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Rise of Nigerian Novel: A Critical Perspective

Javeed Ahmad Dar

Research Scholar,
Department of English,
University of Kashmir.

The Nigerian novel is a contemporary variant of oral culture of storytelling. It is of specific kind and intent, and the novelists bear witness to a particular social experience. Its most dominant themes are intergeneration conflict, a tussle between individual and society, love and marriage. The other important themes include political failure in newly independent country, Christianity versus indigenous belief system, magic tradition, alienation, gender, and city versus village life, ambition of young educated people, fertility and reproduction. The complex juxtaposition of Western modernity and African tradition and the acuteness of clash between them are very Nigerian which have engaged the writer's creative attention. Among all these themes politics of failure that finds strong representation. The Struggle against colonial occupation and the post-colonial political failure have left an indelible mark on the collective psyche of the Nigerian people. The novelists reacted strongly to the demands of their societies that led to the birth of the Nigerian political novel

African literature consists of a range of writings from oral to written literatures. It is more prominent in indigenous and colonial languages like Hausa, Igbo, Portuguese, French, Arabic and English. The novel on the continent as an important genre has made an indelible mark in all languages. The importance given to African and Nigerian novels is often attributed to the European imaginative consciousness rooted in literate modernity. But the appeal of the novel on continent also owes a lot to the didactic reflective purpose of folk tales and fables. The core of it remains in great oral epics as illustrated in pre-colonial writings like *Sundiata* epic of Mali and the *Ozidi-saga* of the Ijwas. These writings provide ideological and cultural foundation to the contemporary fiction and the relevance to its modern audience. According to Abiola Irele the novel in Africa "has acquired today a cultural significance that was once the exclusive province of the oral narrative" (Irele: 1).

The African novel achieved global reorganization through the use of European languages. European culture, history and social factors have conditioned the evolution of the novel on the continent. These claims have been equally challenged by the counter arguments. The literary tradition is believed to exist on the continent long before the European occupation by Arab kings in the North Africa. They introduced Islamic tradition to the population south of the Sahara. This interaction runs longer in the past part where the Quran played a greater role than the Bible as a protocol of writing and in developing literary sensibility.

Critics further argue that the earliest written works that are associated with the African continent predate both the introduction of literacy in Africa and the arrival of European languages. It is believed that the beginning of the novel in Africa goes to the formative period of Western literature itself. Some important works of this period which had a direct bearing on the

practice of fiction in Africa are *Aethiopica* by Heliodorus and the *Golden Ass* by Apulius. A critic speculates about *Aethiopica* that, "... while the personal details of the author have remained obscure the atmosphere of the narrative points to an African with possibly a racial and ideological axe to grind". (Irele: 3) Moses, a modern translator of this work, remarked that "Aethiopica is a glorification of a dark-skinned race, and an obscure sect. It creates space for the assumption that the author was a colored man, who shows his attachment to gymnosophist cult". (Heliodorus: 10) Similarly, *Golden Ass* as the first modern novel relies on both realism and the mythic mode of narration where the author takes flights from the physical world to the fantastical which is the contemporary technique of magic realism that novelists use to deal with current socio-political issues. It is the one of the most important cultural legacies for modern Nigerian novel as well. Critics argue that this conscious recuperation of magic realism in modern African fiction is inherent in the imagination of African culture. Fantasy and myths give weight and vision to the writers exploring in their peculiar ways. Abiola speculates in his article *Introduction: perspectives on the African novel* that when the dates of composition of these above-mentioned works are considered it is possible to say that the written works antedate the longer narratives that we now associate with oral tradition, but it took nearly a thousand years before the full emergence of the African novel as a literary genre.

African indigenous languages have played a greater role in shaping and structuring African literary novels. Holy texts like the Bible and the Quran were translated in indigenous languages which created literary flexibility in them. The process of translation opened new horizons and possibilities to the local language users to excel and encompass both Arab and Christian worlds in their writings. In 1875 Africa's historiography marked the foundation of literary society, *Society of Real Africaners*. The central aim of this organization was linguistic growth which was initiated by the translation of the Bible into a common accessible language. This was intended to make Africans to write as they spoke in order to address class division and other such issues. This created a sort of tension between the indigenous culture and the structure of minds associated with Arab-Western modernity. The first native writers show flexibility through the use of indigenous languages in their fictional writings by adopting opposed influences. The tradition of Orality, myth and folklore presented in the written form determined the narrative rhetoric and forms of fictional address in many of the indigenous languages. This creative process is well-illustrated in the first novel in indigenous language by Thomas Mofolo's Sotho novel *Chaka*. Its narrative impulse is taken from the praise poem tradition into a prose narrative form.

