

Violence in Postcolonial Nigeria: Jowhor Ile's *And After Many Days*^(*)

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Abstract

This paper takes a close look at Jowhor Ile's novel entitled *And After Many Days*; Ile's debut novel is a historical record of Nigeria in 1990s where corruption and poverty prevailed everywhere. Violence was rampant after formal independence from British colonization in 1960. Ile managed to document many historical and political events in Nigeria during this period, showing how the big oil crisis in the Niger Delta broke out, and how students' demonstrations demanding their rights followed. He uses symbolism to describe violence in Port Harcourt in particular. The paper deals with violence in postcolonial Nigeria, where the country was divided into ethnic groups.

Keywords:

violence; Postcolonialism; crisis in the Niger Delta

الملخص

يتناول هذا البحث نظرية العنف في نيجيريا فترة ما بعد الاستعمار و بداية الحكم العسكري للبلاد. و يوضح الكاتب و المفكر "فرانتز فانون" أن العنف سمة سائدة في المجتمعات التي عانت من الاستعمار لفترات طويلة مثل المجتمع النيجيري. و يؤكد فانون

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أن سلوك العنف هو أحد أهم السلوكيات التي يسعى المستعمر لتوطيئها في المجتمعات التي يستعمرها حتي يضمن سيطرته علي تلك المجتمعات حال حصلت علي استقلالها. ويقدم الكاتب النيجيري الشاب "جوهور اليي" عبر روايته "و بعد عدة أيام" تحليلا عميقا لنيجيريا وما حدث بها من أحداث سياسية و اجتماعية و طائفية خلال فترة التسعينيات. وقد شهدت تلك الفترة في نيجيريا طفولة الكاتب التي شهد خلالها انهيار التعليم و الاقتصاد و الأمن، بل وعمليات القتل والتصفية ضد سكان دلتا النيجر لمطالبتهم بحصتهم في البترول الموجود بأراضيهم والذي يباع لشركة شيل من الحكومة النيجيرية مباشرة. وقد نجح "اليي" في الإشارة الي الأحداث التي وقعت في نيجيريا خلال تلك الفترة مستخدما الرمزية من خلال عائلة "بول" و التي تمثل واقع المجتمع في تلك الفترة. و يبدو أن "اليي" لا يستطع التصريح بما يقول خوفا من أن يستخدم عنف السلطة ضده أو يمنعه من الكتابة، حيث أن رئيس نيجيريا الحالي هو أحد القيادات العسكرية السابقة و المتورطة في أعمال العنف.

وفي النهاية يحذر "اليي" المجتمعات التي حصلت علي استقلالها من ان تستدرج الي العنف السياسي والاجتماعي لأن ذلك يؤدي لعودة سيطرة المستعمر مرة أخرى عبر حكومات تبدو وطنية في شكلها، لكنها في الواقع في خدمة المستعمر.

الكلمات الدالة: العنف، ما بعد الإستعمار، الأزمة في دلتا النيجر، نظرية فانون عن العنف

Introduction

Born in 1980 in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, the young Nigerian writer Jowhor Ile achieved great reputation inside and outside Africa. Ile started his career only in 2016 with his debut novel *And After Many Days* that took three years for him to write; however, the novel was well received as it documents the 90s as one of the most important decades in Nigeria.

Ile is one of new generation writers who write about postcolonial Nigeria; some of them live between Nigeria and America like Alice Walker,

some live in Europe like Chika Unigwe, and others still live in Nigeria describing life, history and politics of Nigeria among them Ile is one. All of them present the problems of their people, culture and politics in their literary works.

Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria witnessed six successful military coups that continued for almost twenty eight years where the country was divided ethnically and religiously into three, then four regions. The sixties witnessed a failure military coup that alarmed Nigerians that the army is ready to interfere whenever it is dangerous. In 1966, and due to political and social problems, The Igbo General Aguiyi Ironsi led a military coup against the civilian president who had an iron hand on Nigeria. The same year in July, there was an anti-coup by General Yakubu Gowon who divided the country into twelve states instead of four regions, and this division was the main spark of the civil war in Nigeria.

In December 1983, General Mohamed Buhari led another military coup against Shehu Shagari who drowned the country into political, social, economical corruption and devoted oil income to himself and the governing class. In August 1985, Ibrahim Babangida abandoned Buhari and managed to get balance to Nigeria again till he stepped aside in 1993. General Sani Abacha takes over power in November 1993 after the resignation of Shonka that was seen as a palace coup. Abacha was a real dictator who tortured and killed his dissents; his regime continued till 1998, the period about which Jowhor Ile wrote his novel.

In writing his novel, I think that Ile was affected by Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* that tells the story of corruption, poverty, and injustice in France that led to the French Revolution. *And After Many Days* reminds the reader with the scenes of violence accompanied the postcolonial period in Nigeria, those scenes are still present in Ile's mind while writing this novel.

The research explores violence in Nigeria during 90s period after 30 years of independence. It reflects the deteriorated social and economical case of Nigeria under military regimes, and warns that such case leads to endless violence and a bloody chaotic society.

