7-13.

_____ 1975. Africa and her writers. *Morning yet on creation day* London: Heinemann 19-29.

_____. 1988 *Hopes and impediments.* Ibadan: Heinemann.

_____1989. Achebe: A chat that bares it all. *The Guardian* (Nigeria) November 11, 12.

_____.1975 The African writer and the Biafran cause. *Morning yet on creation day*. London: Heinemann. Reprinted 1977, 1981. 78-84.

Adimora-Ezeigbo, Akachi 2008. *Artistic creativity: Literature in the service of society*. Inaugural lecture. Lagos: Univ. of Lagos press.

Akhuemokhan, S.I. 2008. Distributive justice and the blind continent: A study of *Cross of gold* by Laureta Ngcobo and *Osiris rising* by Ayi kwei Armah *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, 39.4 71-90.

_____. and Okolocha, H.O. 2012. Prostitution and personhood: A reading of Naguib Mahfouz's *The thief and the dogs*. Transational Literature. Vol.4, No.2, May 2012, 1-10. Retrieved from http://fhrc. flinders.edu. au/transnational/home.html on Oct.3, 2012.

Amyuni, M. 1985. Introduction. *Season of migration to the north: A casebook.* Ed. Mona Amyuni. Beirut: American U of Beirut. 11-25.

Asein, S.O. 1987. *Alex La Guma: The man and his work*. Ibadan: New Horn Press.

Awosika, O. 1997. *Form and technique in the African novel*. Ibadan: Sam Bookman.

Barry, P. 2008. In Faluse, C.O. Crisis of identity in the selected works of Mongo Beti and Ferdinand Oyono. M.A. project. Dept. of English, University of Ibadan.

Beckley, C. and Hassan Ahmed. 1982. *Tayeb Salih speaks: Four interviews with the Sudanese novelist*. Washington, D.C.: embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan.

Bird, Otto. A. 1976. *The idea of justice*. New York: Fredrick Praeger

Black, H.C. et al. 1990. *Black's law dictionary*: *definition of the terms and phrases of American and English jurisprudence. Ancient and modern*. Sixth edition. USA: West Publishing Co.

Caminero-Santangelo, B. 1999. Legacies of darkness: colonialism, Joseph Conrad, and Tayeb Salih's *Season of migration to the north*" ARIEL: A review of International English Literature, 30:4, October 1999, 7-33.

Chukwuma, H. 1989. Positivism and the female crisis: The novels of Buchi Emecheta. *Nigerian female writers: A critical perspective*. Otakunefor, H.C. and Nwodo, O.C. Eds. Lagos: Malthouse, 2-18.

Clark, C.I.D. 2001. *Deviance and criminology*. Benin: Perfect Computer.

Cook, D. and Okenimkpe, M. 1983. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An exploration of his writings*. Ibadan: Heinemann.

Dasylva, A.O. 1994. Toward a new taxonomy of the hero in the African novel. Ph.D Thesis. Dept. of English, University of Ibadan.

_____.2004. *Studies in drama*. Lagos: Stirling-Horden

Dostoevsky, F. 2012. Crime and punishment. Retrieved Feb. 14, 2012, from www.enote.com.

Echenim, K. 1996. Cultural hero in the novels of Chinua Achebe. *The Nigerian Journal of the Humanities* 8, 1-13.

Eko, E. 1982. From vagrancy to concerted action: Progressive commitment in three novels of Alex La Guma *Journal of the Literary Society of Nigeria* 2: 46-56.

El-Enany, R. 1993. *Naguib Magfouz: The pursuit of meaning*. London: Routledge.

Emecheta, B. 1979. *The joys of motherhood*. London: Heinemann.

_____. 2007 Feminism with a small 'f' *African literature: an anthology of criticism and theory*. Olaniyan, T. and Quayson, A. Eds. USA: Blackwell. 551-557.

Eruaga, A. 2012. Oral traditional elements in Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of rain*. *JONSILLS* 82-95.

_____. and Okeke, E. N. 2011. Deconstructing female stereotypes in Achebe's novels" *AJELS: Abuja Journal of English and Literary Studies*. 2:1, 265-282.

Fashina, N. 2006. Proverbs, proverbials and meaning: deconstructing patriarchy in Achebe's *Things fall apart*. *Ibadan Journal of English Studies*. 3;155-173.

Gamble, L. n.d. Emile Durkheim, his principles of sociology, and their effects on society today. Retrieved May 13, 2014 from http://www.waves ofwords.4t.com/theorywebpage.html

Gikwandi, S. A. 1977 *The novel and contemporary experience in Africa.* London: Heinemann.

_____. 2007. African literature and the colonial factor. *African literature: anthology of literary criticism and theory*. Eds. Olaniyan, T. and Quayson, A. USA: Blackwell, pp.54-59.

Hall, S. Calvin 1954 *A primer of freudian psychology*. New York: The World Publishing Company.

Hobbes, T. 1947 *The leviathan.* London: Chapman & Hall

Holy Quran in Bambale, Y.Y. 2003 *Crimes and punishments under Islamic law.* Lagos: Malthouse.

