

**YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL VICES IN ADAOBI TRICIA
NWAUBANI'S *I DO NOT COME TO YOU BY CHANCE* AND CHRIS ABANI'S
*GRACELAN***

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE
FACULTY OF ARTS**

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

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**AN ORIGINAL ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this study was carried out by **Agatha Uzorchukwu NWALI (Matric No. ART2000217)** in the department of English and Literature, University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

PROF. ADEKUNLE P. MAMUDU
(Project Supervisor)

DATE

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to Youth in the Nigerian society who engage in social vices because of Pressures that comes with unemployment.

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With a heart of gratitude and lips of praise, I return all the glory and honour to God for his endless love upon my life. I appreciate him for granting me insight to start and complete this project, may his name be praise forever and forever, Amen.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page - - - - -	ii
Certification- - - - -	iii
Dedication- - - - -	v
Acknowledgements - - - - -	vi
Table of Contents- - - - -	vii
Abstract- - - - -	ix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Study - - - - -	1
1.2 Scope of Study - - - - -	1
1.3 Methodology - - - - -	1
1.4 Theoretical Background- - - - -	2
1.5 Review of Literature - - - - -	4
1.6. Thesis Statement - - - - -	8

CHAPTER TWO: PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE

2.1 Introduction - - - - -	9
2.2 Loss of Identity and Self Worth- - - - -	9
2.3 Decision Making - - - - -	12
2.4 Desperation- - - - -	16
2.5 Conclusion- - - - -	19

CHAPTER THREE: ECONOMIC FACTORS

3.1 Introduction - - - - -	20
3.2 Family Financial Pressure- - - - -	20
3.3 Skill Wastage- - - - -	23
3.4 Government Negligence - - - - -	26
3.5 Conclusion- - - - -	29

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

Works Cited- - - - -	32
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ABSTRACT

The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria has been linked to a rise in social vices, particularly among young people. With limited opportunities for employment, many youths turn to criminal activities such as drug trafficking, fraud, kidnapping etc as a means of survival. This does not pose to the safety and security of society but hinders the country's economic development.

This study will focus on the pressures that make youths in the Nigerian society settle for social vices because of their unemployed state. It makes use of the qualitative research method to carry out textual analysis of the novels as it helps understand the view that both authors have towards Youth unemployment in the Nigerian society.

Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Chris Abani's *Graceland* depict the psychological pressure and economic factors that makes youth settle for occupation that does not speak well of them. For instance, Kingsley in Nwaubani's *I do not come to you by chance* decides to become a cyber-fraud and Elvis in Abani's *Graceland* engages himself in different illegal jobs.

This essay does not focus on government as the cause of unemployment but reveals that Youth unemployment contributes to social vices in the Nigerian society and concludes that, if reduced, will curb vices in the Nigeria society.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Study

The essay examines youth unemployment and social vices in Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Christopher Abani's *Graceland*. It explains how youth unemployment leads to the menace of social vices in Nigerian society.

1.2 Scope of Study

This study is limited to Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Christopher Abani's *Graceland*. The study of the novels is based on how youth unemployment leads to social vices in Nigeria.

1.3 Methodology

This study adopts the qualitative research method. Denzin and Lincoln puts it aptly "qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artifacts, and cultural texts and productions, along with observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives" (43) it entails the critical analysis of the two texts namely Adaobi Tricia

Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Christopher Abani's *Graceland*. It also uses secondary materials from the library, Private Journals, Public Journals and the internet.

1.4 Theoretical Background

The theory adopted in this study is New Historicism theory. Emphasis will be based on the historical cultural context of New Historicism theory, its definition and mode of operation. New Historicism theory is a critical movement developed in the 1980s.

New Historicism, a form of literary theory which aims to understand intellectual history through literature and its cultural context, follows the 1950s field of history of ideas and a form of cultural poetics. In 1980, It first developed especially through the work of the critic, Stephen Greenblatt, and it garnered widespread influence in the 1990s (1). For the purpose of this research, The New Historicism approach is the cultural context in which text is produced, rather than focusing on the formal structure of the text itself. Harold Aram Vesser introduces an anthology of essays, *The New Historicism* (1989), which noted some key assumptions which include; "that every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices, that literary and non-literary texts circulate inseparably, etc." (3-13).

