

Addis Ababa
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**Contemporary Sociopolitical Predicaments in Selected East African
Novels in English [Ca. 2005-2015]**

Mekwanent Tilahun Desta

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages and
Literature in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in English Literature**

Addis Ababa University

**College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**

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By: Mekwanent Tilahun Desta

Approved by Board of Examiners

Abiye Daniel (PhD)

Supervisor

Signature

Date

Melakneh Mengistu (PhD)

Examiner

Signature

Date

Tesfaye Dagneu (PhD)

Examiner

Signature

Date

Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the research entitled “*Contemporary Sociopolitical Predicaments in Selected East African Novels in English [Ca. 2005-2015]*” is my own work and all the references used or quoted have been duly acknowledged.

Mekwanent Tilahun Desta

Signature _____

Date _____

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Abstract

*This project is geared towards investigating contemporary sociopolitical predicaments in an attempt to determine the trajectory of the historical, social and political realities reflected in the selected East African novels in English. The study aimed at finding out the emergent themes in the selected novels, identifying if the prevailing themes correlate with the historical realities, examining the representation of Africa and Africans, and identifying the intertextuality between the chosen novels. A postcolonial theory is used as a reading strategy and a national/regional model of postcolonial theory is employed to comparatively examine the thematic convergence and divergence the novels under scrutiny may have. To this effect, four novels namely, *The Orchard of Lost Souls* (2013) *Cross Bones* (2011), *Black Star Nairobi* (2013) and *Waiting* (2007) have been selected purposively from East Africa. The purposive selection of the aforementioned novels is grounded on the researcher's motivation to fill the identified research gap. A postcolonial theory has been discussed in an eclectic manner as a theoretical framework of the study. The study thus found out that the selected novels have brought out emergent themes such as religious fundamentalism, ethnocentrism, piracy, human trafficking, and cross boundary sociopolitical problems that are unsettling the sociopolitical atmosphere of the Horn of Africa. In addition to foregrounding the impact of the aforesaid themes upon sociopolitical realities of the East African countries, the novels under scrutiny also reveal that the existing sociopolitical anomalies such as corruption, lack of good governance, and gender issues are still taking their toll on Africans long after independence. Finally, the comparative analysis conducted on the selected novels has shown that the novels under investigation have both thematic convergences and divergences. The study concludes that the authors have tried to call the attention of the readers to the fact that Africa in general and the East African region in particular is confronted with new challenges such as religious fundamentalism, ethnocentrism, piracy, human trafficking, cross boundary sociopolitical problems, and foreign powers' meddling in their internal affairs.*

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my childhood friend Artist Haacaaluu Hundeessaa. Haacaaluu was a phenomenal young talent who used art as a veritable weapon to fight injustices. May His soul rest in an eternal peace!

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Background of the Study

1.1 The Nexus between African Literature and African History

A number of scholars espouse that it is hard to deal with African literature devoid of its historical foundations. Among the scholars who project the inalienable aspect of African literature and African history, Melakneh (2012, p. 1) has offered the interwoven nature of African literature and African history in comparison with Western literature which, according to him, de-emphasizes the socio-historical context of cultural critique to the point of maneuvering a paradigm shift. Moreover, Melakneh asserts that the significance of the reciprocal relationship between modern African history and modern African literature is reiterated by Afrocentric writers and critics that the African writer appears to be more of a teacher than an artist proper entrusted with the reasserting his/her historical, linguistic and cultural identity. By the same token, Ojaide, (2012) states that:

Africa's political history has a significant impact on the people's experience and their literature. The experience of colonization placed the European metropolitan countries at the center and the African colonies at the periphery in a relationship that African writers fought against. In fact, Janheinz Jahn sees African history as paralleling modern African literature. The years of colonization, nationalist struggle, independence, post-independence, and neocolonialism have their imprint on modern African literature (2012, p. 18).

Given the arguments on the relationship between African literature and African history, the colonial and postcolonial historical premises are reckoned to be the milestone for the emergence and development of African literature. African novelists have been observed addressing the burdens of colonialism and the prices paid during emancipation movements. They have also continued echoing their voices against the backdrop of colonialism and postcolonial social, political and historical reality of their people. African novelists have been developing their works in light of the socio-historical circumstances shaping a vast array of ideas emerging across time and space.

It has also been observed as a common tradition among many historians and literary scholars to use the colonial and postcolonial experiences of the continent as a landmark whenever the

written tradition on the soil of the entire continent is referred to since the introduction of writing in Africa is resolutely linked to the advent of colonialism. In a similar line of thought, Gikandi (2004) maintained that those who were the founding figures of what is called modern African writing both in African and European languages were without exception, the products of the institutions that colonialism had introduced and developed in the continent from the time of Berlin Conference 1884-85 through to the era of decolonization until the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Gikandi, on the other hand, states that there had also been African literatures that were produced outside the institutions of colonialism. In this respect, he notes the existence of oral literature in all African languages and moves onto the pre-colonial writing in Arabic, Amharic, Swahili, and other African languages that bear ample evidence to the thriving literary tradition in pre-colonial Africa. However, Gikandi affirms that what is now considered to be the heart of literary scholarship on the continent could not have acquired its current identity or function if the traumatic encounter between Africa and Europe had not taken place (p. 379).

As a result, African novelists and African historians who have tried to put their thoughts and observations on paper apparently reflected the social, economic and political phenomena of their people that in this sense hold true to Gikandi's thesis. Works by Chinua Achebe of Nigeria, Ayi Kwei Armah of Ghana, and Ngugi Wathiong'o of Kenya are a few among piles of literary productions presenting the salient themes in postcolonial African Novels. It is from this vantage point that scholars and literary critics alike uphold that African literature depicts the socio-historical circumstances of the people of the continent. As a result, African literature is sometimes dubbed functional than aesthetic product despite the fact that there are advocates who hail it as a repository of African history and wisdom.

Innes (2007) stated that postcolonial literatures and postcolonial studies have seen a rise in the number of scholars and researchers who venture in the field across the world over the past half-century. Innes writes the prominence of diverse writers such as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka from Nigeria, Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy from India, Derek Walcott from the Caribbean, Seamus Heaney from Ireland, Margaret Atwood and Michael Ondaatje from Canada, Peter Carey and Patrick White from Australia, and J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer from

South Africa whose works appear on numerous school and university syllabuses. Concurrently, their writing has provided the nourishment for a variety of postcolonial theories concerning the nature of such works, approaches to reading them, and their significance for reading and understanding other literary, philosophical and historical works.

1.2 Thematic Trends of Development in African Literature

Postcolonialism encapsulates the totality of practices which characterize postcolonial societies from the inception of colonialism to the present day. Because of some prevailing circumstances between the period of colonialism and the present day, which can be termed as postcolonial transformations, there are observable phases that demonstrate a myriad of changes in attitude and experience. Each phase creates different response(s) in African postcolonial literature. The phases and their effects upon African literature have been discussed by scholars such as Simon Gikandi and Arbiola Irele.

Thus, it is needless to explain the fact that a postcolonial approach to literary and cultural study has long been engaged with the multifarious issues writers from countries who had a historical encounter with colonialism engage themselves with. Scholars like Edward Said, Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha, and Bill Ashcroft laid down converging insights on the premise that postcolonial theory is a field that avidly engages with the examination of literary works produced by authors from cultures affected by colonial experiences.

Though postcolonialism examines the various forms of exploitation, resistance, representation and other pressing issues in light of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, the thematic preoccupations of the literary products from the advent of colonialism to the present time differ in accordance with the socio-historical circumstances. In this connection, Kehinde (2004) maintains that:

African writers have an enduring propensity for social and political commitment. Their texts mostly reflect and refract the socio-political events in their societies. Initially, African literature was a tool for celebrating the heroic grandeur of the African past; later it was used for anti-colonial struggle. Presently, it is being employed as a veritable weapon for depicting the postcolonial disillusionment in African nations. Therefore, African literature is always chained to the experiences of the peoples of the continent (P. 228).

Kehinde further states that the contemporary African novel is a vast phenomenon that poses several challenges to the critic in attempting to give a fair view of this ever-growing field (2004, p. 228). Melakneh (2008), on his part, maintains that African writers after the 1970s have moved far beyond the stage of disillusionment and the post-independence mourning to the extent of demanding change. It is from this vantage point that he offers a brief survey of major trends of development in the history of Anglophone African novel. Cognizant of its importance, the current study adopts Melakneh (2008) “Major Trends of Development in Anglophone African Novel” as a guiding frame of reference and substantiates it with working theories obtained from additional reference materials. Besides, a substantial adoption of ideas from other African scholars such as Kehinde (2004), Olatunji (2010), and Oha (2008) has been made in an attempt to show the major trends of development in African literature.

1.2.1. Colonial and Anti-colonial Polemics

Melakneh (2008) reiterates that historical and nationalist themes dominated African literature in English across East, West, and Southern Africa. He states that the thematic emphasis of the literary works produced during the first phase of development (1930) was laid on refuting the colonialist view that portrays Africa as a continent without any history and culture worth speaking of before its contact with the outside world. Similarly, Olatunji (2010) maintains that the first phase of African literature lies in the historical epoch when the West was trying to give a tag to Africans and define African identity. Olatunji further reiterates that this period was the early part of colonialism which in its own turn laid the foundation for the postcolonial African literature though the theoretical and imaginative works of the time were categorized under the umbrella term “colonialist literature”.

As several scholars put it, the colonialists hugely invested in justifying the conquest, occupation and denigration of what belongs to the societies outside the West. In this respect, Fanon (1963) maintains that:

Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today. When we consider the efforts made to carry out the cultural estrangement so characteristic of the colonial epoch, we realize that

nothing has been left to chance and that the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. The effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives' heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality....the colonial mother protects her child from itself, from its ego, and from its physiology, its biology, and its own unhappiness which is its very essence (1963, p. 210-11).

The colonialist discourse depicts the colonized peoples as barbaric and inferior judging them against the tenets of western value foregrounded as the universal standard. This parameter encapsulates a dichotomous comparison between the western world and the colonized world. In the same vein, Said (1978,1983), argues that the West stereotypically labels the history and cultures of others which it doesn't understand or knows very little about as inferior and ignominious in order to augment its claim of supremacy. He affirms that the West has negligible and oversimplified concept of the East; for him the West believes in the supremacy of its values that should elevate the culture of the uncivilized "other" to the standard it set. It is from this premise that Said questions the West's notion of history and authority of knowledge and calls for its reconsideration.