Postcolonial Literature

In his book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures*, Bill Aschcroft, defined Postcolonial literature as writing which has been “*affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day*” (2) This kind of literature has its own concerns as well as its characteristics, the concerns are: first, reclaiming spaces and places; Colonizers work on alienating people from their home lands to other places inside or outside their countries. Postcolonial literature attempts to restore immigrant people to their home lands through description, narration, or dramatization. Second, it asserts cultural integrity, Colonialism works on removing the native culture, customs, and traditions of indigenous people, so postcolonial literature emphasizes on restoring those cultures and reviving them again as they are the basic part of identity. Third, colonizers claim helping citizens who live in poverty and timeless societies to change their lives into better. They give vindications for using power and enslavement against indigenous people, so postcolonial literature reveals the real aims of colonizers which center on exploiting the natural resources of those states and subjugating native people.

The first chapter of Aschcroft's book includes the characteristics of postcolonial literature that could be summarized in the following: first, in order to oppose the kind of generalizations drawn by colonizers in educational, social, historical and political texts, postcolonial writers use detailed description of people, nature and cultures in their indigenous places; they resist the process of obliterating their identity and imposing the colonizers. The detailed description restores the reader again to his native place as if he is still living there.

Second, though colonizers managed to impose their own language to be the formal language, postcolonial writers stressed the need to recuperate the pre-colonial language and culture; they use some of their indigenous words within their texts to illustrate the mastery of language imposed on them. Some writers wrote in English, the language of colonizer, due to two reasons: first, postcolonial countries are divided into many regions with different languages and dialects, hence writers want their works to be read

by all inhabitants; second, postcolonial writers want to convey the right image of their society and their suffering under colonization, so they write in English as it is the universal language. They want their works to be read all over the world to convey their messages to the whole universe.

Also, postcolonial writers managed to reshape imported colonial art-forms to incorporate their indigenous style, culture, structure and themes. There are thematic parallels between the two literatures like the theme of the struggle towards independence in community and individual, and also the theme of construction or demolition of houses or buildings in postcolonial states. They submit the European style of literature, especially poetry and dramatic performance to their indigenous identity.

In postcolonial Nigeria, many Nigerian writers appeared after independence writing brilliant literary works discussing colonialism and its effect on their societies. Among those famous writers there are: Chinua Achebe, Buchi Emecheta, Christopher Okigbo, Ben Okri, and the Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka; all of them write about Nigeria's problems and suffering after colonialism and the obliterated identity they are trying to restore.

Neocolonial Nigeria

After military evacuation, British did three things to guarantee their control over Nigeria: first, they supported and sponsored North-South separation that has become the known division in the country. Second, they promoted the division and discrimination between ethnic majority and minority groups. Third, they divided rates of development among the groups increasing the creed of north for northerners, west for westerners, and east for easterners (Diseruvwe 4). This widened the gap among Nigerians with different tribes and they were so weak before British colonizers, Michelle James emphasizes:

When the British Colonized Nigeria, they had the backing of their armed forces, but they governed by enticing a portion of Nigerian society to support the system that they installed. The system had three primary tools: The Christian Church, schools that taught British curriculum, and The English Language... The British were

able to keep Nigerians working against one another as a foil to the power the local population could have had if they were unified against the British. (8)

As an African country, Colonialism in Nigeria differs from that in America and Europe, Ake explains:

Colonialism in Africa marked different from the colonial experiences of the Americans, Europe, and Asia...the colonial state redistributed land and determined who should produce what and how. That is often deployed forced labour, imposed taxes and a break up of traditional authority and social relations of production resulting in proletarianization. (1)

Despite the independence of Nigeria and the native Nigerian Presidents, but the British philosophy and life style continued because the native leaders themselves were the products of the imposed European cultures. They were brought up at English schools replete with English minds and attitude. They did not have the sense of Nationalism, defined by Edward Said as *“an assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a heritage. It affirms a home created by a community of language, culture and customs”* (139) Kwame Nkrumah points out *“within this ‘postcolonial neocolonized world’ African leaders have no power and freedom to decide on the course of any development of their countries without approval from Washington, London, Paris, and other western capitals”* (8)

Fanon's Theory of Violence

The definite and logical result of Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Neocolonialism is violence. Many philosophers have their own views about violence and they believe that it is not random but *“a fundamental force in the frame work of the ordinary world and in the multiple processes of the world.”* (Lawrence & Karim 5)

The great philosopher Frantz Fanon has his theory discussing violence in decolonized societies declaring that *“decolonization is always a violent event...it reeks of red-hot cannonballs and bloody knives”* (1, 3); he believes that *“colonialism is not a machine capable of thinking, a body*

endowed with reason. It is naked violence and only gives in when confronted with greater violence” (23)

Fanon defines two types of violence: instrumental violence defined as *“a concept in which the implementation of either wanton irrational or calculated rational violence occurs as a means to an end.”* (Fanon in Roberts 5), in other words, it is that kind of violence used to get to a certain goal. The other type is intrinsic violence defined as *“a metaphysical concept in which the act of either random irrational or calculated rational violence itself contains inherent value it operates outside the means-end continuum.”* (Fanon in Roberts 5)

Fanon asserts that the colonial rule is *“the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native.”* (38), he describes the ridiculous and humiliating way of the colonizer in dealing with the colonized; the colonizer insists on dehumanizing the colonized to the extent that *“it turns him into an animal.”* (42) Violence of the colonizer against the colonized turned the relationship into master and slave, the master has the power to dominate the slave, while the slave is *“frozen in the historiography and rendered immobile.”* (Killmeier 3)

The natural result of this is that the colonized does not understand any language but that of violence. Due to the continuous process of dehumanization, the colonized believes in violence as the only way and the opposing event that is able to remove the feeling of revulsion caused by the colonizer. The colonized finds no solution to restore himself, his humanity, and his freedom but violence.

