

**A FORMALISTIC STUDY OF SOCIAL VICES IN KOLA EKE'S AUGUST 1985
AND OTHER POEMS**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE ENGLISH AND LITERATURE,
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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersign certify that this project work is adequate in scope and was carried out by AMUNE Grace Ofufeke, in the department of English and Literature, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria; In partial fulfillment for the award B.A. Degree in English and Literature.

Dr. E.J Legemah
(Project Supervisor)

Date: _____

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God almighty and the Olufemi Amune Family.

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I want to thank God almighty for his grace and supernatural blessings throughout the course of this project work and my stay in this University of Benin.

My humble and special thanks go to Dr. Legemah, my project supervisor for his time, guidance, teachings and understanding. It is an honour to be lectured and supervised by you sir.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This study examines social vices in the poetry of Kola Eke's August 1985 and other poems from a formalistic perspective, so as to show how social vices are presented in different forms. Exploring how the poet uses poetic expression, like language, stylistic devices, structural elements to articulate, criticize these social vices prominent in Nigeria society and provoke public awareness. This study dives into the various themes, style techniques in this collection to understand its role in shaping the society and promoting social change. By focusing mainly on the collection's formal attributes, this study seeks to show the relationship between poetic form and thematic meaning, making us understand how Eke's work reflects societal issues.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This study is limited to Kola Eke's poetry collection, entitled AUGUST 1985, and OTHER POEMS, only instances of social vices in the collection are necessary in this work. Therefore, other parts of the collection may not be brought to bear during analysis.

This study is restricted to the depiction of social vices in the Nigerian society. The study of this text would be isolated from external influence with focus on the internal qualities, highlight the interplay between form, meaning, revealing Eke's critique of societal issues through poetic expression.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative research method, entailing these poems as literary works, analyzing devices, form, structure etc. Interpreting layers of meaning in the poem, this captures the essence and impact of the poetic expressions on societal issues. This will involve collecting relevant poems from the collection as the primary data, using formalist principles to dissect the poems into aspect like, imagery, diction, rhyme, and the overall structure to understand their impact on theme development.

Qualitative research is defined by various scholars, emphasizing its focus on understanding human experiences and social phenomena. Creswell (2002), describes it as a method aimed at deeply exploring and interpreting social phenomena within their natural settings, seeking to answer the "why" and "how" of situations rather than just "what" or "when".

Denzin and Lincoln (1994), highlight its interpretative, naturalistic approach, where researchers study phenomena in their natural environments to grasp the meanings individuals attach to them.

Moser and Korstjens (2017), note that qualitative research gathers participants' perceptions and behaviors, providing deeper insights into real-world problems without quantifying data.

Keith Punch, defines it as empirical research where data are not numerical, focusing on observed experiences. These definitions collectively underscore qualitative research's depth, flexibility, and emphasis on context. The reason for the use of this type of research method is because, qualitative research provides rich, detailed data that uncovers nuanced understandings of complex phenomena, capturing participants' thoughts and emotions that may be missed by quantitative methods. Researchers can adapt their methods and questions during the study, allowing for responsiveness to new insights and ensuring relevance to real-world contexts. Conducting research in natural settings enhances the authenticity of data, providing a better understanding of social and cultural phenomena. Finally qualitative methods foster rapport between researchers and participants, leading to richer, more reliable data collection.

THEORITICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical background of this essay is anchored on formalistic literary theory. Mainly focusing on the structural purposes of this particular collection, the way it is written and its original structure and form, rather than external influence.

According to M.H Abrams, formalism as a literary approach that emphasizes the analysis of a text's structure, language, and form, rather than its content or contextual background. This perspective views literature as a self-contained entity, focusing on how its formal elements contribute to meaning. Abrams gave few key features of this theory; the use of literary devices for conveying themes and emotions in literature, also detailed analysis of

the text to uncover layers of meaning and how various components interact within the work. Abrams highlights the importance of examining aspects like meter, rhyme, syntax and narrative structure, allowing critics to understand how these elements shape a reader's interpretation. Abrams in his influential work 'The mirror and the lamp', outlines four features mimetic, expressive, pragmatic, and objective, which provides a framework for understanding different approaches to literary analysis. He then says that formalism tends to exclude mimetic, expressive definitions of literature concerning solely on how form contributes to meaning without considering historical or sociocultural contexts. These definitions and features by Abrams articulate a clear understanding of formalism as a critical approach that prioritizes textual analysis, offering valuable insights into how form shapes literary meaning.

Another definition by Viktor Shklovsky, a key figure in Russian formalism, defines formalism as a critical approach that emphasizes the autonomy of literature, focusing on the formal properties and techniques of literary works rather than their content or external influences. Viktor argues that literature should be studied as a unique art form with its own set of rules and characteristics. Key features by Viktor; difference between story and plot, (fabula and *suzhet*) Russian words for story and plot, underscoring how narrative structure can manipulate reader perception. He likens literary works to machines, emphasizing that they are constructed through intentional human activity, highlighting the craftsmanship in creating literature, also critiques traditional views that prioritize thematic interpretation over formal analysis. His central concept, defamiliarization refers

to the technique of presenting familiar objects or experiences in an unfamiliar way to enhance perception and understanding, making the ordinary seem extraordinary prompting readers to engage more deeply with the text

The arrangement of language, rather than the implications of the words or on the historical relevance of the work. This approach will contribute to the role of poetry in social critique.

In this essay, we are going to explore how Kola Eke stirs up mind of man to these decadences which has plagued his society, Nigeria. For a more thorough depiction of these vices in the society, the poet, Kola Eke underlines a critical survey to unveil the corruption, exploration and injustice that has become an emblem of most African states and how it has eaten up the beauty of the African, Nigerian society.

REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP

It is observed that an average number of works and studies has been done on Kola Eke's poetry.

Mukoro Edefe considers 'Eke's artistic use of language in his poems to expose the character of our socio-economic and political leaders in a unique manner' Edefe commends Eke's perspective to view these personalities through a reader's critical and analytical disposition. Edefe also says that one of the most distinctive qualities of Kola Eke's craftsmanship is his artistic presentation of eco-critical solutions in his eco-poems,

which separates his eco-poetics from his contemporaries. He also says that the poet intertwines these environmental problems with viable eco-critical solutions.

Odia Clement has published multiple studies on Eke, the legislative poems of Kola Eke, which examines the poet's recommendations for social change through his legislative themes, he also explored leadership presentation in Eke's works, emphasizing the denouncement of corrupt leaders and the call for traditional morality. He also examines the artistic manner in which Eke portrays ecocritical solutions to devastating environmental challenges confronting humankind', while focusing on artistic imagination and eco-solutions in the poetry of Kola Eke. Clement also says that the subject of leadership has taxed the imagination of creative writers all over Africa and it has continued to function as the muse of recent Nigerian poets, one such is Kola Eke whose poetry vacillates between social commentary and political activism, which enables him to address the problems of leadership, ecological challenges, and other sundry issues and present his vision of an alternative social order anchored on gender equality, political revolution and socio-economic justice in Nigerian history. Clement goes on to say that Eke's poems are different since he deliberately weaves images and allusions to underscore his poetic vision. Therefore, there is need to examine the methods of his figuration of leadership in order to expand Eke's artistic craft.