According to Murfin Supriya and M. Ray, description of a New Historicists, they analyse it as a person with an eye to history. Acclaiming the "new" in new historicism

does not mean it is a new field of study as many critics that existed between the 1920s and 1950s also focused on the literature's historical content. They also viewed Historicism interpretation as a "consequence." To them, history is not viewed as the cause or the source of the work. Instead, the relationship between history and this is seen as dialectic (logical): the literary text is interpreted as both product and producer, end and source of history. One undeniable side benefit of such view is that history is no longer conceived, as in some vulgar historical scholarship, as a thing wholly prior, a process which completes the appearance of the work (456).

The literary text is said to be a component of culture's ideology by virtue of passing it on. Jean E. Howard says the whole point of New Historicist enterprise, "is to grasp the terms of the discourse which made it possible [for contemporaries] to see the facts of their own time in a particular way-indeed, made it possible to see certain phenomena as facts at all (1)." The New Historicist sees fact that the people of the time does not, and this special insight is what enables him to grasp the "discursive practices" that produced the fact that the people does not see.

According to Maria Muresan, one of the most profitable association remains between literary criticism and history, in the form of the new historicism. The movement emphasizes the importance of the role played by the historical context in the interpretation of artistic creations. Thus, the past becomes open. The writings having meaning only in relation to other writings, their value depending on the value given to

them, directly or indirectly, by the discourses of the time. In other words, in the author's opinion, the meaning given to a text by the initial readers remains unchanged. The difference is that today's critical readers are more aware of the political and the cultural conventions of the past than the ancient public because the latter assumed these models as part of the collective imagination.

1.5 Review of Related Scholarship

This review examines existing scholarly works on Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Chris Abani's *Graceland*. Oluwole in his review of the novel observes that Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* is a fictional work that addresses development issues. He argues that by showing internet fraud, the writer shows how people can be negative in a society that makes them feel less human. He compares this idea to Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain*, when he says: This is what he has to say:

Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, development fiction as a paradigm of engagement assumes another dimension. In fact, Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* finds a worthy ally in *I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, the differentiating element being the strength of will of the central character of the latter, compared to the former. It can be argued that what Odogua lacks in confidence and will, Kingsley possess in abundance. It is, therefore, apt to say that, while Ndibe's characterization

seems weak, the helplessness of the victims, Nwaubani's characters seem imbued with the creative drive and motivation to be assertive over their despicable situation (108).

Okparanta notes that the novel uncovers the complication of the moral question. According to him, citing an illustration from the Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You By Chance*, the novel challenges the reader to understand the ethical and non-ethical aspects of the 419 (advance fee fraud) machinery, blurring the lines between good and bad. Through the character of Cash Daddy, Nwaubani expounds on "self-enrichment" and individual wealth, raising questions about the true goals of the 419 scams and through Kingsley, challenges the post-colonial political structure that makes unemployment a norm (np). Okparanta further justifies through the unemployed status of Kingsley that experience writes a new chapter into people. This can be justified from the quote of Henry James: "Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue" (152).

As a result, the work is an exposition that literature is society in pages. As astutely reflected, it is the ageless life of man in motion. It is an illustration that explains the idea behind moral question, that greed will lead to more greed and the normalisation of it, the assassination of characters.

Lawal in his article entitled, “exploration of internet syndrome” state that, “the central message of the novel is the demonstration of internet syndrome.” He opines that in reading of the text, one sees the true picture of Nigerian society embedded in the story. The aim of Nwaubani in *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* is to reveal the ways and the extent at which corruption in many forms has eaten deep into the systems of Nigerian society to the extent that integrity does not matter so far one is economically buoyant regardless of the source of one’s wealth.

Furthermore, Sarah Harrison review that Abani’s *Graceland* extends a long tradition of Lagos literature by re-imagining the city from the perspective of its poorest population. He further critiques the instability and inconsistency of the postcolonial nation-state. Specifically, through his formal and thematic elaboration of a “suspension” leitmotif, Abani demonstrates the paralyzing imbrication of the local, national, and global discourses of development that collide at the urban margins. While national models of progress are proven untenable by the discrepant trajectories of development that intersect the city, the promise of cultural transnationalism is equally circumscribed by Elvis’s immersion in a global economic system that perpetuates his marginalization. (94)

Delores Philips in his review in the Taylor and Francis online article observe that the deployment of recipes and food images in Abani’s *Graceland* presents a complicated image of Lagos, Nigeria, in which the cultural archive of the recipe collection proves incompatible with the excrement of everyday life. He argues that the directives in the

recipe collections in the text purport to offer a complete manifestation of Nigerian culture, but only ambivalently perform their given task as they fail confront the excesses that flood the novel (105).

