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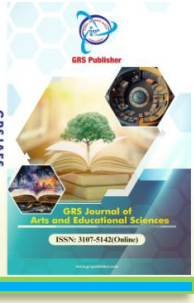

Dystopian Realities and the Politics of Power, Control and Individual Struggle in Nigerian Postcolonial Literature

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Abstract: A significant body of post-independence African literature reflects a deep disillusionment with the failed promises of nationhood. Many of these narratives portray the pervasive corruption, moral decadence, and sociopolitical collapse that followed the euphoria of independence. In Nigeria, this disillusionment manifests as a dystopian experience shaped by the politics of inequality, power monopoly, systemic corruption and exploitation. The resultant society is one characterized by oppression, segregation, and moral degeneration. This study, through close readings of selected fictional works, examines the representation of Nigeria as a dystopian landscape governed by corrupt leadership and marked by socioeconomic disparity. It interrogates the human condition within this fractured society, focusing on the individual's struggle for survival, identity, and moral integrity in the face of overwhelming sociopolitical decay. Furthermore, the research explores the dialectic of resistance and conformity; how characters negotiate agency and selfhood in contexts where manipulation and control threaten their very sense of being. Ultimately, the study underscores literature's role in reflecting and challenging the realities of postcolonial disillusionment in Nigeria and by extension, the African society.

Keywords: *Postcolonial literature, Nigerian fiction, dystopia, corruption, inequality, authoritarianism, resistance, identity.*

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Introduction

Struggle is one of the most enduring truths of human life, and literature has long served as a mirror reflecting this reality. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes struggle as "making strenuous or violent efforts in the face of difficulties or opposition." David Salti, a Middle Eastern salesman, reinforces this idea by noting that to achieve full humanity, one must inevitably pass through the many struggles that life presents. His statement raises an important question: what forms of struggle truly shape human life and, by extension, literary imagination?

In fiction, struggle generally appears in two broad forms; internal and external. Internal struggle revolves around psychological or moral dilemmas (man versus self), while external struggle puts the individual against outside forces. These external conflicts are often grouped into five categories: man versus man, man versus society, man versus fate or the supernatural, man versus technology, and man versus nations. Among these, this study focuses on man versus society, a conflict that highlights the tension between individuals and the sociopolitical systems that restrict, exploit, or attempt to control them. This clash reveals how characters push back against social structures that suppress freedom, identity, and individuality which are the core concerns at the heart of dystopian literature.

The dystopian genre evolved as a response to failed idealisms. Although it is commonly seen as a reaction to the disillusionment that followed the 1789 French Revolution; especially fears that popular uprising could slide into dictatorship, most scholars agree that dystopian narratives grew out of earlier utopian thought. The word Utopia, coined by Sir Thomas More in Utopia (1516), describes an imagined perfect society similar to Plato's *Republic*. While early writers dreamed of ideal worlds, by the nineteenth century, that optimism began to fade, giving rise to dystopian works that challenged the assumptions of utopian perfection.

Dystopian fiction functions as a warning. It extrapolates social, political, or technological anxieties into imagined futures that expose the dangers of oppressive systems. As Babaee Ruzbeh notes, dystopian literature aims to "provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted." By exaggerating current realities, dystopian narratives seek to awaken readers to looming crises and inspire social consciousness. Early works such as Émile Souvestre's The World as It Will Be (1846) imagined societies consumed by commercialism and political machinery. Others, like Bellamy's Looking Backward (1888) and Forster's The Machine Stops (1909), began exploring the technological edge of dystopian writing. The genre reached its classical form with works like Zamyatin's We (1921), Huxley's Brave New World (1932), and Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949), texts that Keith Booker describes as defining and foundational due to their sharp engagement with real-world issues and their far-reaching critiques of the societies they depict.

Dystopian literature therefore, is a branch of speculative writing that examines imperfect social systems by imagining societies far worse than our own, as Basil et al (76) note. These imagined worlds reflect the fears and uncertainties of their time while

offering meaningful commentary on human civilization. Within such settings, man versus society conflicts become especially pronounced, as protagonists confront oppressive institutions in their struggle to reclaim dignity, identity, and personal freedom.

Dystopian societies often feature authoritarian governments, oppressive technologies, environmental ruin, deep inequalities, and the suppression of individuality. Writers use these elements to explore why societies decline and how individuals respond to that decline. Across generations, authors have adapted dystopian motifs to reflect both personal concerns and larger social realities.

At its core, the tension between the individual and society in dystopian narratives explores questions of identity, autonomy, and resistance. Society itself becomes an antagonist; a force that restricts, commands or punishes. As Hiisch observes, society is not merely a backdrop for characters; it often functions as an enemy that imposes obstacles and hardships. This "society" may appear in the form of totalitarian governments, exclusionary institutions, religious doctrines, communal pressures, or rigid cultural norms.

Resistance within such systems is risky, as challenging the established order threatens the foundations of dystopian control. The conflict is therefore both external and internal, testing the protagonist's emotional and moral endurance. Nigerian postcolonial literature vividly captures these dynamics, portraying societies marred by corruption, political manipulation, economic decay, and widespread disillusionment. These narratives illuminate how individuals struggle to survive, resist, and assert identity within failing or oppressive systems; issues that this research will examine in the selected fictional texts.

Statement of the Problem

It is often posited that society provides the infrastructure and social framework necessary for the development of individual personality and potential. Yet, this assertion remains contestable, as literary discourse frequently illustrates the contrary: society can act as a constraining force that suppresses individuality, particularly when a person's vision, ethics, or moral compass diverges from prevailing social norms or institutional expectations. Such tension generates immense pressure for conformity, often compelling individuals to compromise or conceal their unique perspectives to align with dominant ideologies.

Within Nigerian fiction, this dynamic is vividly explored through the lens of dystopian social settings, where systemic oppression, corruption, and socio-political antagonism function as mechanisms that challenge and restrict personal autonomy. This research therefore, seeks to investigate the ways in which dystopian societies, as represented in Nigerian literature, operate as antagonistic forces against the individual. Additionally, it examines how rebellion; whether overt or subtle, emerges as a strategic and ethical response to such societal pressures, as evidenced in the novels selected for this study.

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant social and scholarly relevance, as it provides a critical perspective on the structural and cultural factors that inhibit the potential of promising and visionary individuals. By examining the friction between the individual and society within Nigerian fiction, the research illuminates the broader societal imbalances that stifle creativity, moral integrity, and personal growth. In addition to contributing to literary scholarship, the study offers reflections that may inform social reform and the restructuring of societal norms to support individual development and civic responsibility.

