

**SATIRISING THE MILITARY: IDRIS AMALI'S GENERALS
WITHOUT WAR AS A CASE IN POINT**

BY

Luther Wefechukwu AKPOTOHWO

ART 2000784

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

FEBRUARY 2025

**SATIRISING THE MILITARY: IDRIS AMALI'S GENERALS
WITHOUT WAR AS A CASE IN POINT**

BY

Luther Wefechukwu AKPOTOHWO

ART 2000784

**AN ESSAY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF ART (HONS) IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
AND LITERATURE, FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY
EDO STATE, NIGERIA**

FEBRUARY 2025

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this study was carried out by **Luther Wefechukwu AKPOTOHWO** in the Department of English and Literature, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

Professor Kola C. Eke
Supervisor

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my beloved family, especially my mum and dad whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my greatest strength. To my friends and mentors, who have guided me with wisdom and patience, I am truly grateful.

A special dedication to all scholars and literary enthusiasts who appreciate the beauty of imagism in literature may this work contribute in its own way to the ever-evolving study of poetic expression.

Above all, I thank God for the wisdom, perseverance, and inspiration that have carried me through this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I am profoundly grateful to God Almighty for granting me the strength, wisdom, and perseverance to complete this project. His guidance and grace have been my source of inspiration and endurance throughout this academic journey.

I extend my sincere appreciation to my project supervisor, Professor Kola C. Eke whose invaluable guidance, constructive criticism, and unwavering support have been instrumental in shaping this research. Your patience, encouragement, and keen insight have contributed significantly to the success of this work. I am truly grateful for your mentorship sir.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my lecturers and the entire faculty for their dedication to imparting knowledge and fostering my academic growth. Their teachings, advice, and support have played a crucial role in broadening my understanding and equipping me with the necessary skills to undertake this project.

To my beloved family, words cannot express my appreciation for your constant love, prayers, and encouragement. Your sacrifices and unwavering belief in my abilities have been my driving force.

I especially thank my mum and dad Mr and Mrs AKPOTOHWO for your continuous support and for always motivating me to strive for excellence. Furthermore, I acknowledge the contributions of scholars and researchers whose

works have served as a foundation for this study. Their dedication to knowledge and academic excellence has been instrumental in shaping my research.

Lastly, I appreciate everyone who, in one way or another, contributed to the successful completion of this project. Your kindness and assistance have not gone unnoticed. Thank you all

Luther Wefechukwu AKPOTOHWO

February 2025

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Life and Works of Idris Amali

Idris Amali was born in the early 1950s into the family of Mallam Aliyu Amali in Oturkpo, Benue State of Nigeria. He attended St. Andrew Primary school as well as Wesley High school Oturkpo. He got admission into the University of Ibadan, Jos Campus in 1975. He graduated in 1979 and was the first President of the student Union in Jos. He was the Head of Department of English and Literature for two terms and four years as the Director of General studies. Amali was a two-time Dean and later was made Professor of Oral Literature.

Amali is one Nigerian poet who uses the vehicle of poetry to condemn political and moral decadence. His satiric attack on the Nigerian leaders, including the military has led to a situation in which the then Late Head of State, general Sani Abacha allegedly threatened to assassinate him. His publisher has to intervene by changing the title of his collection of poems from *Generals Without War* to *The Night of the Generals*. However, after the death of Abacha, there has been a reversal to the former title *General Without War*. He has an unpublished collection of about 130 Nigerian poets on the military from 1960 to date which will be out soon. Amali has been a member of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) both at all levels. He has served as its national vice secretary for twice and vice chairman of the Bomo association.

The Nigerian Poet, Amali, is well published. His articles and poems have been published in both local and international journals such as *Ufhamu*, *Chelsea*, *Journal of World Literature in English*, *Presence Africaine*, *Okike*, *Gombak Review*, *International Islamic University of Malaysia*, *Fajar Journal*, *Journal of Creative writing*, and a host of others .

Amali experienced the bad economic and political environment of 1980s in Nigeria. A period of untold inflation, skyrocketing corruption and structural adjustment which made life difficult for Nigerians. External debts were increasing and infrastructures were declining, religious and ethnic conflicts were at their highest. These conditions are much demonstrated in his poetry. He assumes the role of art for social advocacy in the hope of attaining a better living conditions.

