SOCIAL HYSTERIA, MORAL PANIC AND THE (DYS)FUNCTIONAL ORDER OF POSTMODERNITY IN AMMA DARKO'S *FACELESS* AND BOLAJI ABDULLAHI'S *SWEET SIXTEEN*

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Abstract

Amma Darko's *Faceless* and Bolaji Abdullahi's *Sweet Sixteen* creatively interface a dialogue that centres on the prevalent social order, charts the course for salvaging the disoriented mass from the present socio-cultural pervasion. The two novels are read critically and inter-textually towards discerning the complex socio-cultural dynamics of postmodern society that seem adrift on the cleavages of moral precipice. The thrust of this paper hinges on the strategies of representation by which writers serve as chroniclers of the state of the world, sensitisers of humanity, and as advocates for the vulnerable, with particular interest on the girl child and the younger generations. Darko's major characters portray the grim picture of the present social order, just as Abdullahi's story projects pedagogically, the propositions towards arresting the prevalent situation and healing society of its falling ethical foundation. A combination of the two creative scenarios constitutes veritable platform for dialogue, for synergising discourse of value re-engineering, socio-economic justice and of moral repair. The analytical thrust of this paper is therefore guided by postmodernism as theoretical tool suitable for interrogating the complex cleavages of contemporary socio-cultural experience.

Keywords: social hysteria, (dys)functionality, postmodernity, Darko, Abdullahi

Introduction

The prevalent postmodernity with its attendant socio-cultural anomie triggers the critical agenda of this work, based on the two texts selected for analysis, which bear particular interest on the dangers which society, and indeed the younger generations are being exposed to. The present era of popular culture, social media, digital modernity, strange dialects with incoherent idioms, and broken family values, manifests a medley of socio-cultural activities that tend to dismantle earlier notions of social relations and traditional, ethical, cultural and socio-economic value systems. The two texts taken as primary resources in the writing of this paper, namely, *Faceless* by Amma Darko and *Sweet Sixteen* by Bolaji Abdullahi, recreate the hysteria, the latent and manifest panic, psychic anomie and socio-ethical crisis that characterise postmodern society. The two texts when read side-by-side, and in the critical context, set out to, as Mary Kolawole puts it, "capture the restless spirit of the age" (2). The stories re-enact the realities of present-day life-drama, the pervasions, the troubling and traumatising humanitarian situation (Allison Mackey 1995), and similar (mis)demeanors which the authors seek to proffer roadmaps for negotiating society through the complex urban architecture of postmodern socio-cultural landscape onto a landscape of control and safety. In order to filter their individual aesthetic preferences as well as investigate the common groundings of their creative contexts, the study investigates the respective social backgrounds to the issues that inform the thematic directions of the two stories. The objective of examining the meeting point where their respective aesthetic vision intertwine, are dissected and decomposed for better understanding of the phenomenon being metaphorised in the texts. The ways the texts are thought out, the respective plot styles and by the positions and strategies of the narrations, the interlocking imaginative dialogues constitute a convergence of social encounters of postmodern society. The convergence and interplay of the arguments in the two texts, though positioned from the interfacing directions in the critical contexts, are sync with the shared goal of re-creating harmonious, purposefully designed. inclusive social order for the overall good of society.