Another scholar, Julius Legemah analyses Eke's use of language to reflect societal issues, focusing on Nigerian electoral experience. says that Eke is a poet who has taken up the

task of using his poetry to speak against the societal problems of the present-day Nigeria, also says that as critical as Eke's poems are, they have not attracted the scholarly attention of many language and literary critics. Legemah's analysis, made him discover that Eke deliberately uses material processes, declarative mood system and topical themes in foregrounding the ugly experiences common with elections in Nigeria, in this paper he concludes that the experiences presented and the way they are packaged as messages are geared towards calling for a revolution that will bring some level of positive changes in the Nigerian elections. Legemah explains how Eke's use of language captures different human experiences relating to electoral irregularities in Nigeria.

From the above reviews, it is noticed that critics and scholars have looked at the poetry of Eke from diverse perspective, with all appreciating his artistic imagination and ability to provide solutions to whatever challenges he writes about. But none of them have focused on the depiction of social vices in his works. It is for this reason that we have decided to study and critically examine this depiction in Kola Eke's August 1985 and other poems.

A paper by Zhang Qingru discusses Formalist Literary Theory as a link between the author and the reader. It analyzes reader's acceptance of Formalist Literary Theory, discussing its theoretical gains and losses. The paper argues that Formalist Literary Theory inevitably involves the reader and implies a unique thought of artistic acceptance. It also suggests that the establishment of formalist literary theory cannot leave out the dimension of readers' acceptance.

An overview of Formalism explains that formalism "focuses on the form and structure of a text rather than its content or context". It emphasizes analyzing language, metaphor, symbol, ambiguity, irony, paradox, and unity within a text. It also notes that while formalist techniques are still used, the idea of isolating a text from its historical context or author has fallen out of fashion.

THESIS STATEMENT

Literary devices, like imagery, repetition, tone, diction, alliteration, simile, hyperbole is used in Eke's August 1985 and other poems to explore social vices and how it manifests in forms of hypocritical leadership, tyranny and corruption.

CHAPTER TWO

HYPOCRITICAL LEADERSHIP AS A SOCIAL VICE

This chapter aims at the depiction of hypocritical leadership as one of the social vices in Kola Eke's August 1985 and other poems. Hypocritical leadership, as a social vice, occurs when leaders fail to align their actions with their stated values and promises. It is a conceptual framework used to study potential leadership scenarios and their possible outcomes. A leader's perceived integrity serves as a signal for how their followers engage with one another.

Hypocrisy involves inconsistency between attitudes or behaviors and comes in various forms such as, moral, political, economic, religious and social hypocrisy. Manifesting in several ways saying one thing but doing another, taking a "do as I say, not as I do" approach, underscoring the value of hard work but exclusively promoting individuals within their inner circle, overusing position power to demoralize team members and cause them to shut down, and not addressing issues, even personal ones, that frustrate employees. The discrepancies between a leader's words and actions can have significant negative consequences like, erosion of trust, loss of credibility, decline in commitment and doubts about fairness. Nigerian leaders have been exhibiting the act of telling lies, stating fake promises and portraying deceptive acts that has caused the lack of trust from the society.

From here on , we shall explain how this vice is treated and forms it manifests in the collection in order to enable us appreciate the efforts of contemporary poets such as Kola Eke at satirizing hypocritical leadership in his country, Nigeria.

POLITICAL HYPOCRISY

One of such poems in the collection is entitled ‘August 1985 II’. The poem is about our political leaders with an authoritative presence who manipulates and deceives the people through eloquent speech and how they forsake the needs of the people and all they pledged to do and its beginning to affect the people and shows the dire state of healthcare.

The poet says thus:

Barracks boys

Blessed with the gift of gab

Toyed with us

Once More

Promised to accelerate

the engine of

Standard health care

deliver

Pledged to lay

the rugged and rough

roads of economy

with asphalt

Struck us like

a counterfeit promise

A man burnt by fire

Runs away when he sees ashes

Struck us like

a bait

To extend the arsenal of

health services to the mass

Struck us like

mere rhetoric

A man burnt by fire

Runs away when he sees ashes

Foreign medical check up

By chieftains

To be abbreviated

To be abridged

Pledged to bail out

Epileptic hospitals

From mere consulting houses

To Arcadian level

Through the use of various literary devices and language the poet examines this social vice, from the first stanza 'barrack boys' symbolizes these leaders, use of alliteration 'gift of gab' manipulation through eloquent speech and persuasive abilities, the last lines show the expressions of the people as they have been deceived again. Stanza 2 examines the stalled progress of healthcare due to failure to fulfill these promises. The use of imagery 'rugged and rough roads' symbolizes the difficult economic landscape, contrasting with the smoothness of 'asphalt'. Poet goes on to use a repetitive structure 'struck us like' to reinforce the impact of these broken promises, the simile 'A man burnt by fire' illustrates trauma and distrust, suggesting that past betrayals lead to skepticism about future promises. The lines 'To extend the arsenal of health services to masses' illustrates yet another promise made by these leaders to the people that has not been fulfilled.

The phrase 'Foreign medical check up' critiques elitism, while there is enjambment in this stanza creates a sense of continuity in disappointment and also there is highlight of the disparity between leaders actions and their rhetoric. The poet uses hyperbole in 'bail out epileptic hospitals' underscores the dire state of healthcare. The contrast between

‘mere consulting houses’ and ‘arcadian level’ illustrates unfulfilled aspirations for improvement.

The poet concludes the poem with lines that depict a collective skepticism towards political promises. The line ‘electoral architectonics’ critiques the superficiality of political structures, hinting at a preference for genuine governance over violence.

In the poem, he makes it clear that when a society has been greatly exploited by its leaders through constant lies, lack of transparency and unfulfillment of promises, it can revolt in a way that the individuals of the society withdraw from political activities. The poet Eke presents a society that is suffering from the hypocritical acts of their leaders.

From the poem we can see that our leaders are only interested in the votes of the people in the society, in order to receive the benefits that awaits them when they get into power, they go to any length to fake speeches, expressions, goals and actions during the period they are trying to please the people because they know that these people are vulnerable and need certain things and are likely to fall for the deceptive things by these leaders offering attractive things to them. But the people of the society are no fools, especially as these leaders keep repeating the same routine and promises they never fulfill.