1.1 Satire as a Concept

First of all, satire originates from the Latin word "Satura" which means "Full of Variety". Originally, it was from the Latin expression "Lanx Satura" which means "a dish of varied fruits". However, recently, satire has come to be regarded in various ways.

According to *Brewster's Dictionary of phrase and fable*, satire was first applied to "... a medley or hotchpotch in which folly, vice or individuals are held up to ridicule" (964). In later usage however, it has come to be defined a bit differently; Satire is a literary work - be it prose, poetry or drama which laughs at the foibles and maladies of persons in high places.

Ngugi gives a general definition of satire and the core concerns of the satirist:

Satire takes for its province a whole society, And

for its purpose, criticism. The satirist Sets himself

certain standards and

Criticizes society when and where it

Departs from these norms.

He writes us to assume his standards

And share the moral indignation which

moves him to pour derision and

ridicule society's failings.

He corrects through painful and

Sometimes malicious laughter

{Ngugi: 56}

Dorothy Eagle considers satire as "a poem or in modern use sometimes a prose composition, in which prevailing vices or follies are held to ridicule" (510). In the opinion of Gilbert Highet Satire often deals with "... actual cases, mentions real people by name or describes, them unmistakably (and often unflatteringly),... (16).

M.H. Abrams on his part describes satire 'as the literary art of diminishing or derogation a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation. It differs from the

comic in that comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself, while satire derides; that is it uses laughter as a weapon and against a butt that exists outside the work itself. [353] Satire ridicules vices in the society and pinpoints this bad attitude. Its real aim is to shock the individual or society by exhibiting this melody to reality with a view to encourage a change.

Satire has usually been justified, by those who practice it, as a corrective of human vice and folly. Alexander Pope, for example, remarks that "those who are ashamed of nothing else are so of being ridiculous". Its frequent claim has been to ridicule the individual, and to limit its ridicule to corrigible faults, excluding those for which a person is not responsible.

Holman defines satire as "a literary manner which blends a critical attitude with humour and wit to the end that human institutions or humanity may be improved" (473). Buldick is of the view that satire is "a mode of writing that expresses the failings of individuals, or societies to ridicule and scorn" (198). Pollard sees satire as "a literary piece in which wickedness or Ibily is consoled" (181). John Dryden who started the great age of English satire and sees satire as:

A kind of poetry invented for purging of our minds, in which human vices, ignorance, and errors and all things besides, which are produced from them in every man, are severely reprehended (Dryden: 143)

David Worcester defines "satire as the engine of anger, rather than the direct

expression of anger".

From the foregoing definitions, one makes bold to define satire as either a prose or a poetic composition that ridicules an individual's or societal vice or folly and always aims at correcting this particular vice or folly.

1.2 Classes of Satire

A true satirist" according to Hugh Holman "is conscious of the frailty of institutions of man's devising and attempts through laughter not so much to rear them down as to inspire a remodeling". It is the degree of abuses or humour, the extent to which inspiration is drawn to remodeling; and the nature of satire that, to a great extent, give the different types of satire. A good satirist attacks almost everything. It may be what man is or what he does. He does not only aim at ridiculing vice but is also concerned [with reforming the society.

Satire, conventionally, is of two types, and M.H. Abrams breaks it into direct satire and indirect satire: Juvenalian satire and Boratian both named after the great Roman Satirists.

“Juvenal and Horace”. In Horation satire, the character of the person is that of an: . . . Urbane, witty and tolerant man of the world, who is moved more often to wry amusement than to indignation at the spectacle of human folly pretentiousness and hypocrisy and who uses a relaxed and informal language to evoke from readers a smile at human follies and absurdities, sometime including his own. (167)

Horace talks of the tone appropriate, to the satirist who as a moralist shows

concern by condemning the vices and society. Horace uses subtle mockery and effective vehicle for conveying his message.