Concomitantly, Bhabha (1994) asserts that colonial ideology rests upon a discourse that divides the world into dichotomous identity categories of the civil and barbaric, the 'us' and the 'them'. He upholds that the colonial discourse is aimed at depicting the colonized as a population of denigrate type on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish system of administration and instruction. Ashcroft, et al. (2004, p. 154) also claim that the creation of the "other" comes from the need to create a distance between oneself and those who deviate from the norm. "The existence of others is crucial in defining what is "normal" and in locating one's own place in the world." Through addressing native people of the colonies as feeble-minded savages, The Empire established a binary separation of the colonizer and the colonized, whereas the "uncivilized" was marked as "the other".

In what seems to be an explanation of a binary separation of the colonizer and the colonized established by The Empire, JanMohammed (1997) described the colonial literature as "an exploration and a representation of a world at the boundaries of civilization, a world that has not been domesticated by European signification or codified in detail by its ideology... presented as

uncontrollable, chaotic, and ultimately evil” (1997, p. 18). Colonialist literature is a product of works by western citizens at home or residing in colonized areas. They used their creative imagination and philosophy to portray the people of the colonies as subhuman, evil and culturally inferior.

The colonizer used such imaginative texts that played a collaborative role to instill the idea that the colonial “other” is such a backward, uncivilized and subhuman. Works such as Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* make the finest instances of colonial texts. They are parts of what Ngugi (1993, p. 18) described as “collaborative literature” in which “the noble and intelligent was the character who cooperated with the colonial process. The bad and the ugly was the African who opposed colonialism”. Other texts that could be classified as colonialist include diaries, biographies and autobiographies, memoirs by white travelers, settlers, administrators and soldiers who were representatives of the imperial power. The writings hide the imperial discourse within which they are created. They cannot form the basis for African indigenous culture because they “privilege the centre... the metropolitan over the provincial” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998, p. 5).

On the other hand, Melakneh (2008, p. 33) avers that the literary works produced by Africans during the first phase were mainly concerned with the reassertion and validation of the past. He further explains that the era was characterized by the drive to explain the past and to relate it to the present in anticipation of the future. In a fashion that harnesses his scrutiny of the first generation of African writers, he upholds that:

The first generation of African writers was generally intent upon re-writing the colonial history and sociology of Africa, with a view to addressing such issues such as how and why the continent was overrun by foreign rulers, what the consequences of the invasion were, whether pre-colonial African societies were characterized by savagery and thus needed the “civilizing” guidance of colonial powers. African writers of this period contend that Africa had advanced systems of economic organization, quasi- democratic political arrangements and well developed cultural institutions (Melakneh 2008, p. 33).

In a manner that concurs with Melakneh (2012, p.71) but slightly digresses in mode of presentation, Olatunji (2010) attempts to view the first phase of African literature as a literary trend that had two phases. He argues that colonialist literature indirectly gave birth to another phase of African postcolonial literature which he dubs “early colonial literature” and moves on to

affirm that the works in this phase were produced by African writers under imperial license in anyone of the imperial languages with their theme propelling around rebellions. In this respect, he hails Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka* (1964) as an exemplary work that gives an account of the historical might of the denigrated indigenous cultures in a subtle and seditious way. Regarding the second phase, Olatunji (2010) claims that:

“The next phase in postcolonial African literature is what can be called modern colonial literature. It takes its cue from works of writers like Mofolo. This phase is dominated by works of writers, like Chinua Achebe, Mungo Beti, Ferdinand Oyono, Camara Laye, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and so on”. The ideological orientation of such works is to combat and interrogate the colonialist literature and philosophy (2010, p. 18).

Olatunji quotes Achebe (1964) saying that the main intention of this phase in postcolonial African literature is to inform the world that “African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans... they (Africans) had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty and dignity” (Achebe, 1964, p. 158).

Melakneh (2012, p. 70), on his part, states that this period typifies the retort to what is mostly conceptualized as “the White Man's Burden” as an upshot of which the introduction of Western model curriculum meant to prepare civil service personnel for colonial system of government substituting traditional institutional practices by tribal chiefs came into force. He sums up that the literary works produced during this time were devoted to the affirmation and validation of a unique and valuable African identity and the articulation of grievances and complaints against the entrenched order.

Olatunji (2010) on his part maintains that the later stage of colonial literature made a shift towards resistance to the demand for independence and self-governance by thematically accentuating in works like Ngugi's *Weep Not Child* (1964). Moreover, the novels such as Ngugi's were demanding for the return of Africans' land. The years between 1950s and 1960s witnessed the turning point in the campaign against colonialism and human rights as a result of which numerous revolutions erupted across the world. In 1960s, a decade many historians call African years, several African nations had become independent. However, it hadn't taken a long time for Africans who began to live under the leadership of their fellow African leaders to become disillusioned. The disappointment and disillusionment were born from the avaricious,

corrupt, and power fetish deeds of the African politicians who took the reins of governance from the colonialists merely to prove themselves worse than the colonial masters.

1.2.2 Post-Independence Anomalies

In the era which most literary critics and scholars alike call post-independence, referring to the historicity of the socio-political phenomena most African countries got their independence from their colonial masters into their own hands to the present, African politicians those who seized power made extravagant pledges to bring peace, economic prosperity and democracy among other things. As a result of these superfluous promises, Africans thought that they are leaping into the beginning of a new era where their dreams and aspirations to enjoy liberty, equality and democracy are not far away. However, Africans who began to see a glimmer of hope in the wake of the colonialists' departure began to cast a shadow of doubt upon what was going on as time rolled by.

Moreover, Nachafiya (2011) upholds that post independence experiences unfortunately shifted the concerns into conflicts within the Africans themselves, between the rulers and the ruled. The initial expectation that the independence was going to change the condition of Africa socio-politically, and economically, summed up into a very dark cloud of disappointment and frustration which soon turned into disillusionment. Consequently, the hope that began to blossom in the hearts and minds of Africans owing to the finely chosen words of the new and first breed of post independence African leaders began to gradually wither. This is due to the dissonance between what those post independence African leaders were saying and the socio-political reality the vast majority of Africans were living in. The misgivings observed in the heyday of independence, what is commonly known as disillusionment foregrounds the post-independence anomalies African countries happened to face.

In what seems to hold a mirror up for the reflection of the post-independence reality of Africa, Melakneh observes:

In the wake of WWII, the messianic nationalist parties [...] were spearheading liberation movements envisaging a range of strategic ideals such as, national unification, political stability, modernization, economic prosperity, universal suffrage and prevalence of social justice. Ironically, however, the dominant nationalist movements and their leaders installed themselves in a virtually permanent power such that the end of the colonial era seemed to have

ushered in a new era of rampant corruption, protracted fratricidal wars, war torn economy, and undemocratic military takeovers and rigged national elections culminating in utter disillusionment bordering on black despair (2012, p. 6).

By the same token, Krishnan (2014) maintains that postcolonial African writers such as Ngugi, Achebe, Soyinka and most significantly, Armah have engaged in revealing the postcolonial conditions of many African countries. The author further exemplifies the postcolonial African context by taking Ngugi's novel as follows:

[...] the novel engages with what has become a well-rehearsed and a priori tale of African neocolonial mismanagement, corruption and inadequacy, chronicling the Ruler's manic struggle to maintain power at all cost and the indifferent corruption of his ministers in the face of rampant poverty and misery for the masses. In this sense, Wizard of the Crow restages Fanon's warning against the pitfalls of national consciousness, joining a long line of works focused on the disillusionment that followed independence, including Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966), Soyinka's *Season of Anomy* (1973), and, most significantly, Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) (Krishnan, 2014, p. 14).

Thus, the above discussed points lead towards a conclusion that postcolonial African writers characterize the post-independence African leaders as those who were once considered as the truest sons of Africa who can liberate their people and answer the questions of good governance, economic equality, and democratic rights. Such characters that materialize as messiah to their people often emerge from the lower or middle social strata; mainly they are portrayed as school teachers who resonate the suffering of their people and stir the struggle for independence like that of the honorable chief Nanga the central character of Achebe's *A Man of The People*.

As a result of their unwavering anti colonial stance and their pledges to solve the multifarious problems after independence, their people took them as messiah, and thus, the leaders managed to easily ascend to power following which their fellow people quickly ventured in giving them any available nickname that shows their jubilation and ecstasy. Nevertheless, the post-independence euphoria and jubilation enjoyed a brief period of celebration followed by the denial of expectations. In this regard, Fanon (1963) states that:

Before independence, the leader generally embodies the aspirations of the people for independence, political liberty, and national dignity. But as soon as independence is declared far from embodying in concrete form the needs of the people in what touches bread, land and the restoration of the country to the sacred hands of the people, the leader will reveal his inner

purposes to become the general president of that company of profiteers impatient for their returns which constitutes the national bourgeoisie (Fanon 1963, p. 166).

With the failure of political independence to realize the anticipated practice of democratization in many African countries, disillusionment has set in and writers in their works reflected these social dissonances manifested in political instability, ethnic squabbles, inequality, corruption, abuse of power and leadership failure. The effects and aftermaths of colonization become a fascinating theme of these writers, including the wide socio-economic inequality in society which often results in conflict.

What is more, Melakneh (2012) observes that African writers from the colonial experience to the present time reacted to the socio-historical reality of the time in their own ways since the level of post independence maladies went far beyond the limit. Borrowing Achebe's metaphor, he further states that:

A writer who observes all the robbery and treachery by a bunch of kleptocrats can hardly be indifferent to this phenomenon. The committed African writer does not only experience a psychological shock and embarrassment at this state of affairs but also embittered and angry that people who yesterday were hailed as messiahs during the liberation struggle have today barricaded themselves in the house while the rest are abandoned in the rain' (Melakneh 2012, p. 7).

The sociopolitical context of the societies from which writers emerge indubitably innerves them. As a result of their observation and concern, the writers engage in activities that awaken the public at large. With regard to what writers can do, Okolo (2007) states that writers influence thoughts about political currents and conditions by way of leading the reader to critical reflections on the type of leaders suitable for a given society and on the degree of civic consciousness exercised by the people in protecting their rights. What's more, Okolo reiterates that the imaginative writer through his or her work can set an ideal standard for society and the state as an agent for social change by means of disseminating ideas significant for the understanding of politics in a given socio-cultural context.