Another poem in this section is titled “August 1985 III”. The first stanza immediately begins by introducing the central figure ‘the spokesman’ and his method to use ‘messianic pledges’ to deceive the people, the devices such as metaphor ‘anaesthetize’ suggests a numbing sensation and the word ‘messianic’ implies grand religious promises,

the poet begins this poem by suggesting ‘the spokesman’ which represents our leaders is using rhetoric to manipulate the public. Eke goes on to by writing quotations from the spokesman speech to the people “ we do not intend to rule by force” emphasizing on the spokesman denial of authoritarian intentions, he uses irony to characterize the spokesman while suggesting his lack of sincerity. The direct quote shows the contrast between words and potential actions. The next stanza introduces a metaphor :

If the rains are

Going to usher in prosperity

One takes note

From the hot season

Which shows the state of the nation, symbolism ‘rains’ shows good times, ‘hot season’ represents struggle and hardship, this stanza begins to connect the leaders promises to external factors, suggesting a reliance on chance rather than genuine action.

The poet says thus:

Told us

About our country

Afflicted with untold gap

Between the rich and poor

Pledged to bring

A mower

To cut down the gap

Between classes

Told us

About sick economy

Needed a stretcher

Ambulance for emergency ward

Made his points

With impressive clarity

Took full advantage of

Predecessor's abominable acts

Those blessed with

Anaesthetic words

Analgesic promises

Be buried alive

The excerpt above shows how leaders hear of the people's problems but fails to address or acknowledge it. The word 'afflicted' represents the severity of the problem and the metaphor 'untold gap' shows the disparity between social classes ' between the rich and poor', directly addressing the social problem of inequality. The next stanza is a proposed solution to this inequality, but as usual fake pledges 'mower' which symbolizes an instrument for reducing this gap, but then ironically becomes a symbol of empty promises as the solution is never provided.

The poet uses medical imagery to speak about the economic crisis 'sick economy', 'stretcher', 'ambulance', and 'emergency ward' as he compares the economy to a patient in need of medical attention, and to create a sense of urgency. Simply saying that this crisis, underscores the leaders failure to manage the country affairs effectively. The repetition of words in the next stanza emphasizes the disconnect between promises and reality, highlighting the leadership's inaction.

Ending this poem, Eke comments with irony on the spokesman's presentation and his strategy of blaming his predecessor, revealing the tactics of deflection used by current

leaders. Eke continues with medical imagery ‘anaesthetic words’, ‘analgesic promises’ to refer to deceptive words and ‘buried alive’ to create a strong image of punishment, providing a decisive judgement on these leaders, suggesting a deserved fate for those who deceive the public.

By analyzing each stanza, we can see how the poet builds a case against hypocritical leadership, using various literary devices and a free verse form to create a powerful critique. The poem shows us how our leaders pacify the public with empty promises and numb them from reality, escaping from providing solutions to problems like social inequality and economic crisis, showing their inadequacy, failure to manage state affairs and fulfill promises that are meant to be their responsibilities as leaders.

Eke’s diction contributes to the complexity of the poem, where we have formal words like; afflicted, abominable, messianic, analgesic and anaesthetize, these words suggest a serious critique of the political situation. There also figurative, direct and informal words to make the poem more conversational and more accessible to readers.

The poet’s tone, it varies according to each stanza, it goes from critical to concerned, weary and then condemning of the hypocritical promises of leaders that keep occurring.

MORAL HYPOCRISY

The poem Eke uses to fight moral hypocrisy is entitled 'Crossed-cheque leader'. In this poem, Eke presents the leaders as untrustworthy, through its structured stanzas, each employing metaphors of financial integrity to symbolize moral leadership.

The poet says thus:

Green Republic needs

A good leader

A payee with

crossed cheque

Not a payee

with dishonoured cheque

Not a leader

submerged in fake promises

Not a payee

carrying stale cheque

Not a leader

carrying stale promises

A leader

whose cheque has

Two parallel lines

Drawn across its face

Not one

parading dishonoured cheque

With irregular signature

Without sufficient fund

One

not on the podium of

Mob hysteria

One on the platform of good morals

The poet begins by introducing the need for a trustworthy leader, likening them to a metaphor 'crossed cheque' that represents reliability, he then goes ahead to contrast with a metaphor this with leaders offering 'dishonored cheques', symbolizing fake promises and deceit. In the third stanza there is emphasis on the importance of freshness in leadership commitments, paralleling 'stale' cheques with outdated promises. The poet highlights the need for leaders to possess integrity, as indicated by 'two parallel lines', signifying authenticity, also criticizing those who present themselves falsely, akin 'irregular signature' and insufficient funds signifying untrustworthiness.

The poet closing the poem advocates for leaders grounded in moral values rather than populism or mob influence, and then differentiates between genuine leadership 'crossed cheque' and deceptive promises 'post-dated cheque', emphasizing the immediate need for reliability. Ends with a call for leaders chosen by popular consent rather than intimidation, reinforcing the need for democratic integrity. The repetition of 'Not a leader' shows the qualities that disqualify hypocritical leaders, reinforcing the poem's critique of false promises.

The various devices used like, metaphor 'crossed cheques' symbolizes a trustworthy leader, while 'dishonored cheque' represents deceitful leaders, this metaphor contrasts integrity with hypocrisy, repetition, imagery 'stale cheque', 'irregular signature' evoke visuals of dishonesty, contrast, the juxtaposition of a 'leader on the platform of good

morals' against one 'parading dishonored cheque' stark differences between ethical and unethical leadership. These devices collectively illustrate the poem's condemnation of leaders who fail to uphold their commitments, portraying hypocrisy in Nigerian governance.

ECONOMIC HYPOCRISY

Another poem, Eke uses to explore economic hypocrisy as a form of hypocritical leadership is entitled 'Fake Frozen Fish' there is a use of vivid imagery and literary device to explore this social vice. Each stanza serves to critique the deceptive nature of leaders, using the metaphor of counterfeit fish to symbolize hypocrisy in business as what they advertise is not what they produce for sale to consumers.

Can be seen in the excerpt below:

Cold room shops

Spinal cord of

Fake fish business

Fake fish flourish fervently

Fake fish flood market

Forebrain of

Titus fish business

Fake fish flourish frequently

Shopping malls

Hindbrain of

Fake mackerel fishes

Counterfeit fishes

Green Republic

Midbrain of

Fake frozen fish

Outlet

A mirage

Detection of fake fish

Same size and colour

Same texture with original mackerel

Skin colour same

Street blue marked with

Wavy blacklines

Dorsally and silvery

Detection

During and after cooking

Plastic texture

Foams on fire

This poem takes an interesting turn from other poems examined in regard to this vice because of the use of imagery, it may appear as a poem that talks only about adulteration of food , and health risks to consumers and undermines public trust in the food industry. But in regards to this research this poem serves as an exploration of our imagination regarding literature and how a poem can represent one or more issues. The poem doesn't directly address political leadership but critiques a form of corporate or economic

hypocrisy, where businesses prioritize profit over consumer health and safety through deceptive practices.