Without doubt, the two authors are socially roused by the complexities, the palpable angst and fears that pervade the present moment of depressed economies, socio-cultural dislocations, where hopes of the mass of society are shattered and life becomes generally harsh, living and survival get more and more difficult, and the world becomes prone to violence and suffering even in the face of gargantuan technological innovations and expansive development. In the present age of postmodernism with its notoriety of 'popular culture', extensive and complex networks of urbanisation, human congestions, infantile and adult predators lurk the streets, harmful drugs are used freely by the under aged, just as pornography, gang war, violence and 'strange sexual behaviours pervade public existence, while sundry criminality remains prevalent in the global village sphere. Alan McKee projects a vivid picture of the postmodern moment by stating that in the present noxious society, "Hundreds of millions of people are consuming films, television programs, computer games, pornography, trashy magazines, pop music, heavy metal, rap, country and western, crime novels, romances, and hundreds of other kinds of culture" (2), and these 'new' culture markers signify a universe of Babelian incoherencies. The strangeness of the moment is defined by the new gibberish that passes for language of modernity being propagated through social media space, thus pointed at skewed identities of the present generation that seems to have lost sense of cultural belongingness, have lost that natal tongue and origins. Romanus Aboh affirms that "language is an identity building or formation material" (5 *Language and the construction…*). And the is apt for pondering the fate of the emerging generation that tend to embrace the alienating ethos of postmodernity.

Worsened by the existing phenomenon of socio-economic disparities in society, with the ever-widening gap between 'the haves' and 'the have-nots', there arises a gnawing atmosphere of panic and fears for the present and succeeding generation. The spate of criminality and inordinate moral behaviours by the younger generation, aggravated by the insensitivity of the political and leadership elites make the situation helpless. The primary texts of this paper weave the sordid reality of the moment, flagging the dangers that might consume the collective future of man, while at the same time creatively raising platform for dialogue towards negotiating society to safer shores, away

from the stormy gale of the raging toxicity and noxious weaves of globalisation and postmodernity.

Locating the Dislocations of Postmodernist African Experience

The two texts in context try to re-configure the manifestations and concerns emanating from the situations of social dislocations, ethical and moral dysfuctionality, arrearage and panic in their creative universe that require urgent, yet collective attention of society. In a similar thought, Aboh avers that "African writers … use their literary works as tools of cultural consciousness and rejuvenation" (189 *Beyond Loanwords*). Darko projects a bleak picture of a 'real' world where the weak and vulnerable are trampled, violated, brutalised and socio-economically excluded. The goings-on in this social setting are configured through plot style, dialogues, characterisation and settings, creatively purposed to ventilate the inbuilt tension and malfunction of values, aimed at portraying the 'causes and effects' of the manifest realities of this re-created universe. However, in-between the artistic spectacles, we locate the prognosis and imagined possible remedies to these existential situations. But the huddles that mar the prognosis of this envisioned process are, by the forcefulness and discourse content of the text, the primary concerns of this paper. These huddles, as far as Darko's *Faceless* is concerned, are brought about, ironically, by the political and public officialdom that appear to exhibit insensitivity to the stark realities of the moment, or look the other way, away from the responsibility of bringing succour and social justice to the mass of the hapless society, especially the aged, the incapacitated and the younger, misruled, misguided emergent generations. Since the traditional political and social institutions have evidently failed to play the expected roles, Darko, through artistic utility, uses creative agency as veritable channel for social sensitisation and intellectual mobilisation, and for the articulation of collective participation of society in bringing social justice and order to bear on a constantly evolving society. In this critical context, *Faceless* inter-textualises other textual situations like Abdullahi's *Sweet Sixteen* that particularly re-enacts a form of 'ideal world order' of inter-social and inter-gender, inter-generational relational norms. The narrative flags up semblance of ethical template and rules/roles that are functional, practical, pragmatic and fundamental to the project of ushering in progressive development of human capacity