A century later, Juvenal came in with a different view of the term satire. His attitude is that of an upright man or a moralist who sees satirist as a moralist, he is vexed and frustrated. Consequently, he is motivated to write satire because no other genre can actually convey his message. M.H. Abrams states that the character of the persona is that of a moral man who makes use of a dignified and public style of statements to lampoon modes of vice and error which is comparable to the ridiculous and who is ready to bring out from readers' contempt, moral anger or a disillusioned sadness at the aberration of humanity (167-8). It will therefore not be appropriate to say that Juvenalian satire in literature is only better and ironic criticism of contemporary persons and institutions that is filled with personal invective vexation and moral change.

The satirist has a lot of literary and rhetorical devices. He may make use of dramatic incidents, fictional episodes, proverbial sayings, cartoon, invective, sarcasm, irony mockery, parody, exaggeration, understatement to relay his anger.

The reader of the satirist must share with him certain intellectual and moral standards that concur with his attack. A satirical work may be sociological, in other words, it satirizes social issues. It may be religious, that is it dwells on problems of religion. It may be political, economic and moral and so on. The best

works of satire were written in periods when ethical and rational norms were strong enough to stimulate widespread agreement still not completely powerful as to bring about complete conformity. During this period, the satirist lives in a society and still far- off from it. He exercises a multiple vision.

1.3 Literature Review

A number of critics have examined Amali's *Generals Without War*. One of such scholars is Kola Eke, who sees political revolution as the dominant and unifying theme in the poetry of Amali. Where he says: "Part of our enjoyment of Amali's poetry comes from the way he uses mental pictures either to prophesy or demonstrates the inevitability of a political revolution" (168). Another literary critic is Sule Egya. Egya concludes that the poet is angry with military dictatorship.

Egya is of the view that Amali uses the vehicle of poetry to condemn the misbehaviour of the men in uniform. According to him, the beauty of Amali's Poetry lies in the honest, brave, and open condemnation of the military class. (273).

Similarly, another critic, Bello Bada, identifies the poet's lampooning of the injustices of the military leadership. He states categorically:

The poet as a social advocate begins to warn the military in power about some of the bad they are doing which do not benefit the society... he confronts the military rulers directly challenges them on their misrule, corruption and insensitivity (163).

Like Egya, Bada focuses on the crimes of the military ruling class. Bada's essay also

demonstrates that the poet deliberately warns the military rulers of the bad effects of their misdeeds. The critic lives to demonstrate that Amali is a vehicle of inspiration and castigation to the people.

Finally, Babayo Waliki shows that there are a lot of societal issues in *Generals Without War*. In this view, the collection does not purely concentrate on military misrule. Waliki's paper looks at the following themes: corruption, gross national indiscipline, unseriousness and poor governance (235-146).

From the foregoing, it is clear that critics are less interested in the use of satire as a tool of assessing Amali's collection of poems and satire is a tool that abounds from page to page.

1.4 Thesis Statement

This study demonstrates that Amali satirises untold acquisition of wealth, leadership insensitivity and undeserved promotion of military men.

CHAPTER TWO

UNTOLD ACQUISITION OF WEALTH

In the poem "the generals", one can see the quest for endless wealth by being portrayed by the poet:

As you climb hilltops individually on the backs of others. You fulfill your greedy plans and forget that many are dying below uncared for where patients lie in pains in the window dressing wards. School teachers and civil servants sing dirges of unpaid wages as University dons survive on their failed shadows from the decisions of our home-made generals who swagger across Europe with our money for cure of stomach pains where millions of our money are coded. (17)

In this first stanza, the poet makes use of contrast to focus the reader's attention to a number of greedy "generals" in the corridors of power. A close look of the opening lines shows the contrast between those on the "hilltops" and those "below".

Amali uses the technique of contrast here to deride the inequalities based upon wealth, power, prestige and other social conditions. The most wealthy, most powerful are placed at the "hilltops" and the underprivileged, suffering masses are at the bottom. This is obviously the gap between the masses and our

leaders in the corridors of power due to greed.

Besides, the reference to the "climbing of the hilltops" and 'greedy plans' are obvious illustrations of metaphorical expressions. This shows that leadership is very far from the growth in the country is dearly not hopeful about the growth and development of the country as a result of narrow and selfish mindsets.

