

An Appraisal of Three Nigerian Poets' Perspectives on Trends Plaguing Contemporary Nigeria

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Abstract

Here, we attempt a scholarly review and art appreciation of selected recent poems of these poets, with a view to highlighting their contributions to indigenous studies. Although we rely solely on the poems, focusing on their themes, for content-analysis, a few other relevant textual materials are used too. Besides, the poets are also interviewed for an in-depth understanding of their perspectives.

Keywords

Poets, Perspectives, Trends, Plagues, Contemporary Nigeria, Robert, Dibia and Eze

1. Introduction

The poet is a literary stylist, economist, artiste, pace-setter, trend-setter, analyst, columnist, researcher, sociologist, historian, philosopher and all-rounder, who technically (poetically) says little but communicates much. The plaguing trends of contemporary Nigeria constitute the poet's heaviest burdens. The three Nigerian poets under study decry the burdens in their poems, such as Robert's *Mother Nigeria Tears*, Dibia's *Jobless Graduates: A Poet's Burden* and Eze's *Armed-robbers in Black*. Poetry is said to have been defined in superlative terms as the 'best word in the best place', 'the centre and circumference of knowledge', 'what is often thought of but never so well expressed' and many others, all to the consternation of those who are scared stiff by poetry [1]. The poets, as special writers, often worry about and cry over the ugly happenings in their environment that are precipitated by man and nature. Every poet is a writer but every writer is not a poet. This unique talented, artistic and economical writer plays the role of activism, who champions the course of a people's liberation, change and development. The poet most times merely wears the shoes of the victims of circumstance, for which they often lament, weep, cry aloud even more than the bereaved, satirise, and clap.

By singing aloud, the ills or the good of their environments

and people as well as others with theirs, the poet plays both the general and specific roles of the writer, the 'real writer,' not the politicking-cajoling pen that writes for fear or favour. Remarking on writers who write with either a static or dynamic world order in mind, WaThiongo [2] had satirised Chinua Achebe for merely capturing and reflecting the struggling around him, and appreciated Wole Soyinka for his heroic stand as a social individual. According to WaThiongo, the writer's role is that of helping in the community's struggle for a certain quality of life free from all harmful or infectious exploitative relations. Poetry, via the poet, helps in the life struggles of the society at all and different times.

On the writer's significant contributions to the society's struggles, WaThiongo muses thus: "The extent to which the writer can and will help is not only by explaining the world but in changing it will depend on his appreciation of the classes and values that are struggling for a new order, and new society, a more human future, and which classes and values are hindering the birth of a new and the hopeful. And of course, it depends on which side he is in these class struggles of his times." This paper likewise appraises the contribution of or help from the selected poets – Odey Robert, Godfrey Dibia and Crescent Eze – to the contemporary struggling in Nigeria, by identifying as well as satirising the classes, values and phenomena that are struggling and consequently plaguing the Nigerian society

with misfortunes and impediments that both affect and prevent the birth of the desired/supposed new order.

Uwatt [3], in broad perspective, lends credence to the foregoing thus: "From the earliest stage of the struggle for the evolution of democratic nation states, up to the more recent African and Arab springs, revolution has remained [an] effective weapon for changing the world order. Be it the American or French revolution, or the Kenyan and Tanzanian revolutions, or the Harlem renaissance or Negritude movement, the writer has always been struggling side-by-side with the nationalists or Pan-Africanists against colonialism, slavery, tyranny, cultural aberration, psychological disorientations, etc. Literature itself is [a] representation of the struggle in society at human, spiritual, economic, social, cultural, religious, environmental levels and within the self. The writer's stand in these struggles is shaped by his vision of the world order and the role he elects to play in his envisioned world order." The respective stand of the studied poets in the struggles in contemporary Nigeria is shaped likewise, and they have as well elected such a role, expressed partly by their perspectives. Here, they adopt poetry, one of the genres and oldest form of literature, to contribute to Nigerian society in such regard.

2. The Poets' Brief Background

2.1. Robert, Odey Simon

Robert, O. S. holds BA (Honours) in Languages and Linguistics of the Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria. A career academia, he is a postgraduate candidate, who has taught English Language and Literature in several secondary (colleges) and tertiary institutions for considerable years. This Utugbor, Bekwarra – born young promising radical scholar is an erudite, versatile experienced and diligent linguist, poet, researcher and writer with many scholarly publications to his credit. These include journals, books, chapters, edited books/articles, articles, anthologies, plays, novels and conference papers. He is married with children. His research interests include Languages and Literature, English Studies, Bekwarra and African Linguistics, Cultural and Gender Studies, Media, Philosophy, Education, Religion, Politics, Economy, Entrepreneurship, and Development and African Studies.

2.2. Dibie, Godfrey Atunu

Dibie is an experienced and multi-disciplinary French linguist from Obiaruku, Ukwani, Delta State, and a pioneer lecturer with the Department of General Studies, Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia. Besides, he teaches with National Open University of Nigeria, Lafia Study Centre, and the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Lafia, Nigeria. He holds BA (Honours) in French of the Delta State University, Abraka; MA in French Translation of the University of Jos; PGDE of the National Teacher's Institute, Lafia Centre; and PhD in African Caribbean Literature of the Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria. His core research interests are

French, Feminism, Linguistics, Literature and Literary Criticism – social and political satire. He is the sole proprietor of Master Key School, Lafia, Nigeria. He is married with children. He has different local and international publications, including books, and conference and journal papers, single and co-authored.