In continuation of the decades old assumption and approach to the postcolonial philosophical and political dynamism, writers those whose works were published after the new millennium, i.e. 2000, seem to be calling for inward looking while scrutinizing emergent discourses and social

realities of their countries in light of globalization which is regarded by many as a principle by which neocolonialism or imperialism is maintained and implemented.

In this regard, Kehinde (2004) upholds that the neo-colonial situation led to the emergence of African literature that started engaging in description and interrogation of post-independence problems in Africa due to the fact that the neo-colonial African experience is becoming more and more enervating as the African political space is becoming more turbulent and unbearable for the people. Kehinde adds that the people are at the mercy of the tyrants who are forcing themselves on the people as a result of which African literature is becoming more robust and more sensitive in its reactions.

1.3 A Glimpse into the Historical Backdrop of the Selected Novels

Stretching across the colonial and postcolonial epochs, discourses on Africa foreground the social reality of the continent as an avenue wherein citizens' dreams are shattered by conflicts that sporadically erupt and cause overarching humanitarian crisis among other prime issues. Beginning from the dawn of independence, the continent observed numerous wars that claimed millions of innocent lives. Especially, The Greater Horn region is one of the most conflict-ravaged on the African continent.

Concomitantly, Leenco (2004) states that the horn area became the site of fierce expansionist competition during the second half of the nineteenth century involving forces from within the area as well as those from without. The expansionist agenda of the local forces was driven primarily by a religious-based ideology of domination with control of resources as the ultimate aim. Many conflicts occur in response to the expansionist tendencies of many states especially in Africa. Writing about the Horn of Africa, Markakis observes that:

Expansionist trends did not cease with the decline of colonialism. A new round began at the end of the Second World War, with the disposal of Italy's former colonies. Seeking an outlet to the sea, Ethiopia at the time laid claims to all parts of Somalia and succeeded in annexing Eritrea. In turn, when it gained independence in 1960, the Somalia republic laid claims against all its neighbors, and the pursuit of these claims became a source of perennial conflict in the region. (1994, p. 221).

These expansionist tendencies as to Kidane (2011, p.15) account for the violent conflicts between Kenya and Somalia in the 1960s as well as those between Ethiopia and Somalia over

Ogaden. Expansionism is also largely responsible for the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Whether the initial problem was caused by the colonial powers is not the issue. What is significant is that both the colonial authorities and those of post independence periods have been engaged in expansionist tendencies and thus causing resentment and conflict.

The selected novels are set in the historical realities of Kenya and Somalia and Uganda. The region has been attracting the attention of the global society due to the historical phenomena it experienced since the days of independence. Thus, providing a cursory review of the historical setting upon which the novels are situated is believed to aid the contextualization of the analysis and the subsequent conclusions.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

After gaining independence from the reign of the European colonial power, Africans were greeted by a multifarious challenge that uncovered the next episode of the herculean task ahead. The first task that many postcolonial theorists considered greeting Africans at the gate of the colonial compound from which they are moving away is that the movement of self-assertion. Indeed, African novelists rigorously engaged in the restoration of the lost and silenced indigenous values that had been trampled on by the colonialists. In order for their attempts bear fruits, they embarked on discursive construction of identities in a way that consolidates the movements during the heyday of independence and paves the way towards fulfillment of the much craved for sociopolitical stability.

It is indeed needless to explain how much multilayered and transcendental the postcolonial challenge African countries have been facing beginning from the dawn of their independence. A number of scholars divide the post independence sociopolitical reality of the continent in different phases. Postcolonial disillusionment which encompasses pressing sociopolitical issues such as civil wars, coups, and lack of good governance stayed for long under the spotlight in literary research works that have been carried out over the last decades. However, there is a critical paucity of literary research that engage themselves with the most recent issues imbued with the 21st century global reality.

Globalization, which appears to be ripe agenda of the 21st century, is considered by many as an opportune policy that brings the entire populace of the planet earth into one global village from which the entire citizens of the global society benefit a lot. However, a number of scholars describe globalization as a masquerade of colonialists who are taking a return trip to the global south. Moreover, some scholars argue that a new theory that critically examines globalization in literary studies need to be developed since postcolonialism suffers from certain inadequacies in assessing what exists beyond postcoloniality in its historical sense. In this regard, Kalliney (2008) upholds that postcolonialism is failing to update itself to address the historical currents that haven't been salient topics in its previous critical engagements. Furthermore, Kalliney states that:

Social scientists have been theorizing the declining political and economic sovereignty of the nation-state for almost twenty years, but such thinking has recently become wide spread in the humanistic disciplines, too. In literary studies, for example, Amtiva Kumar recently proposed the heuristic "World Bank Literature" as an alternative, implying that the rubric "postcolonial" does not sufficiently register the impact of relatively new, supranational organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Anthony Appiah, Wai Chee Dimock, Andreas Huyssen, Fredric Jameson, and Gayatri Spivak, in addition to hundreds of less prominent intellectuals in the humanities, have all contributed to ongoing debates about the cultural and philosophical ramifications of globalization. An important consequence of this transition is the way we now think about the "history" of globalization as a material process and as a critical practice. Many scholars working on globalization now prefer to think of imperialism as an undeveloped form of economic, political, and juridical power, a kind of immature form of globality (2008, p. 2).

There is a claim that the era of globalization or the neocolonial phase has brought adumbration of the decades long sociopolitical challenges and the newly introduced agenda to worsen the situation of the third world. Among the propelling discourses that appear to be shaping the way the world operates is issues related to cultural, religious, political, economic and ideological matters. While the powerful countries use their bargaining power to impose their policy on the developing countries, African nations turn out to be an easy prey since they depend on aids to support their economies. This allows the countries that have strong financial and economic muscles to decide the fate of Africans.

As they give any form of assistance for Africa, donor countries expect the Africans to comply with the political and ideological dictates in return. The relationship between African politicians and donors directly and indirectly affects the lives of Africans in sociopolitical terms. The

imperial powers that dictate the global status quo approve the governance of any regime in Africa as far as their interest is served no matter how tyrannical the African regimes are. Similarly, the West endorses any opposition that operates against the regimes defying its orders. The sociopolitical landscape of African countries is highly influenced and shaped by the political relationship the continent establishes with the world powers while domestic affairs remain fragile.

Thus, an investigation into contemporary sociopolitical intricacies the continent has come to grips with as portrayed in the selected novels becomes imperative. In so doing, the East African region is selected for a reason that it is often taken as the heart of the continent's modern day sociopolitical challenges. Moreover, the literary tradition of this part of the continent appears to be overlooked when it comes to the literary researches towards which researchers' attentions are gravitated. Besides, Musila and Ligaga (2016, p. 171) claim that eastern African literary and cultural studies have lagged behind other regions, in consolidating itself into a distinct area of study; in ways similar to southern and western African studies. The authors further argue that:

The region may enjoy relative linguistic connectivity, with English and Kiswahili as shared official languages, but the different economic and political directions each country took soon after independence – with Kenya's capitalist orientation, Tanzania's African socialism, and Milton Obote's brief flirtation with socialism; further complicated by civil wars in Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia; the attendant economic disasters these created and the anti-intellectual attitude of repressive regimes in the 1980s and 1990s, among other factors, had far-reaching implications for the promise of a coherent regional intellectual landscape. In part owing to these fractures, much work remains to be done in reflecting on and mapping out the shapes of the region's literary and cultural studies (2016, p. 171).

What's more, when the issue of selecting African novels for analytical purpose is raised, scholars and critics anchor their analysis on novels written from the colonial time to the postcolonial era, mainly focusing on the novels produced between 1930s and late 1990s. The preliminary reading of the current researcher suggested that although new prose writers have emerged since 2000 some of whom have earned international awards and acclaim, fewer research-based studies were conducted on their works. Studies that exist have focused on the canon of African prose and more so on the canonical works of writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, and Ayi Kwei Armah.

Other studies concentrate on other genres mainly oral literature. The present study addresses this critical paucity in terms of unraveling the current thematic preoccupations taking the center stage in contemporary East African novels. It draws on a wide range of sources to examine how the selected prose writers depict the sociopolitical reality of East Africa and its relationship with the outer world. In addition, it attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the major challenges East African countries are faced with after the second millennium?
2. How do the novelists portray African public figures in terms of their commitment, integrity, and morality?
3. How do the novels depict African leaders' power autonomy?
4. How do the novelists under scrutiny portray Africa and Africans?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1.5.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to explore Modern-Day Sociopolitical Intricacies in selected Anglophone African Novels.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

This study is geared towards addressing the following specific objectives by confining its analytical probe to the selected novels. Thus, the current study envisages:

- To find out the emergent themes in the selected novels
- To identify whether the prevailing themes correlate with the historical realities
- To examine the representation of Africa and Africans
- To identify the intertextuality between the chosen novels

1.6 Methods and Procedures of the Study

1.6.1 Research Design

The Novel as a literary product presents a multitude of milieus which give readers a panoramic view of the human experiences. Reading literary materials in general, and reading a novel in

particular puts the reader in the dominion of its characters for this particular genre of literature presents a vast array of experiences with which readers could share imaginations. As well, it needs to be noted that dealing with literary products mainly invites a qualitative approach.

Therefore, a qualitative approach is used to deal with the selected novels. The necessity of following a qualitative approach in such a context as to Kothari (2004) is that a qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior. A qualitative approach to research is a function of the researcher's insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the form which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis, i.e. researches that purely employ non arithmetic analysis. In light of this, an attempt is made to examine how the underpinning themes are fleshed out in Nadifa Mohamed's *The Orchard of Lost Souls* (2013) Nurudin Farha's *Cross Bones* (2011), Mukoma Wa Ngugi's *Black Star Nairobi* (2013) and Goretta Kyomuhendo's *Waiting* (2007).

Specifically, textual analysis is believed to help the project by engaging it in a critical and in-depth dialogue with the extracts under study. The textual analysis is carried out within the framework of postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory is taken as an approach that leads the critical engagement with the texts to a more objective and valid analysis and conclusion. More specifically, regional/national comparative model of postcolonial approach to literature is adopted to comparatively analyze the chosen novels.