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach, grounded in literary and textual analysis. Data will be collected through a thorough consultation of primary and secondary sources, including textbooks, journals, and scholarly articles, with particular emphasis on the novels under study: *The Fourth World* by Ifeoma Okoye and *Campus Riot* by Chuma Anikwata. The methodology is designed to interpret, contextualize, and critically evaluate the representation of dystopian social structures and their impact on individual characters, as well as to explore the strategies of resistance employed within these narratives.

Review of Related Literature

The term 'dystopia' is a fictional genre whose thematic preoccupation borders on how certain political, social, economic and religious control bring about subjugation on the individuality or infringement upon the privileges of man. Dystopia has gained a wide literary experimentation. It has helped to appreciate the present and lent itself as commentary on the possible tendencies of certain societal systems if taken to a logical extreme. The concept and historical context of dystopias entertained a wide range of perspective among scholars and critics. A survey on the survival submissions suggest two main conclusions. First, the genre is rooted in its counterpart, utopian fiction. Secondly, it could be said to be an offspring in the words of Moylan which was a period of '(…..) exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, disasters, famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and steady depletion of humanity' (qtd in Moniek 4)

Dystopia cannot be totally understood without its opposite, Utopia. The word Utopia was first used in direct context by Sir Thomas More in his work titled *Utopia* (1516). This word is translated from the Greek as 'no place' (outopus) which is also realized as 'good place' a derivation of the English homophone 'outopia'. In his book, More creates a vision of an ideal society with minimal crime, violent and poverty. Meanwhile, some critics also considered Plato's *Republic* (written around 380 bc) to have birthed the utopian novel given its extensive ideals and postulations about a perfect community with an ideal political, social and legal system. The Utopian concept was appropriately described by George Kateb as a society, "In which all conflicts of conscience and conflict of interest are abolished (…) all obstacles to a discriminate life for all men have been removed (..) and peace in abundance and virtue (is) permanently and universally obtained (17)

Therefore, utopian fiction depicts an ideal earthly paradise where every facet of human existence flows in the scale of harmony and prosperity. Walsh reacting to More's work *Utopia*, posits that the society is based on the principle of collectivism and shared resources. The idea of self-aggrandizement is discouraged and all effort is channeled to the progress of the state and thus commonwealth (40). Governments consists of legitimate officials and monarchy is subject to change given a suspicion of power extremely. Thus, the utopian concept is characterized with the integration of man's private and public life; individual and communal happiness is not independent of each other.

However, in the late 19th and early 20th century, an anti-utopia genre (dystopia) emerged. Gregory Claeys notes that the term appears intermittently beforehand as it was first employed by John Stuart Mill in 1868 parliamentary debate (107). The term is suggestive of a 'bad place'. Literary speaking, it refers to an imagined place where almost everything is bad. Going through the historical cause, Moylan (44) asserts 'dystopian narration is largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century' which points to the destructive wars that brought about a global tragedy. Secondly, the dystopian shift is also traceable to the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union. Peter Rupport observe that humans' high hope in socialism which influenced most utopian literature vanished when the October revolution of 1917; a herald of some sort of utopian world to the Russian, crumbled. He states 'the failure of socialism in the Soviet Union, once thought to be a model utopian experiment ….. is sufficient evidence that utopianism is not only ineffective but unttainable.. (qtd in Gerhard 7).

Meanwhile, for Booker (19), he submits that the shift is to be referenced to the new technological innovations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which culminated to the rise of dystopian thought. The realization of the scientific achievement as predicted by Bacon in the aforementioned centuries offers in Booker's words, 'hints that science would not have an entirely emancipating effect on humanity, as science contradicts human nature and thus becomes a source of its repression and control' (6).

Again, Wash claims that the discoveries of Freud in psychology set forth a background for the emergence of dystopia, as evidence reveals that man is not entirely rational but also possesses passions and desires (125). Kateb adds that man is seen as 'mysterious being … mysterious to himself and surely to others, and fully explicable by his milieu… and capable of some spontaneous behaviours' (146). These developed assumptions thus querries the trustworthiness of man to exercise justice, equity and order when found in the seat of power. Therefore, these major historical events of the twentieth century; world war I and II, rapid technological progress and notions of imperfect humanity influenced dystopian thoughts that gave rise to the dystopian genre.

Sargent in his three faces of Utopianism (1963) defines dystopia as;

A non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time space that the authors intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader loved (9).

In compliment to his claims, Gordon Tally and Prakash view dystopia to be "a utopia that has gone wrong or a utopia that functions only for a particular segment of society' (1). Thus a dystopia society pictures a state of dysfunctionality, degeneration and dictatorship. The scope of dystopia fiction does seem to signal something about the society and as Atwood would put it "is a sad commentary on our age" (95). Some of the prominent representation of this genre are *We* (1924) by Yevgeni Zamyatin, *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley, *Nineteen Eight-four* (1984) by George Orwell, *The Handmaid* (1955) by Margret Atwood to mention but a few. The dystopia landscape introduced in these classics is one where the virtues of the individual are trampled upon and destroyed in the name of development and control. As Malak observes, "Dystopia essentially deal with power; power as the prohibition or perversion of human potential, power in its absolute forms (10)

Sanders hold that dystopia fiction is the result of fear in modern society, mainly fear in external control and fear of anonymity. These fears are portrayed as forceful compliance of the individual to society's implemented system. According to Moylan, the emphasis of dystopia is the 'ability to register the impact of an unseen and unexamined social system in the everyday lives of everyday people'. (qtd in Moniek 4). For instance, in *We*, Zamyatin portrays a society in the distant future where rigid conformity is crushed. Zemaytin, an advocate of October revolution of 1913 and a witness of its failure, suspected the rise of totalitarianism and wrote *We* as a warning. He depicts a rigid society where people's individuality and creativity is suppressed which points to Stalinist totalitarian regime's potential in Russia. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* was influenced by *We* and was written as a political satire's and a portentous warning after witnessing the atrocities of Stalin's rigidity in Russia and the mayhem of Hitler's impact in Germany. Afraid of the spread of a facist virus throughout Europe, Orwell portrayed a society under strict rule with secret surveillance, constant wars, miserable living condition and where individuality, is seen as a crime. Thus through the socio-political concerns embedded in their works, these dystopia writers projected writing as system of caution and resistance.