Mathew Omelesky notes in his review that Christopher Abani's *Graceland* unsettles notions of youth, "empowerment or resistance," creating a restless oscillation between cynicism and idealism. He also views the move from the lens of the theme of restriction and violence. He opines that:

Pervasive violence and restricting norms seem to debilitate the novel's characters, leaving little room to negotiate the constraints of their bleak lives in the slums of Lagos. On the other hand, there is a certain euphoric optimism that pervades the novel particularly among youth which is undergirded primarily by idealized non-African. The persistent fluctuation between suffocating violence and utopian thoughts of the "outside" renders the politics of *Graceland* fundamentally ambiguous. (84)

Ashley Dawson looks at the novel in the area of structural adjustment and self-fashioning. He posits that post-colonial scholars have not fully address issues relating to urban space and society. However, narratives of formation in the city such as the one that structure Chris Abani's novel *Graceland* offer allegories of postcolonial hopes for economic development and political reform. Lauren Mason depict that Chris Abani's

Graceland treats photographs, films, and other visual representations of cities as emerging cultural narratives in Nigeria. He further state that:

While Abani's novel reaffirms the important role literary exchange has played in formations of diaspora, it opens a space for us to consider the ways in which visual narratives are renegotiating and redefining contemporary notions of it. Visual media in *Graceland* extend diaspora formations to tropes of images and the interplay between written and visual narratives, accounting for how visual media shape notions of diaspora in the 21st century. (16)

John Schwetman views the novel in the area of migration and its effects. He says that Elvis's journey from his Igbo village to Lagos and then the US shows a tragic loss of connection to his roots, but also prepares him for a more diverse life abroad. He further states that:

Elvis's story represents a tragic series of estrangements from his native Igbo culture. From a cosmopolitan perspective, which seeks to overcome attachments to place, Elvis's development is slightly more positive. His time in Lagos equips him to move to a diverse community of immigrants in the United States where he will have more access to the international cultural influences that he seeks. (184)

Above all, while other scholars have examined both texts on the aspect of economic disparity and the impact of globalization on individual lives, with little examination on

unemployment and its pressures, this study intends to explore how unemployment affects young people and the pressures that drive them towards social vices in Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Chris Abani's *Graceland*.

1.6 Thesis Statement

Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Christopher Abani's *Graceland* establish that Psychological pressures and Economic factors are causes of Youth Unemployment and Social Vices in the Nigerian society.

CHAPTER TWO

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the psychological pressures in Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Christopher Abani's *Graceland* which include loss of identity and self-worth, decision making and desperation. It extracts instances from both texts that shows how the psychological pressures lead to youth unemployment and social vices.

2.2 Loss of Identity and Self Worth

In Nwaubani's *I Do Not to You by Chance*, Kingsley, the protagonist, is presented as one who struggles to regain his identity and self-worth due to his unemployed state. The author uses his lifestyle to showcase youth who are unemployed in the Nigerian

society and how that they look for different means to survive even if it is to inflict pain on other people. At the initial stage, his source of self-worth is to get an engineering job after graduation. However, due to him not getting a job makes him helpless considering the fact that he is the “Opara,” the first son of his parent. He decides to join his uncle known as cash daddy who is a cyberfraud also known as 419. As he begins to make it through the fraudulent act, he realizes how he has detached himself from his dream and aspiration:

Was the sacrifice I was making in 419 worth it?

Does it make sense to set my dreams aside in keen pursuit of cash?

I could do without the eight-bedroom house and the driver and the gardener and the cook, but how about the welfare of my family?

My sister could do without McVities biscuits and Gucci shoes, but how about a good education? (254).

This above statement depicts how Nigerian youth grapple with their inner self and are left with no choice than to engage in vices that tend to diminish their identity and self-worth. Another scenario of loss of identity and self-worth is presented in the text when Kingsley exchange pleasantries at the airport with his classmate, Andrew, who brags about his work status, Kingsley realizing how much he detests to talk about his current work status informs him that he is into importing and exporting. In a satirical manner,

Andrew replies:” And now you are into exporting and importing. What is the point of going into sciences if you are not going to use it?” (235).