1.6.2 Source and Type of Data

The researcher makes use of materials which are commonly known as primary and secondary texts. The primary texts are the novels that have been used as primary sources of the data from which extracts have been taken for analysis. Secondary texts are sources that relate to or support the researcher's thesis ideas and analytic discussions. The materials include scholarly works such as anthology, critical edition/casebook, reader's guide and other related resources from which viable postcolonial issues are adopted. Accordingly, the study attempts to explore possible and most likely meanings of the texts as can be realized within the postcolonial conception of the focal points of the study.

1.6.3 Selection Criteria

After selectively reading and rereading of novels authored by African writers after 1970, a purposive sampling technique was employed to determine the selection of four novels from East Africa. Besides, most of the previously conducted studies focused on novels written by notable African novelists such as Chinua Achebe, Nigugi Wa Thiong'o, Ayi Kwei Armah and other established novelists. Moreover, studies that are already in stock emphasized on novels published before 2000. Such an observation dictated the current researcher to select the novels published between 2005 and 2015 to examine the trending themes in this era of African literary production. Therefore, contemporariness in terms of time and geography appeared to be convincing criteria to select the novels in question.

Besides, the thematic preoccupation of the selected novels which can be termed as thematic currency remains one of the most important selection criteria. The four authors whose works are selected for analysis appear to be iconoclastic due to their attempt in reversing how African sociopolitical realities should be seen and remedied. In this respect, Okolo (2007) upholds that the imaginative writer, through his or her work, can offer critical appraisal of the existing political situation and in this way can mould or redirect the actions of society, its beliefs and values. As such, ideas contained in literature can influence people's perception about politics and about the best means of effecting political change. By prompting people to seek justification for and to criticize their political situation, literature also performs a normative function.

The imaginative writer through his or her work can set an ideal standard for society and the state. An imaginative writer can thus perform the function of political philosophy: to disseminate ideas significant for the understanding of politics in a given socio-cultural context. Hence, it is from this point of departure that a conscious selection of Nadifa Mohamed's *The Orchard of Lost Souls* (2013) Nurudin Farha's *Cross Bones* (2011), Mukoma Wa Ngugi's *Black Star Nairobi* (2013) and Gorette Kyomuhendo's *Waiting* (2007) is made for they build on the complex dynamics of recent day Africa's sociopolitical intricacies.

1.6.4 Analytical Procedures

It is believed that literary works are unique to the setting, culture, intellectual point of view as well as human experiences in which they are set by their creators. As a result, a meticulous

selection and a contextual analysis of texts is needed while conducting literary research. Accordingly, the analysis will be carried out on the selected novels by providing theoretical backings where there need be. Hence, special attention is offered to the most important texts that constitute tenable elements for analysis so as to meet the set research objectives.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to bring various outcomes among which are the following:

a) Most of the studies carried out on African novels ardently set canonicity as their prime selection criteria. For this reason, it is often difficult to assess the contribution of novelists that are publishing their first, second or third novels for canonicity is in many cases defined in terms of producing numerous novels. Thus, an overall examination of the established and emerging novelists' will enable readers and critics to venture into cross examination of established writers' works and emerging writers'.

b) In many cases, when the issue of postcolonialism is raised, all that comes to readers' mind at once is the power and ideological relationship between the west and Africa. This study, among many others of its kind, is expected to show a relatively new paradigm of analysis that shows multidimensional approach to postcolonial Anglophone African novels.

c) This study also attempts to reveal the emergent themes that contemporary East African novels develop in line with the existing thematic trends. In doing so, it provides an opportunity to students of literature to examine how such themes are formulated in a subtle way and serve as a powerful background for fiction.

d) The finding of this study is also believed to foreground the new facet of researchable topics in African literature.

(e) Making an examination of modern day sociopolitical intricacies in recent African novels may provide an insight into the major thematic preoccupations taking shape in contemporary African literary landscape compared to former thematic trends.

(f) This study, in line with other similar studies, can upgrade the ability of students of literature to comprehend and interpret literary texts by providing a clear presentation of the continuing and emerging themes in literary texts.

1.8 The Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is delimited to examining modern day sociopolitical intricacies such as ethnocentrism, religious fundamentalism, diplomacy and electoral violence among other issues in the selected novels published between 2005 and 2015. More emphasis is given to governance, sovereignty/diplomacy, interethnic and interreligious relationships and how identities are constructed in constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparisons and cognitive models as presented in the discourse structures of the novels under scrutiny.

Chapter Two

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Review of Related Studies

In this section, a review of published and unpublished research works prior to the current study is presented. The first part of this subsection is devoted to critical works conducted on the selected novels while the other assesses studies conducted on related themes with the view of showing the similarity and difference between the preceding research works and the current project.

2.1.1 Critical Works Conducted on Nuruddin Farah's Novels

Harry Garuba (2017) in his essay entitled “Teacherly Texts: Imagining Futures in Nuruddin Farah's Past Imperfect Trilogy” attempted to cast a light on Farah’s trilogy *Links* (2005), *Knots* (2007), and *Crossbones* (2011). As the title of his publication indicates, Garuba explores Farah’s trilogy as composed of texts that bring the teacherly aesthetic that was cultivated as part of postcolonial literary modernity into the contemporary moment. He compared story rendering techniques which he categorized as old mode of teacherly texts and new modality of teacherliness laying his emphasis on the subtlety and amenability of the later development. Moreover, he argues that:

It is within this new mode where questions of cultural citizenship and formal, political citizenship are brought together and explored in imagining new futures for postcolonial nationhood in a globalized world that Farah’s Past Imperfect trilogy is located. The novels *Links*, *Knots*, and *Crossbones* allow us to map and track the historical and modal transformations that the concept of the teacherly text has undergone in African literature—and to highlight why it is so important to postcolonial literary production in general (Garuba 2017, p.29).

Garuba’s work is linked to the current study in a sense that it attempts to foreground the teacherly nature of Farah’s novels. However, the difference between the current study and Garuba’s work rests on the fact that the current study on one hand looks at the thematic development of the current day’s multifarious sociopolitical challenges African nations are grappling with and on the other hand the emphasis it gives to the areas that have been given little or no attention in literary research undertakings in recent times among other things.

Another critical work preoccupied by Farah's Novel is Kamil Naicker's article entitled "Going to pieces: narrative disintegration in Nuruddin Farah's Crossbones". This work investigated the narrative technique that Farah employed. It came up with a conclusion that Crossbones initially engages with, but ultimately shatters, the narrative techniques of crime fiction. What's more, Naicker states that while such fiction typically builds towards revelation and catharsis, Farah's novel is structurally and thematically preoccupied with dissolution. Subsequently, Naicker upholds that Farah does not seek to redress every popular misconception with a countering "truth", but that the chaotic, apparently incomplete structure of the novel is itself a call for fresh terms of engagement. By writing a crime novel that evokes more questions than answers, Farah suggests the facileness of all forms of narrative that claim to unilaterally capture the Somali situation.

Kamil Naicker's work is much concerned with the narrative technique that Farah employed which as to the author digresses from the normative technique of writing a crime novel. The shade of similarity between Naicker's publication and the current study rests on the point that both works consider the mode of presentation as one of the most important things that demand due attention. Nevertheless, there is great difference between the two works. While Naicker's publication foregrounds the narrative technique Farah employed as a weapon to contradict with the western orientation, the study in question dwells on the emerging sociopolitical challenges Africa in general and Somalia in particular are struggling with.

2.1.2 Critical Works Conducted on Mukoma Wa Ngugi's Novels

An MA thesis conducted by Samuel Wambugu Wanjohi explores the thematic concerns which Mukoma addresses in his novels Nairobi Heat and Black Star Nairobi. Wanjohi's study employed the theory of narratology to conclude that theme of transnational violence and crime is prominent in both novels. In addition, the project also focused on the narrative strategies employed by the author in communicating themes of betrayal, corruption, racism, greed and deception. The thesis eventually concludes that Mukoma has successfully weaved intricate detective narratives using well thought out narrative techniques which enables him to communicate transnational violence and crime, and other related concerns which he has addressed in these two novels in an effective manner.

This study has an affinity with the current project in which it raises the issue of translational violence and crime. Nevertheless, the sharp difference between Wanjohi's work and the current study emanates from the fact that while the former reveals the presence of transnational violence and crime from narrative technique, the later broadly discusses what these translational violence and crime signify in sociopolitical terms. The project under scrutiny fundamentally differs from Wanjohi's thesis owing to the fact that it examines themes such as ethnocentrism, foreign powers' meddling and the rampant moral decadence the current Kenya is caught up in.

The other work discovered while searching for critical works produced on the selected novels prior to the current study is a publication entitled "Memory and the Popular: Rwanda in Mukoma Wa Ngugi's Fiction" by Eleni Coundouriotis (2017). This essay locates the valences of the popular in Mukoma Wa Ngugi's fiction to understand how Rwanda as a background for a thriller fits into a longer tradition of African popular genres that represent the aftermath of violent conflict. The essay in question claimed to have raised the question of whether Nairobi Heat and Black Star Nairobi attempt to illuminate the genocide or only evoke it as background. Finally, the essay examines the relation among action, morality, and sentimentality to identify how Mukoma reclaims the plot of intervention from the humanitarian framing of the failure of international intervention.

However, the current study differs from Coundouriotis' work due to its focus on how the modern day sociopolitical themes are brought out. Thus, it can be said that this essay has no relationship with the current study apart from the literary material that it selected for analysis.

2.1.3 Critical Works Conducted on Nadifa's and Kyomuhindo's Novels

While exploring scholarly researches conducted on Nadifa Mohamed's *The Orchard of Lost Souls*, the current researcher found an academic article produced by Nick Mdika Tembo, entitled: "Made of Sterner Stuff": *Female Agency and Resilience in Nadifa Mohamed's The Orchard of Lost Souls*". The article aims at the investigation of literary representation of women in postcolonial wartime narratives by African female novelists. The article thereby concludes that female characters are situated at the heart of the novel in a way that depicts them reconstruct their subalternity, fight gendered violence, and social vice. The similarity between Tembo's article and the current project emanates from the fact that gender issues are addressed in both

researches. Nonetheless, the greatest difference between the two works rests on the fact that Tembo's article solely focuses on women's agency while the current study extensively examine the multifarious sociopolitical circumstances Somalia of then days' was caught in.

