

Violence and the Oppression of Male Characters in Elnathan John's *Born On a Tuesday*

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Abstract

This paper has examined patterns of violent oppression against male characters in Elnathan John's *Born on a Tuesday* (2016). The study has explored religious fanaticism and bourgeoisie's abuse based on violence, police brutality, economic exploitation, verbal-cum-physical/psychological abuses, discrimination, and manipulation, as patterns of male oppression. The study has applied Freud's Psychoanalysis and Marxist Critical theories in interpreting different male characters' patterns of oppression in the proletariat domain. The paper has interpreted Althusser's (1971) ideology of the Repressive state apparatus (RSA) such as the police and the army as a means used by capitalism in maintaining careful manipulation of people into accepting an unfair system as well as using force to control them, especially in exposing extreme violence oppressive orientation against the male gender, as they need to be subdued in order to comply. This research has also discovered through the interpretation of Freud's psychoanalysis that violent-abusive-oppression is very traumatic to the male gender with physical, emotional and mental consequences.

Keywords: Violence, Oppression, Psychoanalysis, Marxist Critical Theory.

Introduction

According to Ifeoma Odinye (2019), "the general perception of violence in reality and the negative portraiture in literature have been attributed to extreme force, injustice, violation, rape, pain, suffering or actions which could cause discrimination and destruction" (113). Chiegboka and Udemba (2021) see "physical and psychological violence, human trafficking, sexual abuse, slavery and many others as dangers faced everyday" in the world (96). Notably, Violence and the need to be right has blinded the world that some religious fanatics adopt any available means to manipulate and coerce others into accepting their religious view to be most correct; and anyone going contrary to these conceptualized beliefs are deemed enemies needing to be crushed. Government instead of assisting her citizen to overcome fanaticism capitalizes on the chaos they create as a means to manipulate the people and keep them under control forcefully. To think that the people at the receiving end of these vicious violations are the male gender is unbelieving. But owning the fact that their presence and single mindedness pose a threat; in that they can overthrow a government or a religious group makes them the target. Therefore, they are eliminated before they could rise to their defence. All these violence and abuses are oppressive tools adopted to condition their minds into submission but majority are unaware that they are being oppressed into surrendering.

This study's emphasis is deeply rooted in different socio-cultural contexts in relation to extreme violence, police brutality, deprivation, deception, intimidation, slavery, sexual abuse, poverty,

inequality, discrimination, terrorism and other noticeable crime. The important aspect of gender-based violence is hinged on the havoc caused by oppression—a suppressing or cruel pressure which is capable of causing a vicious mental disorientation. Walters and Parke (1964:231) cited in Odinye (2021:9) maintain that oppression could be individually and culturally determined—it thus gives people the privilege to harm others based on belief systems, familial and cultural background. Odinye further maintains that oppression as a puppet string of gender-based violence is “wrapped in an abusive behaviour that has a forceful pattern of dominance and control over the victims”. The above ideology gives room for the serious questioning of police brutality and violent abuses as an effective means to subdue male genders regardless of its effect on them. This writer has reserved nothing in exposing human excess of those in power, taking advantage of their positions to invoke oppressive conditions leading to damaging consequences and imposed sufferings on male victims in society; as the male characters are used to mirror these atrocities as it affects the male gender in general. Sophia Ogwude (2013:2) opinions that:

Feminists and some writers perhaps have grouses against patriarchy and its all-pervading ideological stances especially as evident from male-authored creative works which is hinged on the often derogatory and marginal roles assigned to the female characters in different literary works. Simone de Beauvoir (1949) first drew attention to this position which has since been corroborated by Mary Ellman’s *Thinking About Women* (1968) among others.

In as much as there are divergent opinions on feminism and feminist concerns; one must readily accept the fact that contemporary writers do not have to close their eyes to the truths of oppressive experiences of the male gender as drawn from the complexity of reality consciously documented in literary texts. Commenting on ethnographic evidence, Julianna Simon and Marianne Preger-Simon (2010:306) explanation thus:

The male gender is oppressed, not just privileged in the society. They are not oppressed by women or by any particular group. They are oppressed by society as a whole, through parents, other adults, institutions, peers, and the media. Male oppression acts to keep men and boys in particular roles, those roles the society require them to fill in order for it to function normally or effectively.

Further, in reviewing the mentality of African cum Nigerian peoples, it is dangerous to act ignorance regarding the current situations that exposes the unhappy lives of the male gender—a thinking coated with an unwillingness to confront the humiliation of oppression enhanced by cruel brutal actions inflicted on the male psyche in different African cultural contexts. In agreement with the above view, Simon and Preger-Simon (1991:306) consider the demeaning interpretation of male oppression as a pathetic reversal of desires. They state that:

What men and boys lose through their oppression is not access to resources, as do most other oppressed groups, but access to a whole range of human qualities and choices. Little boys are tender, vulnerable, full of feelings and very expressive. They love to be close, connected and cuddly. Very early in their lives, these aspects of their nature become a liability. While boys are permitted to maintain and develop a sense of adventure, independence, and power, their gentler inclinations are quickly shamed and pummeled out of their repertoire. When boys show their vulnerability and tenderness to other little boys or to adults around them, they are regularly teased and humiliated and often beaten up or ostracized.

This is to say that male had always been on the disadvantageous side of being beaten or molded into strong hearted people even as their hearts might be softer or weaker than their female counterparts. At tender age male gender are being groomed into learning that men do not cry that; majority die of heart related issues as they try to button up their emotional traumas and hide away their tears so as not to be regarded as weak.

Research has played a vital role in uncovering male violence against women, including so-called “honor” killings, where women are killed for allegedly violating cultural norms relating to sexuality and who are perceived to have “tarnished” their family’s reputation. Although previous studies have begun to draw attention to the experiences of male victims of domestic violence, current understanding in this area remains limited (Hine et al., 2020). Even less research has been conducted on male victims of HBV/A ... and how cum why they are affected by patriarchal violence. This is an important area of inquiry because the gender-specific experiences and needs of male victims have been neglected.... (Mohammad Mazher Idriss. February 25, 2021: 1)

Idris notes that the causes and effects of what is often referred to as “honor”-based violence/abuse (HBV/A) ... on men and boys is an under-researched field of patriarchal violence. This lack of research has resulted in an imperfect understanding of how and why men become victims of HBV/A and an absence of an effective theoretical framework in which to analyze their experiences (2021: Abstract). Gryzb, 2016; Sev’er & Yurdakul (2001) sums that HBV/A ... involve male perpetrators who are schooled in an everyday culture of patriarchy, which inculcates traditional sex roles, discrimination, and the objectification of women. (cited in Idris, 2021)