Fanon’s theory states that violence is positive on one side as it *“frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.”* (94) This means that revolutionary violence aims at restoring self before colonialism, as Jean Sartre indicates *“the native cures himself of colonial neurosis by thrusting out the settler through force of arms.”* (21)

On the other side, Fanon indicates that violence has negatives; he sees that physical harm is the first and foremost aspect of violence and he emphasizes that torture is a necessity of colonial world, it is not only

towards one side which is colonized, but it is reflected on both sides: the colonizer and the colonized.

And After Many Days

And After Many Days takes place in the coastal city of Port Harcourt, Nigeria where the author currently lives. Atoke indicates that, through the lens of Ajie's eyes, Ile "*takes you on two distinct journeys; what it meant to live in Nigeria in the early, to mid 90s; as well as intricately weaving the reader into the life of the Utus*" (2)

Though the novel is still new as it was published 2016, but it was praised by many writers as the author is not speaking about a strange society he did not live in, but he "*is rooted in the lush mindscape of the The Niger Delta. For here is a writer whose rare insight is evident not only through the voice he breathes into his characters but also in how deep he digs to tap the wellspring of their history.*" (Barret no.page)

And After Many Days tells the story of a middle-class family in Nigeria whose 17 years old son, Paul, disappeared after he went in a visit to his friend. The whole family was upset and they started a wide search for days and weeks till they lost hope to find him. Finally, after decades of his loss, they found out that Paul was killed by a soldier in the street. The book tells about postcolonial and neocolonial Nigeria in 1995 where "*Corruption, greed, laziness and the many other vices that plague the nation are discussed with uncompromising candor*" (Hooligan 3)

In his interview with Channels Book Club, Jowhor Ile said that the novel took almost three years to be finished; he emphasized that his novel "*is about what we live now, about the life of Nigeria, it is about life in Port Harcourt. It is very much of social reality and history.*" (Ile, Jowhor. personal interview 2016)

And After Many Days is a novel about corruption in Nigeria that caused poverty which led to violence. Corruption of both government and military regime replaced the colonizer and led to the poverty and suffering of Nigerians seeking the improvement of their life conditions. The outcome of this was violence: violence of the regime against citizens, violence of

Nigerians against each others, and violence of economic exploiters against their exploited. This circle of violence led to social division and economical deterioration which affected everything in Nigeria, Vasily Vakhrushev points out:

The neocolonialists methods have been widely applied in conjunction with acts of aggression, police operations, the provocation of local wars, various forms of intervention in the internal affairs of the developing countries, including conspiracies, coups d'état and assassination of leaders of the newly independent states, and the national-libration and anti-imperialist movement. (119)

This study discusses violence in Nigeria at this time and how Ile depicts violence in his novel throughout the story of a family who lost their elder son and is waiting for his return. Violence in Nigeria as a postcolonial society is a natural result of poverty and corruption caused by colonizers, Fanon explains "*their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together – that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler – was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons*" (35)

The book contains two stories parallel to each other, or one hidden into the other; it is the story of Nigeria in the ninetieth and the story of Utu family as an example of a respected middle class Nigerian family. Holligan argues that "*Ile skillfully addresses the political climate of Nigeria in the mid-1990s while exploring the personal ramifications of corruption on the Utu family.*" (2)

Jowhor Ile tells the story through Ajie, Paul's younger brother, who is still a child. When he was asked why he preferred to tell the story through Ajie, he said:

I enjoyed writing from his point of view...Ajie didn't have direct access to some of the events but he was a young person in a family...He is also an excellent eavesdropper. My main challenge was to stay faithful to his voice and perhaps showing how he heard of an event, locating him in the room. Much of the story comes to the reader through his observations, but he was also quite active- he would interrupt or maybe say something out of

turn... He quarreled with things happening around him but he also doubted himself a lot and I think his introspection was good for the story. (Iromuanya 3)

The opening pages of the book carry a general description of the situation in Nigeria,

It was the year of the poor, of rumors, radio announcements, student riots, and sudden disappearance. It was also the year news reached them their home village, Ogibah, that five young men had been shot dead by the square in broad day light. (3-4)

Ma, the mother, was very upset and did not believe that Paul can sleep outside home "*Paul knows how dangerous the roads can be at night*" (7); the whole family is waiting for Paul's return

Like the pendulum on their parlor wall, they swung to either end, dread and hope, but generally stayed in balance: no hysterical outburst, no screaming and pounding the walls for answers, no silent bitter tears that soaked the pillow when you lifted your head in the morning. There was just stillness. Something quiet crept about the house, made you feel a sudden chill, and sprayed your arms and neck with unexpected goose bumps. (10)

Those words describe the case of Utus waiting for Paul's return in such terrible social and insecure atmosphere. Shannon Schmidt explains "*Ile deftly draws readers into their shifting world to bear heartbreaking witness to the slowly dawning recognition that Paul has indeed vanished from their lives, seemingly without a trace.*" (1) The family was afraid that Paul might be arrested or hurt by the police as in such a corrupted society it is better not to be seen or heard; Schmidt continues "*outside the Utus' happy home is a country with a tumultuous legacy of political and social strife-corrupt officials pocketing bribes, flare-ups between ethnic communities, riots, students demonstrations and false arrest*" (2)