An academic article by the same author entitled: "*Reading the Trauma of Internally Displaced Identities in Goretti Kyomuhendo's Waiting*" has been found while the search for any academic studies carried out prior to the current study on Goretti Kyomuhendo's *Waiting* was under way. In this article Tembo focuses on how the author locates the anguish and trauma of her local community's search for belonging and for a sense of self-worth during the last months of the 1979 civil war in Uganda when the Uganda National Liberation Army and the Tanzanian People's Defence Force combined to oust Uganda's dictator-ruler, Idi Amin were at war. The author proposes that *Waiting: A Novel of Uganda at War* is a fictional narrative that imagines the author's and her community's lived reality, and that Kyomuhendo utilizes waiting as a narrational trope in a clear attempt to come to grips with the lingering traumatic memories that engulf the local inhabitants of Hoima as they await the advancing allied forces to 'liberate' them from Idi Amin's rampaging soldiers. Tembo's article and the current study converge on the material selected for the research purpose. The current study is different from Tembo's article in many ways. While Tembo's article dwells on a single theme: trauma, the current study draws on the wider vista of the thematic preoccupations Kyomuhendo foregrounds throughout the entirety of her novel.

2.1.4 A Review of Critical Works Conducted On Other Novels with Related Themes

In the quest to find previously conducted studies, the first material the researcher came across was Melakneh Mengistu's PhD dissertation entitled "Post-colonial and Mainstream Anglophone African Novel". In his dissertation, Melakneh dwelt upon a comparative analysis of selected African Anglophone novels from Western, Eastern and Southern Zones of the continent with a view to determine their thematic convergence on stylistic parallelism which traverses nations and regions across mainstream Anglophone Africa. He upheld that the comparative analysis reveals that all novels under his scrutiny except one (*Disgrace*, 1999) invariably partake thematic and stylistic intertextuality as an expression which still gives rise to emotive debates between the adherents of appropriation and abrogation of English.

Moreover, he noted that the dominance of English had already impacted upon the African cultural productions which eventually led African novelists to declare RE (Received English) in favor of English which involves editorial intrusions and deviations from the normative usage. Furthermore, he maintained that one of the most outstanding back to the imperial center (Britain) is the empowerment of an alternative textual strategy without recourse to the traditional perspective rules. Thus, he concludes, the third generation of Anglophone African novels (1970-2000) has evolved an electric approach to the criticism of modern African Literature in order to accommodate its peculiarities such as thematic ‘parochialism’ and cultural hybridity due to the accidents of history.

The difference between the current study and Melakneh’s dissertation stems out from their difference on the issues they take as center of attention. While this study aims at examining the modern days sociopolitical intricacies African countries are confronted with, Melakneh’s dissertation focused on determining the thematic junction on stylistic parallelism across nations and regions of mainstream Anglophone Africa. In his dissertation Melakneh raised a score of ideas related to language politics, gender and ideology among others wherein he concluded that there are similarities among the issues they raised and the stylistic features they used. However, the present study doesn’t emphasize the central themes such as language politics, abrogation and appropriation of the English language that Melakneh treats as the pillars of his dissertation.

Dagne Alemu’s (2010) MA thesis attempted to examine the discourse of post-independence disillusionment in *Petals of Blood* (1977) and *Devil on the Cross* (1982) with a view that both novels depict an undistorted image of a post-colonial African state, Kenya, with all its complexity of problems. Then, Dagne analyzed the two novels separately and conducted a comparative analysis and found out that the chosen literary works deal with post-independence disillusionment: political corruption, social class stratification, gender inequality, resistance and liberation which are widely foregrounded in both novels.

There appears to be similarity between Dagne’s work and the current one when it comes to the underlining themes such as political corruption, social class stratification, and gender inequality regardless of the chosen novels. However, the main difference between the two studies emanates

from the fact that while the former study focuses on the social realities of the early days of independence, the later engages with the social realities that came into play in later times.

Chapter Three

3.0 Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This section of the dissertation offers the theoretical and conceptual foundation of the current project. Postcolonial theory is therefore chosen as the guiding principle in this context. Postcolonial theory is in the limelight since it serves a multitude of disciplines as a basis to conduct a well thought out analysis. Despite the fact that the postcolonial theory is a widely debated field involving a great number of theorists, a comprehensive review of its development and how it relates to literary research, and thus lays the theoretical basis of the study at hand is offered. To enrich the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings in the development of the dissertation, a reference is made to the works of some influential scholars in the field along with other fields that serve as ancillaries of the postcolonial theory by way of expanding on the knowledge stemming from postcolonialism.

3.1 Postcolonial Theory

Young (2003) states that the Bandung Conference marks the origin of postcolonialism as a self-conscious political philosophy after which the great Tricontinental conference was held in Havana in 1966. Young goes over saying that the conference brought scholars from Latin America, Africa and Asia together for the first time as a result of which the conference was named 'Tricontinental'. Besides, Young asserts that the conference established a journal called (Tricontinental) in which the writings of 'postcolonial' theorists and activists (Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh, and Jean-Paul Sartre) appeared as a transnational body of work with a common aim of popular liberation rather than as a single and elaborated political and theoretical position. However, according to Bahri (fall 1996) cited in Melkneh (2008), the rise of Post-Colonial Studies in Western academy dates back to the appearance of Edward Said's influential work *Orientalism* (1978).

Postcolonialism attracted the attention of thinkers as a result of which scholars and writers engaged in polemic discourses on its scope and nomenclature. In this regard, Brooker et al

(2005) maintain that postcolonialism draws on a more radical implication of poststructuralism's study of colonial discourse, or what is usually termed 'postcolonial criticism'. In an attempt to substantiate their claim, the authors assert that:

Analysis of the cultural dimension of colonialism/ imperialism is as old as the struggle against it; such work has been a staple of anti-colonial movements everywhere. It entered the agenda of metropolitan intellectuals and academics as a reflex of a new consciousness attendant on Indian independence (1947) and as part of a general leftist reorientation to the 'Third-World' struggles (above all in Algeria) from the 1950s onwards. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) was and remains an inspirational key text (it had an important preface by the metropolitan 'convert', Jean-Paul Sartre). Thereafter, 'postcolonial studies' overtook the troublesome ideological category of 'Commonwealth literature' to emerge in the 1980s as a set of concerns marked by the decentredness otherwise associated, philosophically, with poststructuralism and particularly deconstruction (Brooker et al 2005, P. 219).

What's more, Moore-Gilbert (1997, p. 5) inquires whether postcolonialism is a criticism or a theory and resorts to a claim that postcolonial criticism and theory alike comprise a variety of practices, performed within a range of disciplinary fields in a multitude of different institutional locations around the globe. Many of these long predate the period when the term 'postcolonial' began to gain currency and have since been claimed retrospectively as continuous, or contiguous, with what are now commonly identified as postcolonial modes of cultural analysis. On the other hand, Lopez (2001) observes the postcolonial as a condition, a set of historical and cultural contingencies; and sees postcolonial writings generally as a body of work that seeks to address these contingencies in the hope of finding ways of thinking and living in its unprecedented historical moment.

On the other hand, Innes (2007) contends that it is useful to be aware of the terms and theories that have become current in critical discussion, of which the terms 'postcolonial' and 'post-colonial' themselves with variance in their usage became the subject of considerable debate. For historians, the hyphenated word refers specifically to the period after a country, state or people cease to be governed by a colonial power such as Britain or France, and take administrative power into their own hands. But within the area of 'Postcolonial Studies', which tends to embrace literary and cultural and sometimes anthropological – studies, the term is more often used to refer to the consequences of colonialism from the time the area was first colonized.

In the same vein, Venn (2006) affirms that the prefix in postcoloniality is not meant to signal the end of the previous period but to stand for the sign of an emancipatory project, that is, it announces a goal yet to be realized: that of dismantling the economic, political and social structures and values, the attitudes and ideas that appeared with European colonialism and its complex combination with capitalism and Western modernity, and it is important to add, with pre-existing forms of exploitation. Postcolonial critique is thus a counter occidentalism as well as an emancipatory task.

Quayson (2000), on the other hand, maintains that like postmodernism and poststructuralism, postcolonialism designates critical practice that is highly eclectic and difficult to define. Quayson further recaps that:

The term itself is sometimes written with a hyphen and sometimes left unhyphenated with the two forms being used to designate the same areas of interest by different critics. The hyphenated version was first used by political scientists and economists to denote the period after colonialism, but from about the late seventies it was turned into a more wide-ranging culturalist analysis in the hands of literary critics and others (Quayson 2000, P. 32).

Moreover, Quayson attempts to conceptualize postcolonialism as a discipline that involves a methodical engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects upon the societies those who had a historical encounter with colonialism and the subsequent global developments deemed to be the aftereffects of the empire. Concurrently, Ashcroft et al (2004, p. 2) maintain that “the term ‘post-colonial’ is meant to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression”.

What is more, Selmon (1997) also states that the term postcolonialism is as much about conditions under imperialism and colonialism proper as about conditions coming after the historical end of colonialism. A growing concern among postcolonial critics has also been with racial minorities in the West, embracing native and African Americans in the US, British Asians and African Caribbeans in the UK and Aborigines in Australia among others. Because of these features, postcolonialism allows for a wide range of applications, designating a constant interplay

and slippage between the sense of a historical transition, a socio-cultural location and an epochal configuration. All the more, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1995), state that:

Post-colonial theory involves discussion about experience of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics, and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being. None of these is 'essentially' post-colonial, but together they form the complex fabric of the field (Ashcroft et al., 1995 P. 2).

More to the point, Innes (2007) maintains that postcolonial studies generally aim at the interaction between the culture of the colonial power, including its language, the culture and traditions of the colonized peoples in a manner that acknowledges the importance of power relations in that cultural exchange, the degree to which the colonizer imposes a language, a culture and a set of attitudes, and the degree to which the colonized peoples are able to resist, adapt to or subvert that imposition.

Similarly, Venn (2006) upholds that a longer and complex history underlying postcolonialism with the history of anti-colonial struggles which are an admixture of diasporic and indigenous productions constituting local knowledge combined with radical, universal political principles and widespread political contacts between different revolutionary organizations that generated common political information and material support as well as spreading radical political and intellectual ideas adds to the understanding of anti-colonial struggles as the activities that subvert, disrupt and contest the strategies towards the homogenization and privileging of a centre or an origin or a sovereignty or a world-view which is at the heart of every form of colonization or subjugation, past and existing.