The reply he gets depict his lack of self-worth and also display how youth has neglect their aspiration due to unemployment. Additionally, Christopher Abani’s *Graceland* also demonstrate loss of identity and self-worth in the life of the protagonist, Elvis. Elvis like many young people faces a dearth of opportunities in his neighbourhood. He becomes hopeless as he is unable to get a job after dropping out from school as such, he tries to become Elvis Presley, an American Idol in other to escape from the harsh reality that surrounds him. He visits the beach to sing and dance for the Americans but he is not regarded because he does not look like the Elvis they know:’

“Does he work for the hotel?” “I don’t know.” “So what d’ya think he wants?”

“I think he’s doing an Elvis impersonation,” the harried woman said.

“He doesn’t look like any Elvis I know. Besides, ain’t that wig on back to front? Do you think he speaks English?”

“I don’t think he’s gonna leave until he gets some money,”

Elvis took the two naira; it hardly seemed worth it. His bus fare cost more.

“No dollars?” he asked. “Dollars? Beat it, son. Go on, vamoose.” (15)

This extract above demonstrates how he struggles to become an Elvis Presley impersonator for the purpose of living his American dream as well as gaining profit for dancing and singing at the beach. This desire reflects a loss of identity. Elvis involvement with Redemption further diminishes his worth as he is introduced into a new job which involves wrapping of hard drugs, specifically cocaine. At first, he contemplates if he should do the job but as soon as Redemption persuades him reminding him of his present state, he agrees:

“Your trouble too much. Every time I see you, you say,

‘Hook me up with some money deal.’ Den when I do, you say you don’t know.”

“But—” “Anyway, it is not you I blame, you see?” Redemption interrupted. “I blame myself for involving a boy in a man’s work.”

Elvis heaved a sigh and took a swig from his beer. (104)

2.3 Decision Making

The text entitled *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* depict how the protagonist take some decisions due to his challenges. Nwaubani uses the idea of decision making to examine how young people decide to engage in fraudulent acts in other to survive the harsh reality of life when they are unable to get a proper job. Kingsley decides to work

for his uncle after realising that he has nothing to sustain him and his family as they depend on him: “Right there and then, a switch flipped inside my head. Indeed, my father was no more. And it was my responsibility to start caring for the people who were still here. There was nothing stopping me now.” (143)

Another instance that drives his sense of decision making is when Ola, his girlfriend, leaves him for another man. During the conversation that confirms that there is another man in her life, he realises he has no choice than to go in search of any job that will fetch him income:

‘So how long have you known this man?’ She sighed, as if she was relieved that we had finally scaled the highest hurdle.

‘I met him a while ago,’ she said. ‘But it wasn’t until recently that things became serious.’

Aha! The Dolce & Gabbana wristwatch and the Gucci slippers and the Fendi handbag. The man was clearly very serious. ‘Who is he?’

‘There’s no need—,’ ‘Just tell me . . . Who is he?’ ‘What are you doing with that information? Are you going to plant a bomb in his car?’

Aha. The man even had a car. All my feelings rolled up into one tight ball of anger. (138).

Furthermore, the general definition of wealth in the society shapes young people's decision. This is evident in the above extract as Ola through the negative influence of wealth abandons Kingsley to marry another man. In one of Kingsley's visit to her mother's shop, she confirms that success is associated with wealthy material when she state:

'Other men are finding their way,' she said. 'Other men know what and what to do to move ahead

Your own is just different. Is it certificate that we shall eat? If I say that you're useless, it'll be as if I'm insulting you.

But since you people met, I can't see anything at all - not one single thing - that Ola has benefited from you.

As far as I'm concerned, you're a complete disappointment.'(49).

In another scenario, his uncle who is involved in 419 gives him reasons to join him as he believes that for one to earn respect in the society, one has to be wealthy as nobody is ready to associate with one who has no wealth to offer:

'So, after all this your education - the one you've done so far - what have you gained from it?

With all the big, big calculations you did with your calculator in school, has it made you to calculate those same amounts of money in your own pocket?

Or in your own bank account? Or in different currencies?’ (125).

