## TERRORISM AND THE LEADERSHIP QUESTION: A PSYCHOANALYTICAL READING OF GARRICKS' TOMORROW DIED YESTERDAY AND JOHN'S BORN ON A TUESDAY

## **Chisom Favour-Vivian Ezeibe**

Department of English Language and Literature Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka chisomifeyinwaezeibe001@gmail.com

#### R

## Ifevinwa J. Ogbazi

Department of English Language and Literature Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka ij.ogbazi@UNIZIK.edu.ng

#### **Abstract**

Leadership in a country faced with terrorism is often explored through political or ideological lenses, but the psychological underpinnings of such leadership are less understood. This study addresses the gap in understanding how internal conflicts and traumas influence leaders in violent movements and how these dynamics perpetuate violence in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and Elnathan John's *Born on a Tuesday*. It aims to uncover the unconscious psychological mechanisms driving leaders and their impact on followers and societal stability. Using Freud's psychoanalytic theory, including concepts of the unconscious mind, trauma, and the death drive, this study explores how unresolved personal conflicts and repressed desires shape leadership styles and actions in insurgent contexts. The analysis reveals that leaders in these novels are driven by deep-seated traumas and unconscious desires for power and validation. Garricks' portrayal of Niger Delta leaders and John's depiction of jihadist motivations and psychological manipulation highlight how personal insecurities and unresolved conflicts fuel insurgent violence.

**Keywords**: Psychological conflicts, unconscious psychological mechanisms, ideological manipulation, leadership, terrorism, insurgency, violence.

## Introduction

Nigeria's post-colonial history has been characterized by both triumphs and trials as the country struggles on its path towards nation building. Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has grappled with persistent political, economic and social challenges. Various governments, entities, and individuals have entrenched a culture of marginalization and inequality, resulting in widespread violence and national security issues (Kunwar, 2024). The nation's political, economic, and social crises have sparked significant historical events, including military coups, the 1967-70 civil war, religious riots, and more recent occurrences such as the 2020 ENDSARS protests. These protests, driven by grievances such as marginalization and resource control, highlight underlying tensions. The failure of government leaders to address and curb the underlying issues have given rise to insurgent leaders who garner followers and spur them to afflict violence on the people. The issue of leadership failure frequently takes center stage in modern Nigerian literature, especially in works that examine the country's battles with terrorism, insurgency, and social disintegration. Works such as Chimeka Garricks' Tomorrow Died Yesterday (2010) and Elnathan John's Born on a Tuesday (2015) have tried to examine how leaders use violence to gain control and followers fall prey to harmful beliefs, and the relationship between societal instability and leadership in Nigeria. The psychological foundations of leadership in violent movements are the main issue this study aims to solve, especially in light of Nigeria's continuous terrorism challenges. What drives the leaders of rebellious organizations? Why do people follow them even if it means losing their own lives and leads to the downfall of society? What are the roles of government, community, religious and family leaders in terrorism and the leadership question in Nigeria? This work investigates the intricate and frequently concealed psychological motivations that underlie leadership in violent situations via the prism of psychoanalytic theory. The study also looks at how widespread societal harm is sparked by leaders' egotistical power ambitions, repression, and unresolved trauma. This results in violent cycles that strengthen insurgencies and prolong national crises.

This study adds to the body of knowledge by emphasizing how crucial psychological analysis is to comprehending leadership in multi-ethnic Nigerian society. This essay highlights the significance of psychological trauma, repression, and unconscious desires in insurgencies, whereas the majority of terrorism literature concentrates on the political and socioeconomic elements that fuel insurgencies. More broadly, it highlights the necessity of a multifaceted conception of leadership in violent contexts— one that takes into account political, social, and psychological viewpoints. All things considered, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and *Born on a Tuesday's* psychoanalytic examination of leadership provides a deeper, more complex understanding of terrorism and

insurgency in Nigeria by illuminating the psychological factors that propel leaders and followers into deadly cycles of violence. Comprehending these dynamics can facilitate the development of more efficacious interventions, both in literary works and practical implementations aimed at terminating violence and promoting societal reconciliation.