It is at this juncture that the preoccupations raised by Young (2003) come into play to uphold the view that:

Postcolonialism begins from its own knowledges, many of them more recently elaborated during the long course of the anti-colonial movements, and starts from the premise that those in the west, both within and outside the academy, should take such other knowledges, other perspectives, as seriously as those of the west. Postcolonialism, or tricontinentalism, is a general name for these insurgent knowledges that come from the subaltern, the dispossessed, and seek to change the terms and values under which we all live. You can learn it anywhere if

you want to. The only qualification you need to start is to make sure that you are looking at the world not from above, but from below (2003, p. 18).

Even though most of the personalities trying to define postcolonialism seem to reach consensus on the fact that it is a multidisciplinary field, Gbenoba & Okoroegbe (nd) uphold that it is such a field mainly influenced by various thinkers such as Edward Said, Bill Ashcroft, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and Aizaz Ahmad. The authors further avow that it is a field of literary criticism which was used by some literary critics in the late 1970s to denote the advent of a more critical understanding of the effects of colonization claiming that the approach seeks to provide critical reflections about Western imperialism and colonialism.

Postcolonialism has also been dubbed as a political project designed to promote the contesting of colonial domination and to critique the legacies of colonialism. Postcolonial literature uses the language and literary forms of the colonizers to write about the history and mythology of the colonized. Thus, postcolonial literature is by nature transformative, and often subversive. As well, Olatunji (2010) observes that postcolonialism, is a historical incident that interrogates the philosophical point of reference, practice and effects of colonialism on other societies in the process of history.

Tyson (2006) upholds that as a domain within literary studies, postcolonial criticism is both a subject matter and a theoretical framework. As a subject matter, postcolonial criticism analyses literature produced by cultures that developed in response to colonial domination, from the first point of colonial contact to the present. Postcolonial criticism focuses on the literature of cultures that developed in response to British colonial domination. However, as a theoretical framework, postcolonial criticism seeks to understand the operations politically, socially, culturally, and psychologically of colonialist and anti-colonialist ideologies.

Melakneh (2008), states that postcolonial theory is also associated with the concepts of resistance and representation. The concept of resistance implies of human freedom, liberty, identity, individuality and etc., which may not have been held in the colonized socio-cultural perception of human kind. Resistance literature employs the language of the cosmopolitan power to rebut their dominant ideologies. In other words, the colonized nation is “writing back” to the Imperial Center reacting against either the oppression or racism of the colonizers or the inherent cultural

“better-ness” of the indigenous people. Thus writers from formerly colonized countries writing in the colonial language, particularly in English, have demonstrated the counter-discursive potentials of the tools appropriated from the colonizer.

Representation, on the other hand, as to Melakneh (2008, p. 71-2) relates to the portrayal of individuals, people or historical events. In the postcolonial context, representation linked to issues of bias for or against, stereotyping and the influence of discourse. Stereotyping, in turn, is the representation of an individual in terms of the prejudices against the cultural other in which case the individual is perceived as a simplified type rather than a complex human being, thereby, dehumanized. In fact, no representation is ever neutral but a means through which it is constructed.

3.1.1 The Critical Models of Postcolonial Theory

Melakneh (2008) states that postcolonial theory emerged as part of the critical yardstick in 1970 with Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) to be the foundational text that exposed the discursive construction of the orient as inferior contrary to the occident. Furthermore, Melakneh hints at the convenience of Ashcroft et al (2004) classification of Models of Postcolonial Theory. Accordingly, Ashcroft et al state that the need to develop these models emanate from writers’ and critics’ conviction that the special character of postcolonial texts calls for new and adequate vantage point that can enable the exploration of distinctive features of postcolonial literature.

The authors further avow that as writers and critics became aware of the special character of post-colonial texts, they saw the need to develop an adequate model to account for them. Four major models have emerged to date: first, ‘national’ or regional models, which emphasize the distinctive features of the particular national or regional culture; second, race-based models which identify certain shared characteristics across various national literatures, such as the common racial inheritance in literatures of the African diaspora addressed by the ‘Black writing’ model; third, comparative models of varying complexity which seek to account for particular linguistic, historical, and cultural features across two or more post-colonial literatures; fourth, more comprehensive comparative models which argue for features such as hybridity and syncreticity as constitutive elements of all post-colonial literatures (syncretism is the process by

which previously distinct linguistic categories, and, by extension, cultural formations, merge into a single new form).

These models often operate as assumptions within critical practice rather than specific and discrete schools of thought; in any discussion of post-colonial writing a number of them may be operating at the same time. Thus, the current study adopts the National/Regional models that consolidate its analytical pillars from the same book and treats it in the following section.

3.1.2 National/Regional Models

Questions and controversies may arise if one needs to explain what strictly codifies something as national, or as regional. However, the ideas embedded in national and regional reincarnate in the words that follow them to provide succinct meaning of the intended thought. In this regard, one may talk about ‘national anthem’ which politically signifies the people of a given country regardless of their linguistic and cultural differences as the sum of its parts. Consequently, the nation can be understood as a concept that embodies the overall sociopolitical experiences and practices of a group of people inhabiting a country with which they identify themselves as nationals. The same analogy can be drawn with reference to ‘regional integration’ aiming at the notion of cooperation between several countries that belong to the same corner of a continent. This can also mean the expression of sociopolitical experiences that go across national boundaries and add up to the regional experiences that converge at a certain juncture.

Melakneh (2008, p.74) on his part claims that a nation can be any political formation of people with shared, extensive and lasting ethnic, linguistic, and historical loyalties and experiences attached to them. He moves on to stating that national or regional models are set against such assumptions that emphasize the distinctive features of national or regional history and culture which reinscribes history from the position of previously silenced indigenous peoples. Ideas about national literature are shaped in contrast with the colonial legacies in an effort to epitomize optimistic future that leads towards sovereign nationhood freed from British colonialism.

Ashcroft et al (2004) affirm that the first post-colonial society to develop a ‘national’ literature was the USA. The emergence of a distinctive American literature in the late eighteenth century raised inevitable questions about the relationship between literature and place, between literature

and nationality, and particularly about the suitability of inherited literary forms. Ideas about new kinds of literature were part of the optimistic progression to nationhood because it seemed that this was one of the most potent areas in which to express deference from Britain.

But as the extensive literature of the USA developed different characteristics from that of Britain and established its right to be considered independently, the concept of national literary differences 'within' English writing became established. The eventual consequence of this has been that 'newer' literatures from countries such as Nigeria, Australia, and India could also be discussed as discrete national formations rather than as 'branches of the tree'. Their literatures could be considered in relation to the social and political history of each country, and could be read as a source of important images of national identity.

The development of national literatures and criticism is fundamental to the whole enterprise of post-colonial studies. Without such developments at the national level, and without the comparative studies between national traditions to which these lead, no discourse of the post-colonial could have emerged. Nor is it simply a matter of development from one stage to another, since all post-colonial studies continue to depend upon national literatures and criticism. The study of national traditions is the first and most vital stage of the process of rejecting the claims of the centre to exclusivity.

African and European critics have produced several regional and national studies which reflect the widespread political, economic, and cultural differences between modern African countries (Gurr and Calder 1974; Lindfors 1975; Taiwo 1976; Ogungbesan 1979). Clearly some regional groupings are more likely to gain acceptance in the regions themselves than are others, and will derive from a collective identity evident in other ways. Thus, this study adopts the regional/national model of postcolonial theory with a conviction that the East African countries from which the selected novels are chosen have thematic parallelism that reflect cross border issues that justify the appropriateness of national/regional comparative model of postcolonial literary theory.

3.2 Emergent Themes

Kalliney (2008, p. 146) argues that postcolonial theory has reached an impasse because it fails to grasp, much less adequately critique, the emerging system of world sovereignty commonly called globalization. In their estimation, postcolonial theory is something from which scholars of globalization can learn, but recent political and economic developments have left postcolonial studies unprepared to assess the political contradictions of our current world. Postcolonialists have offered a surprisingly muted reply, effectively ceding the discourse of contemporary world politics and culture to critics of globalization.

Moreover, the author upholds that postcolonialism is rapidly becoming a historical discipline, with many of its prominent figures, far from mounting a counterattack, gladly joining forces with Hardt, Negri, and the growing legion of transnational theorists. In literary studies, for example, Amtiva Kumar recently proposed the heuristic "World Bank Literature" as an alternative, implying that the rubric "postcolonial" does not sufficiently register the impact of relatively new, supranational organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Kalliney sums up that Anthony Appiah, Wai Chee Dimock, Andreas Huyssen, Fredric Jameson, and Gayatri Spivak, in addition to hundreds of less prominent intellectuals in the humanities, have all contributed to ongoing debates about the cultural and philosophical ramifications of globalization. Thus, the following points are regarded as offshoot of postcolonialism that are emerging in the field of literary study.

3.2.1 Ethnicity and Ethnocentrism

Some postcolonial scholars claim that the concept of ethnicity is one of the most vexed and complex issues in the postcolonial theory. The notion of ethnicity has been seen as a concept that intersects with notions of race, marginality, imperialism, and identity, provided that all concepts possessing a nuance of affinity with ethnicity lead to a constantly shifting and continually contested theoretical ground. Put in a nutshell, the argument boils down to a dispute over whether some ethnic groups and not others are entitled to the term 'ethnic', and whether the indigenous people of an invaded colony are the only 'truly colonised' group. Far apart from the dichotomized attempt at projecting the ethnic as the colonized black which in essence amounts to

race, this section opts for the term ethnic to refer to a group of people that have common language and culture regardless of their race and nationality.

According to Bhabha (1994), the racial binary of white/non-white was always an ambivalent one because on the one hand the non-white race was deemed to be completely primitive and savage while on the other it was idealized as the 'noble savage' and deemed to be improvable. Bhabha claims that race theory was responsible for the generation of endless stereotypes. In defining the concept of race and ethnicity, Nayar (2015, p.116) observes the point that postcolonialism as a mode of interpretation tracks race and its cognates, racial difference and racism, as an organizing principle of literary texts and history-writing but, more than anything else, of colonialism. Nayar further reiterates that along with colonialism comes the rhetoric of domination that builds on the discursive construction of the role that the European colonial power has over the "other" races that are represented as inferior, primitive, vulnerable, child-like, treacherous and incapable of governing themselves compared to the Europeans.