Innes, C.L. 1990. *Chinua Achebe: Cambridge studies in African and Caribbean literature*. London: CUP

Inyama, N.F. 1996. From homestead dictator to national tyrant: evolution of the father/protector image in Achebe's novels. *Eagle on iroko: Selected papers from the Chinua Achebe international symposium 1990*. Ihekweazu, E., Azuonye, C., Ijere, M., Ijoma, C., Inyama, N., Maduakor, O., Ohaegbu, A., Okoronkwo, C., Ozigboh, I. and Udechukwu, O. Eds. Ibadan: Heinemann, 216-223.

James, A. Ed. 1990. Buchi Emecheta *In their own voices: African women writers talk*. London: Heinemann. 35-45.

Karibi-Whyte, A.G. 1986. *Ground work of Nigerian criminal law*: judges series. Lagos: Nigeria Law Publication.

Kolawole, M. M. 1997. *Womanism and African consciousness*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

La Guma, Alex 1967. *A walk in the night.* London: Heinemann.

_____ Interview with Robert Serumaga in Dennis Duerden and Cosmos . *African writers talking* London: Heinemann 1972, 91.

Labeodan, H.A. 2004. Moral responsibility and punishment in the Yoruba society *Orita* XXXVI/1&2; 11-37.

Lindfors, B. 1982. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's detention. *Journal of the Literary Society of Nigeria*. 2, 4-12.

_____. 2007. Politics, culture and literary form. *African literature: an anthology of literary criticism and theory*. Eds. Olaniyan, T. and Quayson, A. USA: Blackwell, pp.22-37

Macionis, J. and Gerber, L. 2011. *Sociology*. 7th Edition. Toronto: Pearson Canada. Retrieved May 13, 2014 from http://durkheim. uchicago. edu/biography.html

Mahfouz, N. 1961. Trans. Le Gassick, T. 1984. *The thief and the dogs*, New York: Doubleday.

Maiangwa, Y. The duty of violence in Yambo Ouologuem's *Bound to violence*. 1979. *New West African literature*. K. Ogungbesan. Ed. London: Heinemann. 71-79.

Makaryk, I.R. 1993. Compiler. Encyclopedia of contemporary literary theory: approaches, scholars, terms. Toronto: U of T Press, 163-168.

Makdisi, S.S. 1992. The empire renarrated: *Season of migration to the north* and the reinvention of the present. *Critical inquiry* 18:804-820.

Mezu, R. U. 1997. Buchi Emecheta's *The bride price* and *the slave girl*. A schizoanalytic perspective. *ARIEL*: *A Review of International English Literature*, 28:1, Jan 1997, 132-146.

Mokgoro, Y. in Sachs, A. 2009. *The strange alchemy of life and law*. London: OUP.

Mowah U.F. in Faluse 2008 Crisis of identity in the selected works of Mongo Beti and Ferdinand Oyono". M.A. project. Dept. of English, University of Ibadan.

Mpiku, M. 1971. From one mystification to another: negritude and negraille in *Le devoir de violence Review of National Literature*. 2. 142.

Msiska, M.H. 1997. East and Central African writing. *Writing and Africa* Eds. Msiska, M.H. and Hyland, P. London: Heinemann, pp.46-65.

Mugo, M.G. 1978. *Visions of Africa in the fiction of Achebe, Margaret Lawrence, Elspeth Huxley and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o.* Nairobi: Kenyan Literature Bureau.

Naguib Mahfouz: A biography. Retrieved on June, 16, 2004 from http://www. library. cornel.edu/colldev/mideast/mahfouz.htm.

Ndibe, O. 2000. *Arrows of rain*. UK: Heinemann.

Ngara, E. 1990. *Ideology and form in African poetry: implications for communication*. London: James Currey.

Ngwaba, F. 1996 Complementary duality as a principle of characterizations in Achebe's novels. *Eagle on Iroko*: Selected papers from the Chinua Achebe international symposium 1990. Eds. Ihekweazu, E., Azuonye, C., Ijere, M., Ijoma, C., Inyama, N., Maduakor, O., Ohaegbu, A., Okoronkwo, C., Ozigboh, I. and Udechukwu, O. Eds. Ibadan: Heinemann, 267-379

Nnolim, C. 1982. Characters, themes and structure in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *A grain of wheat*. *Journal of the Literary Society of Nigeria*. 2, 65-73.

_____ 1996 The artist in search of the right leadership: Achebe as a social critic. *Eagle on Iroko: Selected Papers from the Chinua Achebe International Symposium 1990*. Eds. Ihekweazu, E., Azuonye, C., Ijere, M., Ijoma, C., Inyama, N., Maduakor, O., Ohaegbu, A., Okoronkwo, C., Ozigboh, I. and Udechukwu, O. Eds. Ibadan: Heinemann, 166-177.

_____ 2010. Literature as a philosophy of life. *Book of abstracts* Benin international conference of the Literary Society of Nigeria (LSN) 3-8.

Nobel Prize for Literature. Retrieved April 16, 2002 from http://www.sis. gov.eg/egyptinf/culture/html/naguip.htm

Nobel Speech http://www.nobel.se/literature/laureates/1988/mahfouz-lecture.html

Nwapa, F. 2007. Women and creative writing in Africa. *African literature: An anthology of criticism and theory*. Eds. Olaniyan, T. and Quayson, A.. USA: Blackwell, 526-532.