The lack of studies on male victimization limits scientific knowledge, capturing only the paradigmatic examples (and therefore creating stereotypes), while simultaneously limiting scientific knowledge and understanding of other (minority) groups (Samad, 2010). As the area of study matures, the full range of victims must be considered in order to ensure that appropriate approaches are implemented across the board. In particular, how men may dominate other men is under-developed and under-theorized by ascribing men as perpetrators, the theoretical connections between patriarchy, male perpetrators, and masculinity (Connell, 1995) have become so well established that any conceptualization of men as “victims” (or women as perpetrators) requires one to move outside the traditional boundaries of thinking, all within a climate that has been slow to acknowledge other paradigms. (Idris, 2021) He then concludes that:

... Like women, men are harmed by patriarchy and by the same kinds of perpetrators; there are also striking analogies in the ways in which both women and men are victimized in natal violence. [it is paramount to recognize] ... male victims and the various perpetrators these types of cases present, including fathers and the involvement of mothers as primary or secondary perpetrators. Until academic research on, and consequently service provision for, male victims is taken more seriously, men will not come forward and disclose abuse, exacerbating the belief that “real” men cannot be victims. A gender-inclusive conceptualization of “victimhood” needs to take into account the various factors that contribute to victimization, for both women and men, in order to understand both the similar and different reasons why they are abused. Recognizing the differences and the impact intervention has for men will also help to encourage

tailored responses that are better suited for male victims. ... practical responses, are less formalized and developed for men. ...

Tennakoon, W. (2021) in his article “Men’s Tears Also Matter: A Study on the Patriarchal Oppression of Men in Literature” in the abstract of his research notes that the popularly established idea that women are almost always oppressed under the patriarchal system while all men enjoy its benefits is not always so. In his selected literature, he argues the possibilities of “certain” men being the victims of patriarchy, carrying both manly and womanly qualities (according to patriarchal interpretations) to be more successful in their roles as men. Victims of patriarchy in this context refer to those who do not satisfy the gender stereotypical characteristics drawn by the patriarchal system and whose voices are unheard in society. The sample of victims who fails in their effort to act upon the gender expectations of their culture includes Okonkwo in the novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, Macbeth in the drama *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, and Viscount Gontran-Joseph de Signoles in the short story, “A Coward” by Guy de Maupassant. The analysis of the protagonists’ failure of these literary works raises the awareness of the “forgotten sex” in literature and obviously in society. ... The necessity of rejecting patriarchy which provides satisfaction to neither men nor women and replacing it with a system where men may freely respond to various circumstances of life without being the “outcasts” of their societies is also important.

looking at selected literature, a novel, short story, and drama, [which] tries to raise the awareness that both men and women share specific characteristics and men cannot always be the oppressors of patriarchy but they are also victimized by that system which is meant to be supportive to them. ...awareness of society, in general, should be raised to the oppression patriarchy brings to both men and women. The perceptions of society should be changed in terms of the values of men and women. Therefore, men should not be painted to be personalities whose hearts are never melted in pain, [or, and] sufferings of others. Tennakoon, W. (2021: Conclusion)

Now, reviewing the general thematic concerns of African literature as related to Marxist concepts, Akoje, (2018) says:

...Politics is a vital aspect of every society. This is due to the fact that the general development of any country is first measured by its level of political development. Good political condition in a nation is a sine qua non to economic growth. A corrupt and unstable political system in any country would have a domino-effect on the country’s economic outlook and social lives of the people. The concept of politics itself continued to be interpreted by many political scholars, critics and the masses from different perspectives. Corruption, political assassination, greed, perpetrated not only by politicians but also by the masses are the societal ills that continue to militate against socio-economic and political development in most African countries, particularly Nigeria....

As this study not only explores the violent abuse of male characters; it also tilts towards exposing the perpetrators of those abuses thereby exploring the bourgeois-cum-government contribution in silencing and deprivations of basic-human-rights these male characters endure. This study therefore, examines how the selected male novelist has represented the dimensions of oppressive violence-abuse mated out to the male characters in his novel particularly as it affects the male protagonist and his male acquaintances. Elnathan John’s *Born on a Tuesday* (2016) is examined from the perspective of a male writer in order to examine various human

rights violations and consequences on the male gender—both physical and psychological. The novel also identifies violent-abusive-oppressive conditions that cause great physical, mental and psychological trauma to the male gender in different contexts. The oppressive conditions of the male protagonist here replicate with distorted psyche resulting from extreme torture, physical deformation regulated by police brutality owing to religious fanaticism. This is a contextual analysis of the selected primary text.

Theoretical Anchor and Perspectives of the Study

This research has adopted two different theoretical frameworks to explore the issue of male oppression in selected fictional texts. The study has employed Marxist Critical Theory and Psychoanalysis as theoretical anchors.

Marxist Critical Theory

This theory throws some light on the nature or patterns of oppression which indicate that social groupings and economic association or conditions play vital roles in encouraging oppression within a given context. What is basically at stake is the position of Marxist criticism which discusses the issues of social status, economic condition and power association within a given social or cultural context. Notably, all these issues are very important in Marxist criticism since they aid in the interpretation of social conditions visible in a given fictional text. Onoge (2009:471) attempts a clearer perspective which states that “Marxist criticism is necessarily sociological. This sociological nature is important because it distinguishes it from all other types of literary criticism. However, its sociology is rooted in the materialist understanding of cultural consciousness”. In Marxist analysis of literature, a sentimental outburst recurs in the interpretation of class struggle representing any political or social conditions. Precisely, an interpretation of social values, norms and class issues is challenge within literary perspectives by Marxist literary critics. To give a cogent assessment, one must agree that:

Marxist’s critics examine literature from the point of view of dominant elites and the rich. They consider how the dominant elites exploit subordinate groups and the bourgeois suppress the working class. The Marxist’s critics see how literature can be used to promote some social and economic revolution, consciousness and awareness and a radical transformation of the society to bring equilibrium and bridge the gaps in social class systems. (Agyekum 2007:129)

He further opines that, “the rich repress the poor, ...and that literature promotes social and economic revolution, consciousness and awareness (thereby encouraging) a radical transformation of the society to bring social equilibrium and bridge gaps in class society.” Notably, Marxism reflects determinism—a pattern of thought which stresses that individual is the product of their environment – economic, social and cultural. No wonder Marx and Engels have viewed “morality, religion and philosophy as phantoms formed in the brains of men—everything that is determined by the nature of the economic base, known as economic determinism” (Krishnaswamy et al. 2005: 97). No doubt, human needs are psychological, and the quest for existence within social structures is central to man. Man, basically explores relation to the external world. But there is always more; bourgeoisies cannot oppress the proletariat without devising a means.

