

TRANSGRESSIONS AND SANCTIONS IN TWO NIGERIAN NOVELS

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Abstract

The Igbos make up one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. They are both egalitarian and patriarchal in nature and they believe in the principles of justice and fairness. Consequently, they operate a cultural worldview which compels every member of the society to operate by the society's rules and standards of behaviour and the transgression of which attracts some sanction. As a patriarchal society, they place a high premium on paternal honour and respect. This is reflected in one of their proverbs: “*Nwata tulie nna ya elu, ogodo nna ya ayochie ya anya*”. (A child who dishonours his father by treating him like a toy is blinded by the father's loin cloth/scrotum). This illustrates the fact that the Igbos demand for justice on acts of paternal/parental dishonour. This proverb is brought home in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958, henceforth *Things*) and Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2006, henceforth, *Purple*), two novels set in Igbo community and authored by Igbo writers. These two works are related in their heroes' dishonourable treatment of their fathers and the grievous sanctions that come with such despicable acts. This essay adopts the above Igbo proverb and Jeremy Collier's postulation which states that: “...the business of literature is to recommend virtue and discountenance vice...” (97). It argues that the protagonists' transgression of the Igbo code of filial relationship spells their disastrous end, and concludes on the note that Achebe and Adichie, two Nigerian Igbo writers, inscribe their cultural worldview and identity in these novels.

Key Words: Igbo culture, transgressions, sanctions, paternal dishonour, protagonists

The Igbo People and Their Belief System

The Igbo people are one of the three major tribes in Nigeria. They are egalitarian in nature and expect every member of the community to abide by the social norms and ethos of the community. As social beings, everyone orders his/her actions in line with the community's norms, mores and standards of behaviour. This is the social expectation, but in reality, certain people choose not to conform to these societal standards but rather choose to overtly or covertly rebel against them. This aberration which is manifested in acts of socio-cultural misconducts is addressed internally in the Igbo society.

Though some African communities have lost their social control mechanisms to civilization and technological innovations, the Igbo society tenaciously holds on to theirs. Even beyond the precincts of their immediate community, they endeavour to conform to their culture and tradition knowing the implications of their violation. This is because they are watched by both visible and invisible beings from whom their actions cannot be hidden. Consequently, they are conscious of the fact that they do not live to please themselves and the living alone but also the gods and their ancestors all of whom intermingle with the living. The Igbo worldview pulsates with what (Nathaniel and Akung 2022:9) enumerates to include but not limited to African imagination, knowledge system, deification system, thought and body.

These gods and ancestors which are the spirits of their dead fathers and forefathers are consulted on a daily basis and their opinions and approvals are sought on matters and/or major decisions concerning individuals and the community. The implication of this is that these invisible beings are carried along in the day to day running of the society and have their part to play in ensuring the preservation of the norms of the community. Like the living, they bless virtuous actions and punish vicious ones. Every Igbo person understands the intensity of gods-and-ancestors-exacted-sanctions and avoids them like a plague. They prefer the punishment inflicted by humans to those administered by the former because of their far reaching and long lasting effects. The Igbos value the wholesomeness of their society and this is achieved through the efforts of the living, the dead, the ancestors and the gods. When an individual goes against the laws in Igbo land, such a person will be required to answer for his/her actions.

In every society, people break the rules of behavior for various reasons. Some may feel too big and too socially important to submit to anybody or codes of behaviour while others may feel too wealthy and too proud to abide by the rules of social conduct. Because the Igbos believe that nobody is above the society, warnings are issued to such deviants and if they refuse to align, fines are then exacted from them for transgressing the social norm. If they still remain recalcitrant, such individuals are handed over to the gods whose assistance is solicited in punishing such offenders. This depends on the gravity of the offense and on how stubborn the offender proves to be. For instance, Papa Nnukwu and Pa Anikwenwa solicit the help of the ancestors in the punishment of Eugene in *Purple*.

As a superstitious society, punishment of cultural transgressors can be both physically and spiritually administered. The latter happens when the offender is heedless to warnings. In such case, he/she is handed over to the gods and the ancestors for vengeance. Then, the community will proclaim that the hands of the gods are dealing with him/her as the person will be seen to suffer many misfortunes and traumatic experiences. Ademola Dasyuva rightly avers that: a “society’s culture produces its own literary tradition...” (10). The Igbo culture has, indeed, produced her society’s literary tradition. Most Igbo writers, including Achebe and Adichie, and especially in the novels under consideration, have appropriated Dasyuva’s submission in their craft.