Christian sentiment in the Bible further shaped the flight of African literature to large extent. It induced didactic themes in which Bunyan's *Pilgrims Process* served as a template. According to Isabell Hofmeyre, it shaped the African novel to large extent. It was something which took the novel a bit away from the orthodoxy to the quest motif and allegorical significance which was akin to the didactic and symbolic function of the African folk tale tradition.

Similarly, the translation of Quran influence on African languages into Arabic scriptures that introduced Muslim tradition of literacy and narratives in the novel. Some important works of

this tradition are *Seasons of Migration to the North* and *Ambiguous Adventure* by Tayeb Salih. It further induced in Later works religious meditation that goes hand to hand with the protagonist sense of cultural and spiritual exile. It also acquaints novel with sufism and mysticism that was later on expounded by the contemporary African writers by involving cultural elements. Similarly, Islamic culture was celebrated in the fiction like *The Last Imam* 1984 by Ibrahim Tahir and *So Long a Letter* by Mariamaba.

Yoruba novel responded very early to the themes and issues of contemporary African society in which Daniel O-Fagunwa takes lead in combining the indigenous cosmological cultural tradition on one hand and Christian symbolism and didactics on the other hand. This paved the way for his successors to move the Yoruba novel in to a secular realm of life. This was possible only through the profound transformation the local language as a medium of literate expression. Likewise, the Swahili novel emerged as a representative of contemporary realities and a medium of possible discourse.

Development of the novel in indigenous languages forms a corpus for the future trajectory of the African novel written in European languages. Chronologically the most dominated among them is Portuguese, French and English. The novel became more rich and flexible with the colonizers linguistics and socio-politico-economic and cultural influences that the continent was going through.

The first novel in a European language in Africa was *The Slave* in 1856 written in Portuguese with an African setting that was very close to the north-east Brazil tradition. This novel cannot be claimed as the first genuine African novel because of its heavy indebtedness to the Portugal colonialism in background. Other important works in Luso phone like *The secret of life of Xavier Domingo* by L Vierya, Pepeteta's *Mayambe* and L. B Hunwana's *We Killed Mangy Dog* tackle anti-colonial themes and the sentiment of nationalism.

French speaking Africans led by Leopold Senghor started a socio-political movement called negritude in 1930. He was assisted by the thinkers like Aime Cesaire and Damas to denounce colonialism and asserted validity of their own culture as against oppressive colonial culture. However, the first presence of Africa in the French colonial novel was seen in *Histoire de Iouis Anniaba* and *Ourik*. These French colonial novels depicted African's negativity.

Likewise, English colonizers and their language played pivotal role in the rise of the African novel in English. It acclaimed international stature only in this language. Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko (The Royal Slave)* 1688, an ancestor novel in English written by a British writer explores slave trade as a theme. It has an African hero who is a prince and is tricked, then sold as a slave to a British colonizer. They write against the empire and tell their own stories in their own ways. Bill Ashcroft argues:

The study of English has always been a densely political and cultural phenomenon, a practice in which language and literature have both been called into the service of a profound and embracing nationalism. (Ashcroft: 2)

It charged the novel with different experiences that were politically motivated to integrate African self against the European presence.

The novelists like Achebe brought African experience into definite focus which tries to explore their full human and narrative scope in the modern novel. He re-explained artistic representation of the Africa and novel emerged as a contemporary narrative genre on the continent. It became an autonomous mode of imaginative life in Africa. His works imbibe Igbo ethos at both communal and individual levels. It legitimizes his imaginative expression as an impetus to the efforts of other writers to convey the sense of a specific location in the world. Other Igbo novelist like Flora Nwape, Onuora Nzekwicz and Elechi Amadi represent in their works ethnographic concerns. Achebe has also influenced non-Igbo cultural writers like T M Aluko and Ngugi WA Thiong'o who in their respective cultures laid foundation for their imagination.