Althusser (1971), a French Marxist, asserts that a range of formal and informal agencies of social control are necessary to maintain capitalism. Althusser argued that if people were simply forced to co-operate with capitalism, that they would eventually reject the system. Therefore, Althusser argued that people are manipulated into loving the system so that they find it harder

to challenge it. He described these two mechanisms as the Repressive state apparatus (RSA) such as the police and the army and the ideological state apparatus (ISA) such as education, where students are rewarded for working hard. Althusser argued that capitalism is maintained by carefully manipulating people into accepting an unfair system as well as using force to control them. (Kenton, 2023).

The Necessity of Art, have in fact robbed artistic productions of any vitality in the activities of real men to liberate themselves from social exploitation and prostration before nature. (Onege, 2013:472). This theory is invaluable as it will help in interpreting oppressive human exploitations of male characters.

Psychoanalysis

The approach of this study is unique because it examines human personality in the face of oppression. It is natural therefore to question the implications of oppression as a phenomenon with mental health consequences. It is significant to note that in truth, oppression is perceived as the primary nexus of psychopathology—a cruel pattern which hurts the oppressed without traces of diseases, poor health or inherited characteristics from DNA (Jacobs 1994). Different cultures and groups recognize the existence of male oppression, but has scarcely perceived it as an issue of distinct control of power which must be approached with clinical insights. According to Hanna et al (2000:432) who cited Jacobs (1994):

Oppression is forcing something that is undesirable or harmful on a person or group; depriving a person or group of something that is needed, wanted, or helpful; or both. To be oppressive, it must also threaten or ruin a person's mental or physical health, well-being, or coping ability. From a global perspective, oppression, either by force or deprivation, is clearly a major source of psychological problems and issues, in general, and leads to depression, anxiety, and some personality disorders.

Clearly, psychoanalysis is an important tool in practice. It provides great insight into the inner workings of the human mind. Erich Fromm (1992), in *The Revision of Psychoanalysis*, notes that a person's development is often determined by forgotten events in early childhood, rather than by inherited traits alone. Fromm explains that:

Human behaviour and cognition is largely determined by irrational drives that are rooted in the unconscious; therefore, any attempts to bring those drives into awareness triggers resistance in the form of defence mechanisms, particularly repression. Therefore, conflicts between conscious and unconscious materials can result in mental disturbances such as neurosis, neurotic traits, anxiety and depression. Hence, unconscious materials can be found in dreams and unintentional acts, including mannerisms and slips of the tongue.... (cited in Mbonu. 2021:51)

On the whole however, we find that psychoanalysis is very suitable for the interpretation of experiences that cause emotional disorders. This brings to mind our perception of psychoanalysis as an observed therapy and “theory of the human mind” (Eagleton 137). From psychoanalytical perspective, the psyche of the oppressed operates at different levels called models: the ‘id’—the unconscious impulsive component of an oppressed personality; the ‘superego’—the model of the mind that operates as a self-critical conscience which reflects the social standard of a given society and the ‘ego’ which wraps the oppressed self with a sense of self-conceit or conduct. The premises of this research captures Sigmund Freud's

psychoanalytical approach which stipulates that human lives are controlled and affected by conscious and unconscious desires which supports Karl Marx's proposition that individuals are product of their economy and society.

The concepts of psychoanalysis as stipulated by Sigmund Freud are wrapped in the crisis of human personality and relationships such as emotional / psychological injury termed 'trauma', the involuntary rejection from consciousness of painful impulses or memories known as 'repression', the condition of lacking awareness of situations called the 'unconscious', directing an impulse towards a socially constructive valued end known as 'sublimation', the sexual and death drives, the feeling of self-importance known as 'ego' and the unconscious fantasy which are spurred by socio-political and economic conditions (Fromm 12-13).

Further, Sigmund Freud (1894, 1896) noted a number of ego defences which he refers to throughout his written works. His daughter Anna Freud (1936) developed these ideas and elaborated on them, adding ten of her own. Many psychoanalysts have also added further types of ego defences. Defence mechanisms are psychological strategies that are unconsciously used to protect a person from anxiety arising from unacceptable thoughts or feelings. According to Freudian theory, defence mechanisms involve a distortion of reality in one way so that we are better able to cope with a situation. We use defence mechanisms to protect ourselves from feelings of anxiety or guilt, which arise because we feel threatened, or because our id or superego becomes too demanding. Defence mechanisms operate at an unconscious level and help ward off unpleasant feelings (i.e., anxiety) or make good things feel better for the individual. Ego-defence mechanisms are natural and normal. They include the following as cited by McLeod (2019):

Repression is an unconscious defence mechanism employed by the ego to keep disturbing or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious. Repression, which Anna Freud also called "motivated forgetting," is just, not being able to recall a threatening situation, person, or event. Thoughts that are often repressed are those that would result in feelings of guilt from the superego. This is not a very successful defence in the long term since it involves forcing disturbing wishes, ideas or memories into the unconscious, where, although hidden, they will create anxiety. Repressed memories may appear through subconscious means and in altered forms, such as dreams or slips of the tongue ('Freudian slips').

Regression is a defence mechanism whereby the ego reverts to an earlier stage of development usually in response to stressful situations. Regression functions as form of retreat, enabling a person to psychologically go back in time to a period when the person felt safer.

Rationalization is a defence mechanism proposed by Anna Freud involving a cognitive distortion of "the facts" to make an event or an impulse less threatening. We do it often enough on a fairly conscious level when we provide ourselves with excuses. But for many people, with sensitive egos, making excuses comes so easy that they never are truly aware of it. In other words, many of us are quite prepared to believe our lies.

Conclusively, psychoanalysis as a theory finds connections among an individual's unconscious mental process. This connection is linked to an emotional wound resulting to psychological injury or distress that leads to trauma. The adoption of psychoanalysis in the study of literature is very important, because it helps in exploring the character's mind (the memory of traumatic event) and behaviour as he/she passes through violent emotional conflict. Literary texts are like metaphors which expose the unconscious of a given fictional work (Odinye, 2018:52).