The Igbo rules of relationships are etched in the people’s beliefs, cultures and worldview. This also finds expression in their culture and proverbs. They believe that anyone who craves progress and prosperity in life must avoid dishonouring his/her parents and elders. This aligns with the Biblical injunction on parental honour which says: “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God is giving you” and the blessings that flow therefrom (Exodus 20: 12). The danger in parental disrespect/dishonor is seen in the Igbo proverb: “*nwata tulie nna ya elu, ogodo nna ya ayochie ya anya*”, interpreted as “a child who dismisses his father as being worthless is destroyed by the providence that confers fatherhood on the latter which is his loin cloth. Every Igbo child imbibes this core virtue in the process of socialisation and not even ignorance can be an excuse.

Writers, Transgressions and Sanctions in Literature

Literature has continued to serve as a tool for individual and social cohesion because writers attune their literary activism to the positive transformation of man and society. They accomplish this by enhancing the positive aspects of individuals. In most of their works, writers ensure that characters that manifest noble virtues are rewarded while those that exhibit vicious behaviours are sanctioned. As a result of this aspect of their social responsibility, Percy B. Shelley calls them: "...the unacknowledged legislators of the world" (n.p). In the words of Akachi Ezeigbo in her 2008 article, writers "Generally perceive themselves as the moral guides and conscience of their community", since they are "...imbued with the passion to change and redirect their society" (20). It is for this very reason that Chinua Achebe, the late iconic Nigerian writer insisted in "Africa and Her Writers" that African art is utilitarian in nature and dismissed the western notion of art for art's sake as "...just another piece of deodorised dogshit" (19).

Like Law, Jeremy Collier pertinently notes that, "...the business of [Literature] is to recommend virtue and discountenance vice...to show...the unhappy conclusion of violence and injustice..." (97). Remi Raji-Oyelade acknowledges the multi-faceted roles of writers as the "vanguard of nobility and order in society" and as "...serious and talented lot committed to teaching lessons and giving pleasures to their audiences" (1, 2). Apart from its entertainment value, a far more important function of literature is its role of imparting morals. Such didactic quality places the writer as a teacher and guide of his/her society, because such moral quality of literature points the individuals and their societies to the path of order and equity.

Transgression is an act that goes against an established rule or code of conduct while sanction is the penalty for violating such rule. Sanction implies punishment or infliction of pain as retribution for an offense. The imposition of sanction presupposes that a law or an agreement has been breached. Literature as a discipline is domiciled in the humanities which main concern is with matters that relate to human beings in contradistinction to animals and other lower creatures. Otto Bird, a renowned scholar, perceives justice as "a norm, that is, a directive for

guiding men in their actions towards one another” (11). As important principles, sanction and justice cut across many fields of human study such as: Ethics, Law, Literature, Religion, Sociology, and so on. This evidences the importance of these concepts to man and society as they are germane in the maintenance of order and equality without which anarchy and tyranny will hold sway in any society.

Most creative writers are committed to the pursuit of justice, and literature offers the medium for such commitment. One of their major means of enforcing justice is by punishing erring and deviant characters unlike the legal profession that enforces the same thing through the gavel in the view of Olalere Oladiton (20). This coheres with Akachi-Ezeigbo’s observation that the “agenda” of most writers is mainly to “humanize their dehumanized societies” (20). This is because authors act as the voice of the voiceless and arbiters over controversies. The art of creative writing is deemed to be a very serious role which in Lionel Trilling’s view produces “serious” texts that should “hold before us some image of society [and individual] to consider and condemn” (85). Moreover, Collier’s view, earlier cited in the abstract section underscores the value of literature in the inculcation of virtues and abolition of vices.

Literature brings about attitudinal changes in individuals as issues explored in fictional creations nudge the conscience of the audience. Some apposite instances are the social changes in the English society which came in the wake of the publication of such works as: Dicken’s *Bleak House* and Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. In America, the campaign for the abolition of slave trade was motivated by the publication of Equino’s *The Slave Narratives of Olaudah Equiano*. On the African scene, authors like: Chinua Achebe, Ngozi Adichie, Okey Ndibe, Naguib Mahfouz and Isidore Okpewho in their respective novels: *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *Purple Hibiscus* (2006), *Arrows of Rain* (2000), *The Thief and the Dogs* (1961) and *The Victims* (1971) reveal how writers carefully craft their art to ensure that characters are sanctioned for their acts of infractions and injustice.