So in this poem, the poet begins to represent the foundation of a fraudulent industry, establishing where hypocrisy thrives, 'cold room shops', also the repetition of 'fake fish' emphasizes on the prevalence of deceit in leadership. In stanza two 'Forebrain of Titus fish business' suggest that deceit is central to the operation, reinforcing the idea that hypocritical leaders are at the helm of corrupt practices. The poet goes on in other stanzas with phrases like, 'shopping malls' as the 'hindbrain' indicates that consumerism and superficiality are intertwined with leadership failures, highlighting how society is complicit in accepting counterfeit values. In the next stanza 'Green republic Midbrain' shows a disconnect between leadership and genuine representation, criticizing leaders and business owners, who prioritize profit over authenticity. The imagery of a 'mirage' shows the illusion created by hypocritical leaders, as they present identical facades while lacking substance. The poet describes in stanza five and six, the fake fish's appearance- 'skin color same'- as how deceptive business owners mimic genuine qualities without delivering real value. The detection of counterfeit fish during cooking symbolizes the eventual revelation of hypocrisy, as 'plastic texture' signifies fakeness that cannot withstand scrutiny.

The alliteration 'Frozen Fake Fish flourish ferociously' shows the persistence of hypocrisy in leadership, emphasizing its detrimental impact on the society's morality. The

poet ends by calling for food and drug authorities to act against ‘vectors of fake fish’ serves as a metaphor for the need for accountability in business industries. Through the use of various literary devices the poet has enhanced the poem’s critique of leaders and business owners who prioritize appearance over authenticity, using powerful imagery to illustrate the consequences of such hypocrisy. The poet uses straightforward language to describe the deceptive practices and also effectively critiques social vices, illustrating how hypocritical leadership undermines societal trust and well-being.

These poems analyzed in connection to the topic of the chapter ‘hypocritical leadership’ shows the poets creative ability to use words to discuss, criticize and create awareness on this social vice is incredible, focusing on the originality of these poems using a formalistic theory has brought out the importance of literature, from the various literary devices used such as: metaphor, irony, imagery, repetition, language, diction, tone, alliteration, free verse, personification, contrast, structure and form.

Through these linguistic choices , the poet effectively critiques social vices, illustrating how hypocritical leadership undermines societal trust and well-being.

Finally the poet's tones in these poems is critical, as he uses harshness to describe the deceptive practices surrounding them. This critical approach compels readers to recognize and question the hypocrisy in leadership, prompting a sense of urgency to address these social ills.

In essence, all four poems explore different facets of hypocrisy and deception. "Crossed-cheque leader" focuses on the need for trustworthy leadership, while "AUGUST 1985 II" exposes the emptiness of insincere promises and "AUGUST 1985 III" exposes the deceptive tactics used by those in power and "Fake Frozen Fish" exposed the double sided nature of people in positions.

The critical approach of the poet, compels readers to recognize and question the hypocrisy in leadership, prompting a sense of urgency to address these social vices and his use of accessible language makes these poems available to a broader audience, creating more awareness.

CHAPTER THREE

TYRANNY AS A SOCIAL VICE

Tyranny as a social vice, refers to the oppressive use of power by a ruler or government. It is a form of injustice where the rights and freedoms of individuals are systematically violated and suppressed. In the poetry collection, tyranny comes in various forms like political form which consists of dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and military juntas, then the social form which is religious and racial, also intellectual tyranny which is censorship and propaganda and finally economic tyranny . There are several features of this social vice, citizens are denied basic human rights and liberties, ruler or ruling class often abuses their power for personal gain, enriching themselves at the expenses of the people and they do not take accountability for their actions or the consequences. Understanding the different forms, consequences of tyranny is important for recognizing its manifestation in various kinds; Abuse of power in election rigging, coup d'état and emergency powers. Another manifestation is in democratic institutions, where civil society is attacked, suppression of rights which is essential to a health democracy and weakening of judiciary. Then through social and economic factors like, poverty, inequality, political and social polarization and external pressures by foreign interference. Tyranny is a gradual process, that begins with subtle encroachments on freedoms and a gradual concentration of power. Recognizing these signs and actively defending democratic principles is crucial to preventing the rise of tyranny.

From here on , we shall explain how this vice is treated in the collection in order to enable us appreciate the efforts of contemporary poets such as Kola Eke at examining tyranny in his country, Nigeria, in order to correct it.

Using a formalistic approach to analyze these poems we can explore how literary devices, diction, and imagery work together to critique the social vice of tyranny in a society.

POLITICAL TYRANNY

One of such poems is "Predator President" which consists of seven stanzas that collectively convey the oppressive nature of a tyrannical leader through vivid language and powerful imagery.

The type of tyranny illustrated in this poem is authoritarian, characterized by the use of violence, suppression of dissent, and manipulation of legal systems. The "predator president" embodies a leader who consolidates power through fear and intimidation, undermining civil liberties and promoting division among citizens.

The poet employs harsh diction to convey the brutality of tyranny. Words like "strangulated," "buried," and "venom" evoke strong negative connotations, reinforcing the oppressive atmosphere. The repetition of "Predator president" serves to emphasize the relentless nature of this tyranny.

The poet speaks thus:

Strangulated military funds

Orchestrated a coup

Rode into power

As Ugandan president

Predator president

Buried civil law

Resurrected military tribunals

Herded extra-judicial killings

To escape the wrath

of predator president

citizens must develop

defensive adaptation like chameleons

The opening stanza sets the tone for the poem by depicting the tyrannical rise of the leader. The phrase "strangled military funds" suggests a manipulation of resources, indicating how tyranny involves controlling state apparatuses for personal gain. The term "orchestrated a coup" implies premeditated action, highlighting the nature of the leader's

ascent to power. By stating he "rode into power," the poet uses metaphor to illustrate the forceful and aggressive manner in which this leader assumes control.

The repetition of "Predator president" emphasizes the predatory nature of the leader, likening him to a hunter who preys on his citizens. The phrase "buried civil law" signifies a complete disregard for justice and human rights, while "resurrected military tribunals" suggests a return to oppressive practices. The use of alliteration, in "herded extra-judicial killings" reinforces the brutal consequences of tyranny, creating a chilling image of systematic violence against dissenters.

Going further the next stanza introduces the idea that citizens must adapt to survive under tyranny. The comparison to "chameleons" symbolizes the need for camouflage and flexibility in response to oppression. The phrase "defensive adaptation" highlights the survival instinct among citizens forced to navigate a hostile environment. This imagery evokes feelings of helplessness, as individuals must alter their identities to evade persecution.