Male Oppression and the Violation of Rights in Elnathan John’s *Born on a Tuesday*

“Human rights as norms that aspire to protect all people everywhere from severe political, legal, and social abuses. Examples of human rights are the right to freedom of religion, the right to a fair trial when charged with a crime, the right not to be tortured, and the right to education” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2019:1). The people of Baye Layi are not aware or perhaps these rights are not applicable to them as the young teenage boys live on the street under the kuka tree fending and defending themselves. “The boys who sleep under the kuka tree in Bayan Layi like to boast about the people they have killed.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:1). The writer further reveals:

we only go to the juma'at mosque in Sabon Gari on Fridays because there are people giving alms and lots of free food. But Allah judges the intentions of the heart. We are not terrible people. When we fight, it is because we have to. When we break into shops in Sabon Gari, it is because we are hungry... (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:11-12).

According to Sue (2010:7), oppression by deprivation “involves depriving people of desired jobs, an education, healthcare, or living conditions necessary for physical and mental well-being ...[such as] food, clothing, shelter, love, respect, social support, or self-dignity” considering this definition of oppression, then it is beyond obvious that the boys under Kuka tree are severely oppressed yet they are completely unaware. To them life is so that Allah decides it all. Be it good or bad. Sometimes they go hungry, and other times they had to steal in order to eat (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:11-12). They have no shelter, “He gave me one of his flat cartons and took me to where they slept. They slept on cartons under the kuka tree and when it rained they moved to the cement floor in front of Alhaji Mohammed’s rice store, which had an extended zinc roof.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:7).

No good clothing nor clean water, “I will get a cap like that if I get the money, maybe a white caftan too. But white is hard to keep clean – soap is expensive and the water in the river will make it brown even when you wash it clean” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:5); “Someday, insha Allah, I will be able to buy tap water ... and have a box for all my white clothes.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:5). They go to the mosque only on the days the big men bring food just to get some portion, “I have hardly prayed since I left my Quranic teacher and how we only go to the juma'at mosque in Sabon Gari on Fridays because there are people giving alms and lots of free food.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:11). They lack care and guidance, “I wonder where I will go if Sheikhh Jamal throws me out of the mosque. It costs six hundred fifty naira to get to my village from the motor park. I don’t have that much. ... ‘Do you have anyone taking care of you?’ ‘No, no one’,” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:35). John represents the picture of abject poverty (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:37); and these boys wallow in complete ignorance. Jacobs (1994) notes that:

oppression is forcing something that is undesirable and harmful on a person or group; depriving a person or group of something that is needed, wanted or helpful; or both. To be oppressive, it must also threaten or ruin a person’s mental or physical health, well-being, or coping ability. ...oppression neither by force or deprivation is clearly a major source of psychological problems and issues, in general, and leads to depression, anxiety and some personality disorders.

The boys ‘under Kuka tree’ are deprived of all the basic necessities humans require to lead a good and noble life. Who will judge them for being wayward when they obviously lack all that is needed? No food, no shelter, no education, no hospital care even Dantala who is sent to study

under the tutelage of Malam Junaidu is not totally cared for nor respected. Being that his father did not send enough grain, his master refuses to give him enough transportation fees back to Sokoto, the writer tells us:

When I finished, Malam said I could go back to my village in Sokoto, ... I thought he would give me the fare. It was three hundred naira from park not too far away in Sabon Gari to get a space in the back of the trucks which carry wood to Sokoto. Instead he gave me seventy naira, reminding me that my father had not brought any millet that year or the year before to pay for my Quranic training.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:6).

And he even used to send them along the road to go beg for alms which was not part of their almajiri training curriculum, just because he is not under supervision. The children under his care are being used without respect to their human dignity and they labour for free. *Born on a Tuesday* (2016), “Malam Junaidu in Bayan Layi, ... made us beg even after working on his maize farm. Working on a farm during planting and harvest season is better than standing by road, chasing after cars and having people turn away from you like you are a huge mound of shit.” (61). These young boys are oppressed to the point that they turn to crimes and hard drugs to stay afloat and forget their challenges, “I followed Banda and he gave me my first wee-wee I ever smoked. It felt good. My legs became light and after a while I felt them disappear. I was floating, my eyes were heavy and I felt bigger and stronger than Banda ... and all the boys under the kuka tree.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:7).

They are convinced that what matters is one’s intentions not the actual crime so they commit crime with good intentions ‘being hungry’ not that they meant harm. They also do not care if they live or die as it is not their decisions but Allah’s so when they die fighting, it is just ok. “But Allah judges the intentions of the heart. We are not terrible people. When we fight, it is because we have to. When we break into small shops..., it is because we are hungry, and when someone dies, well, that is Allah’s will” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:11-12). “The American Psychological Association defines oppression as discrimination against and/or systematic denial of resources to members of groups who are identified as inferior or less deserving than others. Oppression is most frequently experienced by individuals with marginalized social identities; is manifested in both blatant and subtle discrimination...” the Kuka tree boys are marginalized and even discriminated against as Dantala narrates before he joins them. He narrates thus:

Malam Junaidu had warned us about the Kuka tree boys, who come to the mosque only during Ramadan or Eid days – ‘yan daba, thugs, who do nothing but cause trouble in Bayan Layi.’ We despised them because they did not know that Quran and Sunna like us and did not fast or pray five times a day. ‘A person who doesn’t pray five times a day is not a Muslim,’ Malam Junaidu would say. (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:7).

David & Derthick, (2014:3) defines oppression as “when one group has more access to power and privilege than another group, and when that power and privilege is used to maintain the status quo”. Only those in political office hold the power and they, instead of helping these young men off the street, they encourage their vulgarity by giving them more drinks and little money, “The men from the small party trust Banda and give him money to organise boys from Bayan Layi for them. Sometimes we get as much as one hundred fifty naira ... We also get a lot to drink and eat.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:5); in order for them to remain ignorant and use them as political thugs for their benefits “Banda gets a lot of money now that it is election

season: to put up posters for Small Party and tear off the ones for the Big Party or smash up someone's car in the city." (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:3). The lives of these boys meant absolutely nothing.

According to Marxist theorists, "values and norms shape a person's identity, that is, how they see themselves and how others see them. Marxists notes that the most significant part of a person's identity is their social class. A person's social class determines the way that a person sees the world around them". Judging from this, one would wonder what social class does almajiris or boys form under kuka tree belong to? How do they see themselves? What identity have they mapped out as theirs? Dantala Ahmad is completely ashamed and feels guilty of the live he led under Kuka tree despite being helpless in the matter. He feels as though he is filthy and a sinner, he says "... I am feeling sorry, for the first time, for all I have done. For smoking wee-wee. For breaking into shops with the Kuka tree boys. For striking that man with a machete. For questioning Allah on my way back to Sokoto." (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:29). He is so ashamed that when Sheikh Jamal inquired about his person, he is so scared he would discover the kind of life he has been living and might throw him out of the mosque, he narrates:

...I am afraid. If he calls Malam Junaidu, then he will probably hear that I joined the kuka tree boys, who smoked wee-wee and didn't pray. He raises the phone to his ear and my heart beats faster, not in a good way. ... he asks if he ever had an almajiri named Ahmad who is also called Dantala. As he listens to the reply, the ground on which I sit gets hotter and my stomach suddenly feels like my intestines are being tied together very tightly. I want to get up and run away. He nods and stares at me.... I wonder where I will go if Sheikh Jamal throws me out of this mosque. (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:34-35)

"Revolutionary literature and art should create a variety of characters out of real life and help the masses to propel history forward. For example, there is suffering from hunger, cold and oppression on the one hand, and exploitation and oppression of man by man on the other". The story of Dantala is indeed propelling history and a revelation into the sufferings and miseries of lives of people in the northern part of Nigeria. It is a story of a time past during Sokoto unrest.