This research is conducted using the psychoanalytical theory in Literature to carry out a textual analysis on the novels, with emphasis on the psychological effects of leaders' roles in terrorism on characters and the settings. The research is based on data collection from the library and internet. UNIZIK Manual of Style is used for documentation.

Psychoanalytic theory, founded by Sigmund Freud, provides a framework for understanding human behavior by focusing on the unconscious mind and its influence on actions, desires, and decision-making processes. Central to this theory are the concepts of the id, ego, and superego, which represent different aspects of the human psyche. The id embodies the unconscious drives and desires, often seeking immediate gratification; the ego negotiates between the id and reality, ensuring socially acceptable behavior; and the superego encompasses the internalized moral standards that regulate behavior. This interplay between these three psychic structures often reveals the hidden motives behind individuals' actions, particularly in situations where trauma, repression, or unresolved conflicts shape decision-making. In the context of literary analysis, psychoanalytic theory enables a deeper examination of characters' motivations, exploring how unconscious desires and psychological trauma drive them. Kandel (2016) argues that psychoanalytic theory offers the most comprehensive understanding of the mind. He illustrates how science, through the process of reduction can inform the way we experience a work of art and seek to understand its meaning, and in particular how we may relate to emotions such as fear, anger, guilt, curiosity, anxiety, self-preservation and the like. Indeed, the said emotions have often been evidently expressed through Art, Literature, Music and Dance.

In analyzing Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, psychoanalytic theory provides a lens which explores the motivations of the political and militant leaders within the Niger Delta insurgency. The unconscious drives of these leaders, rooted in feelings of abandonment, historical trauma, and repressed anger, manifest in their violent quest for control and wealth. By examining these characters through a psychoanalytic framework, one can uncover how the unresolved trauma of colonial exploitation and subsequent marginalization fuels their actions, leading them to use violence as a means of asserting their identities.

Similarly, in Elnathan John's *Born on a Tuesday*, psychoanalytic theory helps to decode the psychological transformation of the protagonist, Dantala, and the extremist leader Mallam Abdul-Nur. Abdul-Nur's descent into jihadism can be understood through Freud's concept of the death drive, where his unconscious desire for destruction and domination is driven by internal psychic conflict and societal alienation. Dantala's need for belonging and identity, on the other hand, makes him vulnerable to the manipulation of radical ideologies, as he unconsciously seeks validation and paternal guidance. Psychoanalytic analysis in this case unveils the internalized insecurities and repressed emotions that fuel both leaders' and followers' participation in violent extremist movements.

Overall, psychoanalytic theory is particularly useful in the analysis of these two novels as it provides insights into how unresolved internal conflicts, repressed desires, and trauma drive characters' actions and leadership styles. By examining the unconscious motivations of leaders and followers, this theoretical framework unveils the psychological underpinnings of insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria, offering a more complex understanding of the power dynamics at play. In the both novels, psychoanalysis reveals how personal trauma is often transferred into violent leadership practices, shaping not only the leaders themselves but also the entire social structures they influence.

The application of psychoanalytic theory in analyzing *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and *Born on A Tuesday* highlights how individual psychological conflicts intersect with broader political and social movements. This approach enables a deeper exploration of leadership in the context of insurgency, showing how unconscious drives for power, control, and identity shape not only individual characters but also the larger communities affected by terrorism. Through psychoanalysis, these novels expose the psychological roots of violence, providing a nuanced perspective on leadership that goes beyond surface-level political or ideological explanations.