In Abani’s *Graceland*, decision making is tied to Elvis state of extreme poverty. He is left to fend for himself and make choices base on his believe. At a tender age, he started looking for job after dropping out of school. Due to his poverty state and the situation of his father who is out of work, he does all sort of menial jobs, such as dancing with an Indian lady at the bar, wrapping hard drugs with Redemption, working as a labourer on the site. Just like *I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, he is left to take decision that suits his present state. The text describes the state of an average young person who goes all out to get any job for survival. All through the novel, Elvis is always smoking alongside his friend, Redemption, who helps him secure a job at the bar. He finds smoking as an escape route from harsh reality even when one of his friend informs him of how dangerous it is to drink and smoke: “Dat cigarette you are smoking like you are drinking water will kill you.” (111).

It further describes how unemployment makes young people drink and take hard drugs in the society. They care less about the danger, it will cause to their health. Aside the protagonist involvement in some vices, the text depicts another aspect of decision making which is also driven by unemployment through the life of Okon who often donate

blood at the hospital in exchange of money. Although, he is aware that it is illegal but he takes the decision to continue when he states:

Okon noted his expression with alarm and explained.

“Blood. De hospital, dey pay us to donate blood.

One hundred naira per pint. If you eat well, you can give four pints in four different hospitals, all in one day.

It’s illegal, of course, but it’s my blood, and it’s helping to save lives, including mine. Right?” (74).

The above statement confirms what young people who are unemployed expose themselves to. King of beggars after scolding Elvis of smoking when he says: “Dat cigarette you are smoking like you are drinking water will kill you.” (111) later request for cigarette from Elvis. Surprisingly, he ask: “I thought you didn’t smoke” (111). The king of beggars, however, explains that everyone is free to make decision based on what they feel is right.

Additionally, the concept of wealth also shapes the decision making of Elvis and others in the text just as it is portrayed in Nwaubani’s *I Do Not Come to You by Chance*. In the case of Elvis, he is introduced into a new business by Redemption that involves wrapping cocaine. At first, he is scared of the consequences, when he says: “This is dangerous, we could go to prison for this” (104). However, Redemption reassures him,

emphasizing that wealth provides an advantage over others: “In dis country you can go to prison if some soldier does not like you. At least with dis you can make some money.”

(104)

2.4 Desperation

This manifest through personal sacrifice, moral compromise and the difficult choices the protagonist in Nwaubani’s *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* finds himself. Despite being a university graduate, he could not get a good job to fend for the need of his family. His desperation reaches a peak when his uncle makes him realise that his dream to get a legal job has not sustained his family’s need:

You know something? Me, I don’t have a problem with poverty as far as it’s a choice somebody has made for himself.

But look at you. Very soon you’ll be standing by the street with a tin cup in your hand – begging. Mind you, no one gets a mouthful of food by picking in between another person’s teeth.

Is that why your sister looks like somebody who hasn’t eaten since Christmas Day?

Is that why your mother is wearing the cloth that other women were wearing in the sixties?’ (126).

The above statement from his uncle who tries to convince him to work for him reveals what is expected of him as the first child of his family. It also reveals how the weight of high expectations with limited or no opportunities make young people in the society chase after things that compromise their integrity. Although, he disagrees at first, but as he realises how vital his family needs are, he could not hold on to his integrity alone for survival as such, he begins to work with his uncle who is into cybercrime.

In Chris Abani's *Graceland*, the ideology of desperation is portrayed in the life of the protagonist, Elvis. His desperation stems from the slum he finds himself while growing up. The society which the protagonist finds himself contribute to his desperation as he wants to go to the state where his dream as a dancer can be appreciated.

For Elvis, he grapples with his integrity when introduced to a new job by Redemption which involves trafficking of young girls into the European countries. He struggles to believe that he is involved in such work, as he questions Redemption of what they will do with the children:

“As I know it, de Colonel dey supply dese children to white people who want to adopt dem.”

“And why are they so silent? Are they drugged?” Silence. “Redemption?”

“I no go lie. Me too done begin to suspect dat story. But as you know, dey have paid us five thousand naira each.”

“When did they pay us?” “I have your share. Don’t worry.” “So what do you think the real deal is with these kids?”

“Well, maybe slavery.” “Slavery? Who still buy slaves?” “Plenty people. Dese children can become prostitute in European country. (221).