The African novel responds well and catches every crucial movement of African life. After African independence in 20th century, it began to respond to European forged myths and narratives about native identity and its relationship with the West where it becomes what Fredric James called national allegory. Soon after the independence all hopes and aspirations that literature had romanticized about independence were shattered due to the emergence of more grave socio-political and economic problems with the neo-colonial governments. African novel began to uncover the pathologies of governance that have contributed massively to the tragic unfolding of the post colonial condition in Africa. This led to a dilemma out of which Africanization of novel emerges. According to Irele:

The critical consciousness this has generated is reflected in what I've called elsewhere "the new realism" in the African novel, often given form as modern parables. Thus, the postcolonial condition has determined a strong dystopian current that has found its most powerful expression in the novels of Sony Labou Tansi (Irele: 10).

Critics assert that post-colonial conditions were more important than that of colonial in broadening the horizons of African novel. It gave birth to the War novel as most prominent outcome of that era, with its focus on ethnic conflicts, and tribalism. Ken Sarowiwa's *Sozaboy*, Uzodinma Weala's *Beast of the Nation* and Ngozi Adichie's *Half of Yellow Sun*, in their different ways deal with the unsettled phenomenon of domestic violence and anxieties induced by contemporary political failures.

Urbanization has also added complexity to the African novel where *raffia skirt* and *kolanut* have been left behind as the index of African life in a village environment to the urban milieu that provides varying experience and multiplicity. This led the novel to enter into a new stage where the authors hailing from every corner come forward to add a creative burst in the renewal of the African novel.

The other development in the African novel was the introduction of women novelists. It further broadens the dimensions of novel. Their thematic concerns were a reaction to the changing perceptions of their social conditions. They react in their works to polygamy, male-domination and assert their meaningful position in their modern societies. Their texts make space for feminine voices and empowerment for women through education. They champion for their full participation in economic life and active involvement in the state politics. Writers like Mairama Ba, Buchi Emecheta and Anna Ata Aidoo reflected full-fledged narrative voices for the possibilities of their concern. Thus the African novel covers works in all the languages either indigenous, English or the languages used at the various moments in history.

The genesis of novel and the factors responsible for its boom in Nigeria were similar to that of other parts of the African continent. The introduction of colonizers and missionaries laid foundation for the Nigerian English novel as they played very important role in establishing western education on the whole continent. Nigeria proved very fertile for the reconstruction of the genre for its newness in socio-political context and abundance of cultural heritage. The newness between fiction and the writers of Nigeria seems born for each others as compared to other countries of Africa because, the majority of acclaimed novelists on the continent are Nigerians like Achebe, Amos Tutuola, Wole Soyinka and Ben Okri. The literary activity particularly fiction writing in Nigeria, has produced more than five hundred novels during the last twenty five years.

Yoruba indigenous language in Nigeria is the most sweeping written language. It produced many newspapers and periodicals. The Yoruba language is spoken by the Yoruba tribe that constituted ethnic-based societies to promote this language for colonial elites. The people of this tribe had advantage of interaction with the English speaking people who were connected with such societies. This interaction later played an important role to counter anglophile tendencies. The first Yorubian novel published in Nigeria in 1929 was *Segilola ele yinju ege* translated as *Segilola, Women of Ensnaring Eyeball* that appeared in a local newspaper serially. Later in 1938 a full-fledged Yoruba novel *Ogboju ode ninu Igbo irunmale* by a church master D O Fagunwa became a model for Wole Soyinka's translated work *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons*. Wendy Griswold contests in this connection:

Fagunwa's was not the first novel published in Nigeria however for that distinction property is shared by a set of Hausa novels published four years earlier. In 1933 the translation Bureau in Zaria announced a fiction competition; the following year, it published five of the winning entries (Griswold: 31)

Like Yoruba, Housa fiction extended its domain to new themes relating to science fiction and Islamic morality. There are numerous languages within each tribe and these novels find very small number of readers. There is also scarcity of readership for such novels written in indigenous languages. Igbo novels meet worst results in terms of its readership. These languages even lack standard orthographies. These problems with tribal languages set the English language as a better choice particularly for writers to reach larger audiences. According to the UNESCO

survey of 1989, out of 1444 books published 1380 were written in English and 20 in Hausa, 32 in Yoruba and 12 in Igbo and the rest in minor languages. Literature written in a foreign language also guarantees accessibility for the reader, particularly in English, even if it is hardly anybody's first language among its native writers. With the passing time the trend made the Nigerian novel in English as Nigerian proper novel.