At this stage, the poet seems not to have much hope for a better future as a result of greed. For example, reference to 'greedy hospital prescription on cards' is horrifying. It portrays the untold unpatriotic behaviour of those who handle the affairs of the state. These leaders who are in the corridors of power are after their own greedy minded interests, jettisoning the plight of the masses. The masses pay through their nose for things which ought to have be given or get naturally. The fact of the high hospital bills is a clear case in this direction.

In the poem, 'Generals Without War', the poet lampoons and derides the leaders in the corridors of power for their role in leadership failure in Nigeria. The poet feels very unhappy about the evils committed against the people. The Generals who are trained to guard and guide the people have suddenly turned against the very people they are supposed to protect. Sadly, enough, the generals were expected to fight tirelessly towards the uplift of the common man in the street. It is a clear case of contrast that the same generals now carryout war against the land they ought to defend. As a result of greed, the poet depicts the generals as the fading shadows of the day. This is seen in the second to the last

stanza of the poem. It runs thus:

And daily
 these eagles of marshal dreams
 of unseen wars sprout at dawn
 and like mushrooms whither
 at the peak of noon our doom. (p.15)

An interesting paradox emerges in this poem; eagles, noted for their strength, find themselves on the shoulders of the cowardly generals as epaulette (a decoration on the shoulder of a coat, especially when part of a military uniform). Definitely, in using eagle as part of the epaulette of the uniform of the soldiers, the military is exploring it as a symbol of strength and great skill, which, sadly, the Nigerian army is devoid of. Between the period of their sprouting and that of their withering, they cause great havoc in the land and untold hardship to the people. They are greedy and insist on holding on to power. As destroyers of good things in the land, the poet says, “our long dreams have been raped (35). They “perch at will/even upon the dead and dying” (8-9).

He also asks:

Where is the face of grim time
 when men in dance of the brave
 fished without pains pieces of boiling yams

deep beneath turbulent wombs
 of the seven boiling pots of bravery
 Where is the dawn of the bloody sun
 when men wore feathers turonko birds
 for carrying tubers of evil head
 to the foothills of bravery
 in battles pitched against evils? (P. 15)

Annoyingly as these rhetorical questions are, they underscore the poet's viewpoint of an army that has lost its professional direction to greed for power; which they use to subjugate the innocent civilians. In the poet's view, the real soldiers are leopards who are capable of withstanding attacks from other soldiers. Such leopard do not “(feed) upon the flesh in cold” (6), that is, they do not unduly oppress civilians in order to enrich themselves. But the era of such soldiers, the poet cries out has gone. The soldiers now in the poet's society are “de-feathered eagles”, corrupt soldiers who do not even know what it takes to be soldiers given the fact that they do know the colour of war. Amali, through a combination of lament and satire, indulges in rhetorical questions. He laments the existence of a military that abandons its primary duty of giving territorial security to the nation but delves into politics instead only to have the "long dream" of the people “raped” and abandoned to her fate.

Amali's poem entitled "Generals Without War", the poet also lampoons

the military. They are professional idlers who lack quality of purpose but only commit evil and indulge in barbaric acquisition of wealth. They do not go to the battle field to show their professional training, but are very greedy at vandalizing the nation's wealth. This idea is projected in stanza one and two of the poem "Generals Without War":

As dreams have failed
 to perch on forest canopies
 eagles of marshal dreams in sacred crest
 of general without war unmarked wage wars against our land.
 No leopard feeds upon the flesh in cold
 but here, eagles of home-made wards
 perch at will
 even upon the dead and dying. (P.15)

In the second stanza, the persona describes the liminary as inhumane by the exhibition of their action. He laments that in an ideal situation, if you do nothing; you get nothing in return. But unfortunately, there are military officers who rise to highest positions even when they don't work hard. This is the height of greed. In the same way, in the poem titled "Walking Corpse", the poet exposes our military leaders through the use of irony of their greedy nature. In stanza one, two and three:

My mother,

This one cannot fire a short
a walking corpse drained
by barrels of home-made gin, and women.

This one cannot don a battle gear
and stand the drills known to men-at-arms.