and for re-engineering of community and society. This is part of the issues that continue to beat the waves of gender and social negotiations in African literary sphere. Kolawole thus asserts that "The issue of difference or otherness has therefore continued to engender many epistemological negotiations" (25) in context of African creative, literary engagements and in critical scholarship, as far as gender equality and social justice are concerned. A comparative reading of the two texts, heightening in Darko's *Faceless* and impliedly resolving in Abdullahi's *Sweet Sixteen*, sets in motion, a situation for dialogue towards moral healing and fundamental regeneration of society, with particular focus on the African experience. The texts serve as essential megaphones or mouthpieces for the vulnerable and younger generation whose voices might not be reckoned with, are too weak or muted in 'official' narratives of society and governance. Abdullahi on the other angle of creative interventions and values negotiations in *Sweet Sixteen*, kind of proffers moral remedies imagined as roadmap to a balanced society, especially in the midst of the dangerously drifting and degenerating socio-cultural order. It is clearly an artistic attempt, a prognosis aimed at panel-beating a badly battered society, where there is 'near anarchy', worrisome state of insecurity and vulnerability, especially when the fate of the younger generation, and the weak in society are put into the bargain. Through the bildungsroman (Novel of growing up) trope, Abdullahi, through the creation of the daughter of the close-knitted family (Aliya) and father (Mr Bello) setting, re-configures a world that is purposefully designed, purpose-driven, properly oriented on a firm foundation of love and adequate care-giving as panacea for the prevalent decadence. This is a creative negotiation that envisages the possibility of a humane society, imagined amidst the hysteria, the fears and panics of postmodernity exemplified in the Babelian 'strange' vocabularies and social-media-negotiated, and peer-informed values, as opposed to the traditional family, moral template of proper guardianship, and prevalence of community mores and ideals of upbringing and conscious parenthood that was the norm in traditional African ideals. It is the fear of the unknown direction of postmodernity that informs the thematic texture and socio-cultural context of Abdullahi's *Sweet Sixteen*. In one of several reviews on the book, Akin Oseni's specifically sheds light on the socio-cultural background to Abdullahi's *Sweet Sixteen* as follows:

Sweet Sixteen addresses the many personal challenges faced by young adults, especially among peers and in the society at large. These challenges include but not limited to the choice of peer group, the desire for sexual partners and gratification, the threat of stereotype and body shaming and the urge to hang out and earn respect for being vast in cyber slangs like: HAK (Hug and Kisses), KOTL (Kiss on the Lips), KPT (Keep Parents Clueless) OMG, 53X and many more in this lexical category (4).

The contending issues arising from the thematic convergence of the two texts, viewed from the socio-cultural labyrinths of the two ends of the two author's world projects the two sides of the coin in the dialogues for stemming the tide of postmodernity's near-anarchy moral condition and values.

The thematic issues of the two authors therefore converge at the meeting points between aesthetics and practical issues of human development and concerns for progressive sustainability of society. The social contexts that could be deducted from the embedded inter-textual issues in the texts are creatively articulated towards practical steps for righting the multifaceted wrongs in the value system that arise from socio-cultural and socio-economic dislocations prevalent at the moment. A commitment to mediating policy incoherencies and contradictions in governance that characterise contemporary system is central to the two narrative contexts, when evaluated comparatively. By their artistic engagement with the contradictions at the public domain, the two authors in the two texts do not only project different pictures of how we are and how we ought to be, but also flag some directional pointers towards the amelioration of the present dislocations that thrive on vainglory pursuits of the powerful, the fantasies and vanities of the neo-liberal postmodernist globalisation that have turned the world into a ring of bitter struggles for survival, materialism and laizes fair attitudes of the ruling elites, who turn deaf ears to the plight and outcry of the mass of needy and vulnerable of the world. The role of the writer in such society has always been very clear. O. B. Lawuyi describes such works of commitment as "platform for the creative use of interpersonal and

intercultural relations…in our experiences that expose some very deep personalised and collectivised values and norms, as well as the sensitive areas of our psyche" (12). Allwell Onukaogu and Ezechi Onyerionwu assert that writers everywhere do go beyond frivolities of entertainment "to express their opinions about their immediate and other societies" (20), and in their affirmation, writers do frown at inordinate social practices "that the artist thinks cannot predicate on the growth and development of the society" (ibid).