The different questions depict how uncomfortable Elvis is with the nature of the job but still finds himself involve because of his desperate desire to make money. This also demonstrate how young people who are unemployed in the society desperately agrees to engage in vices that does not speak well of them and even when they are not comfortable, they still find themselves stuck in there. Another character that the author uses to portray desperation is Okon. When Elvis ask to know what he does to make ends meet, he informs Elvis that he has stopped donating blood in exchange for money and now engage himself with another work as he state:

“No. I stop dat long time. For a while we hijacked corpses from roadsides and even homes which we sold for organ transplants.”

Elvis shuddered. Okon noted it. “I know how you feel,” he said.

“It is bad for a man’s soul, waiting at roadside like vulture, for someone to die, so you can steal fresh corpse, but man must survive.” (251)

From the above statement, Abani depict how the menace of unemployment make young people take step that does not speak well of them but for the sake of surviving, they are left with no choice.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the psychological pressures of youth unemployment as it contributes to social vices in the Nigerian society. It extracts vital examples from both texts that reveals the pressure that comes with youth unemployment and how it affects young people in the society leaving them with no choice than to engage in vices.

CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMIC FACTORS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examine economic factors in Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Christopher Abani's *Graceland* which include: Family

financial pressure, Skill wastage and Government negligence. It analyses extracts from both texts that reveal how the economic factors of youth unemployment of lead to social vices in the society.

3.2 Family Financial Pressure

In Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, the protagonist is faced with financial pressure from family which stirs up the rise of vices. Kingsley who happens to be a graduate represent young people who are unemployed in the Nigerian society and how the high expectations from family makes them desperately search for means to survive. The whole financial pressure begins when his father falls ill, and that makes him face substantial medical expenses. As the "opara" of the home, he willingly accepts to go beg his uncle for assistant when his aunt, Dimma, suggests it:

'Ozoemena, humble yourself. We're talking about Paulinus' life here.

I have his cellular number, but I think it's best to talk to him face-to-face.

You don't have to go yourself.' She nodded at me. 'Send Kings.'

'To Aba or to Lagos?' my mother asked. (85)

The above statement from his aunt depict what is expected of him as the first son of the family. Another scenario that examine financial pressure from family in the text is when Kingsley's brother, Godfrey, comes home rejoicing because of his admission into the higher institution to study Electrical engineering. Although it is good news for

the whole family. Kingsley's worries increase as he remembers the cost of sending his brother to a higher institution. He expresses his concern when he says:

I became worried. It was good that Godfrey had written the JAMB and passed, it was good that he had scored enough for admission into one of the best universities in the country.

On the other hand, it was not good that a fresh expense had been introduced into our lives when we were still doing battle with the current ones.

I forced myself to see the cup half-full rather than half empty.

'Congratulations,' I said, grabbing his arm and pumping it up and down.
(105).

The above extract highlights the responsibilities placed on youth in the society, as parent and other family members often depend on them for livelihood. It further describes how youth naturally becomes pressured especially when their responsibility outweighs their income or when they are unemployed. This situation leaves many with no option but to resort to fraudulent activities, which negatively impact the country's economy, as seen with Kingsley in the text.

Additionally, Abani's *Graceland* also explores the idea of family financial pressure in the life of the protagonist, Elvis, and Angela, one of the characters in the text.

The author's depiction of family financial pressure differs from that in Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance*. However, the author uses the lives of Elvis and Angela to portray how young people are pressured at home to search for means to sustain their families' basic needs. While Nwaubani uses Kingsley to convey the message of a youth who is sent by his parents and is expected to cater for the needs of the family after graduation, Abani reveals the pressure placed on young people who have not yet come of age but are expected to secure a job in order to provide for their family. This pressure stems from family's poverty, which results from the loss of parent's job. At age fourteen, Elvis is pressured by his father to get a job when he says: "Elvis! Elvis! Wake up. It's past six in the morning and all your mates are out there looking for work," his father, Sunday, said. (8).

The above statement from his father depicts how Elvis, at a tender age, is saddled with the responsibility of catering for himself, as his father cannot cater for his need due to his loss of job. It further explores how young people in the Nigerian society whom their parent no longer caters for their needs due to the harsh economic conditions, are left with no other means of survival than engaging in fraudulent acts. The author's portrayal can be seen as a critique of parental failure but it is important to note that parents who have lost hope of securing a job cannot be blamed for their inability to provide for their children.