2.3. Eze, Crescent Chinwuba

Eze holds a B. A. (Ed. Eng.) and M. A. Eng. (ESL) of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He served the New Nigeria Newspaper, Lagos, as a Senior Proof Reader for years. He has taught in several secondary and tertiary institutions, prime among which are College of Education, Ekiadolor, Benin, Edo State; Federal College of Education, Aha-Amufu, Enugu State; National Open University of Nigeria, Lafia Study Centre; Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia, where he had risen to Chief Lecturer position in the General Studies Department. Also, he is an English Language Chief Examiner to NECO and Deputy Chief Examiner to WAEC, Lafia. He is an erudite scholar, a writer, researcher, consultant, teacher and counsellor, with several books, chapters and articles to his credit. And, he is happily married with children. He hails from Eha-Alumona, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria.

3. Robert's Poetic Perspectives on Trends Plaguing Nigeria

3.1. The Plaguing Nigerians in Robert's 'Mother Nigeria Tears'

There are great numbers of Nigerians who plague Nigeria on daily basis. To Robert, 'plaguing Nigerians' are all Nigerian evil-mongers, such as insurgents, militants, armed-robbers, witches/wizards, cultists/occultists, *ritualists*, terrorists, vandals, killers, assassins, thugs, religious fanatics, violent/corrupt citizens and leaders and elite, to mention but a few, who cause Nigeria and their fellow Nigerians alarming pains, tears, woes, tension, insurgency/insecurity, militancy, kidnapping, murder, bloodshed, evils, ethnic/religious hate/violence, moral laxity/decadence, disintegration, bitter bloody politics, failed leadership and fellowship, etc.

The poet, Robert [4], employing 'apostrophe' figurative device, first imagines whether the identified emerging problems of contemporary Nigerian society are curse from Africa, Nigeria's mother, for Nigeria's erstwhile purported offence(s) against her, for which Nigeria has lost her glory, as African giant, and no longer have peace, unity and meaningful progress (lines 1-8, stanzas 1-2). In stanza three, the poet conveys Nigeria's plea to Mama Africa, its mother, to supernaturally change the minds of the present generations of Nigeria, whose women too have no motherly instinct, love and mercy (lines 10-13).

Next, the poet observes in stanza six (lines 24-25) that the Nigeria of yesterday (then), when Africa's glory used to reign through Nigeria, its giant (line 23) was not plagued with

pains, hypertension, undue anxiety, fears, woes, sickness, endless cry and mourning from their [insurgents' and all other evil-mongers'] conflicts, terrorism, discrimination, corruption, power tussle, vices, juvenile delinquencies, armed-robbery, hired assassination, abortion, witchcraft, cultism, occultism... (lines 17-23, stanza 5). Religious and ethnic hate and violence are on the increase in present Nigerian society, which seldom existed then. Stanza 7 captures the situation viz:

Mother, your grandchildren know no love for one another
Yet preach religion day on, day night
Like we never did though very virtuous
Blood-shed, evils everywhere, every day, every time (lines 26-29)

It implies that the religious/ethnic hate and violence are incited by their fanatics. Ironically, the 'holy' [good] Nigerians are hated and killed gruesomely, molested, harassed, stigmatised against, battered and rendered homeless (refugees in their own land) by their godless bloody siblings (fellow Nigerians)— evil-mongers: insurgents, militia, ritualists, etc. (lines 30-33, stanza 8). To that end, stanza 10 calls for national love, unity, peace and integration as well as attitudinal change. This call is captured thus:

War not, my lovely children!
Come unto me in unity and newness and wipe my tears
See yourselves all as one, from a single womb
Before the Towel' Babel's spread differences (lines 39-42, stanza 10).

The last two stanzas— 11 and 12 – reaffirm the plaguing mourning state of today Nigeria at its climax, noting that the plaguing Nigerians unleash their evils/atrocities and harms on the land in the company of their external (alien) fellows who are envious of Nigeria, and Nigeria's plea for practical not paper and lip-service, unity, love, peace and integration among her peoples (lines 43-55). Specially, the poet metaphorically likens today Nigeria's situation to hell with unprecedented 'plagues' (lines 50, stanza 11).

3.2. Westernisation and the Abandonment of African Heritage

The extreme contemporary shift from everything Nigerian/African to Western ways, culture, values and norms is decried by Robert in what he entitled 'Who Becomes the Owner of our Treasures?' He poetically laments on the trend of western mimicry, as in westernising Nigerians and Africans in post-colonial times, most especially in the 21st century, championed by the elites, leaders and social institutions and led by the mass media and science and technology. For the poet, Nigerian/African rich indigenous heritage: land, cultures, Mother-Tongues, religion (inclusive of ethics, aesthetics and metaphysics), dress attire, arts, races, literature, origin (genealogy), cosmology, talents and potentials, vegetation, water bodies, traditional government/governance and the entirety are [our] treasures – heritage – of Nigerians, other Africans and Black, which need not be abused, abandoned, put to extinction or tampered with (lines 2-9, 14, 22, 28-34).

Robert decries the manner, rate, extent and nature of the abandonment cum endangerment of Nigerian indigenous heritage as a whole, upon the extreme crave and bids for westernisation – western mimicry – at the expense of the indigenous Nigerian/African cultures, values and norms. The poet regrets that the western 'treasures' – heritage – are not [might not be] as unique, invaluable, rich and natural or original as African heritage, but only for (neo-) colonialism/imperialism, westernisation, modernism, brain drain, brainwashing, Western education and religion (Christianity along with Islam, the Arab spring) and the endless dabbling and battering of everything Black, African and/or Nigerian. He notes that Africans and the other Black races were first stripped off of their entire indigenous heritage then by the colonialists. And these days, in their crazy quest to become westernised, Africans (the Black) themselves erode their heritage. For the imperialist superiority complex, tendency and show-off, the White invaded, battered, dabbled, blasphemed against and wiped out everything Black/African. Their racial cleansing and imposition had plagued the Black race timelessly (lines 11-12, stanza 2-4). The post-colonial Black amidst neo-colonialism and imperialism, especially the rich/intellectual elites continue to promote and sustain the racial cleansing and imposition trends that keep eroding as well as plaguing the Black race cum its panorama.