The poet goes on to speak thus:

Predator president

Distributed his venom

Amongst thousands of people

Persecuted certain ethnic groups

To avoid persecution

Better to change colour

Like the chameleon

Whose skin colour matches environment

The metaphor of distributing "venom" illustrates how tyranny poisons society. Imagery used, conveys the idea that the leader's actions have severe effects, infecting the society with fear. The mention of persecuting "certain ethnic groups" shows the selective oppression features of tyrannical regimes, emphasizing how such leaders exploit societal divisions for their own benefit.

The theme of adaptation as a survival mechanism. The metaphorical use of "color change" shows the idea that people must conceal their true selves to avoid detection by oppressive authorities. This imagery reflects not only personal survival strategies but also critiques how tyranny forces people into compromising their identities.

The poet elaborates on the implications of adaptation. The idea that changing color can render people "invisible" suggests that this vice creates an environment where authenticity is dangerous. This stanza criticises how oppressive regimes compel citizens to hide their true selves, leading to a loss of individuality and agency.

The poet ends this poem by shifting towards a sense of collective yearning for salvation. The reference to "John of the cross" invokes religious imagery, suggesting that citizens seek divine intervention against tyranny. This plea for intercession reflects desperation in facing an oppressive regime, highlighting both spiritual and social dimensions in resisting tyranny.

Through its rich use of literary devices such as metaphor, alliteration, and vivid imagery, "Predator President" effectively critiques and examines tyranny as a social vice. The poem shows how oppressive leadership impacts individuals and society at large, forcing citizens into adaptive behaviors that compromise their identities. By employing formalistic analysis, we can appreciate how Eke's language structure comes together to convey powerful messages about resistance and survival in the face of tyranny.

Overall, through its critical tone, vivid diction, literary devices, and exploration of authoritarianism, the poem effectively critiques social vices associated with tyrannical leadership, urging readers to confront these injustices in their own contexts.

INTELLECTUAL TYRANNY

Another poem in this collection that depicts tyranny as a social vice is titled "August 1985 VI", we can explore how the poem critiques the social vice of tyranny in Nigeria through its literary devices, diction, tone, and imagery. The poem consists of nine stanzas that collectively depict the manipulation and corruption inherent in political systems. This social vice is manifested in this poem through the abuse of power, consisting of electoral

rigging and suppression of fundamental human political rights. This poem explored how leaders manipulates the political structure, by changing the party system and democratic process to their own likening, whereby doing this to weaken the democratic institution and denying the citizens of their fundamental human rights .

The persona says thus:

Surveyor

Surveys and demarcates

Our nation into

new party structures

Impregnates two political

parties

a little to the right

a little to the left

Architect

Designs two classes of politicians

New breed

Old breed

Beckons the new breed

into his political penthouse

Banning and unbanning

the old breed

Now glaring

one cannot cover

a pregnancy with

one's palms

Scaffolding the manifestoes

of the right

scaffolding the constitutions

of the left

Now glaring

Tales about the

Draughtsman's hidden

Agenda

The poem opens with the metaphor of a "draughtsman," representing a leader who manipulates political structures. The line "ascends balcony of power" suggests a rise to authority, while "renovate the body politic" implies a superficial change rather than genuine reform. This introduces the theme of tyranny as a distortion of true democratic processes. The word "surveyor" symbolizes those who control political boundaries and affiliations. The act of "demarcating" suggests division, indicating how tyranny fosters fragmentation within society by creating new political factions. The choice of words by the poet, emphasizes the artificiality of these structures, reinforcing the critique of manipulative governance.

The metaphor of impregnation suggests that these political parties are being artificially created or manipulated by the draughtsman(leader). The lines "a little to the right / a little to the left" imply a lack of genuine ideological commitment, highlighting how tyranny can co-opt political movements for personal gain rather than serving public interests.

Here, the word "architect" further emphasizes the role of leaders in shaping political identities. The distinction between "new breed" and "old breed" reflects generational divides in politics, suggesting that tyranny perpetuates class divisions among politicians. This imagery critiques how power dynamics are manipulated to maintain control over governance.

The next stanza illustrates how those in power favor certain groups over others. The phrase "political penthouse" conveys exclusivity and privilege, while "banning and unbanning" indicates arbitrary decisions that reinforce tyranny. This imagery highlights how leaders manipulate access to power based on loyalty rather than merit.

The line "now glaring" suggests an undeniable truth about the situation. The metaphor of covering a pregnancy implies that hidden agendas cannot be concealed indefinitely. This line serves as a powerful critique of deceitful leadership, emphasizing that tyranny often relies on obfuscation and manipulation. The use of "scaffolding" suggests that both sides are built on unstable foundations, indicating that neither political ideology is genuinely committed to democratic principles. This imagery critiques how tyranny undermines true governance by prioritizing superficial structures over substantive policies.

Ending this poem, the poet speaks on the theme of hidden motives behind political actions. The word "tales" implies rumors or stories that circulate among citizens, suggesting a growing awareness of corruption within leadership. The repetition of "now glaring" reinforces that these issues can no longer be ignored.

The final stanza calls for action against tyranny. The metaphor of needing "antiseptic" implies a desire for cleansing or purifying politics from corruption. Referring to hidden agendas as "bacteria" emphasizes their insidious nature and harmful effects on society. This imagery advocates for transparency and accountability in governance.

The diction throughout this poem is incisive, using terms like "draughtsman," "scaffolding," and "bacteria" to convey strong negative connotations associated with tyranny. This choice creates a sense of urgency and moral outrage regarding oppressive governance. The tone is accusatory, compelling readers to recognize the destructive nature of tyranny while advocating for resistance against corrupt leadership.

The poet successfully critiques and depicts tyranny by employing vivid imagery, metaphors, and strong diction to convey the dangers posed by oppressive leadership. By personifying leaders as architects who design policies that harm democracy, the poem effectively communicates how tyranny disrupts social order and harms individuals. Through its structured analysis, August 1985 VI serves as both a warning and a call for accountability among those in power.

Overall, this formalistic exploration reveals how August 1985 VI employs literary devices to critique tyranny as a profound social vice while emphasizing the need for responsible governance in Nigeria.

SOCIAL TYRANNY

Finally in this chapter depicting tyranny as a social vice in this collection, we will be exploring a poem titled "Tyrant-Drivers". Tyranny in this poem manifests through the consequences of the rulers and ruling class actions on the people, through human suffering, societal unrest and instability.

The persona says thus:

The tyrant-driver

Abachalized the country's

Single and dual carriage ways

With Lion-like policies

Reckless tyrant-driver

Unmindful of undesirable crashes

On our roads

Undesirable deaths

Our tyrant-driver

Treats with reckless abandon

Road management rules

For safety purposes

Our tyrant-driver

Refuses to maintain

Safe lateral spacing

Causes injuries and deaths

He carries out

State-sponsored terrorism

On our expressways

On our fly-over bridges

In the process

Cripples a number of

Young military men

Retires some prematurely

Our tyrant-driver

Does not drive

In-between the lane

Unaware of marked lanes

In the stanzas and lines above the poet has examined, criticised and created awareness of tyranny as a major social vice in societies all around the world.