This one cannot be close to the tremor of
an angry charging cannon as the lifting and
carrying of mark-four dismember his fragile
being P. 15

Throughout the poem, the persona expresses his dissatisfaction with the military in Africa. He sees military men as a failure to their nation state; a set of people who do not live up to expectation in discharging good leadership. The poet sees the military as bad political leaders and because of their greed they resort to untold grabbing of the national treasury. Amali actually rejects the military and what they stand for. He has become disappointed for they are not doing the normal thing- they are supposed to do.

Having demonstrated the poet's condemnation of greed on the part of the ruling class in the military, the proceeding chapter will examine satire on social and economic negligence.

CHAPTER THREE

LEADERSHIP INSENSITIVITY

In the poem entitled “the rain has not come”, the poet exposes the political and economic problems in the country. The first part of the poem, as well as stanza two, the people are wallowing in the desert of distress, simply because there is nothing practically on ground to make life meaningful. One cannot but commend the poet’s use of geographical imagery to emphasize the poor economic situation:

The rain has not come
 And we wallow
 In the desert of distress.
 The rain has not come
 as charred bones of camels propped in sand dunes
 against desert winds of mobile graves
 torment my vision. (II)

From these lines, the poet shows that there is practically no structures in place to make life enjoyable for the people. This is a horrible situation because government has long abandoned the masses, gone into distance from their community.

The coming of the rain would have fostered better physical growth for the entire state. Ironically, the coming of the rain is further delayed as a result of the selfish pursuits of those that claim to represent the common man in the street. When rains are expected, when all else is in place except the rain, then the relief it provides is needed to engender fertility. Human beings give up their fate to the eventuality of the season, most often with hope. Amali' s emphasizes the drought-coated situation, consequent upon the unavailability.

It is seen that the sheer unpatriotic act has unfortunately delayed the coming of the rain, which the people are eagerly looking forward to. As a result of this drought-like predicament and plight, the people's dreams have melted away. Thus everyone and everybody has been abandoned and neglected.

The use of the word 'rain' in the poem is clearly metaphoric. The coming of the rains would have invariably usher in hope, abundance of blessings among others. Because the rain has refused to fall, the majority of people wallow in the desert of distress, want and hopelessness.

No doubt the absence or rather lack of the rain has been the dangerous to animals, specially, the camels which were resilient in harsh moments. The unpleasant situations around the animals have been unfair by the prevailing geographical factors such as “wind and sand dunes”.

These animals ought to have been taken good care of by the appropriate authority. This unfortunate neglect shortens their life span hence, the presence

of mobile grave alluded to in this poem.

There were “swarms of files”, this simply mean, the rain which is the beacon of hope has for unknown reasons failed to fall. The resultant effect is that their oases of hope has been destroyed or burnt into ashes. The basic infrastructure urgently required by the people are not seen anywhere. This unfortunate state of things has made life worthless to all and sundry. This frustrating situation is the result of proliferation of “... heroes of unfought wars” as generals. This leads to the eventual neglect of the people as well as their dire needs and necessities.

The reference to rain in this poem is clearly pregnant with various meanings as well as interpretations. In this context, the rain could be interpreted to imply pretentious democratic leaders that are public spirited in every aspect. The following lines from the poem, at least to this fact:

"The rain has not come
for brutes, leaches and heroes of unfought wars
Parade as members
Of Anti-desert and flood committees"

But how could there have been rains
When our chase has become a race
To grip our silhouette

Cast against melting mountain of dreams

Where soldier ants

Blossom into baobab size

As only select reeds

Are nurtured in our desert of hostile faces

For the cannibal drum and dance. P. 11

The above extract vividly pictures the fact that nothing has been put in place to run the affairs of the people. In the absence of such viable structures, hypocrites have taken over the entire place, thereby populating the people with pack of lies.

Rather unfortunately, this ugly development has a noticeable effect on the socio-economic status of the people. Towards the end of this poem, there are shades of doubt as to the eventuality of the rains; as the people are struggling to make ends meet.