In their intertwining artistic commitments, the two texts inter-textaully magnifies some critical aspects of postmodern socio-cultural reality. David Carter's gives some clues towards understanding the preponderances of postmodern socio-cultural order in the following assertion:

> Whatever usage one prefers, it is clear that 'postmodernist theory' implies certain critical stances: that the attempts to explain social and cultural developments by means of 'grand narratives' (all-embracing theories or accounts) are no longer feasible or acceptable, and that ideas can no longer be closely related to a historical reality. All is text, image, simulation (119).

By the above postulation, humanity presently thrives in a world that is fast becoming socio-economically fragmented, individualistic and culturally corroded by the whirling atmosphere of globalisation with its welter of confusing symphonies. The fabrics of the hitherto grand cultural norms and ethos, and the 'sanctity' of ethno-cultural value system with its communal, collectivist cultural traditions, have become distabilised in the crucible of postmodernity. The ever-changing reality is a phenomenon that continues to exert suppressive influence on indigenous socio-cultural situation. The spirit of the age that is vehemently captured in Darko's novel continues to exert pressure on the moral fabrics of the largely rural peoples of the world and driven societies into fledgy socio-economic situation. In the urban spaces the crisis of unequal economic opportunities and joblessness result into springing up of ghettos with congestions and banal substandard existence, where the mass of the jobless migrate in their quest for the

greener pastures. This development has resulted into desperate effort for survival and unthinkable lifestyle, especially among the younger generation. This condition is noticed in the lives of characters that people the settings and scenes of Darko's *Faceless*. Such prevalence of hopelessness and panic noticed in *Faceless* is a clear manifestation of postmodern encounters. Adullahi's *Sweet Sixteen* on the other hand seeks to mediate the disoriented humanity through a narrative of re-orientation through care-giving to the younger generation, all in a desperate attempt at making a detour from the existing stereotype aimed at healing humanity of contemporary socio-cultural maladies.

The two novellas, in their different angles of artistic projection, re-imagine the presently deeply fragmented, hunger-ridden, disoriented and misgoverned societies. The angst that pervades Darko's *Faceless* vividly illustrates the trauma of existence in a typical postcolonial African society where disillusionment and despair much avail all though it historical trajectory, dating back to flag independence. As Sunny Awhefeada put the situation, "The emergence of African continent from the throes of colonialism was greeted with much hope and expectation. But things went against the [grain]… political instability, corruption, inept leadership, economic mismanagement among other dehumanising and negative decimal defined African independence… The experience of independence was a monumental betrayal which engendered disillusionment…"(178-179). Darko's story in this text reverberates the throwback of this unpleasant memory. The other side of the picture painted in Abdullahi's bildungsroman stems on a mentality of repair from a private to a public perspective. It should be seen as a fence-mending dialogue; a way of cautioning the world as well as prognosticating measures for possible remedy in the face of threatening dangers that the younger generation are confronted with.

It is interesting to note that the two texts are built on gender imaginaries, where the two stories primarily revolve around the girl child and women are the primary propellers of the unfolding plots in the two stories. This creative predilection illustrates the two authors' concern with primordial practices that tend to minimalise the female as weak, as object of exploitation by family and society at large, mistreated as mere property in most cases. If Abdullahi in *Sweet Sixteen* seeks ways to defend and protect the girl child in a gender prejudiced society, it is because society has laid down arbitrarily the second-class roles to her.

But Darko does not mince word in exposing the injustices that the female is exposed to from birth to death in African cultural setting. In reviewing gender-based situation to show how part of Africa's underdevelopment has been tied to this phenomenon, Mazrui states that on account of this gender prejudice, "Only sixty-seven per cent of girls of school age in Sub-Saharan Africa are in schools at all. Only twenty-three per cent enter secondary school. And only three per cent find their way into higher education via tertiary colleges and universities" (32). The statistic above shows the level of insensitivity that plague African socio-economic and cultural environment, against which picture one can keep breast with the thematic context of Abdullahi's story here.