Nude or immodest dressing, pornography, religious hypocrisy and fundamentalism, undue populated emigration, brain drain, etc. are plagues that have crept into the contemporary African (Nigerian and other Black) societies as a result of the foregoing. Instead of culture filtering, borrowing and blending that involve refining a culture via the selective system of picking the good and dropping the bad or ugly and replacing them with some newly borrowed or adopted aspects of another (other) culture(s), mixed up with the newly made indigenous aspects of the target culture(s) for smooth blending and betterment, the Black (Nigerians) rather indulge in self racial cleansing and cultural identity extinction via acculturation, westernisation and culture mimicry (lines 38 & 40). These trends are plaguing. The whole situation is unfortunate. Stanza two captures the foregoing thus:

Where are our ancient treasures?
Instead of procreation, we bomb them
With raw acid - atomic bomb and
Gradual rapid painful rocket launcher bullets
Of extinction (lines 10-13)

The poet queries where Nigerians [and perhaps other Black] are heading to in line 37, voicing out fears and shame (lines 35-36). He enjoins Nigerians (the Black) to return to their old good (standard) indigenous cultures – heritage – for new rich harvest [betterment/development] without imperilment (line 48, stanza 10).

3.3. Nigerian Politics and Governance: Failed Leadership and Bad Example

Robert's 'Lawless Law House' satirises the gross

misconduct of Nigerian law-makers in several states and the National Chambers, whose bad legacy (example) of often fighting in the legislative houses has made politics a wasteful venture to the younger generations. No one would blame the latter law-makers for being fighters, i.e. fighting law-makers, who are bound to be as lawless as their predecessors. Of course, the present law-makers (legislators) of the national chambers engaged in the act at the beginning of their tenure, and have simply sustained the political rascality of fighting in the House during plenary sessions. Certainly, they inherited (learnt) from their Fourth Republic immediate predecessors of Abuja, Benin, Rivers (lines 14-15), who fought openly with several dangerous weapons against one another on the basis of party and personal interests and differences (lines 5, 11, 20, 22). Stanza three captures it thus:

Sometimes, somewhere, like their juniors, a country's
Top Law House is battered by lawless law-makers
All for party and personal sake
They teach lawless' to them
Yet insist on lawfulness.

The actions of such legislators portray failed leadership cum bad example and legacy in Nigeria. They are the black sheep of the legislature (line 30), who express the politics of rancour, bitterness, party politics, ethno-religious divides, god-fatherism, gerrymandering, and 'do or die' affair. The grave implications are of two major phases: (i) failed leadership with bad legacy for future generations; (ii) battered/ruined image of Nigerian politics in the international community: */They war with weapons against one another/ /While the law-adaptors [the masses] watch and hear/ /On television and radio in shame to the world/* (lines 22-24, stanza 6).

Following the gross abuse of power and the rule of law, for which such dubious leaders go unpunished and are rather applauded by sycophants (dubious, worthless followers from among the Nigerian masses), most other Nigerians are bound to crave for such authority in order to become above the law too and do whatever they wish or like (line 28, stanza 7). The situation depicts institutionalised lawlessness by Nigerian bourgeoisie, oligarchs and gerontocrats, as it is almost 'a crime' for the young (youth) to be part of the nucleus of Nigerian politics. Various other instances of failed leadership with bad examples and legacies, which characterise Nigerian post-colonial politics, abound and will continue uncontrollably if not proactively and radically checked now. The legislators are a crop of learned people, who are not ignorant of the law. But merely because of their position and societal status, they breach the law anyhow unperturbed and unquestioned. Such failed Nigerian leaders are also plaguing contemporary Nigeria. Of course, such misdeeds of Nigerian leaders are why even a 'common' Nigerian would perpetrate an evil deliberately and shift the blame to the government (leaders), often claiming that it is because the leaders are bad. If all the leaders were up and doing, upright, God-fearing and exemplary, they would never compromise or contemplate dealing with any citizens who breach the law, regardless of the citizens' status. Therefore, the poet enjoins the leaders

ought to exonerate themselves and leave the bad-minded citizens with no chance of or excuse for breaching the law.

3.4. Neo-colonialism and Ethnic Cleansing

Again, Robert decries the above plagues on contemporary Nigeria. Racial sentiments and parameters still pervert the global society, despite the claimed movements and fights against racism, since the kernel crusaders are themselves ardent recalcitrant imperialist racists. Neo-colonialism manifests in various phases till date. Most times, the ICJ plays the imperialists judicial role similar to the financial one played by the World Bank, the IMF, Western Union, European Union, etc. [5]. These bodies continue neo-colonialism and racism in mute and disguised. They assume the 'supremacy of God' over developing nations, which had been and are impoverished, stripped naked, battered, raided, underdeveloped, cleansed, etc. by their powerful nations of Europe and America [5, 6]. They show unlimited authority anywhere and anytime they like. These bodies are agents of neo-colonialism, meant to sustain European and American imperialist 'supremacy'. That is basically why the Blacks are only given menial positions and jobs in these bodies. They politick unquestioned through near-covert, fancied racism and rhetoric, 'justified' by their development, advancement, civilisation, education, religion and politics. For instance, the declaring of the position of World Bank President opened for general contest but victory remaining the exclusive preserved of the white, like in the case of Okonjo Iweala and Banki Moo, is a mere propaganda and international political cajole.