# Roles of Leaders in Terrorism and the Quest for Effective Leadership in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and Elnathan John's *Born on a Tuesday*

Scholars have long examined leadership in the context of terrorism and insurgency from a variety of angles. Powerful leaders who exercise control over followers through a combination of psychological coercion, economic

incentive, and ideological manipulation have a significant influence on insurgent movements in Nigeria, including those headed by militants in the Niger Delta, Boko Haram, and other jihadist factions. Literary masterpieces like *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* (2010) by Chimeka Garricks and *Born on A Tuesday* (2015) by Elnathan John provide important insights into the nuanced roles that leaders play in these horrific situations. Through this creative work, we can learn more about the psychological processes and unconscious motivations that both leaders and followers are driven by, using a psychoanalytic lens to these writings. This study investigates how psychological ambiguity, repressed desires, and unresolved personal trauma of leaders contribute to the perpetuation of violence within insurgent groups. Scholarly support underscores the relevance of these topics in both literary works and empirical research.

Trauma plays a vital role in understanding terrorism and the leadership challenges in the society. The importance of unresolved trauma and psychological conflict is one of the main psychoanalytic themes that comes out in the analysis of leadership in these novels. According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, suppressed trauma and unconscious urges have a big influence on behaviours, and frequently show out as violent or antisocial inclination. In *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and *Born on a Tuesday* characters' use of violence to assert their power as a result of personal traumas stemming from historical oppression, social marginalization and personal loss. The commanders of the Niger Delta insurgency are portrayed by Chimeka Garricks in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* as psychologically damaged people driven by a sense of personal disappointment and historical injustice. Although the Niger Delta's leaders claim that their militancy is a reaction to their marginalization, a deep psychological craving for control and acceptance lies behind this political rhetoric. Researchers like Ward (2015) contend that traumatized people frequently use violence as a way to regain agency after experiencing feelings of helplessness. In this way, the leaders in Garricks' novel are not only politically motivated but also compelled to exert control over a reality that has left them helpless out of unacknowledged psychological desires. Garricks, for example, illustrated in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* that:

Everyone else is milking our oil. The government has already sold the oil that will be drilled in the next decades. The politicians and military boys have shared oil blocks among themselves... I decided that since it's my oil, my river and my land that's being raped I might as well join in... (152)

Therefore, it is believed that the government's lack of leadership is causing major, complex psychological problems for the general public, which has led to the emergence of other social vices like terrorism and insurgency in the Niger Delta;

We planned to kidnap the white man at about 11.27 a.m. on a drizzling Friday morning in August. We were on one of the nameless, winding creeks that flowed from the Asiama River. The white man was on a boat, a 20-seaterspeed boat owned by the company he worked for, Imperial Oil. Other staff of the company on the boat were the captain and the two deckhands... (1)

Similar to this, Elnathan John in *Born on A Tuesday* depicts Malam Abdul-Nur's complicated psychological journey—a religious leader who turns to jihadism. Abdul-Nur's psychological turmoil and personal suffering molded his leadership style, as his need for approval and control tangles with his ideal of ideological purity. Psychoanalytic researchers have long studied how charismatic leaders of radical groups frequently project their inner problems and fears onto their followers. In this instance, it is possible to view Malam Abdul-Nur's commitment to a harsh interpretation of Islam as a coping strategy for his anxieties and uncertainties. As noted by Stern and Berger (2015), a large number of terrorist organization leaders are psychologically damaged people who use violence to establish their validity and value. Thus, Abdul-Nur's metamorphosis is indicative of the psychoanalytic theory that holds that deep psychological wounds, rather than only ideological commitment, are the source of leadership inside insurgent organizations.

Chimeka Garricks' novel, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, is a detailed account of the conditions in the Nigerian Niger Delta. Oil spills continue to be a manifestation of the long-term negative consequences of the environment's exposure to the continued oil drilling in these areas, devastating both the physical and mental well-being of the local population. In the novel, the masses are made to endure economic marginalization, life-threatening environmental degradation, and forced relocation. This causes a generalized sense of resentment and rage, which gives rise to militants like Doye.