Amos Tutuola's fantastic tale is *The Palm Wine Drunkard and His Dead Palm Wine Tapster in the Dead's Town*, was published in 2 may 1952. This novel was not the first novel of Nigeria but surely the first written in English. There were many novels before Tutuola written in indigenous languages accessible to a limited linguistic community. Critics contest that these novels should be considered Yoruba and Hausa novels but not as Nigerian novel proper. There are many objections associated with it like its structure does not affirm novel like characteristics. Palmer calls it a work of oral literature. The introduction of romances into this genre and post-modern narrative techniques of magic realism have created proper space for *Palm Wine Drunkard* to be called the first novel in English of Nigeria.

Nigeria is called the giant of Africa in terms of its literary endeavour that produced Noble laureates like Wole Soyinka, Booker prize winner Ben Okri and internationally acclaimed Chinua Achebe. The production of fiction was badly hit in 1990 that reduced the number of novels to twenty annually. This was then restored by the local publishers. Nigeria continued to produce novels even if the majority of novelists have not taken writing as a profession due to low chances of earning livelihood. Apart from a few well-renowned writers, they find it hard to make writing their profession. The prospects of foreign writers are bright, which is something contrary in their own country. The other factors which make novel writing a difficult profession to opt for are ethnicity, gender and religious bias. Igbo constitutes seventeen percent of Nigerian population but is the first major contributor in fiction writers. It produces half of the fiction of Nigeria. The second largest ethnic group in population is Yoruba that contributes to only a third of the novelists. Hausa Fulani constitutes the thirty percent population but they contribute only fifty one percent in the production of fiction together.

The Novel in Nigeria has been fortunately written by well-educated youth. These writers are well-learned men who are aware about the changing trends of the world academics and the new adaptation on literary terrain. More than seventy two percent are graduates and thirty five percent have done their masters and research already. Teaching profession and writing in Nigeria has a covenant bond, most of the first generation novelists were teachers. It had shifted for second and third generation novelists who opted for a variety of professions like media and civil services. They try to meet both desire for creative writing and the obligation for livelihood by perusing multiple careers. For a Griswold:

Nigerian novelists must combine their creative work with jobs that put food on the table and they must do so in a particular social context: that of a country that was a colony until

1960 and has undergone continuous political and economic upheavals ever since. (Griswold: 47)

Nigerian novelists also face the problem of publishing their works. They hardly find any Nigerian publishing company for their creative works. It were actually foreign publishers who provided cradle for the birth of the Nigerian novel. Faber and Faber, a London based company first published Amos Tutuola novel. The total numbers of novels published in 1950 were seven, out of which six were published in London by Dakers and Heinemann and the remaining one by Aluko: *One Man, One Wife* by the author himself in Lagos. It is the first novel published in Nigeria. It started business of Western publishers in Nigeria through publications and the novel on the continent became a luxurious exercise due to high value foreign publishers set for these novels. Take the example of Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* published in 1991. It was not available in Nigeria and when it came in Nigeria market in it cost five hundred Naira which could hardly be afforded by a handful Nigerians. According to Adebowale Nigerian publishing houses are still influenced by colonial assumptions. They considered it a favor for authors "...it is not enough to talk about decolonizing African literature. We should also begin to talk now about decolonizing African publishing".(Adobowale:10). Nigeria in this context has improved by creating its own publishing houses that strengthened their publishing industry. It is estimated that that Nigeria had 300 publishing houses in 1988 including more organization and association like OAU: Organization of African Unity and the Association of Nigerian Authors, and Nigerian Publishers Association (NPA).

Moreover, the Nigerian novel gained prominence in terms of its dealing with contemporary themes like traffic jams, city life, wars, crime and politics. It is also well-established fact that the colonial factor and village life have stolen all the sheen of the Nigerian novel in terms of its exploration but new themes are also dealt with to keep going modern concerns of this genre. Most of the writers in Nigeria are obsessed with village life and country setting, hence most of them explore village life. Village novels usually have characters put in the village setting. Most of them are farmers who are not altogether ideal in their social milieu and affairs. There exist tribal conflicts, ethnic rivalries and jealousy within the society. The Nigerians generally believe that any disturbance in social setup has a direct bearing on the natural or spiritual order. To restore social order requires sacrifices and rituals. *Starbook*, for example, a novel by Okri reflects such sacrifices and ritual practices to restore stability in the community. These conflicts and tensions are considered a threat for social stability. The more threatening factors to traditional social order are always from outside and usually associated with Western influences. They are manifested in the form of urbanization, modernization, colonization, and industrialization. It also includes attraction towards Western societies for African-cum-Nigerian youth and the change it brings in their ways of life. Western education is also considered a means of disturbance in village novels. This disturbance caused by outside factors requires tribal meetings and ancestral spirit consultations through cultural practices to restore the lost equilibrium. A clash occurs between the opposing forces which usually results in crisis. Village

novels hardly conclude in restoring tranquility. The clashes between the two opposite forces within a new socio-political context challenge the compatibility of traditional cultural practices:

In a work the virgin, the reader can see just how the disorientation of modernity which Durkheim called anomie, replaces the conventional social order... It is not so much an absence of norms that brings disaster as it is the inadequacy of old norms under new conditions. (Griswold: 126)

Likewise, city novel also starts with the same story patterns. They differ from village novels in terms of their complex themes like sexual life and prospects of marriage. It also involves fertility and a clash between traditional values and modern ways of life. Traditionally woman is considered subservient to man particularly after marriage but under the modern influence city novels show young educated girls who are exposed to city crimes pursuing dangerous jobs and careers. Sexual exploitation, seduction and corruption are the main hurdles city life offers to women folk. The relationship between village novel and city novel is very important to understand them. Nigeria is comparatively more urban than the other countries of the African continent. According to a survey, one third of Nigerians are city dwellers but it is rural Nigeria that is predominant and is considered real. Despite all this, city setting is the rule in most of the fiction written in the country. It also symbolizes dislocation. Traditional setting in the Nigerian novel was very frequently exploited by the first generation novelists but the second and third generation novelists believe in the portrayal of current socio-political problems within the urban context and the changes that are transforming Nigeria everyday.

Furthermore, the other important development in the Nigerian novel was the introduction of women novelist. They explored men-women relations and the problem women faced under the traditional and contemporary changing scenario. Flora Nwapa was the first women novelists who broke the barrier of sex. She wrote *Efuru*: the first novel written by a Nigerian women. She also claims the title of being first African novelist to be published in London. It was published in 1966. It started a new genre of fiction called women-and-men novel. It has a woman protagonist and gender role as the main thread of the plot. The conflict of gender bias is a natural problem in Nigeria which these novelists brought into limelight through their writing. This monumental novel is a radical in challenging the traditional position of women as child bearer and keeps her protagonist childless, who is then worshipped in the society.

The other most important and active genre of Nigeria is the political novel that started with the coming of Europe to Africa as explored by the novelists like Achebe. It depicts the conflict between cohesion and chaos in public life due to political failure. Unlike the romance, the political novel in Nigeria is a serious art form that contests between order and disorder within the contemporary Nigeria political system. This genre bears witness to country's political failure, alienation, and the reason to dominate. Nigerian institutions failed to provide care, protection and justices. The emergency care in hospitals is in shambles, like police failed to give protection and courts to justices. The political novel perpetually critique of corruption, nepotism and the nexus

between politicians and businessmen at the cost of national resources. It has become a mouthpiece for the common people to exchange ideas affecting Nigerian life. Griswold says that “the novels, therefore, are not only about people addressing problems. They are people addressing problems” (Griswold: 241)

The quest for a stable federal government has been the main motivation in Nigerian politics for the last sixty six years. This quest has been continuously haunting Nigerian politicians. The federal government makes very less impact on the politics of the country because of deep-rooted ethnic divide, regionalism and military might. It has rendered the dream of a federal democratic republic unachievable. The tradition of military coups have rendered deep political cynicism due to bitter experiences. It resulted in half-hearted idea of a federal republic of Nigeria. The contemporary political novel like *The Legacy* by Lawrence Nwokora shows in depth the erosion of political institutions by corruption. It has disintegrated family, distorted the law, and played havoc with public life and the business community. Ben Okri's *Dangerous Love* is also a tragedy of the failure of institutions like business, law and equality within the set political framework.

The foundation of a democratic Nigerian dream was laid in 1970's in fever of oil boom economy. It promised a black land of opportunities and equality. It looked forward for education, progress free from ethnic, religious and gender bias so that Nigeria could become a standard black nation for the rest of the African nations to follow. Initially it showed the promise of a politically powerful nation to demand a seat in the United Nations Security Council. The other appealing aspect of this dream was to preserve the best of both worlds. They would keep going with their tradition of family obligations, respect for elders, and acceptance of spiritual life as existed in the folk tradition and oral wisdom supposed to go hand in hand with Western science and technology. Wendy she argues that,

The Nigerian dream was especially vulnerable because it depended on an predictable global market for a single commodity and because Nigerian's unrestrained population growth put relentless pressure on its infrastructure and institutions, but for a while it seemed to capture a future order that was both feasible and desirable. (Griswold: 257)