Another instance of family financial pressure in the text is reflected in the life of Angela, who, like Elvis, works on a building site. In one of their conversations, she complains to Elvis how her father takes her daily earnings: “Angela, who told him that when she took her pay home, her father seized it, blowing it on alcohol.” (30)

This above statement depicts the pressure that Angela experience at home from her father who has no job just like Elvis’ father and that makes her yearn for more income to be able to cater for her needs.

3.3 Skill Wastage

In Nwaubani’s *I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, the idea of skill wastage as an economic factor is depicted through the life of the protagonist, Kingsley. Due to his unemployment, he is unable to utilise his knowledge as a chemical engineer for economic growth. The author uses Kingsley’s plight to reveal the struggles of many youth in the society who lack opportunities to apply what they have learned in their studies. Due to lack of job opportunities in their field of study, they are unable to contribute to the economic development of Nigeria. In the text, Kingsley’s uncle tries to cajole him into working for him, but Kingsley refuses at first, believing he will secure a good job in his field. When cash daddy realises that Kingsley is not willing to join him in his 419 business, he reminds him of the importance of his course of study and questions the income he has gained from it when he says:

‘Apart from when you were using a calculator in your classroom, have you ever written down one million naira in any single transaction before?’

‘So, after all this your education - the one you’ve done so far - what have you gained from it?’

With all the big, big calculations you did with your calculator in school, has it made you to calculate those same amounts of money in your own pocket?

Or in your own bank account? (125).

The above statement from his uncle shows that Kingsley would have made lot of money by just contributing his quota as a chemical engineer to the economy of Nigeria but unfortunately, no job opportunity in any engineering company. This further reveals how young people skills are wasted in the society due to them not being able to get a job that best suit their field of study. At the airport, Kingsley is reminded of the importance of utilising one’s field of study when his classmate questions his decision of going into importing and exporting instead of working in an engineer; ‘And now you’re importing and exporting. What was the point of going into sciences if you weren’t intending to use it in the end?’ (235).

The statement above from Andrew reveals the different happenings in the society whereby graduate are not opportune to work based on what they study and this in turn

leads to economic implication as they are left with no other option than to engage in fraudulent activities for survival sake.

Additionally, Abani's *Graceland* also examine skill wastage in the life of the protagonist, Elvis. In the case of Elvis, he is blessed with the talent of dancing and wishes to become an Elvis Presley impersonator. At the beginning of the text, he is reminded by his father that his talent of dancing is useless in his society and there is a need for him to get a better job for survival: "What work, sir? I have a job." "Dancing is no job. We all dance in de bar on Saturday." (8)

His father's believe that his dancing skill is not a job portrays the general believe of people in the Nigerian society, who fails to agree that dancing and singing cannot earn them good income, as such, people who have such skills are not able to showcase it and are hindered from utilising the skills. Also, Elvis is reminded by his friend, Redemption, that the only place where his skill as a dancer can be regarded is in the United states: "States is de place where dreams come true, not like dis Lagos dat betray your dreams." (28)

This statement above reveal how the Nigerian society has disregard lots of young people's dream, which has make them lose interest in what they love to do. As such, they settle for fraudulent activities such as drug trafficking, human smuggling as portrayed in the text.

3.4 Government Negligence

One of the ways government negligence is portrayed in Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* is in the fact that job opportunities are not provided for young graduate as it is reflected in the novel through the life of Kingsley. Kingsley who happens to graduate with the best result in chemical engineering is unable to get a job to sustain himself and his family. At different occasions, he passes the interview test but ends up getting a rejection letter and this makes him point out how easy it is for those who have connection to get a job when he says:

But the way things worked in our society these days, besides paper qualifications and a high intelligence quotient, you usually needed to have 'long-leg'.

You needed to know someone, or someone who knew someone, before you could access the most basic things.

Still, as I progressed from one stage of the interview to the other, we had all assumed that this time would be different.

Someone had identified that I had graduated as best student in my Chemical Engineering class. Surely, they could see that I was an outstanding brain. (34).

From the above excerpt, the author reveals how government negligence brings about the rise of corruption in the society as many young people who do not have or

know anyone in the works sector are not opportune to get a job regardless of their educational qualifications. Also, government negligence is portrayed in the health sector as medical practitioners fail to pay full attention to patients in the government hospitals. Nwaubani reveals this when Kingsley is invited into the doctor's office concerning his father's health and he says.