Ma describes the status in Port Harcourt in December 1995, "*over the last few days, there had been student demonstrations that has generally escalated. Apart from the road blocks set up by the students, Police vans were burned, students shot at –shot dead.*" (14) This violent and chaotic case victimized innocents, so the government admonished all citizens to "*give peace a chance, to refrain from violent, nefarious activities, and to*

engage in dialogue with government for the betterment of the state" (17) Fanon illustrates that *"the oppressed achieves psychological liberation, or cleansing, by violating the oppressor. They are free then to go on with the more organized forms of violence, praxis, that are necessary for the building of a new, liberated society."* (Gordon 71) villagers revolted against actions of killing and arrest by the police and military troops; they decided to start a movement against government using violence and each one decided to have gun to react against violent actions with the same way.

In order to know about the violence Ma speaks about, the reader has to know about Nigeria before that time and the circumstances that led to such horrible situation. In 1984, Ma's cousin, Gabby, came to Port Harcourt for WASC exam when the military regime had imposed the curfew. On his way home, a policeman stopped him and kept him for nothing he did telling him that he was arrested. Though it was without evidence, but the dictator military regime used this policy to control everything in Nigeria even individuals' freedom. Though Gabby begged them *"just let me go home, I beg you"* (40), he was driven to the police station and they managed to break his head in the process of interrogation, Nigeria was *"a world cut in two...the dividing line, the barracks and the police station."* (Fanon 31)

Ile speaks about the poverty and the bad conditions of Nigerians under military regime that led to violence. The speech of Bendic's friend, Mr. Ifenwa, to Ma is a clear evidence that Nigerians are suffering from the lack of life priorities like electricity *"how do you get your drinks called with NEPA and their manic power cuts?"*, Ma replies *"we are supposed to get power every other day, but sometimes we don't see any light for three days in a row."* (41) Bendic agreed that *"the military had brought Nigeria to its lowest point yet in history"* (43) and Ifenwa emphasized that Nigeria *"was comatose, nailed shut in a coffin slowly moving toward a furnace."* (44) Even educational level is rapidly declining and *"the number of people I meet who have been to primary school but can't read well is just alarming."* (44) Ifenwa adds *"so long as the power situation is not solved in this country, we are going nowhere."* (48) Ile indicates that Nigeria under military regime is suffering in all fields: no good life conditions, no good

education, deteriorated economy, and blind dictatorship. This case of deterioration and destitution is seen by Fanon as an enough reason for what he called positive violence;

The policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination...yet, he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native (Fanon 37)

Biafran war is one of those causes of destruction in Nigeria. Ma and Bendic were always remembering their days in Lagos before the war after the eastern region announced secession. They always remembered the peaceful Nigeria where they lived happily and their feelings were "*something like pride mixed with regret*" (51), pride with the great success they achieved in Lagos and regret that Nigeria became separated, poor, corrupted, and exploited after they got their independence.

Ile returned to 1968 to tell us about Bendic who was reported by an Ogibah man as a saboteur. He was accused of being spy and supporter to the Nigerian side "*there were rumors everywhere, about how Ogotta had fallen, how Port Harcourt was soon to be captured. Prominent members non-Igbo minorities were being seized and thrown into detention on suspicion of sabotage*" (55) Bendic was arrested and moved from Ahoada to Elele, then Isiokpo, and finally to Umuahia; he was jailed for eight year with no crime committed and after being released he was in a very bad healthy situation that he suffered from for the rest of his life. Ma looked at "*the shrunken body. The gaunt skull looked too heavy for his neck to carry.*" (57)

The powerful military came to take Bendic with no proof for accusation. His mother was crying and begged them not to take her son,

Like the wretched woman she has sworn to them that her son had done nothing wrong; she had pleaded with them to sit down to eat...she told them she was Biafran, not Nigerian; she spoke the little Igbo she knew, but it did not do. They ate her food and carried her son away. (56)

Ile depicted the moment brilliantly before the reader as *“he has a particular talent for selecting the perfect details that make even a passing moment come to life.”* (Obioma 247)

Fanon illustrates that violence of the regime leads to violence of natives as the native is *“trapped in the tight links of the chain of colonialism...the native’s muscular tension finds outlet regularly in blood thirsty explosions-in tribal warfare, in feuds between sects and, in quarrels between individuals”* (53) Hence, the result is social suffering and destruction due to individual as well as tribal conflicts. Violence of the regime against natives leads to counter violence of natives against regime and against each others as well.

To shed light on administrative corruption in Nigeria, Ile mentioned the accident of a corrupted official who had misappropriated pension funds. He put his words on the tongue of Paul expressing this crime as a betrayal to the whole people *“How do you make yourself do that? How do you learn how to work yourself up over something that’s not directly your concern”* (75) Actually, Paul is the mouthpiece of all Nigerians living in great destitution while their money and concerns are assaulted by the government. The crime is published in the news and known by everyone, but there is no accountability.