In Africa and other parts of the world, writers have always channeled their art towards the enthronement of social justice. In *Issues in African Literature*, Charles Nnolim subscribes to people resorting to literature in an era of “inordinate quest for materialism”, like ours, to explore its ethical

values and “moral tone to teach the youth... that evil doesn't pay, and to stress moral probity, honour and integrity as goods worth cultivating” (166). Nnolim again in “Literature as Philosophy of Life...”, opines that “literature... deals with sin, morality and crime and punishment as much as the Bible does (3)”. A great demand is placed on writers, mostly the African writers, who create in an environment suffused with: dehumanisation, injustice, bad governance, tyranny and other forms of vices which deny them the privilege of indulging in the concept of “art for art's sake” like their western counterparts. Emmanuel Ngara subscribes to Achebe's view when he postulates that most African writers are committed since their “obligation include not only to draw attention of the reader to the evils, injustice and abnormalities of the existing social order but also to point the way to a new and more humane society” (201). Their method of achieving this is apportioning sanction to every act of infraction and injustice.

Critical Receptions on the Novels

These two focal novels have provoked critical responses from scholars and researchers. In a tribute, “Telling the Truth...”, Michael Thelwell makes this important observation about *Things*: “...the novel related [s] the conflict in the house of Okonkwo of three generations of fathers and sons, against the background of the crisis of faith, identity, loyalty and values engendered by the intolerant, fiercely, proselytizing new faith and the political baggage which accompanies it” (11). Thelwell further notes that *Things* is set in a world where “gods, ancestors and man intermingle....Where social order and moral balance are maintained by the elaborate and subtle protocol of law, custom and ritual articulated by the ancestors...” (11).

In “The Artist...”, Charles Nnolim avers that Okonkwo's failure and woes emanate from his lack of respect for the mores of his people and contends that such act of disloyalty is punished through the community's “variously recognised sanctions...” stressing that “„the ethics of traditional loyalties dictated that the people had control over their leaders and rulers through variously recognized sanctions....,” and submits that “Okonkwo fails because he is not a leader of his people whose mores he breaks, whose wise counsel he does not seek, whose caution he squanders” (170, 171). Okonkwo may be a great and fearless man of Umuofia but his status does

not shield him from being visited with sanction when he transgresses the laws of his community.

With regard to characterisation of his heroes, Nnaemeka F. Inyama is of the view that in *Things* as in his other novels, that Achebe reveals “a gradual evolution of the image of the father/protector-figure from a homestead dictator, through an autocratic clan/protector-figure, to a national tyrant” (217). Kester Echenim believes that Okonkwo's “excessive reactions not only attract condemnation from his kinsmen, but constitute a fundamental infringement on the solidarity between man and the gods” (4). Commenting on Okonkwo's unnatural attitude to Unoka his father, as being contrary to the worldview of Umuofia society, Kofi Awoonor connects this to the cause of the hero's downfall and notes that, “this intolerance of failure and contempt for lesser men marks his dealings with his own father, a behaviour which men in Umuofia find unnatural” (120). Okonkwo's attitude towards his father is opposed to the culture of his people and such strange behavior is punishable by the gods.

Awoonor's observation is, however, silent on the attitude of Umuofia society to Unoka's lazy habit. Umuofia people may resent Okonkwo's disrespectful attitude to his father, but they do not endorse Unoka's laziness either. This is because this society places much premium on industry and takes exceptions to laziness. Consequently, Unoka's lazy disposition remains a source of embarrassment to them as it condemns him to a habitual debtor (*Things*, 4, 9, 10' 13).

In “*Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie's Debt to Achebe?” apart from rebutting some critics' claim to *Things* as being the source of *Purple*, Ahmed Maiwada posits that *Purple* is “...a story about the spiritual conflict between good and evil,...represented by...three generations of the Achike family” (n.p). On his part, Niyi Osubade examines the attitude of Eugene Achike and submits that “his private life is as dictatorial and as abusive as the leaders whom he attacks” (40). Eugene's treatment of his family and father is condemnable as it is shorn of humanity, love and consideration. Kingsley Ugwuanyi flares Eugene's fanatical embrace of the Christian religion that makes him “criminalise what is cultural with the people”, while justifying the same act when done “in the Christian way” (39). By doing the same

thing for which he condemns others, it shows that Eugene's act is deliberate and not out of mistake or oversight.