The poem opens with the word "tyrant-driver," establishing the metaphor of a driver to represent a leader who recklessly navigates the country. The word "Abachalized" suggests a transformation or corruption of the country's infrastructure, referencing the policies of former Nigerian tyrant leader Abacha. The line "Lion-like policies" implies aggression and dominance, setting a tone of oppression.

The following stanza emphasizes the consequences of tyranny. The repetition of "undesirable" highlights the negative impact on citizens lives. The imagery of "crashes"

symbolizes the chaos and destruction caused by the tyrant's negligence, illustrating how authoritarian leadership leads to loss and suffering.

Going on, the poet critiques the disregard for laws meant to protect citizens. The phrase "reckless abandon" conveys a sense of irresponsibility, suggesting that the tyrant prioritizes personal power over public safety. This reinforces the idea that tyranny endangers lives.

The poet continues to emphasize negligence. The technical term "lateral spacing" serves as a metaphor for proper governance and societal order. The refusal to maintain safety protocols reflects how tyrants disrupt social harmony, resulting in physical harm to citizens.

The line "state-sponsored terrorism" illustrates the brutality of tyranny. This suggests that the government itself is responsible for violence against its people, reinforcing the theme of oppression and fear. The mention of "expressways" and "fly-over bridges" situates this violence within everyday life, making it relatable to readers.

This stanza highlights the internal consequences of tyranny on state institutions. The imagery of "cripples" suggests both physical and metaphorical damage, indicating that even those meant to uphold order are affected by oppressive leadership. This critique extends beyond civilian life to include military personnel, emphasizing that tyranny undermines all aspects of society.

The metaphor of driving poorly symbolizes a lack of direction and responsibility in leadership. The phrase "unaware of marked lanes" suggests ignorance or willful blindness to established norms and rules, further critiquing how tyrants neglect their duties.

In this concluding stanza, the poet calls for education and reform among leaders "tyrant-drivers". The metaphorical suggestion that they need a "driving school" implies that effective governance requires knowledge and adherence to principles that promote safety and well-being.

The diction throughout the poem is harsh, using terms like "tyrant," "terrorism," and "reckless abandon." This creates a sense of danger, reflecting the serious implications of tyranny on society. The tone employed is accusatory. The features of tyranny in this poem is seen through the reckless disregard for laws, oppression, and violence against citizens. The metaphorical use of driving emphasizes how such leaders navigate society without concern for safety or well-being. Kola Eke successfully depicts tyranny in the above poems in the collection, *Predator President, August 1985 VI* and *Tyrant-Drivers*, by using vivid imagery, metaphors, and strong diction to convey the actions, and consequences posed by oppressive leadership. By personifying leaders as predator presidents, draughtsman, and reckless drivers, these poems effectively communicates how tyranny disrupts social order and harms individuals. Overall, this formalistic exploration reveals how these three poems examined, employs literary devices to critique tyranny as a profound social vice while emphasizing the need for responsible governance in society.

CHAPTER FOUR

CORRUPTION AS A SOCIAL VICE

Corruption is widely recognized as a social vice that undermines societal values and institutions. It reflects a deviation from ethical norms, prioritizing personal gain over public interest, which erodes trust in governance and social cohesion. Scholars argue that corruption is driven by underlying vices such as greed and self-interest, which can be exacerbated by weak institutional frameworks. Corruption in the poems under study manifests in different forms, which could be through religious, moral, social, political and economic forms. Corruption can occur in a society, family, religious gathering, educational setting and business organization.

The consequences of corruption include increased inequality, diminished economic growth, and a decline in moral standards, impacting the overall stability of societies. Thus, addressing corruption requires not only legal reforms but also a cultural and moral shift towards ethical conduct and accountability.

Focusing on the Eke's ability to use language structure, literary devices and themes to examine, depict and criticize corruption as a social vice in this collection. Looking at few poems in the collection that has different forms of corruption as a prominent social vice.

RELIGIOUS CORRUPTION

One of which is titled "Prosperity Gospel", is a poem that critiques the social vice of materialism and corruption within religious institutions, particularly focusing on the

exploitation inherent in the prosperity gospel movement. A formalistic analysis reveals how the poet employs various literary devices, diction, tone, and structure to convey this critique.

Persona says thus:

Prosperity gospel

Continues unabated

Pastors talking too much

On material acquisition

A peculiar tingling

pains down our thighs

as preachers jettison

reality of heaven and hell

Gross misrepresentation of

The Bible

An inkling of danger

in the air

Prosperity preachers

A vast afforestation of

Exotic cars

Limousines

The poet begins the poem with the first two lines "Prosperity gospel continues unabated" to emphasize the ongoing nature of this corruption. The focus on "material acquisition" highlights a materialistic ethos. The poet critiques the obsession with wealth among pastors, suggesting that spiritual teachings have been replaced with "material acquisition" and corrupted by greed.

The imagery of "a peculiar tingling pains down our thighs" evokes a physical reaction, symbolizing discomfort with the disconnect between spiritual teachings and material pursuits. This stanza depicts the neglect of fundamental spiritual truths (heaven and hell) in favor of earthly desires.

Eke uses the term "gross misrepresentation" which conveys a strong negative connotation, indicating deceit in how biblical teachings are presented. The poet warns of the dangers posed by prosperity preachers who distort religious texts for personal gain. A vast afforestation of exotic cars" employs a metaphor, comparing the proliferation of luxury items to an unnatural growth. This metaphor illustrates how prosperity preachers prioritize wealth over spiritual integrity, creating a façade of success.

Going deeper into the poem, the phrase "the preacher preaches what they like to hear" is an ironic statement, as it critiques the pandering nature of sermons catering to congregants' desires, highlights how preachers manipulate their messages to attract followers, compromising their moral authority.

The juxtaposition of "poverty is a nuisance" and "poverty is an enemy" emphasizes the disdain for poverty within this theology. The poet critiques the simplistic view that equates wealth with virtue and poverty with failure, perpetuating social inequality. The line in the next stanza "trick us out of our life savings" employs a strong metaphor, depicting financial exploitation by pastors, underscores the nature of prosperity teachings that exploit vulnerable followers for financial gain. This exploitation is one that goes on every day in the religious society and because of the desperation of this people they become vulnerable to whatever these religious leaders tell them to do and would believe anything they say because they think it is the right thing to do or believe in order for their situation to change.