Another form of violence is depicted through hostility against the same population. In his book, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, Claude Ake explains *“because of circumstances that reach back to the colonial experience, most African states tend to be in hostile relation to the bulk of their population.”* (42) This is clear in the city of Erema where a woman left her husband and moved with another man to his own house; according to their customs, this was acceptable in case the woman is looking for divorce. The husband tried to restore his wife many times and he sent many people to persuade her to return home, but she refused; the man got angry and one day,

He took a machete and chopped off the head of his wife’s lover.
Then he carried the head and walked the whole length of the village, and each time he met someone he asked this thing I have

done is it good or is it bad!...it is right what you have done, it is good. (77)

After that, the husband killed himself when he reached the end of the village. The accident is strong evidence to the violent case Nigerian society witnessed at this time. People were ready to kill and avenge out of their feelings of rage. What is responsible for this case is the daily suffering of people and harsh living conditions; the feelings of anger, hatred and dissatisfaction towards the brutality of the military and government were directed to neighbors, friends, and even man's family inside his home. Violence is the only way through which people express themselves if they fail to reconstruct their identity or build a positive new one "*there will be serious psycho-affective injuries and the result will be individuals without an anchor, without a horizon, colorless, stateless, rootless.*" (Fanon 218)

In contrast to the case of poverty and destitution of most people of Ogibah, Nwokwe, one of Oganians, built a house that was described as "*one of the few that stood clearly visible from the road*"(84) It was said that he spent too much money in building this house which was "*obviously, not all his money.*" (85) OYF (Ogibah Youth Front) could not stop him because "*he has blocked their mouths with money...he plans to run for local government councilor.*" (85)

This is a clear reference by Ile to the illegitimate relationship of wealth and power in Nigeria. He states that those dirty businessmen who own money can bribe politicians and silence them; even the movement of Ogibah youth supposed to defend rights of Ogibah people are working against them and receiving money from corrupted people to stop questioning them. Corrupted businessmen can even buy votes to get to the head of authority regardless of people's demands and requests. So, under military regime, social and political life was corrupted. In his book *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Kalyvas comments:

Even when government forces kill large number of civilians, destroy property, and use other forms of collective punishments, civilians choose to collaborate with the incumbent's forces if the rebels are seen as weak. (67)

Another form of corruption is introduced in chapter six of the novel through the character of “Application Master” described as:

His face cracked open, and his tongue trembled as he laughed. He was dressed in tobacco-brown trousers and a shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows. The red of the shirt had bled out until the color was now a dull brown. (88)

He was an educated man who went looking for a job for many months and did not succeed to have one. His mother called him “Application Master” due to dozen applications he filled for jobs. This man represents people of Ogibah who learned for many years and can speak languages, however they can’t earn their living finding a suitable job.

The “Application Master” was the man who aroused the oil crisis in the novel. In order to understand oil problem in Nigeria the reader must trace its history. Shell Nigeria is one of the biggest oil companies all over the world and about 80% of Nigerian oil exists in The Niger Delta. This region is inhabited by small ethnic groups suffered for many years from the exploitation of multinational oil companies. Due to political corruption, Shell Company used to provide more than 50% of oil income to keep the Nigerian dictator in power as he was supporting them. Not only Ogonians, but also dozens of other groups were suffering from economic, environmental and social injustice; Ben Naanen explains that *“the most conspicuous aspects of life in contemporary Ogoni are poverty, malnutrition, and disease.”* (75-76)

The worse is that Shell’s search for oil destroyed the environment of Ogonians and oil extractions polluted the water they used to depend on fishing and farming. The natural result was great economical deterioration, no water, no electricity, no health care, and no education. Inhabitants of Ogoni had pipelines build across their lands and farms, before their homes, and even cut their roads. Also, the great pollution of oil caused the death of fish, spoil of plants, and acid rains to the region. Above all, gas flares hurt huge number of people and caused global warming affected all creatures. (Kriesch 2)

What was strange and provocative is that the government admits that Shell funds the army in Delta region. There were big demonstrations in

many villages after the pipelines cut the farms of Ogonians. Claiming Shell's protection, policemen killed more than eighty people protesting against the company; instead of looking for a solution, Shell supplied the police with powerful weapons to protect Shell against peaceful demonstrations against them, "*since the Task Force occupied Ogoni land in 1994, the Ogoni have lived under constant surveillance and threads of violence.*" (Boycott Shell/Free Nigeria: The main issue 3) Moreover, the military armed some troops to fight each other in a kind of civil war to guarantee the security of Shell.

Military regime supported and protected oil companies as 80% of military and government revenues comes from oil. Shell bribed officials as well as military and police officers to stop any attempt to get them out of Nigeria. Filling their pockets with money, military was against Ogonians and insisted on silencing them by power, killing, wounding, and harassing. All what the military wanted was to keep power and authority to get billions from Shell. Many people fled to Ghana, Togo, Canada, and USA as refugees, and according to Fanon:

The militant who faces the colonialist war machine with the bare minimum of arms realizes that while he is breaking down colonial oppression he is building up yet another system of exploitation. This discovery is unpleasant, bitter, and sickening: and yet everything seemed so simple before. (145)

The colonized reproduces another regime with native faces but with the policy of the colonizer. Thus, including all native people in the process after colonization is a must or there will be a case of alienation and exclusion that leads to violence. Being alienated in society tempts man to express his existence and social participation throughout violence as the only means he has.