Because they do what they like and favour who they want anywhere and anytime, the ICJ does same in its verdict, as in the case of ceding Bakassi to Cameroon. This instance is captured viz: 'The Bakassi have been rendered homeless/dehumanised, abused, battered, maltreated, killed, maimed... /by Cameroon, her Gendarme leading the massacre squad' (line 27, stanza 6). The human rights of these people had been and are grossly trampled on, ignored by ICJ too. The poet aptly captures the Bakassi' woes as follows:

Citizens with no rights of identity!
Prisoners with no prison
Another slavery!
Another colonialism!
Refugees without camp! (stanza 12).
Bakassi are grieve alive and dead
Crying endlessly, timelessly
Spilled Bakassi Blood and sweat cry for vengeance and mercy (stanza 11)
Thiers are no more!
Not even like refugees, they are.
Fate too, nothing in stuck for them!
They stand stagnant in-between, upon orders.
Their rights, considered not, even now. (stanza 9)
/Nothing to fall back on!/ /Wouldn't the war have been better for Bakassi?/

It is only the ICJ's verdict on the ceding of Bakassi that has shown that land is worth more than the lives and well-being of the people of a nation. That is a case of international

judicial ethnic cleansing: */Another slavery/ /Another colonialism/*, which points at neo-colonialism in Nigeria and other parts of Africa that are still controlled by imperialist international bodies. It was an avenue to reduce Nigeria's vast size, giant status and natural resources. Now, it means that there was Bakassi nation in Nigeria, a whole Local Government Area (LGA) in Cross River State for that matter. Yet, record still has it that Cross River has eighteen (18) LGAs. Bakassi's case is inhuman and an ethnic cleansing, as the people now have no place they can boldly call their own. The poet captures the helpless situation of the Bakassi thus:

Bakassi, a homeless home!

Bakassi, a shattered home!

Bakassi, a then home! (stanza 1)

The Bakassi are now citizens of no mean country,
State and Local Government Area.

With supreme sacrifice, Bakassi paid for Nigeria
And Biafra to Cameroon (stanza 2).

Bakassi

A son-of-the-soil landlord forcefully made a stranger-
servant and hermit

An aged mother turned a motherless baby

Whose loud cry, grin and gnashing of teeth, screaming
Are heard afar but no rescue, even from near (stanza 3).

Her seventy-six jewel wells

All pushed to Akwa-Ibom

Pitiable but never by any

Whose pity the Heaven alone hears for rescue (stanza 5).

To most of the developed nations, Nigeria deserves no mercy. This is shown in various ways in Nigeria's diplomatic relations, including economic endeavours. For example, the British Airways charges or used to charge Nigeria a whooping amount for fare to the UK, but charges Ghana and the like just a half or less of what it charges Nigeria, whereas it is nearer from Nigeria than from Ghana. The outrageous call charges by MTN from Nigeria subscribers in Nigeria, which cannot be compared with the call charges of other countries as well as the irregularities of MTN that amounted to being fined by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2012 and 2015 could never be tried in UK, US, etc. because of their 'supreme status.' Regrettably, upon the unjust legal advice offered to MTN by some Nigerian money-monger unscrupulous jurists, this multinational telecommunication firm had to refute or first argue over the fine.

This radical poet, sharing the plights afflictions and woes of the Bakassi, expressed by his tone and mood, first blames the Bakassi helpless yet helpful situation on Gowon and Ojukwu, the problem initiators. Successive Nigerian governments take the blame from the problem initiators. The inaction or inability of Nigerian governments [Federal and State (Cross River and Akwa-Ibom) governments] to resolve the prevailing issue without involving the ICJ or within the ICJ's deadline is a clear case of failed leadership. The blame is categorically extended to the international community [especially the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the leading developed nations] and Nigerian judiciary and other elites and bourgeoisie. Bakassi is indeed where could be best

described as 'There was an LGA in Cross River, a nation, a people with their monarch, culture and systems, and a place', like Achebe's 'There was a Country'.

The above verses of Robert's poem on Bakassi snappily describe the painful dehumanising situation of Bakassi both as an area and a people, plagued with uneasy ceaseless woes, pandemonium, identity struggle, conflict, deprivation of all phases, killing and maiming by the Cameroonian Gendarme (line 28), epidemics, poverty, paralysed or shattered economies and underdevelopment, to mention but a few. Yet, no one outside Bakassi seems concerned. Nothing other than ICJ's imperialist neo-colonialist imposed order of no mercy! Bakassi's supreme sacrifice for Nigeria is rewarded with the otherwise—dehumanisation, cruelty and merciless justice, assumed to be justice. More blames with shame to Nigerian post-colonial leaders! The poet reiterates hope in God, the most supreme Justice of Heaven and Earth, for the reverting of Bakassi case someday, and for saving Nigeria from neo-colonialism and failed leadership and followership. The poet's optimism reads, 'Bakassi shall resurrect someday!'

4. Dibia's Poetic Perspective on Trends Plaguing Nigeria

4.1. Unemployment Plagues on Nigeria

Dibia [7] expresses the incessant woes of Nigerian graduates who suffer for jobs amidst many jobs, all because only a few belong to the bourgeoisie, the 'big gun' tree, the political and intellectual elite classes, oligarchic and absolute monarchical classes, the top military lineage, religious and ethnic lords circle and demonic societies. Gone are the days Nigerian graduates had prestige and shared equal rights and privileges. Although certificate grade is greatly emphasised even at the expense of talent, prowess, dexterity and pragmatic product (performance output), those outside the folks have their First Class and Second Class Upper (Lower) neglected, relegated and contemplated. For the Third Class and Pass, no matter how brave, clever and productive, it only takes the grace of God for them to get jobs, unlike those of the First Class and Second Class that they are even better/more than.