Dominic Strinati sheds light on the bleak picture that is cast on the postmodern world such as we encounter in the social arena of the two texts being analysed in this work by stating that, "Much of the debate about postmodernism has been too vague, abstract and difficult to understand …relatively little has been said about postmodernism as an empirical or historical phenomenon" and concludes that "Postmodern theory is an attempt to understand a media-saturated society" (212-213). In the society we are witnessing today, the very soul stands fragile, volatile and deceptive. The colorations of the moment expose a phenomenal clash between cultures, values and mores that create alienation, blank spaces and silences that characterise postmodernity. Yerima, echoing Bhabha, thus states of the African postmodern cultural crossroads that "there was a meeting of two cultures that led to a hegemonic clash and fusion of the two cultures which gave birth to a destruction and dislocation of consciousness, cultural ethics, values and environment", and avers further that "This, in turn gave birth to a hybridised culture, one which involved a new process of cultural reconstruction, relocation and integration" (13). In such a time as now that the world seems morally adrift, incoherent, and restive and tinder, danger lurks at critical locations of society as humanity continues to grope for new direction out of the present fluidity.

The Writer, the Social World and the Postmodernist African Experience
Literary texts characteristically re-create worlds in the perception of the creative writer, who is interested in beaming the mirror of the 'seen' or 'constructed' universe to the audience to visit, probe into, or explore as

well as learn from. Steven Lynn thus asserts that "Literary works are, in a way, like places we can visit… Some call us back again and again; others we feel obliged to experience, knowing they'll do us good, even though we never quite enjoy them" (xvii). The responses of African writers to the tension of the present moment, stream from the modulations of specific and varied socio-cultural phenomena, the socio-economic universe envisioned in the mid of the committed writers. But, regardless the postmodernist assumption that "there is nothing outside the text" (Quayson, xi), there is no gainsaying that in composing or reading texts in any genre of artistic work emanating from the postcolonial landscape, the possibility of separating the literary aesthetic from the social, political, cultural and historical encounters of societies becomes illogical to reason out. Amma Darko's *Faceless* weaves an allegory of a social system with ripples of moral breakdown and social panic that could be palpably felt as one visibly enters the national sphere that is embedded in the metaphors of the story. Fola' Kazeem rightly states that "Every literature aspires to be a commentary on the lived experiences of its society" (120). Darko uses the story to re-create the social tension and anxiety that pervade contemporary Ghanaian society, and the experience recounted can as well be duplicated in any other postcolonial African country. Through the arguments in the dialogue activated through the characters in the story, the goings-on at the societal fabrics of contemporary society could be perused and interrogated. On the other side of the debate, Abdullahi's *Sweet Sixteen* flaunts what looks like a totem for the neutralisation of the prevalent noxious socio-cultural atmosphere, as part of the healing process for the recovery of the blighted social body from the depravity and disenchantment of the moment. In *Faceless*, Darko re-creates familiar characters that decode the terror of the moment, exposes the agents of pervasion that stalk our neighborhoods, create despair that afflict modern man, inflict the vulnerable with anguish and stagnate the emerging generation who are yearning for attention of those in power. The scenarios of the narrated social sphere spell out unpleasant signals that society must note with caution.

We witness in the creative scenes in Darko's enactment, a gory tale of substandard, neglected and congested location such as 'Sodom and Gomorrah', the odorous ghetto wasteland where youthful destinies meet their waterloo and criminality remains art of survival. Darko's