Due to social, economic and environmental injustice, Ogonians established a resisting movement named MOSOP (Movement of Survival of the Ogoni People) with 300,000 Ogonians. The movement had nine leaders who declared that Shell is not welcomed in Ogoni and it must stop its activities. Ken Saro-Wiwa was one of those leaders who become an icon in

Nigerian history, but in November 1995, Wiwa was executed in a military tribunal that was criticized by the whole world. The government accused him with the other eight leaders of killing four activists, but the fact is that they were against Shell advantages. (kriesch 2)

The powerful and aggressive attitude of military, police and government led to big demonstrations by people of The Niger Delta. Some of them occupied oil stations and pipelines of Shell stopping the third of Nigerian oil to be exported. They demanded fair compensation for lost land and income, fair compensation of people killed, self-determination, reduction of gas flaring, and sharing oil profits. Fanon suggests that *“violence ...frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.”* (94) The violence of oppressed against their oppressor caused them big losses. The exploiter realizes that there is a violent reaction from natives against his violent action.

In his review, Atoke praises the brilliant ability of Ile in expressing everything without using names; he is to the point in his description:

Jowhor Ile’s ability to capture characters without being specific is a skill that not every writer possesses. He uses “Company” in reference to the oil company that is responsible for the damage that has been done to Ogibah village. And even though he doesn’t mention the name of the head of the Military Government in Nigeria, he is accurate with his use of dates-citing major incidents that can be tied into that time frame in Nigeria’s history. Incidents such as the ADC Airlines, Plane Crash, and the execution of Ogoni 9. (4)

Some Ogonians accepted the compensation of Shell with the belief that they can do nothing and they decided to leave their lands; those people were accused by villagers as traitors. Nwokwe accepted compensation and became local government councilor, *“you took money from company. You are exactly like your father, bowing down to paper money and coins.”* (95) Bendic assured *“this thing trying to rip us apart is actually coming from outside. If we don’t understand that first, then we will be wasting strength on the wrong matter.”* (96) Bendic’s words refer to the company that

managed to split people of the same village; they took some Ogonians on their side and abandoned others to guarantee the community split. The result of this is violence among native people which guarantees the continuation of Shell's exploitation without being bothered by Ogonians.

The conversation between "Application Master" and Nwakwe represents the two points of view, that of Ogonians adopted by him, and the opposite one of the company adopted by Nwakwe; "Application Master" said:

Company has been here for nearly three decades. There are young men in this room who were not yet born when they came to tap oil from our ground. Nobody here can say we have treated company badly. And that's not to say our stomachs are too sweet wit happiness. What your God has blessed you with, you can't quarrel with it. You use it and move ahead in life, for your own good, for your children, and for your neighbour too. (96)

He continues reminding attendees of their peaceful attitude with the company, and the company's aggressive and violent reaction:

Before company came, we were here, the oil was here, right here...under our feet. Did we make trouble when they came here combing through our forests? When their work destroyed our farms, when they cut through people's houses t build their pipe lines, did we fight them or seize their workers so that their work would not go on? Did we not accept the money they paid for damages? (97)

He speaks about the new gas lines the company decided to build at the same time they are killing native people,

Now that they have decided they want to build pipes for gas, not oil, they want the pipes to go through our farms and our waterside near Idu. I have only one question to ask: if the ones they built for oil are killing us now, why should we allow them to put up new pipelines when we don't know what damage they might cause?(97)

In his essay, *Postcolonialism, feminism, and development: intersections and dilemmas*, McEwan emphasizes that *"the 'third world' is integral to what west refers to as 'Modernity' and 'progress.'* It contributes

directly to the economic wealth of western countries through its exploitation.” (95) Britain looked at Nigeria as a prey that fills its hunger for industrial developed society; with the great progress achieved in industrial revolution, Britain decided to occupy Nigeria to exploit its natural resources and huge oil reserves claiming urbanizing Nigeria. Shell Company dominated Niger Delta, and it used violence through armed troops to kill even native landlords. British used legal and illegal ways to achieve their goals regardless of the great pillage and devastation they caused to other societies.

On the other side, Nwokwe speaks with the tongue of those villagers who benefit from the company; he enumerates the projects the company made in Ogibah:

If not for company, you think we would have been anything that we are today? This secondary school we have now, that our children attend-people from other villages come here now for school-how long did we stay before it was built? (98)

Nwokwe reminds people that they were neglected for decades by the government. All the governments did not establish projects or provide their village with facilities required for good life:

Did the government know us before now? Did any tarred road run to us before? Does this village lead to anywhere? So why do we talk as if we don't know these things? And because I speak my own truth, the truth that I see with my two eyes, does that mean I've accepted a bribe from outsiders against my own people? (98)

He reminds them of the water pump the company brought to their village to drink pure water.

If not for company, would we have the mono pump that gives us water? How many villages around here have tap water? Without company, mosquitoes would be eating us up in the man grove, and all these people in the government wouldn't have known we even exist. (98)

Nwokwe summarized the whole situation and the power of authorities represented in the government and the company they protect. He

warned his people that they have no solution but to accept what the company offers as they are the weak side while the company with the governmental support is the stronger one.