Ending this poem there is use of repetition in this stanza "addicted with exotic shoes", "affiliated with exotic houses" emphasizes the superficiality of prosperity preachers' lifestyles. This highlights the hypocrisy of leaders who preach wealth while indulging in excess, further corrupting their message. Showing how these preachers rip the wealth of their vulnerable members through corrupt and deceptive ways and use this for their personal gain. These preachers preach about prosperity in the wrong way and only get to enjoy this prosperity because they are taking it from the people they are purposely and consciously misleading.

The imagery of "like the Ibibios", "we must rub ashes all over fake pastors" uses a cultural reference to suggest public humiliation. This final stanza calls for accountability and exposes fraudulent practices within the church, advocating for a return to genuine spirituality. The poem primarily addresses economic and moral corruption in a religious setting, focusing on how prosperity gospel teachings exploit followers' desires for wealth while distorting religious truths. It critiques the commodification of faith and the ethical implications of such practices. By illustrating how prosperity messages distort spiritual teachings for financial gain, the poem encourages readers to reflect on their values and beliefs within religious contexts. The concluding call for accountability serves as a powerful reminder that reform is necessary to restore integrity in faith practices.

The language structure features short, impactful lines that create a rhythmic quality. The use of repetition emphasizes key ideas, while varied sentence lengths contribute to a

dynamic flow. Additionally, the progression from observation to critique reflects an escalating concern about corruption in religious practices.

SOCIAL CORRUPTION

Another poem is titled "Migratory Kites", it addresses corruption through the form of exploitation and loss of dignity, particularly focusing on the migration of young girls driven by economic necessity using animal imagery to convey this message. A formalistic analysis reveals the literary devices, diction, tone, and structure that the poet employs to critique this issue.

The persona says thus:

Like migratory kites

Young girls migrate

For breeding and cash supply

Women bereft of dignity

Swallows migrate from

Northern Europe to

South Africa

For breeding and food supply

Little girls migrate from

Green Republic

Like migratory birds

To Europe

Migration in young girls

Engineered by

Cash needs

Changes in climatic conditions

Like kites

Some women undergo migration

At the beginning of

Dry season

Let us teach migratory

Kites

How to build nests

How to survive

Eke begins the poem with the simile "Like migratory kites" establishing a comparison between young girls and birds, suggesting their lack of agency in migration. The line "bereft of dignity" conveys a strong emotional impact. This opening stanza highlights the vulnerability of young girls who migrate for economic reasons, emphasizing their loss of dignity.

Going further into the poem, is the imagery of swallows migrating "from Northern Europe to South Africa" serves as a contrast to the plight of young girls, emphasizing the natural instinct of birds versus the forced migration of humans. This contrast critiques societal conditions that compel young girls to leave their homes for survival.

The line "Little girls migrate from Green Republic" uses metaphor, suggesting innocence lost in the pursuit of economic opportunities. The poet critiques the harsh realities that force children into migration, stripping them of their childhood.

The repetition in "Night migratory birds", "Without stars" shows lack of guidance and underscores the uncertainty faced by those who migrate under difficult circumstances. Many lines of animal imagery emphasizes a sense of aimlessness, Eke speaks on the hopelessness those who are forced to migrate face, because of the poor conditions of the economy.

The line "engineered by cash needs" uses a metaphorical expression to highlight economic pressures causing this girls to migrate, particularly young girls seeking financial stability.

The simile "like kites" suggests fragility and lack of control over their circumstances. The line "beginning of dry season" implies a seasonal cycle tied to economic hardship. This lays emphasizes how external factors dictate the lives and choices of these young girls. The call to "teach migratory kites how to build nests" employs a metaphor for empowerment and survival skills. This final stanza advocates for education and support systems that can help vulnerable populations reclaim their dignity.

These poem explores the migration of young girls, in most cases these migrations are through illegal and dangerous routes. The poets speaks on how corruption has led to poor economic conditions in a nation which is causing its citizens to look for means to survive

and make ends meet. The migration of these young girls are for corrupt purposes, but these girls are said to be out of option and choice to survive, the conditions these girls are in just to survive makes them lose their dignity and begin to feel less of themselves. These girls could be sold out for illegal financial purposes by those with power and money, owned and used during these conditions and some of them are under pressure so they do what they can to survive. Eke ends this poem with a plea that survival and empowerment skills should be available to these young girls in order to avoid these migrations, he speaks on the need for education and support systems to be available to vulnerable society members.

The poet's diction is evocative, using words like "bereft," and "migrate," which convey a sense of urgency and emotional weight. The tone is empathetic, reflecting concern for the plight of young girls while condemning societal structures that perpetuate exploitation. This tone enhances the poem's critique by emphasizing the seriousness of the issue.

The poem creates awareness on social and economic corruption, focusing on how systemic inequalities force vulnerable individuals, particularly young girls, into precarious situations. It critiques the exploitation inherent in economic systems that prioritize profit over human dignity.

By illustrating how economic pressures lead to the exploitation of young girls, the poem encourages readers to reflect on their roles in combating such injustices. The concluding

call for empowerment serves as a powerful reminder that change is possible through education and support for vulnerable populations.

Additionally, the progression from observation to advocacy reflects an escalating concern about exploitation and loss of dignity. This structured approach enhances the overall effectiveness of the critique against social corruption affecting vulnerable individuals.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION

Thirdly, a poem titled "Poll Shift II" critiques corruption in the electoral process, portraying it as a cancerous social vice that undermines democracy and civic responsibility. A formalistic analysis reveals how the poet employs various literary devices and diction to convey this message effectively.

The phrase "Poll shift" serves as a refrain, emphasizing the recurring theme of electoral corruption. The metaphor "cancerous for food vendors" suggests that corruption is not only harmful but also pervasive, affecting basic needs.

This opening stanza sets the tone for the poem, indicating that corruption has far-reaching consequences on society's foundational aspects, including food security.

The imagery of "re-constructing buildings and structures of marriages" employs metaphor to illustrate how corruption necessitates rebuilding societal norms and relationships.

The poet highlights the disruption caused by electoral malpractice, forcing individuals to rethink their social structures and commitments. The line "unable to ejaculate their civic duties" uses euphemism, contrasting the intimate language with the serious topic of civic engagement.

This stark imagery underscores the impotence felt by voters in fulfilling their democratic responsibilities due to systemic corruption.

The term "impending staggered elections" introduces a sense of foreboding, while "aeroplanes could not catapult" employs metaphor to suggest that progress and change are stalled. This stanza conveys a sense of urgency and frustration regarding the electoral process being hindered by corrupt practices.

The repetition of "voters cackle with sadness" uses oxymoron to juxtapose laughter with sorrow, illustrating the absurdity of their situation.

This imagery reflects the disillusionment of voters who find humor in their despair, highlighting the tragicomic nature of their experience with corruption.