Furthermore, there is outright satire on the socio-economic negligence of the people in the poem entitled 'the Generals'. The following lines are relevant this state of neglect:

As you climb the hilltops individually

on the backs of others

you fulfill your greed plans and forget

that many are dying below uncared for

where patients lie in pains

in the window dressing wards
 in the window dressing wars.
 School teachers and civil servants
 sing dirges of unpaid wages
 as University dons survive on their failed shadows
 from the decisions of our home-made generals
 who swagger across Europe with our money
 for cure of stomach pains
 where millions of our money are coded (17).

The above underlines the core of the matter relating to the level of neglect; as the common people are deeply in pain. A large number of the people are wallowing in different pains. There is no ray of hope that their condition shall be better or improve.

The poet further stresses the theme of socio-economic negligence as follows:

Must all monkeys climb before they eat?
 But if you have gone ahead
 You haven 't taken the road
 And the government expensive but stale drugs
 dumped from the west litter our street stores
 where government greedy hospital prescription cards

fulfill their dreams.

When the generals bleed

It's the day many shall bleed honest blood unattended

our labour turns comfort for others

as fanfare flows to corrupt city graves of our money (17).

The poet portrays socio-economic groupings in the society and their unequal life chances. Those who have salaried employment are not happy, one can only imagine the predicament of the unemployment beggars and others.

Here the “teachers”, “Civil servants” and university dons” are representatives of

many others who are living below acceptable minimum standard of living and who are exposed to dangers of hunger, disease and want. Consequent on the unstable and small income, it is implied that members of the working class lack the money with which to acquire the minimum necessities of life including food, shelter and medical care. Thus the living conditions for the majority of the people tend to be very bad, uncomfortable and cannot be considered decent.

Amali exposes these generations of unpatriotic leaders who dump fake and expired drugs into the hospitals at the home front, thereby endangering the lives and safety of the common people. The purchase of these expired drugs is done with the natural endowments of the country. It is basically not out of place to assert that these generations of leaders are largely controlled by satanic powers or how else would

one explain these bizarre practices on the part of these devils called leaders.

As a result, the populace have been pushed to the wall, it is only the mercy and divine intervention that will heal the damage done wounds cut open by this set of irresponsible leaders.

The extension of this non caring attitude of the people's leaders is further exploited in the poem- "Don't you see". The leaders for reasons best known to them oppress the people a great deal. It is important to refer to the second stanza and the fourth stanza in the poem:

Don't you see!
 the naked raping of hopes
 as prices of essential daily defy your threats
 and empty public hospitals
 shut their doors on the faces
 of casualties of your home- made war.
 Don 't you see!
 the children with numerous plates of life
 defying the baking sun in want
 as generals now and then speed past
 in tinted glasses of the ruling class (18)

The poet laments over the tensed atmosphere of frustration and neglect as well as the betrayal of trust of the people. Amali exposes the frustrating

experience of the kind of leadership in our present day society.

The level of non-chalant attitude assumes a greater height on the part of the people's leaders in this poem "Don't you see".

The children roam the streets as the teachers that are owed of salaries embarked on an indefinite strike. In the same way. the social rot is equally extended to the ivory tower as the University' dons tout for passenger in various motor parks to eke out a living. This is to enable them have a meal on the table. This is a gross neglect on the part of the people's leaders.

While the children go cap in hands begging on the ruling class has resolved to run a blind eye to the hardship of the common people, gallivanting the streets at full speed in tinted glasses. What a big shame!

The poet lampoons the ruling class for exploiting the masses especially those who toil and slave away on their farms end up being duped of their harvest.

The ruling class is completely cut away from the general concern of the common man in the street. The following lines reflect this:

Don't you see!
 the endless flood and oil spillage,
 inundate aquatic live, as fisher men and farmers abandon their
 trades to mourn Don't you see!
 the rinderpest...
 as carcasses of animals

send pains down the spines of herdsmen"

It is disheartening to note that the down trodden are really in dangerous predicament. Thus, the poet identifies the suffering of the peasant farmers, fishermen and hard men under the military.