Some of you forget we are a small people. All these bigger groups in this country who go in and out of government, do you think they would look in our direction if we didn't have oil? We can all disappear from here in a single afternoon...and they wouldn't even notice. They wrestle for power among themselves as if we don't count...Let us stay close to the company; what they are offering may not be the best, but we can't be claiming our rights and then lose out completely. (99)

Ogonians did not like Nwokwe's speech and one of them told him to inform the company that "*pipe lines shall begin and end at your house...And if gas fire burns, it is your family who will be consumed, since you have decided to go deaf in both ears.*" (99) Fanon is to the point in his explanation that colonialism managed to emphasize the idea of individuality, each one thinks only in himself and his own benefits even if his benefit is against others. Each one calculates his gains paying no attention to the loss of others "*the colonialist bourgeoisie had hammered into the native's mind the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his own subjectivity, and whose only wealth is individual thought*" (Fanon 46)

The company decided to pay compensations for the villagers to build more gas pipelines. People gathered in Bendic's house to discuss this issue and agree to reject this offer. Paul asked a question that was not answered by anyone "*why is it okay for them to take all the resources in our land, destroy our homes, and leave us with nothing*" (105) The fact is that Paul asked Ile's question as one of Nigerians who see their country exploited for decades either by colonizers or military regime.

One of attendees cautioned people against the powerful reaction of the government in case of their refusal to take the money:

It is the devil we are dining with here...these people have government on their side. They look like they are asking us, but they are not; they prefer to indulge us, at least. If any

commotions come out here, then you will see who will come to battle. Everyone here knows you cannot fight government. No medicine can kill government. They will burn a holy shrine and go scot-free. (105)

Violence is quite emphasized in the speech of the man; he states that the government works for the company not native people. They are ready to sacrifice any one to keep taking their billions from the company; it is a circle of corruption stronger than people. Nwosu clarifies that *“the oil which has brought so much wealth to the multinational companies and the Nigerian state has at the same time brought to the people of the Niger Delta untold poverty, disease, persistent pollution, ecological and environmental degradation.”* (546)

The company sent twenty cows to Ogibah’s festival to deepen the gap among different tribes and families as some will accept the cows, while others will refuse them. Those who are against the company insisted: *“we don’t want their disgusting gift! They can’t buy us from ourselves”* (112), and those with the company like Nwokwe and his son *“ran in for a machete and had to be restrained, and the warning cry Otchu! otchu! Murder! Murder! ripped the air.”* (112)

Some people blamed those of the same community itself who were ego and sacrificed public benefit for their own benefit:

The trouble in Ogibah had nothing to do with any of those but started from when human beings decided to live together in a community, knowing all the while they were prone to savage betrayals, filled with the desire to conquer each other, yet making no sufficient safeguards against these. (125)

It is the greed and betrayal of some natives that tempt them to look for their own benefit regardless of their communities. Nachman Ben-Yehuda states that *“Betrayal is dangerous. When trust and loyalty are violated, the threat potential for interpersonal realities or for state integrity (especially during periods of conflict) is profound.”* (9) Nwokwe and his son betrayed

the whole village in co-operation with the company, so Ogonians realized that they were betrayed from the government and from themselves as well.

Betrayal became a concept in Ogibah; Ogbuku, the son of Nwokwe, sent the police to arrest government dissents. He is known by his financial corruption as he *"eat the money meant for renovation of the only school we have."*(139) Ogbuku used the police to avenge the "Application Master" and the whole village. When the police came to arrest "Application Master", the villagers violated police men, but three days later a police van arrived and carried four boys away, *"the whole village was being accused of violence against police on official duty, and "Application Master" was wanted for inciting the violence."* (144) Ile drew disastrous future after that accident:

Bendic and Application Master did not know that this was just the beginning. There were no dead boys yet. No girls had been dragged into bush. Graffiti was yet to appear on the walls of the secondary school saying Ogibah, fear the Nigeria Police and Army. None of these things had happened yet. For now some policemen had been assaulted, a few boys had been arrested as a consequence. (145)

This accident was the spark of military fights between government and army against Ogonians; it was the beginning of armed conflict in Nigeria.

Not only the government and military, but even courts and judges were polluted. After the explosion in Ogibah, Bendic sued the government and after two years in corrupted and bribed courts, the verdict was against Ogibah. Bendic burst into the judge's face *"you are liar, and a thief! Agbra awe eya! Blind devil."* (150) Violence against Nigerians was not only physical, but also by law; courts were bribed and led by the regime and Nigerians could not find any way to restore their rights. In such corrupted society, the noble values of justice and equality were prostituted to the lusts of hate and fear.

Violence prevailed over the whole country and conflicts among members of the ruling authority increased. In chapter fourteen, Ile wrote about the famous Nigerian plane crash. It was claimed that the president of the region wanted some dissents to die, so he had the plane exploded in the

air to make it seem as plane crash. Violence reached to the extent that governors did not listen to dissents or opposite opinions. Bendic's friend, Dr. Idoniboye, said "*your president wanted some people on that flight dead...some people on the flight had been invited to Lagos for some government function. Only a blind man cannot see it.*" (172), it is a cruel and brutal way of getting rid of dissents sentencing them to death.