Hall (1995) on the other hand claims that the notion of ethnicity stemmed from the cultural politics and strategies having many facets of which two principal objects were first the question of access to the rights to representation by black artists and black cultural workers themselves, and the second one being the contestation of the marginality, the stereotypical quality and the fetishized nature of images of blacks, by the counter-position of a 'positive' black imagery. All the more, Hall maintains that the strategies were principally addressed to changing what he defines as 'labels of representation' adding that the word 'representation' is slippery. Moreover, he hints at the fact that the term can be used either as one way of speaking about the angle from which one sees a reality that exists 'outside' the means by which things are represented: a conception grounded in a mimetic theory of representation or as a term signifying a very radical displacement of that unproblematic notion of the concept of representation. Hall writes,

My own view is that events, relations, structures do have conditions of existence and real effects, outside the sphere of the discursive, but that it is only within the discursive, and subject to its specific conditions, limits and modalities, do they have or can they be constructed within meaning. Thus, while not wanting to expand the territorial claims of the discursive infinitely, how things are represented and the 'machineries' and regimes of representation in a culture do play a constitutive, and not merely a reflexive, after-the-event role. This gives questions of culture and

ideology, and the scenarios of representation—subjectivity, identity, politics—a formative, not merely an expressive, place in the constitution of social and political life (Hall 1995, P. 224).

On the whole, Hall argues that ethnicity builds mainly upon events, relations, structures that do have conditions of existence and real effects, outside the sphere of the discursive, but that it is only within the discursive, and subject to its specific conditions, limits and modalities, do they have or can they be constructed within meaning.

The politics of representation is rooted in binarism which brings forward the idea that the relationship among ethnic groups is that of the dominant and the dominated, the exploiter and the exploited leading the ethnic groups into bitter rivalry. The rivalry might occur out of the discursive process of othering which bases itself mainly on the concept of race. Concomitantly, Sollors (1995) upholds that ‘ethnic’ includes all ethnic groups and not simply all those except, an arbitrarily selected dominant group is one which generally concurs with the post-colonial rejection of the centre/margin binarism.

Imperial narratives such as that of anthropology in their project of naming and thus knowing indigenous groups have imported a notion of aboriginality, of cultural authenticity, which proves difficult to displace. The result is the positioning of the indigenous people as the ultimately marginalized, a concept which reinscribes the binarism of centre/margin, and prevents their engagement with the subtle processes of imperialism by locking them into a locally strategic but ultimately self defeating essentialism.

Nayar (2015) on the other hand underpins the idea that it is the discursive construction of race that comes in for attention, given the field’s emphasis on textuality and the link of knowledge with power in postcolonial studies. Thus Cornel West (2002) and others working within Critical Race Theory or Critical Race Studies note the links between race theory manifest as discourses or literary-cultural representations and economics or politics (2015, p.116).

The discursive construction of power relationship in countries with colonial experiences paved the way for further cleavages among peoples of the same race from which further divisions based on ethnic stereotypes emerge and lead into bitter rivalry. Such rivalries among ethnic groups that belong to a given country hamper the sociopolitical progress of the citizens. In tandem with, Ali et al., (2015) state that higher ethnic fractionalization is found to be correlated with slower

economic growth, higher incidence of civil conflicts, weaker state capacity and under-provision of public good.

The implication of these empirical patterns appears to be most severe in Africa due to the higher level of ethnic fractionalization among African countries. The authors argue that the legacies of colonization in fomenting these rivalries and undermining state-building remain poorly understood. Ali et al., (2015) apparently hold Britain's strategy of divide-and-rule where ethnic cleavages were fostered and exploited to weaken and control the local populations accountable for the fractionalization of the populations of the countries at the stake. The writers conclude that as a result of the strategy, the citizens of Sub-Saharan Anglophone African countries are more likely to attach greater importance to ethnic identity (vis-a-vis national identity) due to the sociopolitical conditions.

The inclination towards ethnic identity than the national one is a ripe agenda that can easily serve the interest of war monger who trade in the closet of ethnicity. Regardless of the root causes, interethnic conflicts are the most prevalent threats to security issues in most multiethnic countries in Africa. Similarly, Jinadu (2007) observes that ethnic conflict is now a pervasive and salient dimension of political and social conflict in several countries in the world. In Africa there have since the mid-1960s been prolonged and protracted ethnic-related violent political conflicts. Little wonder, therefore, that there has been a renewed global policy-related and intellectual interest in ethnic conflict in recent years, because of the state building—including peace, development and security—problems they continue to pose for domestic and international politics.

This is particularly so in the case of post-conflict societies, emerging from divisive and usually decimating wars over the control of the state and its resources, where attention has increasingly been turned to constitutional and political engineering to avoid a relapse into armed conflict and to lay the foundations and conditions for lasting peace. Besides, Venn (2006) states that the state itself is often made up of contingently annexed territories, disregarding established cultural and ethnic differences, organized into opportunist administrative units. In the circumstances, the imaginary community of the nation-state is a very unstable artifice united only as a performative device for administrative and accounting practices; in the imaginary of the oppressed, it still

often functions as a virtual community, or a legal fiction. Congruently, more often than not, and precisely because of its lack of autonomy or its limited autonomy from competing ethnic groups, the state becomes the core contested terrain, the deadly serious theatre of ethnic conflict over which ethnic groups or coalitions of ethnic groups should control it and its vast resources, as Jinadu (2007) puts it.

The horn of Africa is not an exception when a reference to interethnic conflict appears in the limelight. The region has witnessed several gruesome interethnic conflicts that claimed numerous lives. Politics is recorded as the foremost cause of interethnic conflicts that ravaged the region. In this respect, Kenya serves a good example since it is a country that has repeatedly been plagued by postelection violence that subsequently developed into large scale interethnic conflicts. Kidane (2011) on his part states that political elites appeared as agents fomenting the eruption of interethnic clashes in Kenya. Citing the statements made by some Kenyan politicians prior to the outbreak of the 1991/92 violence in the country, he maintains that the ethnic clashes between sections of the Kalenjin, the Kikuyu, the Luhya, and the Luo ethnic groups was preceded by inflammatory statements by government ministers who were opposed to the introduction of multiparty politics in the country.

Tragically, the politicians who engage in provocative discourses seem to be either oblivious or devious to the repercussions of such inflammatory statements. Apart from the previous crises, a report released in 2014 by United States Institute of Peace revealed that the electoral violence in Kenya that erupted following the 2007 presidential election has been recorded as the worst since the inception of multiparty politics in 1992, leaving more than 1,100 people dead, 650,000 displaced, and the country deeply divided. Even though the power sharing agreement reached between Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga, with mediation by Kofi Annan helped to sooth the 2007-08 postelection violence, the combination of unaddressed underlying conflict drivers such as unemployment, horizontal inequality, and highly centralized ethnopolitics and highly contested elections as a potential trigger presented significant risks for politically motivated violence.

While it is true that counter-imperial struggles helped forge a reality of community, the latter has in many post-independence states been split into conflicting factions because of the failures of

the national bourgeoisie, a ‘narcissistic, ignorant, cynical’ class functioning as intermediary agents for capitalism, as Fanon (1963) put it. A central problem for the postcolony is the remaking of communities of interest so that democratic and equitable forms of governance may operate, for instance, on the basis of an idea of a social contract, or of a just sociality.

The absence of contract and of a national community based on shared and agreed interest, has meant that post-independence states have had to invent constitutional arrangements that often rested on weak or thin nationalism, or, in some cases, have had to copy inappropriate Western models. This relates to another important factor in analyzing the mechanism for instituting the social, namely, the notion of community, and the concomitant relation of community to nation, and of the state to the community (Venn 2006, p.69)

3.2.2 Globalization, the Neocolonial Phase

For a reason that the post WWII global context doesn’t allow direct colonialism to the world superpowers, there appeared to be a strategic move that was devised and brought the USA to the front stage as a new superpower to carry on colonial plunder in a new form. The US stirred the post war global expansion of finance capital in tandem with its inherent and transformed trends of capital accumulation vis-à-vis the external conditions of capital expansion set by socialist advancement in the wake of growing national liberation struggles following the war. P. J. James (2015) upholds that this renovation passed on a qualitative dimension to imperialist domination and has come to be defined as neocolonialism. Furthermore, P J James (2015) states:

The background for the transition to neocolonialism had already been set by USA through the practice of ‘informal colonialism’ or what is called “imperialism without colonies” in its backyard, Latin America, which enabled the former to perfect the technique of imperialist plunder without having direct territorial control. Being the supreme arbiter of the post World War II global order, conditions were conducive for USA for employing the time-tested devices of informal colonialism on an international scale. During the quarter century that followed World War II, this neocolonialism was pursued under the camouflage of international Keynesianism effectively utilizing the complex set of economic, political, military, cultural and intellectual tools framed during and after the War. Imperialism’s close nexus with the comprador ruling classes in Afro-Asian-Latin American countries as its faithful allies, led to the further integration of the erstwhile colonies or neocolonial countries with finance capital resulting in the acceleration in latter’s world concentration and centralization (2015, p. 18).

Chambers and Curti (2001) try to see globalization as a set of transformations that extends beyond historical imperialism and its continuing effects. Besides, the authors postulate that the colonial power used similar, yet differently communicated strategies to mutate and ascend to supremacy over the dissimilar postcolonial cultures with varying experiences of conquest. Besides, Ashcroft (2001, P.212) maintains that globalism and imperialism stem from similar discursive orientation towards the world and justification of the historical reality of power relations which can be interpreted as a civilizing mission *per se*. Besides, Ashcroft states that there is specific epoch in which nineteenth-century imperialism transfers from one English speaking imperial center characterized by geographical empire to a globalization process without spatial boundaries.

Ashcroft upholds that Teddy Roosevelt's speech on the eve of his election to the Presidency in 1901 perhaps marks the apex of imperialism and the beginning of the USA's serious appropriation of the concept as a policy, confirms the effortless way in which the ideology of imperialism with its huge contradiction of nurture and exploitation transfers into the twentieth-century global economy. As cited in Ashcroft (2001, p. 212), (Beale 1956) "It is our duty toward the people living in barbarism to see that they are freed from their chains . . . and we can free them only by destroying barbarism itself. Exactly as it is the duty of a civilized power to scrupulously respect the rights of weaker civilized powers . . . so it is its duty to put down savagery and barbarism.