Atwood's *The Handmaid* relies heavily on feminism and religious fundamentalism in achieving subjugation of individual will in attack to patriarchal theocracy.

In the book, *Utopia/Dystopia Conditions of Historical Possibility*, Michael Gordon, Hilly Tilly and Gyan Prakash opine;

Whereas utopia takes us into a future and serves to indict this present, dystopia places us directly in a dark and depressing reality, conjuring up terrifying future if we do not recognize and treat it's symptoms in the here and now (2)

This establishes that dystopias are satires on utopian concept. Stillman agrees and writes that dystopia 'warn the inhabitants of contemporary society about possible disastrous conclusion to certain important or powerful trends in their societies' (35). In other words, dystopias take an utopian concept and '(reveal) their inconsistency, their hypocrisy, or their unreality' (Fyre, 337). This unimaginably fragmented worlds of dystopian fiction offer writers the opportunity to represent in the words Moylan "the historical space-time of the authors (…) in way that fore-grounds the articulation of it's economic, political and cultural dimension (qtd in Moniek 4)".

Thus, dystopian novels allow writers an outlet to examine the society's values, structures, wars and injustice, as a way to vent their frustrations at having inherited a ravaged society and increasingly corrupted government.

The function of dystopian fiction varies according to geographical and temporal conditions. Bobby Newman in his essay "Why is Walden too Considered a Dystopian?" presents a summation of several factors critics of dystopian genre namely; Davis (1981), Kateb (1963), Kiman (1987) Walsh (1962), consider to be a typical dystopia work. The parameters are as follows;

(i) Suspicion of scientific social planning.

(ii) The unhappiness of the character portrayed.

(iii) Suspicion of sources of behaviour outside the individual.

(iv) Violation of a presumed inherent need to struggle and

(v) Suspicion of behavioural methods of governances (162)

However, Newman opines that these conclusion provides sufficient basis for classifying dystopias in general. Sean and Daniel also concerned to the fact that there are other dystopian fiction that take as their focus ''all manners of other social pathologies'' (11).

Octavia Bultler's *Parable Triology* for instance, was used to illustrate a dystopian society with a futuristic American sitting which captioned in the words of Sean and Daniel "a combination of corporate dominance, government, corruption, widespread poverty, gang warfare, environmental degradation and general societal breakdown (that) have brought the country to the verge of collapse (11)

Therefore, apart from the technological cum totalitarian control in classical dystopias, contained in broader dystopian realities are issues of political corruption, economic meltdown and ecological destruction. Jacob Rendtorff argues further that corruption also interlinks with dystopia studies because 'it is generally presupposed that corruption will lead to the destruction of trust and stability of society and that corruption destroys the possibility of healthy and good society' (12). On this note, Keith Booker informs us that ''to find dystopian fictions that focuses on third world experience, one must, in fact, turn to the third world itself (61) Most post-colonial and modern African novels also reveals certain dystopian elements that characterized post-independence Africa. Since Booker remarks that any literary piece that underscores ''social or political criticism'' can be read as dystopia. In Africa literature, one finds related truths with the authors society, its history and events being used as motivation for imagining how certain political actions and unreliable might bring disaster. One of such factors, for Negash (qtd in Afoloyan 6), manifest functionally as the struggle for survival in a deprived system where there is inevitably.

For instance, Achebe's novels, *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* captures what Chifane calls 'dystopian standardization', which is characteristic of any societal engagement against corruption and abusive political systems inevitably leading to disorder and oblivion. Chief, the Honourable Nanga and Odili are political types that symbolize the vicious circle of subservience and mifeasance in Nigeria politics. The complex structure of *Anthills of the Savannah,* Achebe's interesting political satire is a kind of dystopia that foregrounds a darker dimension of power abuse, how it shapes human character and affects the country's national development. Edwin Onwuka sees military dictatorship in Achebe's work as a metaphor for ''social alienation and psychological trepidation', in the sense that power illegitimately accessed becomes repressive and destructive to the citizens. The vehement retort by the soldier 'if I kill you, I kill a dog' (48) gives an insight into his impression on civil society. It is suggestive of deep contempt on the citizenry by the corrupt armed forces.

The fierce critic and writer, Wole Soyinka also typifies the military odyssey and power obsession in Nigerian politics. His work, *A play of Giants* doffersses what the playwright himself calls the Aminin Theme; that emphasis the power hungry nature of African leaders; a selfish ambition that breeds moral decay, oppression, disillusionment, economic decline, and abortion of all the great prospects, of nationalism, freedom from imperialism, destitution and diseases, and of Pan-Africanism nursed in 'the heady days of independence celebrations' (7).

This agrees with Simon Gikandi's validation that literary works of Africa post-independence disillusionment are not works 'of how colonialism ruined Africa, but of how Africa leaders aborted the great hopes and expectations of indigenous'. (359). Hence, Achebe and Soyinka share similar political concerns, the issue of indigenous colonization and misappropriation of goenormous.

More so, contemporary Nigerian novels such as Chris Abani's *Graceland,* Helen Habila's *Waiting for an Angel,* Okey Ndibe's *Arrow of Rain*, and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come,* construct a metropolitan Lagos, that in Nnolim's words "astounds the senses, a vibrant city of many cultures and languages, but also a dystopian space of deprivation, despair and dislocation" (321). This generation of writer explores the socioeconomic disjunctions that characterized post-colonial dictatorship and its oppressive mechanism to the lives and living condition of the masses. A good illustration is Ndibe's *Arrow of Rain.* The text constructs a compelling reality of repressive state apparatus where the entire nation becomes an enormous prison and people are physically and psychologically manipulated. In her interview with the author, Tenshak reveals Ndibe's motivation behind his work;

The motivation comes from a longstanding fascination with power and silence and the ways in which those who have political power mandate or inspire silence and especially among those with an ethical or professional backgrounds. (51)

By this, Ndibe questions the overlong quietude and sheer reluctance of the community in revolting against injustice and oppression entrenched in the socio-political system. It goes further to buttress Soyinka's words 'the man dies in all who keeps silent in the face of tyranny' (40). Also, the idea of General Bello brutal rape and murder of lyeso in the novel was seen by Tenshak as Ndibe's attempt of passing a larger metaphysical statement, that is, the rape or defilement of the nation by her inhuman leaders. Perhaps, one common goal which this Nigeria third generation of writers shares, and which transcends the artistic representation of political unrest and socio-economic dilapidation in the nation is the idea of social consciousness, a pragmatic and unrelenting resistance to stiffing social or governmental control. Thus, Aimehi Edoro addresses the role of the writer; contends that in their engagement with their craft 'third generation writers are strongly driven by the assumption that writers have a social role with serious consequences for collective action against social power' (qtd in Tenshak 88)