Meanwhile, those who belong to the 'supreme' folks get lucrative jobs even before the vacancies announcement, securing admission into tertiary (or secondary) institutions, during schooling or immediately after graduation, whether qualified or not, Third Class, Pass or Fail, unlike their counterparts of the 'less privileged' folks. If such graduates come out with 1st Class, 2nd Class Upper or Lower, they are hot cakes for automatic employment or promotion. Such graduates most often receive their appointment or promotion letter from home or elsewhere other than the real offices or institutions, upon phone calls. What an injustice! What a country! What a world! So, indeed, the 'tailless calfs' [Robert, 8] have nowhere to run to from here. It is consequent upon this ugly situation that countless contemporary young Nigerians strive to travel abroad for

greener pasture, where betterment is perceived or told to exist for them. This also accounts for brain-drain and human trafficking across borders or smuggled migrants. Other neglected serious issues arising from the backdrop include youth restiveness, high social vices, emigration as well as rural drift, increased urban population and crimes, forced labour, abject poverty, school drop-out syndrome cum high illiteracy ratio, etc.

Jobless graduates are on the high increase in recent times. No one knows when the situation will change to what obtained those good days, as in the days of Nigerian nationalists and their successors of up to the late 1980's. Then graduates got good jobs without lobby and/or stress upon graduation, since in those good days, firms, institutions and governments always demanded competent graduates of their choice specialisations prior to graduation. And there were no job middlemen (agents); neither was there the negative trend of securing job based on financial gratification (bribe) and favouritism: 'who knows who', tribe, religion, class or group basis. These jobless graduates, as Dibley muses, constitute some burden to the poet. The poet is worried by the unceasing misfortunes, woes, calamities, hardship, plights, humiliation, dichotomy, pains, cries, untapped knowledge and capabilities, poverty, frustration, etc. of these qualified yet disqualified graduates, who most times become pushed by the forces of joblessness to do the unusual. Further, Dibley captures the pathetic situation of unemployment in contemporary Nigeria thus:

Graduates yet not graduates!

Graduates plagued with endless

Woes and tears, painfully.

Years ago, unqualified for jobs...

Now, a graduate worse!

At times, over qualify [sic]

Most times, qualify but have

No big guns behind them

When, how, where will they ever be qualified?

In contemporary Nigeria, many graduates, who are qualified both paper and brain-wise but have no 'connection' in the realm of political power and public affairs, remain unemployed and/or underemployed in exploitative capitalist firms. Such are the firms where many graduates are paid between ten and thirty thousand Naira (₦10-30,000.00) that can barely afford their feeding and transport expenses per month. Regrettably, a few of these fortunate unfortunate graduates *[for a few, peanut jobs for solace]*, are over drained by the greedy capitalist employers/entrepreneurs, blamed and made worthless always. Yet, these are people who paid equal fees with most of their fortunate/privileged graduate fellows, and even learnt more than most of them: *[After much, much and huge/ [purchase of out-home [school/formal] knowledge and skills [education]]]*.

Of course, most jobs are the exclusive reserved of tertiary institution graduates. Yet, after graduation, they are still unqualified, regardless of grades most times, all for not belonging to the 'fortunate' oligarchic class. It is unfortunate and pathetic. These days, as ways of disqualifying the 'less

privileged' graduates, those from poor background nor or have no backing (godfathers), various rigid restrictive criteria are demanded of job applicants: 'They place tricky criteria here and there for them to be recruited, disqualified' (lines 37, stanza 9). Before advert, those to be considered are almost completely selected. Then, to fulfil all righteousness (only for propaganda and cajole), the papers and applications of the 'ordinary graduates' are gathered and later disposed of. At times, they would be disqualified for having HND, private/state-owned tertiary institutions' certificates (BA, BSc, OND and NCE) and for various other flimsy excuses. In their bids and quest for assertion and change, most of the unemployed graduates are mostly defrauded by job monsters/criminals middlemen, scrupulous/dubious workers, and top officials of both private and public institutions, who would always demand whooping amount of money for empty-promise jobs. Worst still, the few available ones for the general public are hijacked by monstrous job agents and top government players (lines 39-40, stanza 11).

These graduates keep roaming the streets of cities and towns without being hired, leaving their knowledge to the swine, untapped, unutilised and less efficacious. The poet, Dibley, notes that if these graduates do not roam the streets with letters and curriculum vitae (CV) or serve 'bosses', the affluent, like slaves, illiterates or primary school leavers, they are left with only two options: *[Belong to the Evil forest Kingdom for way-cut/ and /...joining vices manufacturers/]*, whereby the first option means belonging to secret societies (occult/cult) with big dons for connections/help, while the second option means that such graduates resort to forming or joining militia and crime-monger groups such as the ethnic/religious militia, armed robbery gangs, computer scam groups— yahoo-yahoo guys, campus and street cult groups, ritual clubs, kidnappers, assassins, thugs, harlots/prostitutes and homosexual/lesbian groups who wide spread HIV/AIDS and STD's, gangsters, fake clergy, and so on. Dibley's words on these read:

Like cows with no tail in flies' habitat

The even more talented 'disabled' graduates are left to fate for jobs and survival (lines 30-31, stanza 7)

...only the able empty graduates/

can gain entrance with their master keys/.

Peters are robbed to pay Pauls. (lines 32-4, stanza 8)

Graduates are all common citizens now.

The days are no more when graduates were honoured.

Then, most take to street lives and settle down with atrocities and the unusual.

Some then take to forced Holy call for livelihood

Evangelisation and ministry.

Most rooted in and backed by Lucifer (stanza 9)

The poet regrets that when these graduates fly out across state/nation for betterment, they meet hostilities like harsh or racial ethnic or class discriminations, Diaspora problems like accommodation, feeding, distance gap, strange ways and the consequent clashes, etc. All these they bear out there to survive, having been incapacitated and pushed out by their own governments, elites, gerontocrats,

organisations/institutions, fellows and land. Dibia concludes:

Graduates daily on the increase
Pushed by high population rate
What then is incentive to the younger
Ones to be graduates, discouraged? (lines 45-9, stanza 12)
Jobless graduates!