...Politics is a vital aspect of every society. This is due to the fact that the general development of any country is first measured by its level of political development. Good political condition in a nation is a sine qua non to economic growth. A corrupt and unstable political system in any country would have a domino-effect on the country's economic outlook and social lives of the people. Corruption, political assassination, greed, perpetrated not only by politicians but also by the masses are the societal ills that continue to militate against socio-economic and political development in most African countries, particularly Nigeria.... Akoje, (2018)

Under the guise of social cum class oppression we witness to a reasonable degree human exploitation, corruption, suppression of the marginalized, subjugation and political rotteness. Only a few people have excess to money and basic necessities. The people are so marginalized that they start believing that allowing themselves to be used to disrupt election will benefit them, "Everyone is talking about the elections, how things will change. (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:5); "I am not sure why they have told Banda to collect the cards because I imagine they want us to help vote the Big Party out. ... I am excited about the elections and the way everybody in Bayan Layi and even Sabon Gari likes the Small Party. They will surely win.

... ‘Will they really build up that shelter?’” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:10-11). They are so convinced that if the small party wins then there might be redemption and provision of basic amenities, *Born on a Tuesday* (2016) we read:

The Small Party has promised we may even get one thousand naira per head if they win the elections. They will build a shelter for us homeless boys and those who can’t return home or don’t have parents, where we can learn things like making chairs and sewing caftans and making caps. ... Banda is coughing and spitting out even more blood. I worry. Maybe after the elections, when the Small Party becomes the Big Party, they can pay for him to go to the big hospital in the capital with plenty of flowers and trees. (8-9).

So, they became willing party in political sabotage; he narrates: “...since the recent voter registration I have been saying I am nineteen, ... The man in the Small Party asked us to say so and gave us all one hundred naira to register...” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:8-11); destruction as well as killing just to prove a point, which in the end never materialize, the narrator says:

“... This is the moment we have a been paid for ‘We are going to teach them a lesson,’ ... ‘Burn their office!’ Gobedanisa shouts. ... The first thing we do is set ablaze the huge poster of the Big Party candidate in front of the market.... This security man is stubborn.Gobedanisa charges forward with his machete, striking him on the chest and on the neck. ...they strike at his body.... ‘We are burning the place!’ Banda orders... A fat man runs out of the burning building, ‘Traitor!’ one boy shouts. I hate his party, how they make us poor. ...I strike behind his neck as he stumbles by me. ... Banda picks up the gallon and pours some fuel on the body. He looks at me to strike a match. I stare at the body. ... the fire begins to eat his clothes and flesh. He is dead already. (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:12-16).

They are evidence of political corruption, in that people of Dogon Icee lack basic necessities, after the flood that left many homeless and starving, the government often fail to supply the promised ration to use in sustaining the people “...the men begin to talk about the flood and the government supplies that haven’t come in two weeks. ...The food needs to get to those still remaining in the village, the Imam says, and he asks for volunteers to go and complain in the local government office.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:50). They have no access to hospital nor good road, “The road to Dogon Icee is horrible in several places and it is not strange to hear that there has been an accident. ... ‘In fact we couldn’t drive into Dogon Icee and the surrounding villages last week. Just two rains and the whole place is destroyed.’ People are dying of sickness, ... There is no water or hospital in Dogon Icee and many people, especially children, purge till they die. The water goy contaminated after the flood and although the local government chairman promised to bring water tankers, they have not seen any yet.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:38-39).

In addition to all these, we see the attempt made by the governor to bribe the Sheikh in the name of gifting them, “Men from the deputy governor’s office come to each of our convoys with big brown papers. Sheikh asks what they are carrying. ‘A gift from His Excellency,’ the man says. ‘Please open the bag.’ Sheikh peeps in it. ‘Ah no!’ ... ‘Not money, no. Please.’ The Shiite Malam... refuses the bag he is given. The two men carrying the gifts walk away.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:145). And we equally witness political assassination of the sitting governor and his police chief, “The governor has died ai. ... An aircraft crash He died together with the former inspector general of police, ... the deputy governor may mourn but there is no way

his family will not rejoice at his sudden elevation (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:212), which opens an avenue for the deputy to rise into power. “They will swear him in after the burial tomorrow,” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:215). Due to corruption and manipulation Mujahideen leader not only killed Sheikh Jamal, but after being arrested, (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:226), he is later set free because powerful-highly connected people get involved, “... They say Malam Abdul-Nur is no longer at police headquarters in Sokoto. ... ‘We have to be careful with this information because we do not know who called from Abuja to secure his realise, ... apparently someone doesn’t want him to talk. There is someone involved at a very high level.’” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:228). This writer spare nothing in exposing political oppressive crimes and manipulations of the people. The good Alhaji Usman the supposed benefactor of the people is using the mosque to launder money as Dantala observes:

I discovered something else while handling that account. When he announces a donation, Alhaji Usman only gives us a third of what he announces. The money comes through his company, which makes payment to us by cheque or by bank transfer. I then withdraw two third of the amount and give it back to him in cash. Then we multiply all our expenses by three. So even though what we spent on the building of our school was eighteen million, our papers read fifty-four million.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:211).

He keeps feeding the people because he has intention of vying for a political position, but shows his true nature after Sheikh passing by abandoning the mosque and its people to their fate including Dantala just to secure his political office, “He tried to reach Alhaji Usman. But Alhaji Usman refused to get involved. He said we should all allow the soldiers do their work.... Politicians are all the same. Now that Sheikh is dead, Alhaji Usman doesn’t see any need to protect the movement. He is more interested in winning the elections.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:238).