Helen Habila's *Waiting for an Angel,* a dystopia narration of social realism captures this sense of dissatisfaction and protest both by the university students and the people of Poverty Street. These actions are targeted to confront the problems of corruption, instransparent leadership, mismanagement of funds and resources, the miserable living condition of the masses and the problems in the educational sector. Habila's novel promotes the notion that

Africa's problems are caused by the moral bankruptcy of her leaders. Comparing Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* with Ayi Kweh Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Gerard opines that both works highlight "the resistance of the major characters to despotism, the corruption, the collective demoralization, the economic decay and social oppression that have been the poisoned fruit of decolonization" (147). The employment of symbolism and imagery in *Waiting for an Angel* places Habila in alignment with post-colonial resistance thinking. In an interview with Carmen McCain, he contends

There are no boundaries between what is purely political and what art is, Art becomes politics and politics become art. So I think people like me who find themselves in that tradition and have the temperament, that awareness of what is going on, who feel that things shouldn't be the way things are; have a duty to speak out (qtd in Tenshak 94).

Thus, the demand for justice crosses the length and breadth of many third Nigerian generation literary thought. Similarly, Habila's novel captures environmental interest and its shanty slums, and the depiction of urban decay that engulfs and intertwines with the people's lives. Poverty street is seen as "one of the many decrepit, disease ridden squatters that dotted that city, Lagos like ringworm on a beggar's body" (120). The new dystopia description of the rural community and the precarity of the people is projected as life threatening incidents. Okoye also shares this perspective as the literality of environment and social deprivation foregrounded in her novel. Further, a critical observation on Habila and Okoye's literary thrust, particularly in their respective novels above shows a unifying notion of both authors towards poverty; a sense that poverty, beyond a condition of lack, have become a Nigerian culture through the system of marginalization in the country.

Iwuchukwu examining Ifeoma Okoye's *The Fourth World* from an apartheid perspective unveils the system of violation in the country which manifest on form of 'segregation, oppression and exploitation' owing to the nature of Nigerian politics that draw a disparity between the havoc and have not (266). These Nigerian texts corresponds with Gottlieb's aguement that dystopia do not need to present a system worse than our own, and point to Eastern and Central Europe political critical works that are "clearly expressive of the dystopian impulse although they deal with the writer's own security as is" (5)

Furthermore, in the introduction of the book *Dark Horizon, Science Fiction and the Dystopian magination*, Buccollini et al claim that "the dystopia imagination has served as a prophetic vehicle (1). By this, it means the judgmental foresight of writers with 'ethical and political concern' based on their contemporaneous issues. Also, survival is of the opinion that 'each dystopian society contain within it said of a utopian dream (8). So to say, the exaggerated dystopian vision is created to quote Stillman as the author selects, emphasis and magnifies undesirable destruction or dehumanizing aspect or tendencies of contemporary security (35) which enables the reading public connect to their realities and at same time prepares them proactively against the black future signaled by writers. For Booker, dystopia literature generally also constitutes a critique examination of the utopian premises upon which these conditions and systems are based on hrough the imaginative extension of these condition and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and contradictions [3]

The "imaginative extension' can be seen as incredible conjectures of writers based on the motif of contemporary society, not for the purpose of threat but to achieve a societal rejuvenation. For example, William Golding 'Lord of the Flies' subtly exaggerates the moral deterioration of mankind, the loss of innocence and the struggle for truth and order using teenage characters. This links also to the concept for 'defamiliarization which Maria Varsam sees as a key component of dystopia literature. In "Concrete Dystopia; Slavery and its Others", she writes; "Applied to dystopia fiction, defamiliarization makes us see the world anew, not as it is but as it could be; it shows the world in sharp focus in order to bring out conditions that exist already but which…. We can no longer see' (206). Therefore, most authors of dystopia fiction usually employs futuristic setting to create temporal distance between the dystopian society and the reader. This distance gives the reader opportunity to join the author in a critical examination of the social, political or cultural ideas, enshrouded in the novel.

Moylan in his work, "Scrape for the Untainted Sky; Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia" presents two kinds of dystopia depending on how the novel ends. The first dystopia is the anti-eutopian dystopian. Here the system or societal structures finally overwhelms and over-powers the individual. Julia agrees and asserts that 'dystopia mainly depicts the divergence between individual identity or ambitious and the collection goals of the state which crush or suppress any individual expression' (14). The other form of dystopia, eutopian dystopia presents a situation whereby the individual finds allies, discovers what the system entails and responds with defiance. In this form of dystopia, Moylan opines that though the corporate opposition is acknowledged, yet the novel may sustain two different resolutions. The uprising can either end in defeat and become historic or it can end on a note of individual victory over the system.

Meanwhile, regardless of the outcome, whether the novel is an anti-eutopian or eutopian dystopia, Moylan holds that this individualistic expression, and ideals should learn the reading public with an impression of hope. Hence, the two novels under study 'The Fourth World' and 'Campus Riot' will be used to novel dystopia element of struggle and oppression fear and control, and equally show how individuality and resistance serve as a precursor of hope.

From the foregoing, it could be observed that although many scholars have explored postcolonial disillusionment and the failures of leadership in African fiction, much of this work tends to focus on corruption and social collapse in isolation. What is less explored, however, is how these societal problems come together in dystopian narratives to shape the struggle for identity, freedom, and individuality in Nigerian literature. Few studies have considered how Nigerian writers use dystopian settings not just to critique political failure, but to show the daily tension between individuals and the oppressive systems around them. This study seeks to fill that gap by looking closely at how Nigerian fiction depicts dystopian worlds where power, control, and social pressure confront the individual at every turn. By doing so, it aims to show how literature can reflect the harsh realities of Nigerian society while also imagining ways for characters to resist, assert themselves, and preserve their sense of self in the face of overwhelming obstacles.

Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily guided by Postcolonial Theory, supplemented by insights from Dystopian Theory and Foucauldian Power Theory. Together, these frameworks offer a multidimensional approach to examining how corruption, inequality, and authoritarian governance shape individual experiences and societal dynamics in Nigerian postcolonial literature.