A bony burden to a bright poet. (lines 50-51, stanza 13)

From the above, the poet rhetorical question suggests that since the younger ones are discouraged by the pitiable graduate status of helplessness, most of them are bound to contemplate schooling and/or furthering their education, as little or nothing makes a splash to them about higher education in particular. It is not a mere burden but a bony one to a bright poet, not just any poet but the erudite, philanthropic, humane, optimistic, concerned, deep-hearted, fearless, significant, omniscient, nation-builder, developer and pace-trend-setter poet, who does not only give pen headache but prescriptions and cures, neutralising plagues, if paid heed to.

4.2. Changing Plaguing Contemporary Trends

In what Dibia entitled 'Then Unlike Now,' he decries the unprofitable changes in values, norms, culture, ethics/aesthetics, institutions/systems as well as the entire society of Nigeria in contemporary times. Here, the poet retraces the past, comparing then and now. Although he does not call for a return to rudimentary ways of life, he x-rays the clear cut differences, which in using one's tongue to count one's teeth, one won't need to be told what has/had gone amiss and the way out. The crazy shifts have not paid Nigerians anything better than theirs (their indigenous ways) could/would have offered. A blend is necessary but not an abrupt shift, a sporadic radical shift from even the usual. Dibia notes that then unlike now there was: */peace/ /unity/ /brotherly love/ /an amicable interrelation/ /no ethic religious hatred/ /intensive informal, indigenous education/ /were rich cultural values, norms and ethics, undefiled and sustained/ /security everywhere, though unpaid for/ /Life was so sweet and lively/* (lines 1-10, stanza 1).

It is obvious that many of the good ways of life that obtained in the recent past Nigerian society are almost extinct in contemporary times. Thus, there is the dire need to reflect on the past and retrace the abandoned right ways of life, since the borrowed ways do not seem effective or productive for Nigeria. The digressions have rather stormed and keeps storming the contemporary Nigerian society with the worst unusual [9]. The contemporary Nigerian society is beleaguered by many usual negative trends. Disunity at family and intergroup levels has transcended to national disunity, intensified by religious, ethnic and gender discriminations. Social vices are gradually becoming ways of life in the Nigerian society. Informal education is no longer valued and imparted into the younger generations; indigenous knowledge and cultures are grossly neglected and abandoned for the alien; social vices are on the increase, taking new forms, such as kidnapping, [political] thuggery,

insurgency, militancy, ritual human-hunt, babies snatching, assassination, etc. Dibia further poetically observes,

Then unlike now
No machines yet high production
No Bible and Quran, though new later
But godliness and holiness reigned
No constitution, later made though, law and order, un-negotiated
No democracy yet communalism and communism answered all
With wonders, magnificent
Brain, not paper grades, proved individual's deposit
People used to help people free, humane
Normal people never went mad on the street
People travelled to and lived anywhere anytime
People were conscious of their deeds
Women were women; men were men
Now women are girls; girls are women
Now men are boys; boys are men
Women could cook and home-care
Women were cultured; no crazy fashion and rude manners
Cum indiscipline all for being educated
Virgins were found in every house
Wives were wives, very homely and submissive.

Yes! There were no machines yet high productions because people were diligent and committed to duties with all sincerity. Honesty and the fear of God, even though Christianity and Islam were not spread across yet and of course, were excellent at birth-advent here. Godliness and holiness, which could be widely judged to be duly high without Bible and Quran precepts and constitutions, reigned owing to the people's free and opened minds. Collective community, family and group (national) living and welfare were peacefully and efficaciously practised. Although democracy was not [was barely] practised, communalism and communism were practised with their magnificent wonders-extremely beneficial outputs. Communalism is the practise whereby people(s) of a given community/society live a common life and use or share all they have in common as people(s) living together. Communism is a political movement and economic system in which the state controls the means of producing everything on behalf of the people, aimed at creating a society in which everyone is treated equally [10].

More so, those days, the worth of individuals was proven by their prowess, intellect, dexterity, diligence and outstanding performance rather than paper grades. Good paper grades without justification were as good as nothing unappreciated, unlike now. This is talent not qualification. That was what reigned and took precedence. People were kind, humane, loving and generous to and care about/for one another. Help was not based on affluence, money in return (financial services), favour, connection, tribalism/sentiment, and what have you. Rather people helped their fellows for the sake of God and their deserved dire needs as well as for the sake of tomorrow – which they might be helped by others too later. That is, help or assistance then was unlike now. Besides, there were dress codes (norms). Members of society

generally share norms which define acceptable male and female apparel and appropriate dress for different age groups. Dress norms (codes) provide guidelines on what to wear on particular occasions [11]. Scholars, like Schaefer [12] and Henslin [13], hold the same view. According to Nwauzor [14], norms basically attract punishment for deviance and reward for conformity.

Also, then when things have not fallen apart, integrity and virtues, discipline, morality, humility and being responsible were never compromised by anyone for the otherwise. Almost every woman was virtuous, disciplined, morally upright, responsible, homely and motherly, and could cook and take care of the home very well unlike their present counterparts. These days, one sees young ladies and women struggling restaurants and bars with men/boys. Girls now delve into what are meant ordinarily for mothers (women) ought. Some even snatch 'their fathers' – Aristos – from 'their mothers' in the name of sugar daddy. They no longer value their pubic parts, and have little or no value for their underwear's. Black (Nigerian) ladies now boldly snap and post their nude pictures. What a crazy change! What a shame! Some little girls of seven now have carnal knowledge of men. Sexual discussions are no longer secrete and sacred. Most women (ladies) cannot cook food but depend on junk or restaurant/industrial food(s). Most women are now uncultured, rude, greedy, boastful and fashioned-driven. They misunderstand Western education, and become fond of gross indiscipline, westernisation and crazy modernisation. These and many more, the poet (Dibie) captures briefly and economically. They constitute plagues to Nigeria and burdens to the poet as well as African scholars. For example, it is all these that Nwauzor decries in his paper on 'Changing values in contemporary Nigeria.'