There is another kind of oppression inherent in this novel and which of course marks the beginning of the end of the narrator. The most significant kind of oppression that leads to other forms of oppression experienced by Dantala and that is Religious oppression: being the systematic mistreatment of individuals because of their religious beliefs. “Acts of religious violence which are committed against people who practice a particular religion are classified as hate crimes”. (Wikipedia). “Malam Abdul-Nur now preaches openly against us, mentioning us by name, mocking us in his sermons. Last month Malam Abdul-Nur challenged Sheikh to a doctrine debate about whether it is Haram to go to university and work for the government” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:187).

Therefore, in an attempt to coarsen people into following in their style and abandoning the Haqiqiy group who allows western education, they use extreme torture to suppress others, “... Malam Abdul-Nur has shot someone in the thigh who was caught trying to leave the premises. ‘He even has a little cell, where he keeps people who have committed offences,’” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:195). People are excited about the new movement, they used money (economic benefit) to lure some to them, to become a full member you must do away with western things, they burn books and certificates enthusiastically, and they are very violent and destructive. *Born on a Tuesday* (2016) notes:

Many young people who used to be with us now follow Malam Abdul-Nur. The team leader collects taxes from the unit leaders and people can receive loans to start new businesses or expand old ones. A few weeks ago they had a clash with the police. Up to two policemen and ten of thru members died. They beat

up anyone who tries to make troubles with them and they threaten nonmembers who have similar businesses around them...of our male students have dropped out and act as thugs for Malam Abdul-Nur. I am not sure if it is the hope of money that lures them or the fact that the Mujahideen movement is something new. (186-187). [the writer further writes:] “People are throwing books and papers into fire. Malam Abdul-Nur is supervising the burning, adding kerosene ...Malam Abdul-Nur has told them that before they can truly join his movement they must burn any school certificates they have they are also burning the books by Hausa writers ... they are burning CDs of Hausa movies, They are burning things with so much zeal,” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:187).

The fanatic divides the world into two camps: the good and reasonable section represented in fanatics, and the evil and bad section represented in the other world. Fanatics live in a certain world they create themselves in which they believe that the other world is an evil opponent who lives in darkness and they have to change it into a good society either peacefully or through violence. And this is typical of the Shiites who are described as dangerous,

No one likes Shiites in Sokoto. Everyone believes they are dangerous, especially those of them who go to Iran to study and the Shiite Malam who take money from Hezbollah to fight Darius and Izalas. Even Sheikh preaches against the way they pray only three times instead of five and how they act so uncivilised during the festival of Ashura, covering themselves with mud and dirt, flogging themselves, even wounding themselves to mourn the killing of Imam Hussein in the battle of Karbala.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:107)

But worst is the preaching and propaganda of the Mujahideen leader and his followers that uses extreme torture to establish their point. “...it is the obligation of every able Muslim to forcefully challenge and remove ungodly, infidel rulers. Not through elections, because elections themselves are part of a system of kufr, but by force, because Muslims are bound by submission to the will of Allah.... Malam Abdul-Nur directly calls Sheikh an infidel.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:196-197); “Some of the worst enemies of Islam are the ones who deceive innocent people into thinking they are Muslim. Somebody who has no understanding of Islam and its precepts will go around calling himself a Mujahideen. Islam does not put people in bandage like they are doing, or in fear. ... (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:217).

To the fanatics, devotion itself is more important than the object of that devotion. It is easy for the fanatic to be converted and use his Fanaticism to something else; he is not ready to leave his Fanaticism, but he is ready to change his object “even if the fanatic may deny it, the devotion itself is more important to him/her than the object of that devotion.” (Kalmer Marimaa, cited by Hassouna, 2018:46). This is typical of Jibril’s uncle who is only converted and then tries to supersede the one that converted him, turning against him and fighting him, the writer says:

Malam Abdul-Nur returned from Saudi Arabia with a turban and a new movement in opposition to Sheikh [he] now preaches openly against us, mentioning us by name, mock us in his sermon. [He even] ... challenged Sheikh to a doctrinal debate about whether it is Haram to go to university and work for the government. ... even our school has taken a massive...(*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:186-187). “They are burning books. It is the Mujahideen people. ... our Malam says they are infidels led by a convert who is trying to lead Muslims astray (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:189).

Malam Abdul-Nur's incessant violent assaults, verbal abuse and lack of decorum leave Sheikh Jamal so embittered that during one of his sermons, he comments: "If there is any one mistake I made, it is Abdul-Nur. Now I can't even look Alhaji Usman in the eyes because he will say he told me. Everyone told me but I thought I had him under control. A Yoruba man is a Yoruba man. No matter how Muslim they become. They stab you in the back. That is how they are. Hypocrites." (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:210).

In order to control the excesses of the religious fanatics before and after the death of Sheikh Jamal, in an attempt by the government to restore order, police cum army are dispatched to harass people into submission and after the death, curfew is announced just as Althusser (1971) asserted that, "...the Repressive state apparatus (RSA) such as the police and the army" are tools to manipulate and keep the people under oppressive control. Firstly, this tool is applied during the riot and fire outbreak at Bayan Layi which resulted in the death of Banda, we observe *Born on a Tuesday* (2016):

... Two police vans are heading this way and are firing into the Air. As they get closer the policemen get out and start firing into the crowd. As I see the first person go down, I turn and run. I look back for Banda. He is not running. He is bent over, coughing, holding his chest. ... Banda, get up I scream, ... Everyone is running past him and the police keep shouting. He tries, runs feebly and stops again. They are getting closer ... He gets up again and starts to run. Then falls flat on his face like someone hit him from behind. He is not moving. I run. ... I do not stop. I run past the Kuka tree. I will not stop even when I can no longer hear the guns." (16-17).

We also witness serious police brutality after Sheikh's attack soldiers and police officers are harassing people along the road, like Dantala's experience, *Born on a Tuesday* (2016):

On the road leading away from the hospital, there are dozens of policemen. Black smoke rises from burning trees. They are not letting any motorcycles pass in front of the hospital, and cars are stopped and searched I walk quickly Then a skinny policeman shouts, asking me to stop, aiming his gun at my chest. 'what are you carrying? ... Open it! ... Turn it upside down! I hesitate. He cockspur his gun and I turn the bag upside down. A few clothes fall to the ground. 'Everything!' I shake until the bag is almost empty. 'Throw it on the ground and put your hands behind your head!' I obey and he kicks the bag around while still pointing his gun at my chest. The little knife I took from Shuaibu's house rolls out as well as my money wrapped in a paper. He looks at the knife, looks at me, then reaches forward and kicks my knee so that I fall to the ground. He kicks me in the stomach so hard, I throw up all the rice and beans and fish I have just eaten. 'Get up, ... You want to stab me with a knife ko? 'It is for oranges!' He slaps me and asks me to run. I leave everything behind, running and stumbling. Two other policemen laugh as I do. (124-125).