The metaphor of "the cabin crew of elections and voting" likens electoral officials to airline staff, implying they prioritize satisfaction over integrity.

This comparison critiques those in power for treating elections as mere transactions rather than democratic processes.

The line "electoral shepherds to conduct elections" employs a pastoral metaphor, suggesting that officials guide voters like sheep, indicating a lack of agency among the populace.

This final stanza underscores the manipulation inherent in the electoral system, where leaders exploit their positions rather than serve the public interest.

The poet's diction is sharp and evocative, using terms like "cancerous," and "shepherds," which convey strong imagery and emotional weight. The tone is critical, effectively capturing the gravity of electoral corruption while also infusing a sense of irony. This duality enhances the poem's critique by highlighting both the seriousness of the issue and its absurdity.

The poem primarily addresses political corruption, specifically focusing on electoral malpractice. It highlights issues such as voter disenfranchisement, manipulation by officials, and systemic failures that undermine democratic processes.

The poet successfully critiques this social vice by employing vivid imagery, metaphors, and a tone that resonates with readers. By illustrating how corruption affects not only elections but also fundamental societal structures, the poem encourages reflection on the need for accountability and reform within political systems. The use of humor amidst despair further emphasizes the absurdity of the situation, urging readers to recognize and challenge these corrupt practices actively.

MORAL CORRUPTION

Final analysis of corruption as a social vice in this collection, is in the poem "Fashion Homes" which critiques moral decay within religious institutions, particularly focusing on the inappropriate dressing habits of female worshippers.

The line "Transfiguration of churches into fashion homes" uses metaphor to depict churches as places of superficiality rather than spiritual sanctuaries. The first stanza establishes the central theme of corruption, suggesting that religious spaces have transformed into venues for fashion rather than worship. The imagery of women attending service "with their bodies" highlights objectification, emphasizing how physical appearance takes precedence over spiritual engagement. The poet critiques the prioritization of appearance over faith, illustrating how worship has been overshadowed by a focus on indecent dressing.

The poet says thus:

Dressing habit of

female worshippers demonic

Transfiguration of churches

into club houses

Appear enticing and

Attractive

Women wear spaghettis

Mini skirts

Dressing habit

Little or no concern

to ministers

to priests

Exposed bodies of women

Exposed bodies of ladies

Exposed bodies of girls

queue up for Holy Communion

The word "demonic" suggests a strong negative connotation , portraying the dressing habits as morally reprehensible. This stanza reinforces the idea that the transformation of churches into "club houses" shows the loss of moral values within religious practices.

The phrase "appear enticing and attractive" is an irony, as it critiques the allure of indecent dressing while highlighting its inappropriate nature in a religious context. The poet emphasizes the contradiction between seeking spiritual fulfillment and succumbing to worldly temptations.

The repetition in "dressing habit" from the third stanza and in the fifth stanza followed by "little or no concern to ministers to priests" underscores neglect among church leaders. This highlights a failure of religious authorities to uphold moral standards, indicating that they are either indifferent or complicit in this corruption.

The repetition of "exposed bodies" creates a rhythmic emphasis on the physicality of women, reinforcing objectification and drawing attention to inappropriate attire, this literary device serves as a means to critique how women's bodies are displayed in sacred spaces, detracting from the sanctity of worship.

The lines "half nakedness and near nakedness" use hyperbole, exaggerating the extent of indecency to highlight its absurdity in a church setting. This exaggeration examines societal norms that allow such behavior in places meant for reverence and spirituality.

Eke calls for churches to "cultivate the seed of dress codes" employs a metaphorical suggestion for reform. This last stanza advocates for a return to moral standards within religious institutions, urging them to take responsibility for maintaining decorum.

The poet's diction is pointed and provocative, using terms like "transfiguration," "demonic," and "exposed bodies," which convey strong emotional weight. The tone is admonishing, reflecting disappointment with both worshippers and church authorities. This tone enhances the poem's message by emphasizing the seriousness of moral decay within religious contexts.

The poem addresses moral corruption, particularly focusing on the sexualization and objectification within religious settings. It critiques how societal values have infiltrated spiritual spaces, leading to inappropriate behavior that undermines the sanctity of worship. The poet effectively critiques this social vice by employing vivid imagery, strong diction, and repetition that reinforces key themes. By illustrating how indecent dressing has corrupted the essence of worship, the poem encourages readers to reflect on their values and behaviors within religious contexts. The concluding call for dress codes serves as a powerful reminder that reform is necessary to restore dignity and respect in places of worship.

The four poems collectively explore the pervasive social vice of corruption in various facets of society, particularly within religious and political contexts. Each poem presents a unique perspective on how corruption manifests and its detrimental effects on individuals and communities. Through their use of literary devices, strong diction, and varied tones, the poets effectively critique these issues, urging readers to reflect on their

implications for society. The call for reform resonates throughout, emphasizing the need for integrity and accountability in both religious and political spheres.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This research critically examines the social vices in a collection of poems by Kola Eke "August 1985 and other poems" using a formalistic theory as its theoretical framework. Through the exploration of these various social vices depicted in this collection, the study analyses how the poet uses literary devices, language, diction, tone, rhyme and structure to explore these vices such as hypocritical leadership, tyranny and corruption as well as create awareness and provide solution. This research illustrates how a piece of literary work in its originality and authenticity hold lots of meanings and interpretation when carefully studied. Using this theory, gave way to the fact that literature works do not always need external factors to be completely interpreted or understood.

Chapter One, introduced this study by outlining the purpose, scope, theoretical framework, scholarship review and thesis statement, thereby establishing the importance of formalistic theory in understanding the social vices depicted in Kola Eke's collection.

Chapter Two, focuses on hypocritical leadership as a social vice prominent in Eke's collection, examining the impact of fake leaders and their promises on the people of the society. The manipulation, deceit and exploitation of vulnerable individuals in order to gain political positions, and financial benefits, just to please themselves at the detriment of the citizens. This vice is prominent in several nations, especially African nations up to date.

Chapter Three, analyses tyranny as a social vice, examining poems in the collection like Predator President, August 1985 VI and Tyrant-drivers to criticise the brutal and oppressive rule of leaders on citizens and the various forms this social vice manifest, as it slowly creeps into a society and then grows causing great harm to the citizens just because these ruling class wants everything to go according to how they please.

Chapter Four, examines corruption as the last prominent social vice in this research through poems like Fashion homes, Poll Shift II, Prosperity gospel and Migratory Kites. This chapter focused more on social vices in the religious society, as other chapters focused more on political and economic forms. This study criticizes the immoral shift from spirituality to superficiality, how pastors use their position to gain wealth through vulnerability of the congregation. Also this study explores electoral rigging and corruption, and the effect of corruption on citizens as young girls are forced to migrate under illegal and immoral circumstances for corrupt purposes and end up losing their sense of dignity and pride.

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