Several scholars are widely recognized as foundational precursors of postcolonial theory, each contributing uniquely to its evolution. Edward Said is often regarded as the central figure, with his seminal work *Orientalism* laying the groundwork for modern postcolonial studies by revealing how colonial powers constructed knowledge to dominate and stereotype colonized peoples. Complementing Said, Frantz Fanon explored the psychological and revolutionary dimensions of colonial oppression, emphasizing how colonialism dehumanizes both the oppressed and the oppressors. Homi K. Bhabha introduced influential concepts such as hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence, which illuminate the complex cultural negotiations and identity formations in postcolonial societies. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak further expanded the field by interrogating how marginalized voices, particularly those of the subaltern, are silenced and excluded from dominant discourses. Collectively, the work of these scholars established postcolonial theory as a critical lens for understanding the lingering effects of colonial domination on contemporary societies.

At its core, postcolonial theory seeks to analyze the social, political, and cultural transformations that occur after the end of colonial rule. It provides insight into why many African nations, including Nigeria, continue to grapple with political instability, economic disparities, and moral disorientation long after independence. Scholars such as Fanon, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Homi Bhabha, and Achille Mbembe demonstrate that the structures, attitudes and hierarchies established during colonialism often persist into the post-independence era, manifesting in forms such as corrupt leadership, abuse of power, and ineffective state institutions.

Within Nigerian literature, postcolonial theory allows us to interpret texts as reflections of a society still negotiating with the legacies of colonial rule. Writers depict the nation as a space haunted by its colonial past, where the promise of independence and nationhood has frequently given way to disappointment, corruption, and systemic instability. The theory helps explain why ordinary citizens struggle to maintain stability, identity, and dignity in a society that often fails to protect them. It also illuminates the internal conflicts of characters, who experience fragmentation, moral dilemmas, and psychological strain as they navigate environments shaped by power imbalance and social injustice. Importantly, postcolonial theory recognizes literature as a form of resistance; a medium through which writers challenge oppression, critique societal structures, and imagine alternative futures.

Dystopian theory, by contrast, did not emerge from a single originator but developed through the contributions of multiple scholars. Lyman Tower Sargent offered foundational definitions of dystopia and its related concepts, while Tom Moylan introduced the notion of the "critical dystopia," emphasizing literature's capacity to critique social structures while envisioning possible alternatives. Raffaella Baccolini highlighted the duality of dystopian texts, showing how narratives of despair are often interwoven with subtle but significant traces of hope. Other influential thinkers, such as Darko Suvin, helped shape the understanding of dystopian literature as a reflection of society's anxieties about the present and future.

Dystopian theory provides a lens for examining the exaggerated or intensified realities Nigerian authors depict to reflect sociopolitical issues such as poverty, insecurity, inequality, and corruption. In postcolonial Nigerian fiction, dystopian elements are not merely imaginative devices; they serve as symbolic amplifications of real-life struggles. Broken institutions, failing systems, and decaying social environments mirror the lived experiences of citizens and dramatize the consequences of persistent injustice. By employing dystopian theory, this study can explore how literary spaces become sites where oppression, moral decline, and social disintegration are intensified to reveal deeper truths about the nation. Moreover, dystopian theory illuminates the emotional and psychological pressures characters endure, showing how extreme conditions shape human behaviour and provoke acts of adaptation, resistance, or survival.

Finally, Foucauldian theory, developed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault, adds another critical dimension to this study. Foucault reconceptualizes power as pervasive, not solely dependent on violence or coercion, but embedded in everyday institutions, cultural norms, laws, and social practices. Power operates subtly, shaping how individuals think, behave, and perceive themselves, often without overt force.

In the Nigerian context, Foucauldian theory sheds light on how corruption and authoritarianism permeate not only governmental structures but also the minutiae of everyday life. It explains how leaders sustain control through surveillance, manipulation of information, economic dependence and the creation of social hierarchies. At the same time, Foucauldian analysis emphasizes that power is never absolute; where it exists, forms of resistance, both small and large, emerge. This perspective is invaluable for understanding literary characters who challenge oppressive systems, whether through overt rebellion, moral courage, strategic compliance, or the subtle reassertion of personal agency. Foucauldian theory thus allows for a nuanced reading of characters as both subjects shaped by power and agents capable of negotiation, adaptation, and refusal.

By integrating postcolonial, dystopian, and Foucauldian frameworks, this study provides a holistic approach to Nigerian postcolonial literature. It enables an analysis of both macro-level structures; such as political corruption, economic inequality and institutional failure, and micro-level experiences, including the personal struggles, moral choices, and strategies for survival of individual characters. Ultimately, this combined framework positions literature as both a mirror reflecting the complexities of postcolonial Nigeria and as a space for imagining alternative social realities, forms of resistance and pathways toward justice and human dignity.

Analysis of Individual Struggles in a Dystopia Society; A Question of

Conformity or Revolt in Ifeoma Okoye's *The Fourth World.*

Ifeoma Okoye was born in 1937 in Anambra state, Eastern region, Nigeria. She was schooled at St. Monica's college in Ogbunike, earned a teaching certificate and taught in the same school for two years from 1974-1977, Okoye went to study at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka where she bagged her Bachelor of Arts in English. She also obtained her postgraduate degree in English at Aston University in England, 1987. She taught English at Nnamdi Azikiwe university until 2000. Okoye, according to Oyekian Owomoyela, has been referred to by her fans as 'the most important female novelist from Nigeria after Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta". Okoye is an award winning author. Her first-novel, *Behind the Clouds*, won the prestigious Nigerian festival of Arts and Culture Award and was selected by Spectrum Books as one of the best 25 Nigerian books written over the past 25 years. Her second novel, *Men Without Ears* won the Association of Nigerian author, best fiction of the year award. She is also known for her children short stories including *Trails and Other Stories.*

Undoubtedly, Okoye is one of Nigeria post-independent writers that creates social consciousness and agitates for social reforms in her literary works. She is a keen discoverer of the society especially as touching socio-political imbalances within her society. Just as the artistic pattern of dystopia authors in setting narratives futuristically, conjuring up in an exaggerated satire containing systems of the security, Okoye in his novel *The Fourth World* portrays a dystopia frame of existence which Emenyeonu (IV) refers to as 'the other world'. Okoye holds that beyond the developing countries (third world nation), there lies an unpopular, non-geographical world that bedevils humanity. According to Emenyeonu, it is a world inhabited by "True wretched of the earth who squat in shanties, slums and unsightly makeshift abodes under bridges…. (a world of) violence humanity, the ignored and disposed (and) poverty is their unmistakable identity. (Emenyonu in the foreword, IV).