This scene is a vivid image of brutality, intimidation and humiliation of civilians by police force just to scar and force them into submission. On another account, Ahmad's brothers along with their friends are harassed by soldiers and shot at because they refused to be intimidated, the writer tells us:

I learned from Hussein that they were all in the same private bus when the soldiers harassed them last night. Alhaji Usman's son Al-Amin was driving and Maccido was sitting in the back. A soldier slapped Al-Amin for not turning off

engine when they stopped. They were asked to all get out of the bus and they refused. The soldier shot through the door, wounding Al-Amin in the hip. He started the bus and drove off. The soldiers fired a few more shots, which wounded Maccido and one other man sitting in front. Al-Amin didn't stop driving until they got to the mosque, where he fainted. ... the nurses tried in vain to stop the bleeding. There was no doctor available that night and by the morning, when the Shiite Malam was able to get a doctor, ... Al-Amin was dead." (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:175).

And again, this tool is extremely applied and well exploited by the corrupt government that have no interest in the welfare of the people in mind after the brutal murder of the Sheikh. They used it as a ploy to curb the Haqiqiy agitators from retaliating. Curfew was declared. The narrator narrates: "The streets begin to empty at night when the army trucks begin to arrive. On the radio, the governor declares a dusk-till-dawn curfew in the state and asks everyone to stay indoors or face arrest. The soldiers begin to occupy all the abandoned police points." (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:230); but even after the curfew is lifted, the soldiers remain along the streets, at every road or junction; Threatening the people and arresting everyone they suspect have a hand in Mujahideen including the innocent ones. During these arrests we witness extreme torture and oppression of the masses into compliance, "You are the people who kill soldiers abi?" one of the soldiers shouts at the two men. One of the men spits on the soldiers. A soldier from the truck kicks them both to the floor and shoots them in the chest and in the head. They order us to lie flat on the hot asphalt and they tie our hands behind our backs with wire." (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:235). Then more people begins to agitate the military brutality and unrest that more curfew is enforced, "...there is now a twenty-four-hour curfew in the state because of people everywhere on the streets protesting the heavy hand of the soldiers." (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:238).

Physical abuse is paramount in Bayern Layer resulting in death and injury of many (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:1-17). Again, Jibril and few boys from the mosque suffered physical and verbal violation from Jibril's brother Malam Abdul-Nur who constantly whips and batters them on different occasions that is customary, the narrator tells us:

I don't like the way Jibril returns with red eye or swollen lip many times after his brother has sent for him. Jibril is too old to be beaten like a child. I don't like the way Malam Abdul-Nur hits people, especially the new boys, ... Last month he whipped one of the boys, Khalil, with horsewhip until he bled and Chuks had to treat his wounds. Jibril too has whip marks all over his back. He tells me most of them were from home in Ilorin, where their uncle used to beat all the children in hid house every Friday, just in case they had done something he didn't know during the week." (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:80).

The last sentence supports Fulu and Warner (2018) claims that children raised in violence ends up perpetrating violence themselves. In essence even Abdul-Nur was violated growing up and he learns it as the best way to discipline and implements at later age. In addition, the Mujahideen experienced and suffered physical torture in first degree which ultimately lead to death of some "... He chopped off someone's hand today. ... he stole some raw meat after they slaughtered a cow. ... He made everybody watch, ... He used the butcher's axe. I have never seen so much blood in my life....The boy died about an hour ago. The bleeding refused to stop." (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:214-215). Then on the account of verbal abuse, the writer

says: “Malam Abdul-Nur ... is very impatient and insults you if you do not understand the first time, calling you dakiki, dull, stupid.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:86).

Notably, all these victims of violent abuses and oppressions are mostly male characters (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016) Again, extreme torture-cum-physical-psychological abuses are witnessed in cell; people are so physically abused and so severely mentally tortured that they are dying in numbers. Some even had to admit to crimes in order to be set free, (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:237-240). There is extreme physical and mental torture, like Dantala’s horror scene, *Born on a Tuesday* (2016:244-245):

I swear sir, I do not know any Mujahideen.’ ... He steps aside and nods to one of the men who ties my torso and legs to the chair I am sitting in, lifts me to a pillar in the room and ties my arms around the pillar. Then he is handed a pair of pliers. ... He reaches for my nails. At first I don’t feel anything because my head is still stuck in the belief that this is all a joke. Then the pain comes gushing. I feel it everywhere; in my nose and in my scrotum. As blood flows down my arms, I scream until there are no more sounds coming from my stomach. The shock of the pain shuts me down and softer a few minutes all I can hear are bubbly echoes. There is pain. And there is pain.

There is evidence of psychological abuse in the army detention camp; it is a nightmare. The wailings of inmates are enough torture and creates unimaginable nightmares in the minds of those still breathing. Dantala was so psychologically damaged that he is at the brink of dementia losing a touch of reality, “I don’t know. Time plays trick on me. I whisper words to myself-things I remember from my book, or from *Baba of Karo*, to stop my head from imploding, to remind myself I am still alive.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:253). Dantala is unable to decide if he is alive or dead in fact his soul is tortured as he pleaded to die, he has been tortured into oblivion that nothing feels real neither can he tell apart what is real from his imaginations,

It used to be that death was the worst thing that could happen to me. Then it was torture. Especially the pliers and screwdrivers. After ten fingers and ten toes, and you don’t say anything, even the person torturing you knows there is nothing you can give them and they stop. They leave you to die. This is the hardest part. When the pain doesn’t succeed. The period when they think the hunger will kill you ... and there is nothing to show whether it is morning or night or afternoon. It is the pain even you throw up bitter warm liquid It is not the spam of your stomach when even the bitter liquid onto come up and your mouth is dry and cracked and your lips start to bleed when you try to open then. It is having no one to talk to and sleep deserving you and leaving you to experience every infinite moment of solitude. ... I wish A Mutu didn’t throw the bread he throws in here, once in a while. It prolongs the suffering. The food beats my body into survival. And survival here is worse than being beaten. ... I am having a problem separating what is real from what Houston happens in my head. I don’t even know any more if what happens in my head is not real. (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:253-254).