And men are no more men. Men were never loose, heartless, indiscipline, unstable, women-like, irresponsible, mouthy, etc. Men indulge in the unusual these days. There are many homosexuals these days, even though homosexuality is a sin and has no value. Men behave like boys and vice versa. Men are now lazy and consequently many take to bloody 'quick money' making measures: blood money ritual, armed robbery, hired assassination, [political] thuggery, gangsterism, street touts, pick-pocket, cyber-crime, criminality-dupe (419), etc. A man who accepts another man's pregnancy or has illicit affairs with another's wife is not a real man. A man who rapes is not a man but a timid coward. A real man (a boy) would not defile a virgin, just to take advantage of her. A real man does the right thing to prove his manhood. It is unfortunate that practices like virginity are no more cherished, honoured and celebrated, and/or valued.

5. Eze's Poetic Perspective on Trends Plaguing Nigeria

5.1. Ethnic Crisis and National Disintegration

The poet, Eze [15], writes on the ageing ethnic crisis

palaver in Nigeria and its attendant effects since its amalgamation and independence. Tracing the root of Nigeria, Eze describes the tribes of Nigeria as 'step siblings' who have been engaging in unceasing bitter violent war – conflicts and clashes. Eze notes that Nigerian peoples are biological (blood) sibling of a father, though each to their own territory upon migration to and arrival in Nigeria until 1914 when Lord Lugard joined the two protectorates, and the attainment of independence in 1960 (lines 1-3, stanza 1; lines 5-6, stanza 2).

It is quite clear that the peoples who make up the today Nigeria all migrated from elsewhere to the land at different times and from different places. None of them can ever claim to be the classical aborigines of Nigeria, not even the Yoruba who claim they had come down from Heaven. That is a mere mythical history, told and shared across generations, because the earliest Yoruba rhetoricians lost touch with the factual account and trace of their history, origin and migration to Ile-Ife, from where they spread to the present day other parts of Yoruba. The fact that some narrators or sources agree that some people(s) already inhabited Ile-Ife and other parts of Yoruba before Oduduwa descended from Heaven means that the Yoruba came in from somewhere too, like other Nigerian tribes. The history of the people Oduduwa met, when he came down from heaven, is not given. Of course, that is basically because the Yoruba lost touch with their real history of origin and migration. Adeniyi Adewale Saks has lent credence to this fact in his an undated and online uploaded draft (Afribrary.com). Adeniyi (n.d.) notes,

Oduduwa's arrival did not meet Ilé-Ifè desolated and shapeless at all. He did meet some people in Ilé-Ifè that comprised the sixteen elders who oversaw the affairs of the land before his arrival. These sixteen elders include Qbátálá Qbátáàsà, Qrúnmilá Eléríí-ípín, Qgún Alágbèdè òde-òrun, Qbalúfè, Qbalúáyé, Qsángangan, Qbalóràn, Qrúntó, Qbadió, Elésijé, Ejèsi, Ejíó, Qlòfin àkòkò etc.

According to Eze, it appears that before and prior to Amalgamation and Independence, there was peace and unity among the diverse tribes who co-existed freely and peacefully until these two events of non-matrimonial union. Upon the join, instead of better inter-group relations for even growth and development, they began to 'fight' intensively, struggling over resource control, power, identity, superiority, clashing agitations, etc., which scholars have labelled 'the national question' in Nigeria. Then, they began and keep blaming Lugard for joining them together. They forget that there are other larger countries than Nigeria that still co-exist peacefully with barely little or no conflicts of disintegration. Of course, examples include China, India and South America. The verses below capture the foregoing:

/Before the Good Samaritan's reunion/ /for which their misleading conceived grudges emerged/ /solemnised in 1914 and certified with alien-asunder-free private life/ certificate in 1960, bloody war for each other's blood/ /suddenly germinated, ripe./ Then they began to blame the Samaritan joiner/ /since then, like dragonish vampires/ /they seek and suck each other's blood/ /through ages, bidding blood

brotherhood break/ /that bred Biafra, broken./

However, the poet observes that */these siblings fight on, with none for any defeat ever/*. It is thus clear that despite the continuous ethnic crises as well as struggles, Nigerian tribes (peoples) cannot separate. This is perhaps why Biafra remains a mirage. While the founding parents (including the nationalists) of these ethnic groups */...bias-less mothers/* were not jealous, inciting and conflict-conscious, those (the elites) of the contemporary times incite and split the peoples with biased elitist ethno-religious sermons and also blame the Good Samaritan, Lord Lugard for amalgamating Northern and Southern Nigeria. Of course, ethnic and religious leaders, elite and politicians generate and fan the endemic ceaseless ethnic conflicts fuelled by bitter and radical politics, religious divide and rhetoric of the 'lords' and fundamentalists of different ethnic groups: */One blood, yet they ever segregate, fighting/ /upon alien properties in-brought by the then royal invaders/* - the colonialists.

Concluding with a clarion call for peace, tolerance, smooth social interrelations devoid of bias, prejudice, sentiment and segregation, national disintegration, disunity, ethnic hate, etc. among the peoples of Nigeria, the poet enjoins Nigerians to be one, for they are step-siblings of a father but different mothers, */biasless mothers/ /from far away the shores of their polygamist father's kingdom/*. His plea reads:

End the blood war this era for posterities
Drop your war weapons and become ever united
For you are siblings of a blood.
Polygamy is no war!
Polygamy is no crime; not eternal hatred but diversified unity!