The story emphasizes how the effects of past trauma continue to resonate in the present by illustrating the cyclical nature of violence and its lasting impact on the characters and the settings. As Doye notes, Mpaka never speaks to his kids like a father would, yet his father would only speak to him after hitting him;

...He had told me things he saw and did in the Biafran war- how he killed people, how he watched his platoon leader smash the heads of little children with his rifle butt, and how he was forced by hunger to eat human flesh roasted to a juicy tenderness by bombing from an air raid. Those were the only times Papa talked to me. (76)

His beatings and their ongoing exposure to violence harden Mpaka's kids. Despite having a reliable source of income from fishing, he does not provide his family with the necessities and instead lets them fend for themselves. He would much rather spend his money on his *kai-kai* and *igbo*. Because of this, his kids only know that they must always struggle to survive. Soboye also takes up smoking just like their father and finally turns to crime, which is how he ends up dead. And Doye ends up like his father and brother, no matter what he does to get out of that existence.

The terrorist assaults in Northern Nigeria have psychological effects on Nigerians as well as those in neighbouring countries like Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, according to Elnathan John's novel, *Born on A Tuesday*. These surrounding countries are facing security issues from cross-border incursions and the spillover of conflict. In this tale, communities struggle with internal conflicts as they deal with the divergent ideas that Boko Haram is spreading. The divergent viewpoints of Malam Abdul-Nur and Shiekh demonstrate this;

To fight an enemy, you must first understand an enemy. How do you struggle against those whose elements you know nothing about? Seek knowledge, the Prophet sallal-lahu alaihi wasallum said... Give me one hadith or Qur'anic verse that tells you that English itself is haram, even by analogical deduction. ... If you got guns and tanks and defeated the Nigerian Army, what is your plan for ruling this country especially as there is a whole other half that is not Muslim? (198-199).

Moreover, ideological manipulation is another critical issue in our discourse on terrorism and the leadership question in Nigeria. The role of ideology is central to understanding leadership in these novels. Ideology provides a framework through which leaders justify their actions and motivate their followers. However, psychoanalysis suggests that ideology is often a mask for deeper, unconscious motivations. In *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, for example, the leaders of the Niger Delta insurgency use the rhetoric of liberation and justice to legitimize their violence. While they claim to be fighting for the rights of their people, Garricks reveals that their true motivations are often personal—driven by the desires for wealth, power, and recognition.

Psychoanalytic theorists such as Bottici (2023) argue that leaders often use ideological symbols to establish authority and legitimacy, projecting their desires onto their followers. In this case, the Boko Haram leader's use of ideology reflects his unconscious need to dominate and repress others, with religious dogma serving as a convenient tool for justifying violence. This theme also aligns with Louis Althusser's theory of ideology, which posits that individuals are often "interpellated" by ideology in ways that serve the interests of those in power (Neacşu, 2019). In the case of the insurgent leaders in Garricks' novel, their use of ideological language serves to obscure their ambitions, creating a false consciousness among their followers. Similarly, Abdul-Nur in *Born on A Tuesday* manipulates religious ideology to gain control over his followers, using jihad as a justification for violence. Psychoanalytic theory helps to uncover the unconscious desires that underlie Abdul-Nur's ideological commitment, revealing that his turn to extremism is as much about his own need for validation and control as it is about his religious beliefs.

More so, followers and the psychology of submission explores the psychological factors that drive individuals to conform to authority and follow leaders, particularly in environments of power imbalance or coercion. While the psychological dynamics of leaders are central to these novels, it is equally important to examine the psychological mechanisms that make followers susceptible to manipulation and control. Psychoanalysis offers valuable insights into why individuals join violent movements, often pointing to unconscious desires for security, identity, and belonging. Psychoanalytical theory emphasizes the role of the leader as a father figure who provides followers with a sense of protection and purpose. This dynamic is evident in the two novels, where followers are drawn to insurgent leaders because they fulfill psychological needs that are otherwise unmet in their lives.

In *Born on a Tuesday*, Dantala's psychological journey from a vulnerable, disillusioned youth to a committed follower of a jihadist leader illustrates this dynamic. Dantala's need for identity and belonging makes him susceptible to Abdul-Nur's ideological manipulation. As Butler (1997) suggests, the desire for recognition often drives individuals to submit to authority figures, even when doing so leads to their self-destruction. Dantala's submission to Abdul-Nur's teachings reflects his unconscious desire for paternal guidance and social validation, which the he provides in the absence of other sources of support.