Ahmad Dantala’s Self-Assertion Mechanisms

In 2019, McLeod explanatively sums a few common defence mechanisms as proposed by Anna Freud and some of these mechanisms are adopted by the violent victims of abuse in this novel to battle and overcome their traumatic experiences. This research explores Dantala and Jibril’s Self-assertion defence mechanisms. **Repression** is “an unconscious defence mechanism

employed by the ego to keep disturbing or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious. Repression, is also called “motivated forgetting,” is just, not being able to recall a threatening situation, person, or event.” This is the most defence Dantala adopts to combat all his troubling situations. He is constantly closing his eyes in other not to remember, to forget and not think like the death of Banda, “a fear gripped me in my chest for questioning Allah and why Banda was destined to die. So I kept saying astaghfirullah, Allah forgive me, until I noticed the other boys were looking at me like I had gone mad: what I was thinking had left my heart and started coming out of my mouth goose bumps were all over my arms and I was shaking like I had a fever. My head was heavy.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:18-19); “I am trying to remember the dream I had. All are images that come and go. ... I saw Banda with a hole in his chest and blood around his mouth.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:29). Then the accident that claimed the lives of three, “I wish I didn’t hear his name, because when I close my eyes, I hear his name and see his swollen head and all the blood. It makes me want to scream...” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:19-20).

The burning and killing of the big party workers, (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:28). The brutal murder of Sheikh Jamal leaves his mind floating for so long and it remains in his mind despite his attempts to repress the horror scenes, “The image of Sheikh's body Flashes and disappears from time to time... I want to remember him whole not like that.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:243). All these memories are repressed in Dantala’s mind; but being that Anna Freud continues as cited by McLeod (2019), “...thoughts that are often repressed are those that would result in feelings of guilt from the superego. This is not a very successful defence in the long term since it involves forcing disturbing wishes, ideas or memories into the unconscious, where, although hidden, they will create anxiety. Repressed memories may appear through subconscious means and in altered forms, such as dreams or slips of the tongue (‘Freudian slips’).” And there lies the problem, Dantala’s repressive memories are unsuccessful like the study suggested. He often remembers Banda, and the people they killed that night and mutters to himself. Notably Banda is an important part of his life that every sadness triggers his memories of Banda and he wishes he is still with me:

Flashes of blood and mangled bodies and fire are going through my head. Allah forgive me, but some wee-wee would be good right now so that I could forget these horrible images. If Banda was here he would have given me some; we would have sat down under the kuka tree and talked about things that didn’t matter, until we fell asleep. (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:28). [We observe further:] “I can’t sleep. I wish Banda was here, he would know exactly what to do, how to do it. The thought of Banda wrapped in a cloth and buried under sand makes it hard to breath. (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:49).

He remembers his oppressed life at Bayan Layi and the riot that killed Banda,

It feels like far away dream sometimes-leaving Bayan Layi, escaping the hunger, sleeping outdoors during the rains and harmattan ...and the police guns that last day! I still hear the rat-tat-tat, the screaming, the smoke; still see the boys trying to dodge bullets; still see Banda, coughing, telling to run as he doubled over from pain in his chest . . . I still feel it-the feeling of a tight string that has snapped in my chest, when I saw him finally fall flat.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:62).

These memories often torment his mind and dream as they are only hidden but never erased from the mind. Regression is “a defence mechanism whereby the ego reverts to an earlier stage of development usually in response to stressful situations. Regression functions as form of

retreat, enabling a person to psychologically go back in time to a period when the person felt safer”. And this defence mechanism is Dantala’s power house. It is what preserves him from losing his mind in his nine months of unlawful confinement. He regresses to his childhood memory and the memories of all the things that made him happy,

Sometimes it feels like I am going crazy and I have to speak to myself loudly, to convince myself I am still here, alive. Memory feels like a curse but it is the only thing that keeps me sane. In my mind I am a child again, sitting on Malam Junaidu’s cracked concrete floor, reciting the words of the Quran. These days I don’t know which of my memories are real and which ones are dreams, made up in my mind to keep me from shutting down.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:255).

Those memories kept him alive and going. He stops knowing the time of the day or days of the week. Reality is far from him; he only lived in his mind unaware of the current happenings. He retrogresses deeper into the memories his childhood and that is how he survived in the donjon mentally sane.

Rationalization is a defence mechanism involving a cognitive distortion of “the facts” to make an event or an impulse less threatening. We do it often enough on a fairly conscious level when we provide ourselves with excuses. But for many people, with sensitive egos, making excuses comes so easy that they never are truly aware of it. In other words, many of us are quite prepared to believe our lies. And this is Jibril’s defence mechanism to endure his brother’s tortures. He develops love for his brother’s wife and started having sexual relation with her, “What were you doing? ... Don’t lie to me Jibril, I am not a fool. ... Errands without clothes off ko? ... I saw you Jibril, stop lying! And I saw her too covering herself with a wrapper.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:148) When caught by Dantala, he tries to justify his action believing he is doing nothing wrong that the woman is being treated unfairly by her husband as they are only consoling each other,

‘He treats her like a donkey. ... He treats her like an animal that he despises. Some days he locks her in her room without any food because his food is cold.... He beats her with a tyre whip. He forces things into ...’ ... Tears start to flow and then he starts sobbing. ‘He forces things into her . . . into her . . . anus! Candles. Bottles. He flows her with the tyre whip when they are doing it. Some days she faints.’ (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:148-149).

He even believes the woman loves him enough to run away with him, as she is pregnant with his child, “... I need her to come with me. I can’t leave her there with my child. That is my plan. To leave with her. ... I know she will come with me. I just need to have a good plan to escape, that’s all.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:215). But our thoughts are not always right as they are just thoughts to excuse our human excesses more like wishful thinking. Jibril becomes another victim of women oppression. He is used as a pleasure gratification to compensate for his brother’s brutality. His love is incomplete as his hope of togetherness is shattered. “She refuses to come with me, ... She just said she would rather stay.” (*Born on a Tuesday*, 2016:219).

Conclusion

In concluding *Born on a Tuesday*, it is evident that there is high level of oppression and brutality. Especially extreme physical, mental, emotional and psychological abuses mostly perpetrated by the bourgeois who rather subjugates the poor masses than benefit them; and more pronounced oppression is religious extremist induced war that claims the lives of many.

It is important to note that the majority of the victims of these extreme violations-cum-abuses are male characters. Subsequently, we observe unrequited love and emotional abuse due to rejection. Both Dantala Ahmad's and Jibril's love conquests lead to defeat and rejection. Aisha Ahmad's passion and obsession marries a rich senator Alhaji Usman regardless of her feelings and the newly established relationship she shares with Dantala. On the account of Jibril, the brother's wife chooses her abusive husband over her kind passionate lover Jibril who is under the wrong impression that they shared similar dream of happy-ever-after. All these oppressions, have severe damaging psychological consequences on these male characters that survives while the unlucky ones paid the ultimate price with their lives.

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