Chidiebere Eze argues that *Purple* deals with the question of Western denigration of Africa through the means of Christian religion. In furtherance of his argument, he notes that the novel "lampoons Christian religion and its claims of superiority over the African traditional religion" (290). Eugene cannot claim that the Christian religion is superior to African traditional religion when he, as an adherent of Christian religion, cannot show example of such superiority in his behaviour towards his immediate family members. Ogaga Okuyade sees Eugene's conception of Christianity as being superior to traditional religion as bigotry, stressing that as a result of such erroneous belief, Eugene "reduces his family members to the size of midgits and tosses them as he chooses" (n.p). This being the case, Eugene presents himself as a hypocrite.

In what she calls "Snail Sense Feminism...", Akachi Ezeigbo observes that Eugene's subjection of his wife to "protracted violence and psychological trauma", compels the latter to take Eugene's life (39). Since Beatrice responds to her husband's cruelty through the same medium, even the gods give approval to her action and shield her from prosecution as will be revealed shortly. Tshilidzi Marwala compares the abuse and violence unleashed on South African women with the experience of Beatrice in the hands of her husband and notes that gender-based violence is a problem that seems to have defied solution in Africa in spite of several legislations to discourage it (5).

Angela Ngozi Dick condemns Eugene's style of parenting for lacking in emotional provision for the children and also berates him for "forcing" Beatrice into "passivity" and for "punishing her, the same way he punishes the children" (32). Beatrice is not only punished like her children by Eugene, sometimes she is vicariously sanctioned for their misdemeanors by Eugene. Above are valid critical receptions on these novels. However, from the foregoing, it can be seen that none of the comments explores the texts from the angle in which this essay does. The choice of these two novels is informed by their cultural and thematic similarities in spite of the almost five decade age gap between their publications dates.

Instances of Transgressions and Sanctions in the Novels

Okonkwo and Eugene, the protagonists of the respective novels, are bound by common traits which define their tragic fate. For instance, both heroes have divergent attitudes from those of their fathers for which they display unnatural and contemptuous attitudes towards them. These protagonists' lives are characterised by excesses as opposed to their fathers' moderate and accommodative lifestyles. In *Things*, we are told that Unoka "was never happy when it came to wars. He was in fact a coward and could not bear the sight of blood....When [he] died he had taken no title at all and he was heavily in debt" (*Things* 5 & 6). Conversely, Okonkwo exhibits contrasting qualities. Through an authorial intrusion the audience is made to understand that "Okonkwo... was not afraid of war. He was a man of action, a man of war. Unlike his father he could stand the look of blood" (*Things*,7). These opposing traits and his father's (Unoka's) glaring laziness, make him hate, disrespect and disdain him.

In the Igbo society where these novels are set, an elder or a parent may be irresponsible or failing in his duties but it is not the place of the child to rub it in the face of such an elder or parent because such is a dishonourable action which the gods and nature abhor and punish. Moreover, coldness towards one's parent is considered alien to the Igbo society and culture. Consequently, the gods usually intervene to punish such unhealthy behaviour. This is exactly what happens in the case of Okonkwo because of his contemptuous treatment of his father and also because "... [he] was ruled by one passion—to hate everything that his father Unoka had loved. One of those things was gentleness... and indeed he was possessed by the fear of his father's contemptible life.... He had had no patience with his father" (*Things* 10, 13, 3).

Such contemptuous and disrespectful attitudes are replicated in Eugene's dealings with Papa Nnukwu, his biological father in *Purple*. But in his case, his hatred for his father stems from the former's divergent religious inclination. Whereas Eugene is a fanatical Catholic, his father pitches his tent with the African traditional religion. This difference in their religions is intolerable to Eugene, a situation that makes him to condemn Papa Nnukwu's religion as a heathen practice and equally makes him to see him as one "that has been marked for Satan and on a broad way to hell" (*Purple*, 65).