creation of 'Sodom and Gomorrah', the hellish Agbobloshie, the frightening 'Blue Rasta' setting, reels out an allegory of social tragedy and battered humanity. The complacence of the privileged elites, the defects and dilapidation of justice infrastructures symbolised by the very bad state of the police post, coupled with the unreliability of the "Creamy"- the vehicle that the NGO rescue coordinator was supposed to use to mobilise society for moral change of direction play out a hopeless situation. 'Sodom and Gomorrah' is depicted as a dead-end that perpetually witnesses influx of mass body from everywhere across Ghana, in the quest for 'greener pastures'. It is aptly described as seat of vices where: "Filth and sin, suffering and ignorance, helplessness and woes held sway. And caught in the middle of it all, were girls like Fofo who grew up never ever really experiencing what it meant to simply be a child" (*Faceless* 66). This is a place where violence thrives and the rule of the fist prevails. It is an allegory of lost families floating hopelessly in disparaged existence; this is where young and vulnerable girl child, like Baby T meets her tragic end, Fofo and others haunted by unknown future, being lost to the dangerous streets, find 'resting place' here. The story moulds a glaring picture of streets ruled by rapists, murderers, and merchants of violence; we are confronted by the sorry sight of women used as baby making machine, serially raped by heartless men and condemned to silence by society in the villages and abused in ghetto townships largely due to gender-based cultural violence. Young children harassed by poverty are trapped in the 'Sodom and Gomorrah' enclave, prowled by dangerous elements such as 'Poison', 'Onko' the arch rapists and gang murderers, Maami Broni, the child trafficker and all types of heartless humans let loose to perpetuate lawlessness by a society where law and morality stand on fledgy feet. Panic rules in this sordid and fear-torn society. Darko's story in this book is at best attempt to re-define the day-to-day experience of real-life situation in a typical West African modern city.

Faceless is therefore, by no means to be classified within 'once upon a time' trope of myth and legend lore, but born out of definite passion of a writer who "sees the evils in the society and writes about them, in the hope of bringing society to look at itself and perhaps change it" (Oko 104). African writers, conscious of serious social issues, have no other choice but to use their artistic endowments to re-create the reality and contradictions of the present social experience as are

witnessed in everyday life. Agbogbloshie and 'Sodom and Gomorrah', are familiar places that dot the urban spaces in African capital cities; inhabited by the mass body of the 'dregs of earth', daily struggling and toiling most harshly for survival. These spaces that litter urban spaces located in Darko's artistic snapshot locations int eh setting of history, constitute dreadful places where such scenarios as of "muscled me" frequently "pulled out knives" (*Faceless* 43), characterise everyday life drama. As Darko makes a character to ask rhetorically concerning Agbogbloshie and 'Sodom and Gomorrah' locations as dangerous places in the ghetto areas of the Accra city, where the mass of the society lead existence in the story, a poser is put before a world thus:

> If the ghosts of all the people who die here at Agbogbloshie and whose bodies are never claimed and who end up buried in mass graves at Mile Eleven should decide to hover around here amongst us, wouldn't we be bumping into more ghosts than human beings on market days? (*Faceless* 43-44).

It is the fear of the gory picture painted by Darko in *Faceless* as typically illustrated above that Abdullahi's *Sweet Sixteen* would be viewed. The later thus seeks a repair to a world that is badly battered in values and in vision.

The social space imagined in Abdullahi's *Sweet Sixteen* when weighed against Darko's gloomy locations in *Faceless*, brings to mind Sir Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* written in the 16th century, with its utopian bliss, in terms of the modus operandi of social construction, plot style and thematic agenda. The interaction between Mr. Bello, who is impliedly conscious of the dangers out there in the postmodern world, battles to save his very brilliant girl child Haliya from the confusion of that threatens to eclipse humanity. Haliya's generation, despite its glowing sophistication and ICT high-tech culture, which the earlier traditional cultural society of the father knows little about, comparatively stated, is prone to multifarious danger. It is noted in the story that Haliya's society is socially circumscribed, and the child grows within the ambit of parental watchfulness, and the father takes to social pedagogy, and purposive re-orientation. Haliya's family is a close one and her parents are book-conscious, enlightened enough to understanding the reality of the moment with its repercussions. Her

home of upbringing is revealed through the setting of Mr. Bello's furnishing which contrasts the Sodom and Gomorrah of Darko's setting as follows:

> He chuckled as he got up and walked over to a massive wardrobe that was ranged against an entire wall of the room. He had a neat row of books on the upper shelf. The wardrobe maker might have intended this part of the cabinet to be used to store shoes or other personal items, but Daddy had it converted to book shelf. I remember mum jokingly complaining on many occasions that one of her misfortunes in marrying Daddy was that she had to compete with books to find space in his bed (*Sweet Sixteen* 22).