Polygamy, here, refers to ethnic and religious pluralism and multilingualism in a diverse, heterogeneous nation like Nigeria. But for the contemporary trends and western mimicry, real polygamy was never a source of war/conflict, as many step siblings and marital mates then loved one another (each other) more than immediate siblings of both single mother and father. For instance, nobody beats or tries a member of a co-operating polygamous family and goes scot-free. That's unity in diversity. It ought to be made manifest by Nigerian polygamous family peoples, rather than the otherwise obtained these days. Therefore, the poet has poetically traced the histories of the diverse peoples of Nigeria, stressing why they do not need to war brutally against one another. This trace shows the relationship between history and literature from time immemorial. As Crystal [16] has observed, linguistic conflicts due to divided ethnic and national loyalties are often bitter and violent. This lends credence to the Nigeria's case of bitter, violent, aggravated, intense and ravaging ethnic conflicts and national disintegration due to divided ethnic and national loyalties, struggles, etc.

5.2. Nigeria's Plagues from Military, Para-military and Militia

Here, Eze satirises the negative deeds of military and Para-military, with a sole focus on the Nigerian Police. At the

same time, this poet eulogises the military in particular for their good deeds, hard-to-bear enormous contributions to the nation. First, he describes the police as 'armed robbers in black', which depicts their extorting, exploitative and scrupulous inhuman acts, suffered mostly by motorists and 'inmates' in custody. He notes that the police were 'saints' when created but they later deviated from their core professional goals and ethics, becoming like their corrupt Nigerian bosses, the politicians and other administrators since Independence (stanza 1, lines 1-4). Eze continues,

They became hard-stained by the black passport
Our fatherland they black-stained, dark
Outward stray they to transport
Mounting blocks for a check-point
Long replaced by mint printed papers for pen papers
(stanza 2, lines 5-9).

The above highlights the later nature and current attributes of the police, which seem to be the depiction or implication of the black colour. They have destroyed Nigerian security's image and stained the society with their dirty acts of corruption, extortion, extra-judicial killing, harassment/embarrassment, abetting crimes, including armed robbery, rights deprivation, inhuman torture, false allegations, to mention but a few. The police have taken their mischievous and callous deeds to their road check-points, where they humiliate transporters and dwindle them for money instead of checking particulars: */At their robbery-points, they steal, rob, unmask/* (lines 11, stanza 3).

Any resistance to their scandalous detects usually amounts to severe inhuman torture, delay on the road, loss of life (extra-judicial killing), maiming, illegal arrest and detention, humiliation, harassment, blasphemy, to mention but a few. These are captured viz: */Lives they pump out from any who bids whitening/ /their black deals/* (lines 12 -13, stanza 3); */truth hate they/ / light run they from/* (lines 15 - 17, stanza 4); */Upon their name, Nigeria Police Force: they rob forcefully, polished/ /If any chaste ever among them, the dark-stained Jik-resisted/ /Black robs them/*. For these acts, they bring curses, woes and plagues upon themselves (lines 17, stanza 4). These largely account for their mysterious sudden death and life woes most times, as these aggrieved people (their 'victims') often curse or pray bad prayers against them.

Again, the military, especially the army, who had 'terrorised' the country with successive military regimes and have gone back to the barracks, upon handing over to civilian government fully in 1999, the police have 'dragged' them out to the road 'in joint task forced' and they have become 'stained' though lightly by the police stains that plague Nigeria - 'ordinary Nigerians', especially motorists. People who are supposed to guard and save lives rather take lives unduly and inflict insecurity and pains on the country and its people. The corrupt practices of the Para-military forces like Customs Service, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Vehicle Inspection Officers (VIO), are all instances of Nigeria's military and Para-military plagues. Militia groups of various groups with different labels, some of which are

religious, ethnic, political, economic and individual, are all plagues manufacturers in Nigeria. The ethnic war militia in Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Borno states, the Boko Haram of the North and the Niger Delta Militants in the South-South (though theirs, a just course when not extended) are instances of plagues from militia to Nigeria and Nigerians.

The poet regrets that corruption, which began with one person in the military and para-military, of course, likewise in other sectors including politics, has seemingly outgrown elimination in all the systems of Nigeria. It has become endemic, chronic, acute, deteriorating and pervasive: */A seed once planted by a then devil/ /Within the room, untraced/ /Ever germinates, grows and bears bitter fruits/ /That join force in our creation sour/* (lines 28–30). He recommends that returning the police to station and putting/mounting the Khaki on the road is a best alternative to cutting short police and their like excesses on the road. Their loose road-search is insignificant. The heat from this sect is heavy.

6. Conclusion

Most of the emerging trends of the contemporary Nigerian society are the clear manifestations of failed leadership and followership, Nigerians crooked cruel nature and wickedness to both the country (Nigeria) and their fellows (Nigerians), colonialism and neo-colonialism, social/inter-group relations and challenges, globalisation and modernity, negative imitations and changes, ethnic and religious fundamentalism/discriminations, social class differentiation, and what have you, which constitute worries (burdens on) to the poet who blows the trumpet whingeing, for right-fixing the rising unusual now and giving a trace to yesterday - history. Thus, poetry and history have a romance, as they share close mutual relationships in cooking and preserving for their child – society - and her generations. Poets are of course historians, manufacturers, trend-setters, pace-setters, culture custodians, pen activists... all-rounders, besides their letter status. These poets: Robert, Odey; Dibie, Godfrey and Eze, Crescent are rare radical poets who share the burdens of contemporary Nigerians. Their poems are worthwhile and coincidentally share some viewpoint like blending literature with history by making a trace to yesterday in *'Mother Nigeria tears'*, *'Who becomes the owner of our treasures?'* (Robert), *'Then unlike now'* (Dibie's) and *'Step siblings' endless blood war'* (Eze's).

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