Having portrayed the poet's lampooning of social economic negligence as well as socio-economic negligence. The next chapter will examine that of indiscriminate promotion in the military.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNDESERVED PROMOTION

Amali satirises the promotion criteria of the military men. He feels bad to be recognized with the Nigerian military that appears faulty from their counterparts the world over. Promotions are not based on merit like active participation in war and similar military activity. He resolves that it is to serious disgrace to rise from the lower rank to the position of "General" while one has not gone to any serious battle field, only to try his gun, energy and brutality on the innocent people of his own country, and of course his immediate society. In the poem "Generals without war", Amali states:

As dreams have failed
to perch on forest canopies
eagles of marshal drums in sacred crest of generals without war
unmarked wage war against our land (14).

Again, there are clear instances of accelerated promotion on the part of the few ruling class, while countless number of the military groan and wallow in abject poverty and neglect and lack of promotion.

The poet captures the reality of the unfortunate situation. He states: "No leopard feeds upon the flesh in cold but here, eagles of home-made wars perch at will, even upon the dead and dying..."

The poet condemns the ruling class for their total failure beyond

expectation and to the dismay of the common people.

The Generals are metaphorically described as “eagles of home-made wars” that perch upon the very people they claim to represent. This comparison ridicules them and exposes the irony of their claim to their military promotion. Furthermore, the poet states:

See now my brothers what greed has done...
 these generals shapeless as the baobab
 in glittering face fail the obstacle test
 and you discharge the underfed privates
 who defect from the raging battles of death

See now my sisters
 what the rusty beaks and claws have done
 as men who stood and spat on evils

have lost their venom
 to the season of silence and greed
 we erected

As our long dreams have been raped

In the night of the Generals (14).

Sadly enough, the ruling class have closed their eyes to the general well

being of the people. Their preoccupation is merely personal pursuits.

There is the employment of imagery of total abandonment and greedy pursuits in the community. The use of simile in the apt description of the instance of the covetous ruling class is brought out in the following lines:

“And daily,
 these eagles of marshal dreams
 of unseen wars sprout at down
 and like mushrooms whither
 at the peak of noon our doom.”

In the midst of neglect, the average common man has been pushed to a tight corner where a possible route of escape seems difficult. The following line is a clear summary of this ugly situation:

As eagles de-father and elephants retreat,
 and like rodents haul and hoard.
 I turn to my under-aged son
 his streams of stubborn tears
 erode granite boulders down the valleys of shame
 as his gaits crushed into fragile dust
 thousands of hard earth-worm casts
 which the cannot wheels could not crush (15)

In "Walking corpse", Idris Amali intensifies his attack on the military

leaders. leaders. They have abandoned all the known procedures for training and promotion. They indiscriminately promote themselves:

Today

he is a major after two year of service

a General made through intercourse

with burukutu, napoleon and women

to head a nation

where vermins rule as heroes (16).

Amali condemns the military ruling class, no country can develop with leaders whose primary assignment is women and alcohol. They are bound to fail right from the beginning. The very foundation that brought them to power is shaky. They corruptly promote themselves and later forced themselves on the people as leaders. He described them as ‘vermins’, worms or insects that live on the bodies of people or animals.

This is metaphoric, the poet uses metaphor to draw the comparison as these leaders can be seen as very destructive element just like vermin. The question the poet wants us to really think about is how can such a destructive class be considered as heroes of the nation? This question is used by the poet to really draw the attention of the audience or readers to the atrocities of the military in power. The situation is even so much worse to the extent that:

“This one that gulps a sea of alcohol daily
 at the break of dawn
 and daily drowns in the clouds of his own smoke
 a military Medical officer
 cannot tell the dead from the living
 as casualties perish in his clinic of war”

Amali, as a spokesman of the people, turns to the people and appeals to them to open their eyes properly and see how their country has been destroyed by “vermins”.

In the Poem- “the generals”, there is outright condemnation of the attitude of the ruling class so long as they behave contrary to the wish of the people. This tone of outright condemnation is seen in the last stanza of the poem thus:

We shall exhume them all
 their bones, the bones of those generals
 to be given second burials
 in our ocean of perpetual anguish
 their bull-dozers have made. (17)

At the end of the day, there is a delivery of every hope and expectation. The poem entitled “Botched” gives a synopsis of the plight, the denials, the common people went through in the hands of the ruling class.

The following lines are relevant to the state of the common man in the street:

“We remain daily looking down
at what the Atlantic- bearing winds usher in
against the Sahara onslaught
whether the sharp teeth eat up our lands
or whether the ebbing tides have let out shells,
crabs, sea, sand and fishes
as recipes for worshipping our mortal gods.