This simply illustrates the point that if we must be committed participants in driving the 'ideals' of postmodern society, education must be cultivated, care-giving must be prioretised, and societies must keep pace with the fast evolving socio-cultural system. But the fear that underlies this human progress, now manifesting is as the present *facebook*, digital reality referred to in the story. As the narrator states, "Many years ago, Albert Einstein predicted this moment. He said a day would come that technology would surpass human interaction and the world would have a generation of idiots. I think we are there now" (24). So, the way to check this danger is caution at every level of society. This sort of orientation must start early enough at home before the child is polluted by the negative influences of postmodernity. But this exercise is absent in the society of Darko's *Faceless* and the crisis that pervades the sphere is understandable from this perspective. Darko's society is steeped in poverty-induced ignorance and insensitive elites.

The scenario painted above illustrates the interlocking struggles occasioned by the deep-seated social fragmentation, where some are left to stray and be thrown to the social vagaries of a fast-changing world, where the mass of humanity are left to wallow at the mercy of the ghettos and damnable streets. Chinenye Amonyeze sees the environmental factor as "socialising agents on children and youth" and states further as follows:

> With society becoming more impersonal and less personal, the intrusion of globalisation with its Western appurtenance of individualism becomes more glaring and conflicted especially in relation to communal aspects of communal conservatism found in Africa. Apparently, Nigerian society increasingly demands a culturally literate citizen to resist the forces of post modernisation and detrital identities…. Social changes have had a considerable impact on the Nigerian family (54).

The above extract is not just about and limited to Nigeria, but captures the truism of postmodern, postcolonial African socio-cultural setting. The situation narrated in *Sweet Sixteen*, when placed side-by-side on the social projectile with that of Darko's *Faceless*, goes to confirm the imbalance and contradictions that are prevalent in globalisation society at the moment. The issues that arise from an engagement with the two creative scenarios are many, but let it be stated that if society have given adequate attention to the younger generation that people the spaces of *Faceless*, and that are apparently blacked out, estranged and disillusioned, the numerous tragedies that waste this generation might have been avoided. The situations they face are environmentally determined and socially predestinated, just as that of *Sweet Sixteen* on the other hand is predestined to live a good and purposeful life now and in the future. This is the pointer to this generation. The conditions of inequity, gender, economic and societal imbalance that characterise the two interlocking narrated scenarios in the two texts are lessons that must be pondered upon by the watchers of the realm.

Conclusion
So far, the two texts have been comparatively subjected to critical scrutiny and the in-depth sketching of the circumstances of the situations in the texts has revealed the complex nature of our complicated postmodern social geographies that African society daily live by. The two narrative scenarios converge at the common ground to reaffirm the African writer's commitment to social healing, through cautioning in times of crisis, tickling the community when the community is noted to feign ignorance of encroaching social dangers, and reminding when the

sickness of amnesia seems to sedate society to the point of insensitivity. Exploring the socio-cultural issues in the two social settings mapped in the two texts, gives insight into the trajectories of the fragmentation and dangers that characterise postmodern society, with particular attention to the younger generation and the African situation. A frequent shift between the bi-polar directions of the two works creates an enablement for fruitful dialogues and fresh perspectives to the quest for a better definition of the complexities of postmodern existence. A comparative approach to the issues that arrive from the two creative scenarios also gives room for an enlargement of the focus on the situations addressed in the two narratives. In all, the critical comparative approach to the reading of Darko's *Faceless* and Abdullahi's *Sweet Sixteen*, intriguingly unfolds the variegated strategies by which African writers deploy creative talents to landscape the social space, through projecting the mirror of society as they evolve from different points of view but all geared towards evolving a better world to live in.

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