As his numerous efforts to convert Papa Nnukwu to his white man's religion fail woefully, Eugene applies the offensive by banning him from his house and withdrawing filial bond and care from him. He stops rendering financial assistance to Papa Nnukwu and resolves to send him only occasional stipends in order to assuage his own conscience (*Purple*, 83). This pitiable condition compels the old man to bemoan his squalid condition contrasting the penury and hunger that define his existence to the abundance, affluence and wealth of his son (Eugene). In a deep heartbreak, he soliloquises in desperation: “*Nekeem*,...my son owns that house that can fit in every man in Abba (their Village), and yet many times I have nothing to put on my plate” (*Purple*, 83). In the belief and culture of Abba/Igbo people, acts of parental neglect and abandonment invite sanctions from the gods and the ancestors. This belief manifests in the Igbo proverb: “*Nna zusia nwa, nwa azuba nna*” (It is a child’s responsibility to cater for his/her parents in the latter’s old age).

Unable to swallow the bitter and unprovoked denial of his obstinate son, Papa Nnukwu seeks vengeance in the ancestors against his callous son in his daily morning *ofo* prayers. Whereas he solicits the blessings and favour of his ancestors upon Ifeoma, his not-so-well-to-do widowed daughter that manages to cater for him and her own two children from her meagre income, he places a curse on Eugene: “*Chineke!*, Those who wish others well, keep them well. Those who wish others ill, keep them ill”. [But for Ifeoma, he would say]: “My spirit will intercede for you...when I join my ancestors (*Purple*, 166, 83). It is true he does not mention the targets of the prayer but it is clear to a discerning reader that Ifeoma and Eugene are the respective targets. This is made more glaring in his resolve to personally intercede for Ifeoma after his rite of passage when he would have become an ancestor himself in the above excerpt.

When Eugene disrespectfully bars Anikwenwa, another elderly man in his village from entering his house on account of his status as an African traditional worshipper just the same way he treats his own father, this old man is irked by such disrespectful and indignantly retorts: “Do you know that I am in your father's age group, gbo?” Thereafter, with an injured pride and a wounded heart, he prophetically pronounces some doom on him: “Ifukwagi. You are like a fly blindly following a corpse into the grave!”

(*Purple* 69-70). It is worthy to note that this curse takes effect on Eugene life as his end is both tragic and fraught with doom.

As a proof that these heroes' paternal contempt, rejection and denial are unjust and punishable infractions of their society's code of behaviour, their own first sons imbibe their grandfathers' tastes and traits, preferring to resemble them in attitudes and beliefs rather than identifying with those of their own direct fathers. In *Things*, Nwoye is said to resemble his Unoka, grandfather in several ways: Like Unoka, he reclines at his father's (Okonkwo's) masculine stories of bloodshed, human heads, violence and war only pretending to like them in order to please him, but in actual fact, "... he still prefers the stories that his mother used to tell..." because those were devoid of violence and bloodshed (*Things*, 37). Besides, on Okonkwo's return from the killing of Ikemefuna, something is said to "give way inside of Nwoye" (*Things*, 43). Rather than applaud his father or rejoice with his notion of bravery that is shown in hacking down human beings, Nwoye is said to have a similar feeling he had some years ago on witnessing the killing of twins (*Things*, 43).

Furthermore, on one occasion, Okonkwo is said to have called Nwoye, to sit with him in his *obi* (sitting room). But "the boy was afraid of him and slipped out of the hut as soon as he noticed him dozing" (*Things* 44). The same gruesome incidents which evoke pride and fulfilment in Okonkwo arouse fear and repulsion in Nwoye, thereby compelling him to seek a safe and humane alternative in the Christian religion foisted on Umuofia at the time. As a result, Okonkwo becomes a double loser. He loses Ikemefuna, his foster son, by his own machete and also loses Nwoye, his only biological son, to the white man's religion, thus, ironically populating and propagating the same religion that he hates with a passion. This loss in human terms precipitates the psycho-mental grief and torture that combine with other factors to completely crush him (Okonkwo).

In a similar vein, in *Purple*, while on holiday in his paternal aunt's house where his grandfather also comes to recuperate, Jaja, (Eugene's only son) for the first time, spends quality time with his grandfather and shockingly realises that this same man who is condemned as a sinner and hell-bound by Eugene is an embodiment of immense humanity. He compares the attributes of both men (Eugene and Papa Nnukwu) and comes to the

conclusion that though he may be a pagan, yet Papa Nnukwu's qualities are far much better and much more preferable to Eugene's. Consequently, he toes the paths of Papa Nnukwu, thereby rebelling against his father and the Catholic faith that teaches him only how to brutalise his nuclear family and withdraw love and affection from the extended one.