The outskirt of Enugu was used to capture certain dystopia elements; distribution, deprivation, wretchedness, injustice, political corruption and environmental degradation which have culminated into structure of oppression to the inhabitants of the city. Okoye chronicles the downtroddeness, the helplessness and miserable experience of the dispised world of Akalaka, Kodili, Mama Bebe and others plunged in a survival struggle that affects their humanity. The novel revolve around Chira, a young desperate girl and finalist at FGSS Owerri, who had the ambition of attaining self-reliance through education. Her ambition was threatened by her father's demise, her mother's depression, the disappointment and betrayed from all sides, hope glimpsed and significantly, by 'the humiliations and uncertainties symbolized to her by Kasanga Avenue' (25).

Kasanga Avenue beyond a town is a personification of enormous prison and a hellish zone. Okoye describing the town says, 'Kasanga Avenue was a destroyer of people's bodies and minds (95). This is suggestive and complimentary to a Nigeria society that is existentially unconducive, full of discomfort and physically unhygienic. The residents of Kasanga Avenue, taught by their corporate pitiable condition realized thus "That their enemies were not one another, their real enemies were unemployment, meagre earnings, hunger, disease, an unhealthy environment and poor housing (59).

Perhaps a survey on one of the major problem to the destiny and well-being of Nigerian society is the menace of misery. This is seen in Miss Fisba's sharp mock response to Chira's exotic dream.

Who put that silly idea into your poor little head, Chira?

The poor don't dream of rich dishes, Chira. These schools are not for the likes of you, Chira. They are not for the children of Kasanga Avenue'' (22)

Contained in her words is the unreliable and poor sociological context in the parts of the country that mark off aspiring citizens from embracing destiny. Kasanga Avenue is built heavily on metaphors. It speaks of the community of the dispossessed and disprivileged people, battered with ecological disaster, darkness, oppression and injustice from the indigenous government. Everything about life is zero. Chira helps us through her thought painting of the town as' a cursed place, a place where people had been deprived of good education, good health, good job... Where they are deprived of dignity and honour…. A place where people had begun to accept the prejudiced description of them as slow, stupid, incompetent and criminal' (104-105). This points to the socio-economic disorganization and infrastructural decay that bedevils the Nigerian rural areas

For instance, Okoye scarstically creates the deplorable condition of the health sector. The insufficient health facilities coupled with the lackadaisical attitude of the nurses in addition to the burden of Kasanga inhabitants. In fact, disease and illness have become part of life due to their impoverished state. Despite their labour, they still wallow in an indebted life. Their lives were defined to borrow Akalaka's word, 'struggle'.

Among other Nigerian tragedy in the novels is death. The death of Mama Bebe's little child, Mama Egodi children (Donatus and Egodi), and Doris' baby who were victims of the great flood, hunger, illness and suffering symbolizes suffocation of the nation's hope and destiny. Some neighbours accused Mama Egodi of child abuse (for sending her little child hawking). However, beyond the pathetic situation, Okoye rather than attacking the unwise living of the resident, she points us to a world, the fourth world; a state of dilapidation, an expense of deterioration and the ghettoization of Nigeria society owing to mismanagement, misappropriation and embezzlement of the national wealth. This is revealed through the shadowy and dubious lives of Maks (the selfish bourgeoisie) and the Governor (the corrupt government) which underlines dystopia element of discrimination, oppression and exploitation. In this case, it is propagated not with gun but through greed. Mirror Head helps to explain the reason behind the pervading destitution in the country as he remarks that '… someone somewhere of sometime had stolen what rightly belonged to the people or had deprived the citizens of the country their rights' (155). This reveals the subtle criminality and oppression perpetuated by the empowered affluent few to the unempowered poor masses.

Owing to those miscellaneous quagmire that befalls Kasanga Avenue, almost everyone is brought to a state of conformity, defeat, brokenness and sheer acceptance of their bizarre realities. The dejected party holds the list of Kodili, Mama Bebe, Mama Egodi, Nebolisa and several others who Okoye describe as "faces with residues of worry and anxiety and sleepless night, residues

that looked like pencil mark left on paper after having done a job with an eraser (19-20). Thus, their lives and stories were specimen giving expression to cruel hands of oppression. Kodili was said of Akalaka to have turned to ''a bird's egg, as fragile as ever'' (16) Nebolisa captures the traumatic experience of some people in dystopia Nigeria, while Mama Egodi and Mama Bebe represent the sorry state of lives for most underprevileged Nigerians.

Okoye seeks to trigger a corporate morale, an individual impetus in challenging this obvious injustice. The agitating squad includes Akalaka, Mirror Head, Jude Pebble and Chiralum. Despite the brief role of Akalaka in the novel, his ideals lived on with Chira. He says to Chira concerning her ambition, 'Don't let it die..don't give up, no matter the obstacle's (18). His words preach to the average Nigerians on the need to face their deprived world with unyielding personality. We have Jude Pebble, a selfless and relentless Kasanga Avenue doctor who as the community leader alongside with Mirror Head (Mr. Omuche Uche), featured social activism and nationalistic spirit needed to register opposition against the corrupt and avaricious government. Re-orienting the depressed and defeated people of Kasanga Avenue, Jude remarks;

Its people like you that make things easy for the non-performing government. People that give up easily. We should shout until our leaders are forced to listen to us, until they are forced by our yelling to slow our problems or reduce our suffering (153).

In as much as vocal confrontation returns with negligence from the country's administration as one of the people argued, yet, for Jude, silence and complacency would be a sign of suppressed individuality. On the other hand, with Mirror Head as a message figure, Okoye attacked the concept of elitism and upholds the practice of patriotism in the country. Mirror Head is described as 'an honest' intelligent and well-head nationalist and activist who believed in the equality of all Nigerians no matter their sex, religion, status or ethnicity' (155). Thus, for Okoye justice and equity should be given prominence over class consciousness as represented by Ogom's father, Chief Ayika.

The clarion call for protest and revolt is vividly personified in Okoye's teenage character, Chira. The 18 years old Chira, aside a feminist perspective of her role, also serves as a pointer to individualistic consciousness, vision and expression. Okoye has distinguished herself not only as a feminist but a peronist and she modeled this mentality in her heroine, Chira. Her encounters with the nurse, the matron, Miss Fisba, the priest, Amos and finally Maks reveal a personality type Okoye seem to indoctrinate every well-meaning Nigerian to sustain. A character imbued with audacity, intrepidity, tenacity, self-reliance and moral enablement in confronting the unjust structures, systems of oppression and discrimination in our dystopia society.