The greedy class had denied the masses the comforts of modern living, despite the abundance of the natural resources. Some of the classes that are so denied are- the sick, the youth, the aged, the forgotten as well as the needy.

If drastic measures are not exercised, the future of the community is hanging in the lap of the gods. The pertinent question now is would these ruling class ever turn over a new leaf for the better, knowing fully well that these few group of persons swim in money? It is only time that will tell. The passage of time would invariably tell. This is the food for thought which the poet leaves to us, even as he satirizes against indiscriminate promotion in military ruling class.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have demonstrated Idris Amali's use of satire in his poetry.

As a literary art, satire is known to attack or deride (mock) human vice or folly. It tells the truth even though it does so by ridiculing. In the course of this essay, two types of satire are however identified-Horatian and Juvenalia Satire. Horatian satire is known to evoke amusement at the spectacle of human folly, Juvenalia Satire, on the other hand, evokes contempt and indignation.

- Going through this essay, it can be seen that the poet uses satire as a tool in exposing and lampooning the problems of greed, social and economic negligence as well as the socio-economic abandonment of the people and the concept of indiscriminate promotion in the military. In his poetry, the poet uses devices such as irony, humour, metaphor and so on, in depicting the greedy nature of the ruling class or those in the corridors of power.

From the discussion of satire so far, it is clear that the ultimate aim of satire is to correct societal ills. Idris Amali uses these poems as weapons to

confront, probe, question the ruling class in Generals without war. The Poet is angry at the societal ills around him, and the best way of expressing his bitterness is by using words that would not only shock his readers into disbelief, but into ways of correcting these ills in the society as well.

As a literary genre, satire is known to take a whole society as its province, and for its purpose, criticism. As such, a satirist sets for himself certain standards, and criticizes the society when and where it departs from those norms. This is what Amali does in his collection of poems. Nevertheless, as a satirist; since satire is known to ridicule Foibles, Amali employs satire as a weapon for changing his society. By exposing the problems inherent in a society to public ridicule or condemnation, Amali believes that no matter the circumstances, man's lot could still be changed and that our problem lies within the society.

In his poetry therefore, Amali foresees a better society that would not fall prey to charlatans. He aims at achieving this foresight through his writings and expositions, and this is what he particularly achieves in the text.

From poem to poem, the reader cannot fail to notice the poet's art of ridicule and condemnation. The butt of Amali's satire is definitely the military ruling class. Members of the armed forces hold on to power by virtue of their guns; but they often appear in the guise of messiahs. From the clues in the poems, Amali is quick to point out that they are not messiahs they claim to be. Instead, the generals are seen vandalizing the nation's treasury. To worsen the situation, the masses are

neglected and denied basic facilities of life. The military boys are only interested in their own welfare as they engage in promoting themselves. It is not surprising the poet is seen lampooning the greedy generals, chastising them for outright neglect of the masses; and condemning their promotion criteria.

Works Cited

- Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 5th ed. New York; Holt, 1988. Print
- Amali, Idris. Background. Internet Archive Web 20th May 2012 Eke, Kola. The Quest for Social Justice: A case Study of Amali's "*Generals without War*". *Kiabara Journal of Humanities*. Vol. 17 (2011) 1. Print.
- Amali, Idris. *Generals without War*. Lagos; Malthouses 2000, Print.
- Bola, Bello . "*The Poet as a Social Advocate: A Case Study of Amali's Generals without War and 'General'*". *Journal of Languages and Literatures*. 4.1 (2006) 159-166. Print
- Eagle, Dorothy. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford U.P., 1970.
- Holman, Hugh. *A Handbook to Literature*. 3 ed. Indianapolis: Odyssey, 1956.
- Oxford Illustrated Dictionary. 2 ed, 1975 Print. Worcester, David. *The Art of Satire*. New York: Russell, 1960. Print. Highet, Gilbert *The Anatomy of Satire*. Princeton: Predicament Up, 1962. *Brewster's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. 1962. Print.
- The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English*

Language. Florida: Typhoon, 2004 print