Similarly, we see how the character, Snow White in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, submits to his leader even to his death. Psychoanalytic theory reveals that this process of psychological conditioning is a common tactic in violent movements, where leaders manipulate the unconscious desires of their followers to gain control over them. Cantrell (2015) argues that individuals in oppressive situations often experience a "fear of freedom," preferring submission to authority over the uncertainty of autonomy. Snow White internalizes Doye's ideology as a means of gaining his basic needs, revealing the psychological mechanisms that sustain violent movements. He blindly runs errands for Doye just to make money for sustenance, and eventually follows him to the Asiama River, where he kills him following his suspicions of him, without investigations and confirmation, as the informant in his organization.

Finally, the psychoanalytic exploration of leadership in these novels reveals how unresolved psychological conflicts and unconscious desires for power contribute to the perpetuation of violence and insurgency. Freud's concept of the death drive suggests that individuals have an unconscious desire for destruction, which manifests in violent behaviours. This idea is particularly relevant in analyzing the actions of the leaders in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and *Born on a Tuesday*, where violence becomes a means of asserting dominance and resolving internal conflicts.

In *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, Doye's use of violence is not just a political strategy but a reflection of their unconscious desire to destroy the system that has marginalized his community. This aligns with Fitzgerald and Davies (2022) analysis of violence in colonial contexts, where the colonized subject's psychological trauma leads to a desire for violent rebellion. Similarly, in *Born on a Tuesday*, Abdul-Nur's jihadist violence is driven by his unconscious death drive, as he seeks to resolve his inner conflict through the destruction of others. This is what he does by organizing naïve and unsuspecting youths to cause violence with the intention of frustrating the secular nature of Nigeria's government.

## Conclusion

Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and Elnathan John's *Born on a Tuesday* offer powerful portrayals of leadership in the context of terrorism, revealing the deep psychological forces at play in these violent movements. Through the lens of psychoanalytic theory, it becomes clear that the leaders in these novels are driven not only by political or ideological ambitions but by unconscious desires for power, control, and the resolution of personal trauma. These desires shape their leadership styles, pushing them toward violence and terror as a means of asserting dominance and masking their psychic wounds. At the same time, the followers of these leaders are drawn into insurgency through unconscious desires for safety, identity, and belonging, creating a complex psychological dynamic that perpetuates cycles of violence.

The novels remind us that leadership in the face of terrorism is not merely a political or social phenomenon but also a deeply psychological one. Leaders, whether political, family, religious or insurgent, are shaped by their unresolved internal conflicts, and their actions often reflect unresolved personal traumas. Followers, in turn, are drawn into these movements by their unconscious desires, creating a web of psychological manipulation that sustains insurgency. In exploring these dynamics, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and *Born on a Tuesday* offer a profound critique of the psychological foundations of leadership in the context of terrorism, providing valuable insights into how personal and collective psyches intersect in the perpetuation of violence.

## References

- Agbiboa, D. A. (2013). The Ongoing Campaign of Terror in Nigeria: Boko Haram versus the State. *International Journal of Security and Development*, 2(3), 1–18. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.cl on July 9, 2023.
- Ajibola, O. (2023). The Trauma Continuum: Narrating Deprivation, Dissent and Desecration in Elnathan John and Tricia Nwaubani's Fiction. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, *5*(3), 37–49. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v5i3.1343 on January 17, 2024.
- Akpa, J. I. (2015). Boko Haram: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria. *African Security Review*, 24(1), 101–103. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2015.996023 on January 17, 2024.
- Akpan, F., Ekanem, O. and Olofu-Adeoye, A. (2014). Boko Haram insurgency and the counter-terrorism policy in Nigeria. *Canadian Social Science*, Vol. 10(2), 151-155.
- Alozieuwa, S. H. O. (2016). Contending Theories on Nigeria's Security Challenge in the Era of Boko Haram Insurgency. *Semantic Scholar*. Retrieved from https://www.sematicscholar.org on 29 February 2024.
- Bodunde, D. O. and Balogun, N. O. (2019). An Overview of the Nigerian Defence Policy and the Challenges against Terrorism. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 9, 525-537. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2019.93030 on 14 May, 2023.