Amidst Kasanga Avenue; a metaphor for socio economic and environmental dilapidation, Chira would still echo to herself 'my ambition is still alive (140). Her ethical and bold character is seen in her rebuke to the discriminating matron; 'its unfair to send me away and allow that man over to stay' (19), in challenging her wicked and chauvinistic uncle; ' Nodu and I will fight anybody who misuses papa's land' (90) in exposing religious hypocrisy and materialism as she confronts the priest; 'You are doing this to my father because he was poor, because none of us is ready or able to offer you money to make you change your mind about not conducting a church burial for him' (79).

Finally, in sustaining the ability and integrity to reject Maks proposal threats, Chira's encounter with Maks presents a graphic reality concerning struggle. Owing to her disadvantaged sociological background and coupled with her mother's health challenge, the seeming salvational appearance as Maks brings Chira to the crossroad of her life. She is faced with two attractive options that are altogether remedial in themselves, but their tangibility and longevity in time gives her misgiving. Marrying Maks will take her from rags to riches and solve her mother's health problem although she fears it may boomerang; it could mean a slim hope for her ambition (being educated) or a death of it. However, rejecting Maks portends a continued survival struggles, the horrific unknown surrounding her mother's life and attainment of self-reliance through education. The character of Maks is also suggestive. Okoye helps us peep into his symbolic role as he threatens Chira with his marriage proposal, he says mockingly;

'Your mother will be shocked to hear of your decision (Chira rejection of him). You know what her health is like. It is wicked of you to allow her to die. I promise again to take good care of her, pay her medical bills, find her a decent place to live, give her a generous allowance to spend as she wished' (319).

His wooing promise and approach despite how good and transformative it seems, captures the mind bending strategy utilized by most elites and corrupt politicians in their interaction with the dispriviledged masses. They often seek to seduce and exploit the conscience of the poor and market their popularity through the disguise of philanthropic impression. Nevertheless, Chira's vehement refusal to Maks reinforces her individualistic consciousness, self-esteem, unwavering feminity and transcendental personality.

The hallmark of individualism is captured as Okoye reveals through Chira's thought process.

Relying on people had failed her. First, she had relied on her father to realize her ambition to go to university and her father died. Next, she was going to rely on Ogom's father for financial help and then Ogom had made it improper for her to ask Chief Ayika for help and when she had summoned up courage to ask, she was let down. No she was not going to rely on people anymore she was going to rely on herself' (311).

Analysis of Individual Struggles in a Dystopia Society in Chuma Anilwata's *Campus Riot*

Chuma Anikwata hails from Ifiteani village, Agulu Anambra state. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language and Literature from Nnamdi Azikiwe university, Awka. He is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Scribens Manot Publsihers (www. Scribensmanot books.com). He is also a literature teacher at Unique Comprehensive Secondary School, Awka. He has written three books; *A Welcome Strangers* (drama), *Epitaph for Biafra and Other Poems* (poetry) and *Campus Riot* (novel). Anikwata is engrossed with raising young intellectuals to transform Africa for better.

In the microcosmic world of learning (Stress Scenario Universit), Akinwata features certain dystopia qualities such as corruption, exploitation, fear and control to expose and criticize the decline of

education in Nigeria. The title of the novel; Campus Riot, evokes a sense of emergency, chaos, disorganization, inefficiency and failure that has threatened the academic possibility of the nation. The novel reveals a situation where campus excellence and ethics are overshadowed by mediocrity and compromise. The imbalance as portrayed by Anikwata shows certain unethical educational practices that has been entrenched as a system in the university fostered by professional immaturity. The novel revolves around Nmandi Okadigbo, a finalist at Stress Scenario University who burns passionately for knowledge, but is met with substandard academic system, the negligence, injustice and amateurism of most lecturers who downplay the campus code of conduct and professionalism. Anikwata reminds us that;

The problems with (Nigeria) education system is not only poor government review; it is also lack of dedication and the inexperience of the teachers, the disorganized process of impacting knowledge and the poor manners of the lecturers (266).

Examining further the decline, we are informed of Mrs. Nwogu whose teaching method is equivalent to a news caster and her note is '..made of lines and paragraph lifted directly from different text books and combined together to form a confusing essay' (19). Prof. Clem, on the other hand, represents some acclaimed intellectuals whose honorific professorship are short of merit but based on compensation and favouritism. He is popular with his annoying digression. Others including Dr. Orji who serves to reveal the incompetence and unprofessionalism that has ravaged the academic world of the country.

More so, on corruption and exploitation, Anikwata unveils the promiscuity and illegalities associated with most university lecturers. On one of his encounters with Dr. Orji reveals a scene where female students were victims of sexual harassment. From the words of the engineering lecturer, we see a conditional anomaly; '.. as long as I'm still a lecturer in engineering department, any female student who want my attention must show me her backside' (143). Others in a codified humour hailed themselves of their sexual escapades with female students. One of the lecturers remarks 'You're seriously gunning for five stars' (140) Prof. Clem also adds 'five girls from the same level in your class equal one star' (143).

The male students were not left out. They are bullied into serving the lecturer's appetite, materially. It becomes customary that any male student on an invitation with a lecturer predisposes him to unplanned expenditure. For instance, Prof. Clem was famous for his request of Kola; a derived figurative for cell phones and bottles of wine. Dr. Orji equally goes with a particular brand. Thus academic advancement for most students thrives on bribery (for male students) and illicit affairs (for female students).

The greater part of dystopia patterns represented in the novel is the fear and control system enshrined in the school administration which intimidates students and subdues any sign of rebellion. Owing to the agelong irregularities in Stress Scenario University which has gained a systemic endorsement, to swim against the tide either robs students of a lecturer due attention or jeopardize chances of graduation. For example, there is the case of Judith, being sexually assaulted. She attempted a redness protocol which later earned her expulsion. The act sent panic across the campus so that the individuality of the students is lost. The rationale for a legal confrontation of defaulting school authorities stood bar, but the impetus to pursue the case was infringed by the superimposing influence of the administration. Thus, we see Anthony and Esoehe advising Nnamdi against petitioning Prof. Clem. Kelvin the class representative withdraws himself while reiterating, "I don't want to be prosecuted by the gang of lecturer. I have a lot of challenge at home. I can't risk not graduating with my colleagues (74).