OBIT: 2009. Tayeb Salib 1929-2009. Retrieved from http://h-net.msu.edy/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H Africa&monthweek=e&msg=5lypwOgl4s XMjdHBdrKPCQ&user=&pw)H-Net

Ogude, S.E. 1991. African literature and the burden of history: some reflections. *African literature and African historical experiences*. Eds. Ikonne, C., Oko, E. and Onwudinjo, P. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1-9

Okanrende, A.O.A. 2009. *The Arabian nights and post-orientalist articulations in the North African novel*. Ph.D. Thesis. Dept. of English, University of Ibadan.

Okenimkpe in Adimora-Ezeigbo, A. 2008. *Artistic creativity; literature in the service of society*. Inaugural lecture: University of Lagos Press.

Ola, V.U. 1983. Identity crisis in the tragic novels of Isidore Okpewho. *African literature today*: *13 recent trends in the novel*. Ed. Jones, Eldred Durosinmi, 56-68.

Oladitan, O. 2011. *From literature towards a law-culture discipline: an unending quest for justice*. Inaugural lecture Ile-Ife: OAU Press.

Omotosho, K. 1986. *The form of the African novel a critical essay*. Lagos: McQuick.

Onwuka, L.O. 2008. *Representations of gender roles in selected novels of three male African writers*. Ph.D. Thesis. Dept. of English. University of Ibadan.

Opata, D. 1987. Eternal sacred order versus conventional wisdom: a consideration of moral culpability in the killing of Ikemefuna in *Things fall apart.*" *Research in African Literatures*, 18:1 (Spring),71-79.

Ouologuem, Y. 1960. *Bound to violence*. R. Manheim. Trans. London: Heinemann.

_____1968. *West Africa*, 1474 quoted in Ogungbesan 1979. London: Heinemann. 71-79.

Outa, G.O. 2012. Kenya: works of literature capture ICC drama. Retrieved Jan. 26, 2012 from http://allafrica.com/stories/201202030777.html.

Proyect, L. 2003. Naguib Mahfouz, *Midaq alley*, Book review.

Robolin, S. Gendered hauntings: *The joys of motherhood*, interpretive acts, and postcolonial theory. *Research in African Literature*. Vol. 35. No.3 Fall 2004. 76-92.

Said, E. Naguib Mahfouz: A Biography. *London Review of Books*. 22, June, 2009, 8.

Salih, T. 1981. *Season of migration to the North*. London: Heinemann.

Soyinka, W. 1976. Myth, literature and the African world in is the post-in postcolonialist the post in postcolonial? Critical inquiry 17, 2 Winter. Chicago: Chicago UP. 336-357. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/ stable/1343840 on Oct.3, 2010.

Stock, R. 2001. Naguib Mahfouz: a translator's view. The kenyon review, new series, cultures of creativity: The centennial celebration of the nobel prizes. 23: 2 Spring, 2001. 136-142. Retrieved Sept. 23, 2008.

Structural functional theory? Retrieved from http://www.ask.com/question/what-is-structural-theory.

Talahite, A. North African writing 1997. *Writing and Africa*. Msiska. Eds. M.H and P. Hyland. London: Longman. 13-30.

Tamale, S. 2011. Ed. *African sexualities: a reader*. Cape Town: Pambazuka Press.

The encyclopedia Americana international edition USA: Grolier Incorporated. 8

The living bible paraphrased 1976 Illinois: Tyndale House.

Thelwell, M. 2000. Review at the back page of *Arrows of rain*.

Tissieres, H. Maghreb-sub-Saharan connection. *Research in African Literature*. Vol.33, No.3 Fall, 2002, 31-53.

Trilling, L. 1996. Manners, moral, and the novel *essentials of the theory of fiction*. Haffman, M.J. and Murphy, P.D. Eds. London: Leicester UP, 77-91.

Wa Thiong'o, N. 1972. *Homecoming: essays on African and Caribbean literature, culture and politics*. London: Heinemann.

_____. 1968. *A grain of wheat*. London: Heinemann

_____ 1974. The links that bind us. Acceptance speech by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o of the Lotus prize in literature at first Afri-Asian writers' conference alma ata, Khazakhstan, Sept., 6 1973, *East African Journal of Literature and Society*. 2:1, 67-8.

_____An interview with *Sunday Nation*, 17 July 1977 in Lindfor's Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's Detention.

_____ 1981 *The River Between*. London: Heinemann.

_____. 1993. *Moving the centre*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki /Tayebsalih on 23/3/2010.

Williams, Patrick 1997. West African writing. *Writing and Africa*. Eds. Msiska, M.H. and Hyland, P. London: Heinemann, 31-45.

Zeitlin, I.M. 1981. *The social condition of humanity: an introduction to sociology.* 2nd Edn. New York: OUP."Sudan novelist Tayeb Salih dies". Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7896724.stm.BBC News online http://news. bbc.co.uk/2/africa/7896724.stm on 18/02/2009.