- Bottici, C. (2023). The People and the Image of the Leader. *Populism and the People in Contemporary Critical Thought: Politics, Philosophy, and Aesthetics*, 122.
- Butler, J. (2004). Precarious life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence. London: Verso.
- Cantrell, C. (2015). Liberty Versus Life: Suicide in the Writings of Montesquieu. New York: *The Journal of Psychohistory*, Vol. 43(2), pp 134-146.
- Coady, C. A. J. (2021). The Meaning of Terrorism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cold-Ravnkilde, S. and Plambech, S. (2015). *Boko Haram: From Local Grievances to Violent Insurgency*. Denmark: DIIS Publications.
- Fakemi, A. (2022). "Petro-Fiction and Pseudo-Environmental Activism: The Defining Moments in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*". *Open Access Library Journal*, 9, 1-16. Retrieved from https://doi:10.4236/oalib.1109421 on December, 24 2023.
- Faluyi, O. T., Khan, S., and Akinola, A. O. (2019). Boko Haram's Terrorism and the Nigerian State. In *Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development* (1st ed., pp. 1–157). Springer International Publishing. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05737-4 on November 23, 2023.
- Fitzgerald, L. M. and Davies, A. R. (2022). Creating Fairer Futures for Sustainability Transitions. *Geography Compass*, Vol. 16(10. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12662 on September 17, 2024.
- Freud, S. (1921). Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego. *Standard Edition*, 18, 65-143. London: Hogarth Press.
- Garricks, C. (2010). Tomorrow Died Yesterday. Abuja: Paperworth Books
- Ile, O. J. (2021). Literature and Fundamentalism: *Born on a Tuesday* as Insight in the Nature of Religious Extremism in Nigeria. *IKENGA International Journal of Institute of African Studies UNN*, 19(1), 14–26. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357285870\_LITERATURE\_AND\_FUNDAMENTALI SM\_BORN\_ON\_A\_TUESDAY\_AS\_INSIGHT\_IN\_THE\_NATURE\_OF\_RELIGIOUS\_EXTRE MISM\_IN\_NIGERIA on October 20, 2023.
- John, E. (2015). Born on A Tuesday. Great Britain: Clays.
- Kandel, E. R. (2016). A New Intellectual Framework for Psychiatry. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 155 (4), 457-569.
- Kunwar, N. B. (2024). Safeguarding Nepal: National Security Landscape & Challenges. *Journal of APF Command and Staff College*, 7(1), 155-177.
- Neacşu, D. (2019). Ideology as Public (Political) Subjectivity. In *The Bourgeois Charm of Karl Marx & the Ideological Irony of American Jurisprudence* (pp. 85-117). The Netherlands: Brill.
- Nwaubani, A. T. (2019). Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree. Lagos: Masobe Books.
- Ohagwam, U. (2022). The Politics of the Novel in The Niger Delta: From Kaine Agary to Chimeka Garricks. Global Journal of Politics and Law Research (GJPLR), 10(7), 60–67. Retrieved from https://eajournals.org/gjplr/vol10-issue-7-2022/the-politics-of-the-novel-in-the-niger-delta-from-kaine-agary-to-chimeka-garricks/ on December 5, 2023.
- Stern, J. and Berger, J. M. (2015). ISIS: The State of Terror. New York: Ecco.
- Uzodike, N. O. and Maiangwa, B. (2012). Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria: Casual factors and central problematic. *African Renaissance*, 9(1), 91-118.
- Ward, A. R. (2015). The Subject of Rebellion: Fanon's Call for (Re)action. *Postcolonial Studies*, 18(1), 40-51.