When I entered the consulting room and saw the well-dressed, middle-aged physician, my heart started pounding like a locomotive.

This particular doctor only made cameo appearances on the ward.

Doctors like him had little time to spare on Government Hospital patients who were not paying even a fraction of the fees that the patients in their private practices were.

Usually, it was the lesser, hungry-looking, shabbily dressed doctors who attended to us. (107).

This statement above depict how medical practitioners in the Nigeria society fails to pay full attention to patient in public hospitals due to the government not providing the necessary equipment to aid the health care of the people and also not paying their salaries for the much work they have carried out. This in turn showcases how some employed persons still struggle to survive just like unemployed individuals because of non-payment of salaries.

Additionally, Abani's *Graceland* reveals negligence of government through the ordeal of Elvis and other people in the text. Elvis is advised to drop out from school by Redemption as he believes that school will not provide him the avenue to exhibit his art which is as a result of lack of investment in education by the government. The author points out how Redemption never goes to school but gets promoted by just giving his headmaster and teachers different gifts: "He'd turned up maybe twice a month with gifts for the teachers and the headmaster, who always bumped him cheerfully to the next class." (27)

This statement reveals the rise of corruption that stirs from the harsh reality of the teachers and headmaster, who pay less attention to Redemption's education but focuses on promoting him because of the gift they receive from him as they are employed but still looks unemployed due to government neglecting its workers. Also, the lack of good job opportunities makes Elvis desire to go to the state as advised by Redemption, his friend, in one of their conversations: "States is de place where dreams come true, not like dis Lagos dat betray your dreams," (28).

The excerpt above reveals how young talented people in Nigeria seek ways to leave the country and go in search of better lives abroad as government fails to provide an avenue to get better jobs or even get a sound education which deter the economy of the country as young people engages in fraudulent means in other to survive.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined points in both texts that portray the different economic factors of youth unemployment that leads to social vices. It reveals how young people struggle to cater for themselves and their family due to the financial pressures they experience and how they have no choice than to let go of their dreams to seek other ways to survive. Kingsley and Elvis halt their respective dreams and engage in fraudulent activities to be able to make ends meet in the society as government pays less attention to providing good job opportunities for young people

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

This study has examined youth unemployment and social vices in Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by chance* and Christopher Abani's *Graceland*. The first chapter highlights the purpose and scope of the study, which refers to the areas the study covers. It reveals that the primary texts used to discuss youth unemployment and social vices are Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Abani's *Graceland*. The chapter then reveals that the theoretical background employed for the analysis of the study is New Historicism theory. This theory is adopted in order to explore the menace of youth unemployment in the Nigerian society. The texts used for this study are reviewed, paying close attention to the ideas of other literary critics and scholars. Also, the study reveals a thesis statement that guides how the research work is presented.

The second chapter examines psychological pressure in both texts. This has to do with examining the issues that reveals loss of identity, decision making, and desperation as psychological pressures. In this chapter, instances where unemployed youth struggles to survive in the society and how they desperately make decisions which does not speak well of them are examined. The chapter reveals how Kingsley and Elvis from the texts survives the menace of unemployment by engaging in different vices.

The third chapter examines the economic factors from the texts. It reveals how young people who are unemployed neglect their dreams and aspirations to go in search of any work that can earn them income. For instance, Kingsley in Nwaubani's *I Do Not*

come to You by Chance halts his dream of becoming a chemical engineer, to settle for cyber-crime also known as 419. Also, Elvis in Abani's *Graceland* neglects his dream of becoming a dancer to settle for drug and human trafficking. Furthermore, the chapter shows government negligence towards job creation in the society. This fourth chapter then concludes the research.

Analysis from the various chapters makes it clear that youth unemployment contributes to vices in the Nigerian society. Unemployed youths continue to find means of survival as they pay lesser attention to the nature of the job they settle for, even at the expense of their lives and society at large. Government in the present day Nigeria still fall short of their responsibility in creating jobs for young people. Hence, the steps they take are no doubt cause by their inability to meet their needs. However, this study does not depict the government as the major cause of unemployment in the Nigerian society, and neither does it blame the youths for engaging in social vices. This study reveals that Youth unemployment contributes to vices in the society. Therefore, if reduced, will help keep the Nigerian society sane and serene.

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