In chapter sixteen, Jowhor returns to Ogibah with breaking news that "*soldiers drove into town this morning with trucks. They shot down five boys.*" (189) When Bendic went to check situation, he returned after three days with the news that "*nothing is left. They brought the whole place down.*" (191) Bendic's son Paul describes what happened:

After gunning down the boys they saw idling away in the square, they burned down Mark Alari's house-the first of many. Old men who couldn't escape into the bush were manhandled and made to lie on the floor. They took, by force, any woman they came across. Houses were defaced with graffiti, and they shot in the town hall. By the evening, when they were done, a great smoke hung over Ogibah, and the air smelled of burning meat as the soldiers rewarded themselves with any live-stock they could find, looting Mercury's store and rendering all his cartons of beer empty . (191)

The atmosphere of horror, killing, and devastation drew in children's minds what their country needs. They became well aware of what their country suffers from. When they were asked "*what would you do if you were the president of this country?*" (197), every one gave a different answer exposing a problem in Nigeria. Ajie said "*I'd make sure the roads were will maintained so they didn't cause accidents.*" (198) He is looking forward to save lives of those people killed every day on roads due to governmental neglect; the government does not pay attention to infrastructure of the same village they exploit its resources and steal its billions; Bibi said "*I'd send the military back to the barracks and return the country to democratic rule*" (198) Ile sends a message to the army through Bibi, he wants them to leave power and authority and return to their main job in protecting people against enemies, not killing them. Paul decided "*I*

would sack all the ministers and military administrators. They are all corrupt." (198), he wanted to sack all ministers who steal the fortune of their country. In Neocolonial regime, Ministers were corrupted working for the colonizer and their own benefit, Mr. Ifenwa concluded "*sounds like the kind of revolution we need, if you ask me.*" (198)

Things began to deteriorate and students decided to move against such criminal regime; however, Ile emphasizes that "*it's peaceful demonstration, not a riot*" (202); he stresses on the peaceful attitude of students and Nigerians in their expression to change their living conditions. They were complaining of corruption, poverty, and unemployment.

The students swamped the love as they marched so that cars couldn't go through. Some bad placards held up high with sticks, while others pinned them on their bodies. Hawkers solicited from the side lines with trays of mangoes, baskets of oranges, and soft drinks. A small group of students gathered around a hawker who had set down his basin for the students to take water tied up in clear freezer bags. (202)

However, Ajie emphasized that "*they should burn some government cars; destroy a few things, then they'll get some attention.*" (202) He believes in violence as the only way understood by the government; he sees violence as the only means to change their fate to a better one.

Finally, the last few pages of the novel tell us about the return of Ajie from London where he was studying. Ma told him that they found his brother after decades of absence, but he was dead. Paul was killed by the police in the street "*the boy kept walking. The corporal rushed toward him in a fit of rage and whacked the boy from behind with the butt of his gun at the base of the neck, and the boy went down at once.*" (227) Paul was killed for nothing he did, and even after death he was oppressed by the authority. In their report, they accused him of violence against the police:

The boy had been caught looting a shop during the demonstration, an officer tried to stop him, and he assaulted the officer with a knife. A struggle ensued, during which the suspect went for the officer's gun. Unfortunately, there was an accidental

discharge and a bullet struck the suspect, killing him instantly.(228)

Waiting for many years to receive Paul after long absence, the family now has the coffin, the body, and his belongings. Ile comments “*there is something horrible drastic about the loss of a person. I suppose confronting that body is a way of making sense of death itself, of accepting it.*” (Quadri 3) Paul is the victim of violence, greed, hatred, poverty and corruption; he will stay an icon to the youth of Ogoibah and a proof of police violence. By the end, Ile describes Ogoibah as “*The swamp is not there. The ponds are dried up, all the trees felled. No slow warms, no bamboo or bracken, no blackbirds pecking on a rotting palm trunk.*” (237)

Conclusion

This paper has shed light on violence theory in Postcolonial Nigeria as drawn by the young Nigerian writer Jowhor Ile in his novel *And After Many Days*. After formal independence, Nigeria witnessed dramatic social, regional, economic and cultural change. Ile represents the new generation of Nigerian writers aware of neocolonial Nigeria and the novel is considered a clear documentation to what happened in Nigeria in 1990s.

Ile depicts violence in Nigeria through the family of Utus as the pivot of his novel. Through the absence of Paul, Ile managed professionally to criticize Nigeria and the military regime implicitly; he used Ajie as the main character to be his mouthpiece. In writing this novel, Ile depended on memory and he moved freely from one time to the other and preferred not to be restricted to chronological sequence of events emphasizing that he is speaking about the events of the past, but those events are still alive and continuous; the way he moves in the novel from an event to another and from one character to another is difficult and shows the great talent of the writer.

Ile also discusses the gap between two generations represented in Ma and Bendic as the colonial generation, while Paul, Ajie and Bibi represent the postcolonial and neocolonial generation. He discusses the problems of the two generations and how the new generation believes in violence as the only solution to their problems.

The novel contains great symbolism of Nigeria in the 90s; it was written to document Nigerian life, education, poverty and corruption in postcolonial period. However, I believe that Ile did not mention names due to a kind of fear; he may be sentenced to jail as the president is one of those military dictators who caused Nigeria great problems in his previous ruling period. Ile himself was afraid of regime's violence against him.

Reading *And After Many Days*, the reader gets to know the history of postcolonial Nigeria and he is fully aware of oil crisis that caused the Biafran war. Ile's novel is a brilliant symbolic literary work to Nigeria economically, literary, socially, and educationally. The absence of Paul may represent the absence of fair, just, beautiful and happy Nigeria after formal independence, and the return of Paul dead symbolizes the return of Nigeria with everything beautiful dead. Like the dead body of Paul who was killed by the military, Nigeria became a dead body suffering from poverty, corruption, and violence under military regime.

Ile depicts violence in Nigeria to convey a message to all postcolonial societies not to fall prey to it; he warns other societies against violence and its social, political and economical destructive consequences. Ile aims at stopping violence in other societies not to be divided regionally and ethnically like Nigeria.

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