Jaja detests all that his father holds dear, especially things that border on his religious leanings. He clings to Papa Nnukwu, identifying a similarity between the former's withered hand and his own withered finger, a deformity inflicted on him by Eugene, for failing his Catechism test. Before returning to his parents' house in Enugu, he takes Papa Nnukwu's painting as a symbol of his abiding presence, an act he knows is detested by Eugene who has banned everything about the memory of his "heathen" father in his house. Back in Enugu, Jaja begins to rebel against Eugene and his Catholic religion openly. He refuses to go for communion, a practice that has become a family routine thus provoking violent reactions from Eugene. The narrator states that: "Things started to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to [sic] communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the étagère (*Purple*, 3). Such rebellious attitude which is apparently a renunciation of the Catholic tenets of faith and an identification with Papa Nnukwu by Jaja, traumatises Eugene and gradually leads to his frustration

In Africa and in the Igbo worldview, the issue of the first son is a symbolic one. Every father craves a son from whom he expects honuor and good care in old age. Apart from perpetuating the family name, the male child, especially the first son, is a source of pride to every father. As a result, when there is rejection or when no love is lost between the father and his son as seen in these novels, it becomes a source of agony and trauma to such a father. The 4th commandment and only one with a promise in the Bible is: "Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (1982, Exodus 20:12). This Biblical Commandment resonates in the Igbo Proverb-"*Nwata tulie nna ya elu, ogo do nna ya ayochie ya anya* which literarily means: "a child that throws his father up is blinded by the father's loincloth/scrotum". Metaphorically, it shows that "a person who disrespects his father ends tragically.

Okonkwo, an adherent of the Igbo traditional religion and its ways, neither heeds this proverb nor the counsel of Umuofia elders. He flouts the injunction of Ezeudu, the oldest man in Umuofia and Obierika when they warn him not to partake in the killing of Ikemefuna (*Things*, 40, 46). Charles Nnolim's observation of him is, therefore, apt when he notes that Okonkwo “kowtows to neither man nor the gods” (171). It is evident that neither Okonkwo the traditional religious worshipper nor Eugene the stickler for modern Christianity keeps the fundamental laws of their religious inclinations. The Igbo traditional society believes in the *egbe bere, ugo bere* (live and let live) principle. Similarly, the Christian faith enjoins parental honour and love for others. But both men fall short of the expectations of their religious teachings by their apparent contempt, disrespect and disregard for their fathers.

As a result of this unnatural attitude and intolerance of the divergent views and lifestyles of their fathers and others, the heroes bring calamities upon themselves. They not only cause their sons to flee to religions other than theirs and identify with their grandfathers (heroes' fathers) whom their protagonist fathers detest, but they also end tragically. Okonkwo is denied a decent burial as he dies an abominable death, having hanged himself. Similarly, Eugene is un-mourned by his wife and children having been poisoned by his wife for the brutalisation that she and her children suffer from Eugene. Consequently, through a combination of irony, supernatural intervention and divine arrangement, Okonkwo and Eugene attract some sanctions for their acts of injustice manifested in paternal rejection, contempt and disrespect.

Conclusion

Okonkwo and Eugene, the protagonists of *Things* and *Purple* are portrayed as men that invite sanctions on themselves as a result of their contravention of their society's law with regard to paternal honour and good relationship. Such infraction exposes them to sanction and doom as has been demonstrated in the foregoing. The essay further demonstrates that the crime of paternal hatred and neglect exhibited by these protagonists elicit similar measure of sanction in their respective abandonment and desertion by their own sons. These heroes transgress the bond of father/son

relationship in their deliberate contempt and dishonour of their fathers. Consequently, they receive similar treatment from their own sons and equally end tragically. Achebe and Adichie align with the humane vision of art as the redeemer of man from odious attitude. They are committed writers who attune their art in the quest for justice and harmony. By drawing the readers' attention to the vicious acts of the heroes and creating their humane opposites in their sons, they demonstrate their alignment with the redemptive vision of art.

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