Political novels written in early the Biafra period were more optimistic and positive in their dealings with issues confronting democratic aspirations among the masses. It was then boosted by the reformist zeal of the ruler like Murtala Mohammad's regime. Both oil-boomed economy and reform zeal could not last for long and disbelief started to overlap optimism that resulted in developing doubt and despair. In the beginning of the 1980s Nigerian economy started to lose its strength and continued to be on the decline even now. It automatically reduced high hopes associated with Nigeria as a black land provide good life, high education full of intellectual resources based on both Nigerian and Western world views. These failures further weakened the federal government aspirations that took people back to their ethnicities, regionalism and religions. The increased differences among the people resulted in collective failure. The

government offices have been filled on the basis of nepotism, corruption and non-competence. The educated youth lost faith in their country as a promising land. A novel like *Dangerous Love* by Okri depicts an educated youth's increasing aspirations with Western countries. Omovo is the protagonists in novel whose friends staunchly believe that life itself starts outside Nigeria. The Civil war brought further gloom to the Nigerians. It weakened the democratic set up in Nigeria that started a spree of military coups to take it further away from the federal system. Themes like military coups and Biafra war were and are still a pre-occupation of most Nigerian fiction. Nigeria was exposed at international level for its failure to retain democracy and to restore security for international political envoys. Nigeria was altogether ignored by the world. It's commonwealth membership was also threatened.

The first and second generation novelists gave full expression of this erosion of confidence. For critics corruption an important theme of the Nigerian political fiction. "Achebe took corruption as a characteristic of a culture that had been wrenched from its moorings, most notably in *No Longer at Ease*". (Griswold: 258) He continued to show political corruption in his later works like *Anthills of the Savannah*, through the corruption of institutions. The first and second generations tried to show how difficult it was to maintain integrity. Another important political writer Ogali varied in his response to the political denigration through his writing. In the primary stage of his career he showed great inclination and admiration for all Western things like Christianity, material advancement and technology but later on he begins to question every Western move in his post-civil war writings and later a complete replacement of traditional by a new social order. It failed to achieve its goals. It facilitated to large extent corruption. His work *Coal City* is an epilogue to this new social order. According to Peter K Ayers, "Ogali response opens up a vista of corruption so vast, so pervasive, so comprehensive, that the possibility of honest and constructive social action is effectively ruled out", (Ayer:113)

Consequently, the writers felt discouraged. The new writing in Nigeria was obsessed by such themes. It brought cynicism and despair in the closing years of the 1970 that the total number of thirty eight Nigerian novels had corruption as a main theme that extended to fifty till the 1980s. These political novels thoroughly reflected this loss of confidence that the majority of novels start with, in their socio-political setting. In the history of Nigeria, the dream of a promised land was never realized. These political novels are darkening in outlook, for they provide no viable solutions "when the public and private have been merged, the damage cannot be undone; no base exist for order to emerge from disorder; no social precipitate can organize the chaotic Nigerian mixture. This is the starkly pessimistic picture" argues Wendy. One hardly finds chances of reclaiming to the can-do optimism particularly after the Biafra war in the writings of novelists in particular. T M Aluko's *Chief the Honorable Minister* and Achebe's *A Man of the People* shows the annihilation of Nigerian optimism that portrays a bleak picture of Nigeria and its future. Similarly Areo's *Paradise for the Masses* (1985) concludes in showing a love contester for reformist movement whose founder collapses to corruption.

These political novels followed a set pattern in the form of a protagonist who is very positive about just political order to be achieved through discipline but the opposite forces are so dominating that the main character has to either compromise or be alone as a unheard voice in the milieu. These corruptive forces distort the political movements for ideal order. It is aided by foreign interests in the form of corporal greed and neo-colonial interests.

Okri being a post-modern writer carries the past legacy of political novel in his domain of fiction. His writings both fiction and non-fiction deal with the contemporary issues and concerns of Nigerian democracy in particular. The corpus of his literary activity explores multiple concerns that required solutions. He adopts an oblique way in his writings by adopting symbols, Similes, metaphors, magic and myths to represent what has become now worn out and cliché in the art of fiction. He resorts to the post-modern technique to denounce direct handling of political issues within the novel. His indirectness has made his approach new and interesting that appeals to all. Some of his current themes are corruption, yearning for democracy, gender bias, politics, nepotism, disintegration of family, ecology, alienation in industrial Nigeria, regeneration and cultural politics.

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