By gang of lecturers, it gives us an insight into a civilized crime perpetuated by a group of lecturers who jeopardize students' academic status for playing defiant to the rules. Also worthy of note is the moral bankruptcy and legal impotence inherent in the administration in sanctioning unconventional practices within the institution. Nnamdi's HOD, Prof. Joyce tries to dissuade his intended petition. "You have a clear case here and it took a lot coverage for a student to write this kind of position because I can't write a petition against Clem even as the Head of Department (138) On another occasion, through his professional advice to Nnamdi, Dr. Orji discloses further about the system;

though its true that Prof Clem isn't doing well but who are you to say it? You came here to learn not to teach the professors how to teach. I was Prof Clem's student. I had problem in his course, I was tempted to petition him but I consulted his staff advisor and his discouraged me from making such as a mistake. He told me that I can't succeed by fighting the system but playing by the rules (212)

This elaborate information helps us to understand how control and silence is employed as a weapon in several institutions of the country to propagate corruption, perversion and debasement. Its noteworthy that educational decline is a subset of the travesty in the society. Hence Dr. Orji, still advising Nnamdi on his revolutionist ideology says 'it's the way our society works '(212). So to say, Nigeria dystopia perspective presents a deterioration of the society; a situation where injustice, moral bankruptcy, power misuse, self-aggrandizement and misrepresentation thrives.

It is the midst of those dysfunctionality, the fear and control strategy and system of exploitation that Anikwata featured within Nnamdi a persistent character needed to combat the corrupt system entrenched in the country's life and in this case, the university administration. He achieved his goal through three ways. First, he imbued Nnamdi with a different mindset. When Anthony, Esoehe and Kelvin exempted themselves from quarrying Prof Clem for sake of their graduation, Nnamdi reacts, "You are thinking only about yourself. Think of the generation of students that have passed from this university without being taught anything knowledge, and many more who are coming after us (37).

Nnamdi selflessness and revolutionary mentality explains another reason behind most people's blind conformity to a society that does not work, selfishness. Anikwata is of the opinion that blind conformity to corruption ends up in producing unreasonable people and consequently a deformed society and a retrogressive nation of which Nigeria is yet to be delivered. However, with Nnamdi's role, he advocates for a selfless, persistent and fixed positivity to life if certain corrupt and stifling systems in the country will be defeated and abolished. Secondly, Nnamdi's action of petitioning Prof. Clem after a period of delay and discouragement signals Anikwata's doctrines of courage, heroism and self assertiveness to the cheated, bullied, oppressed and exploited Nigerians on the need to fight, unrelentlessly, the injustice and intimidation from the holders of power. This character of Prof. Clem, a popular but less

influential lecturer is a synecdoche of irrational and corrupt statutory authorities, hierarchies and rank in the country who are above the law. No wonder Anikwata passes a general disappointment when Nnamdi was summoned to withdraw his alleged statement against Prof Clem. He writes pathetically;

Nnamdi was afraid because the struggle for greater good which was inculcated in him in the seminary has no place in the society. The panels of judges are professor with the highest educational qualifications in the country; yet, none of them is rational enough to judge the petition and portion blame to the right person. If the so called learned people have no sense of good judgment and cannot do things right, then, what is the purpose of education? How did people who are so foolish manage to become university administrators? (207)

Hence we saw a Nigeria dystopia situation where institution that embodies power and authority subvert justice, order and truth. Even Nnamdi support system (the students) is brought to silence through the intimidating presence of the school administration over their representative, Kelvin. Kelvin lets out a denial note;

I don't know anything about the petition before today. Nnmadi Okadigbo acted alone, without the support of the students. He defined his action as a one man riot. No other students in the department would follow his footsteps..' (209)

Kelvin's defensive speech reveal something that is common to all students expect Nnamadi, the fear of expulsion. This is symbolic in the country where several personalities in limelight who are expected to be the people's spoken person and advocate lose their voices, masculinity and integrity in their face of repressive systems in the nation.

Finally, Anikwata achieved his self-assertion and resistance philosophy by crafting in Nnamdi a posture of inflexibility and adamancy. The demand of apology letter by the school administration reflexes the system of manipulation and coercion employed as a tool of suppression to any social activities, censoring public opinion, queries and criticism arising from few sensitive and nationalistic people in the country. Anikwata reveals that the apology letter 'is the university way of asking (Nnamdi) to surrender' (213). However, Nnamdi's calculated delay and obstinacy magnifies the place of individual right, sense of reasoning and independent will, with Adaeze's betrayal notwithstanding.

The resultant riot in the school beyond it protest connotation fails to realize Nnamdi's intended reformation. Anikwata, though, does not dismiss the idea of protest. However, he emphasizes on its reasonable radicality and diplomacy other than the sense of abuse and destruction portrayed by the students.

Conclusion

Literary dystopias usually portray a single protagonist who strives to maintain his or her individuality within a repressed society. Repression in the sense that the right, freedom of thought and expression of an individual is under check or restricted by oppressive tendencies. This system in fundamental dystopias usually manifests as a police state. However, by a wider spectrum, dystopia also connotes a corrupt state, in which case Nigeria experience enters the category. The repressive apparatus in Okoye's *The Fourth World* and Anikwata's *Campus Riot* though seem inconspicuous, yet the dehumanizing strategy is exposed using the university administration and the shanty slums of Kasanga avenue as a synecdoche of destructiveness of corruption to the nation's development and individual stability. It introduce a system of oppression and exploitation in Nigeria dystopia society that thrives through intimidation, manipulation and marginalization.

Okoye's *The Fourth World* most evidently captures the varying elements of dystopian realities that beset the nation's hope and destiny. Issues like political corruption, elitism, environmental degradation and progressive destitution in the country put forth a threat and a seemingly apartheid face to the heroine, Chiralum, a representation of the abandoned and exploited masses who struggle to rise above their disadvantaged sociological context. The struggle that Okoye and Anikwata portray is not an easy one; it is a struggle within self, and then against external system (injustice).

In modeling hope and pride of individuality, both protagonists, Chiralum and Nnamdi were fashioned not to accept the ill-fated state of their society. Thus, Okoye and Anikwata share the opinion that the increase of abuse, injustice and social political corruption in the country is based on most people's cultivated mindset around the legalized dystopian tendencies across every strata of the nation. Hence, Chiralum and Nnamdi are types and figures that advertise and promote the place of personal integrity, individual consciousness and morale needed to overthrow or bring to barest minimum the corrupt state entrenched in the country's fabric.

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