What is more, ideological campaigns that situate the USA as sole warden of the global power balance have come to be fully operational. These discourses construct migrants, Islam and terrorism in racialized terms as a result of which according to Narayan (2015) they captured the attention of postcolonial scholars. Besides, the politics of aid in Third World nations that foreground First World as humanitarian and treat suffering as localized and outside of global historical conditions have also received attention. These discursive significations subtly manifest the features of the colonial era. Furthermore Narayan (2015) maintains:

Military campaigns and interventions by the USA, its allies and organizations like NATO, in the pursuit of oil, minerals and other natural resources, extend colonial-era exploitation and oppression. Other policies and international 'agreements' (although these are less by agreement than by coercion) on global warming, fossil fuels, human rights, borders are very often one-sided and rarely in the interests of the postcolony. The new figurations of the Empire therefore replicate

older ones in far more shadowy and insidious forms. The condition of the postcolony remains, in other words, a different but continuing version of the colony (2015, p. 125).

As it could be understood from the recent historical phenomena, the USA used several pretexts to intervene in the affairs of other countries to the extent of removing governments that defied its dictates and installing its loyalists. The USA's direct involvement in toppling governments in the Arab world and indirect involvement in the simmering political turmoil in African countries that reaches the boiling point following elections shows how far-reaching its sphere of influence is. The USA uses several strategies that strengthens its muscles and weakens the imperial 'other'. In the neocolonial phase Third World's decision making in the affairs of its own is totally dependent upon the will of the First World.

Nayar (2015, p.116) puts forward that Subsidies, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), Foreign Direct Investment, disinvestment, privatization and other policies of these nations are very often determined by powers outside the nation-state. Puppet regimes (that we have seen installed in numerous African nations through the 20th century) are usually an effective way for the First World nations to retain political and economic control over the new nation. Globalization puts particular pressures on the postcolonial nation-state in the domain of economy. Exploitation of the natural resources of the former colonies continues through mining and cheap labour (sweatshops). Economic control is also very often accompanied by cultural imperialism.

All these interferences face harsh resistance. Thus, literary materials serve as one form of resistance that reveals the agony of a particular group of people. The resistance staged against colonialism or imperialism through literary products transforms the society. In this regard, Ashcroft (2001) states that literary writing demonstrates that resistance, and the agency of the local, are most powerful when it is transformative. He adds:

By 'taking hold' of writing, whether as novel, history, testimonio, by appropriating political discourse and political structures, by interpolating educational discourse and institutions, transforming conceptions of place, culture, even economics, the post-colonial subject unleashes a rapidly circulating transcultural energy. That is to say, the subject exhibits agency to the degree that he or she participates in a circulation of influence between the global and the local. Contrary to assumptions about the limited distribution and impact of literary writing, literature, because it has been wedded so closely to a historical notion of élite culture, has often been the means by

which colonial politicians, writers and intellectuals have been able to appropriate the cultural capital invested in imperial discourse and redeploy it for local purposes (2001, p. 216).

3.2.3 Conflict and Religion

Stretching across the colonial and postcolonial epochs, discourses on Africa foreground the social reality of the continent as an avenue wherein citizens' dreams are shattered by conflicts that sporadically erupt and cause overarching humanitarian crisis among other prime issues. Beginning from the dawn of independence, the continent observed numerous wars that claimed millions of innocent lives. Especially, The Greater Horn region is one of the most conflict-ravaged on the African continent. In a similar line of thought, Kidane (2011) claims that the people of the region have witnessed many inter-state and intra-state armed conflicts ever since 1956 when Sudan became the first sub-Saharan African country to get its independence. He goes on to say that:

The region was by no means peaceful before the era of decolonisation. During the period roughly between the early 1800s and the era of decolonisation, for example, it experienced many wars, which revolved mostly around state formation and empire building; slave raids; control of resources and trade routes; colonisation and resistance to colonialism; and the liberation struggle (Kidane 2011, p. 9).

Apart from what most of the earlier wars fought in the region revolved around, religious fundamentalism and ethnocentrism have emerged as catalysts escalating the tension between warring parties in recent times. In this regard, while Somalia has been regarded as a nest in which religious fundamentalists having allegiances and links to international Jihadist groups such as Al-Qaida and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are hatched, neighboring countries in the region have been serving as a stage where the tragic dramas of terrorism are performed.

In addition to terrorism, tribal and ethnic conflicts have also taken their toll on population of the region. This has mainly been achieved through the discursive construction of ideology. Freedman (2003) on the other hand acknowledges Gramsci's attempt at exploring the working of ideology as a practice in the world and recaps that ideology is a thought practice that interweaves with, and inform, material and observable practices and acts that can be termed as a recurring pattern of political thinking that, one for which there is evidence in the concrete world. When a thought practice and the dictates of ideology become an integral component of daily activities, it can be

said that the ideology has become hegemonic. Narayan (2015) reiterates that in postcolonial studies, hegemony refers to the domination of non-Europeans by Europeans. Hegemony is not simply military conquest and domination by force. Rather, as Gramsci and Althusser treated it, hegemony works more insidiously.

Therefore, since hegemony embraces religion, religious fundamentalism that is behind modern day's mayhem in Africa and beyond is the result of the hegemonic assimilation of the native culture to the exotic culture. Religious orientation that is adopted from the Taliban way of thinking emerged as one of the catalysts in some countries where Islam is the dominant faith. Especially, in the Horn of Africa, religious fundamentalism emerged as one of the prime security issues. This is due to the geographical fact that the Horn of Africa is bridge to the Middle East as a result of which it becomes a playground for sociopolitical dynamics unfolding across the course of human experiences. The region has complex interrelationships between differing Islamic cultures within Africa, from east to west. In this regard, Somalia, a country wherein anarchy reigned following the demise of the authoritarian regime of Siad Barre appeared as an anchorage where several groups with religious motives can dock their ship.

3.2.4 Politics of Corruption

Corruption is the act of exploiting the society by taking undue advantage of political power to accumulate common wealth as personal property. Corruption comes in various forms: bribery, manipulation of political roles, rigging, financial misappropriation, stealing from public treasury, giving of nonexistent contracts, etc. One of the most endemic problems African nations have been faced with since the exit of colonialism is the problem of corruption. African leaders have been exhibiting all types of corrupt practices that have hampered the proper development of African states. There have been underdevelopments in many aspects of African lives due to the cases of financial misappropriation. African writers have been recording with much accuracy the changing tensions in their society. After the colonial experiences, there was a hope of new beginning. There was a hope of a greater tomorrow in the hands of the leaders. However, chronic corrupt practices by African leaders bore great dismay among the people as a result of which writers took their pens up to pen down the sociopolitical reality of the continent.

Nachafiya (2011) reiterates that African literature from the onset unarguably wrestled with what has been tagged as the illusion of progress. What is labeled so is that the continent has been afflicted by a great problem of corruption from the dawn of its independence up until the current century. African writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ayikwei Armah and Ngugi Wathiong'o are among the forerunners who tried to expose the fibrous fingers of corruption and injustice. This is the state of the political power-game that shows "the fall of man" from pursuing virtuous ideals for vices. Nachafiya (2011) echoes this vicious and irresponsible act of politicians and state of decadence across the continent as follows;

The continent is sadly plagued by horrible sights and shouts of corruption. This has diverted all the attention needed for startling exploits in both the arts and sciences. In Nigeria, for example, every discipline of human endeavor is swallowed up by the hydra of lust, greed and corruption. Newly acquired skills of corruption whittle any acquired dividend of technological achievements with ignominy. Inept politicians in Africa have dug deep pits of political instability (2011, p. 352).

It is implicitly becoming a norm for African societies accept the fathomless depth of moral corruption wherein evil is applauded as heroism blindfolding a man from any positive decision for any serious achievement. The glitch always addressed in African literature is none other than the flowering of the disease of "self", the cancer of mismanagement which alters the type of revolution that seem to show a glimmer of hope for the people of the continent and soon fade away at unexpected pace. If one wants to look at the post independence reality of Kenya that was caught in a glitch of rampant corruption, *Petals of Blood* offers the disillusionment felt during the 1970s in wide sectors of postcolonial Kenya and particularly among the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie as Amoko (2010) puts it. Ogude (1999), on his part, quoting Frederick Cooper (1994) states that African novelists were the first intellectuals to bring before a wide public inside and outside the African continent profound questions about the corruption within postcolonial governments and the extent to which external domination persisted.

Chapter Four

4.0 Contemporary Sociopolitical Landscape in *Black Star Nairobi*

4.1 Synopsis of *Black Star Nairobi*

Black Star Nairobi (2013) is a detective novel which focuses on two detectives. There seem to be a link between the bombing and the murder of Apará. The American Embassy spokesperson holds the view that the explosion at Norfolk is an act of terrorism carried out by Al Qaeda with the help of Al Shabaab. This is a view the detectives and Jason, the CIA representative in Kenya, are doubtful. The novel is set against the back drop of Kenya's troubled presidential elections of 2007. O's wife Mary is shot in an ambush in their house and as burial arrangements are underway post-election violence escalates and Kenya becomes unsafe for Ishmael and O since there are people who are after them. Besides Sahara the key suspect of: Ishmael and O who are engaged in unraveling the murder of Amos Apará, an American, whose body is found in Ngong forest. The investigation into this murder is complicated by the bombing of Norfolk Hotel in down town Nairobi. Apará's Murderer may have escaped to America after three of his men are killed at O's house. O and Ishmael are accompanied by Muddy when travelling to America through Mexico which is considered a safe passage since the migration procedures are not strictly observed. They will be in America as illegal immigrants and they need to find details of who Sahara is and the people he is working with. As the novel unfolds Mukoma reveals how international crimes take place. There is selling of drugs from Mexico to America in exchange for guns. Drugs are then shipped for sale in Africa. Sahara and company run an organization whose goal is to eradicate leadership in the government and in the opposition and then allow new leadership to emerge from the people. Sahara slips back to Kenya and Ishmael, O and Muddy catch up with him and shoot him dead in a hotel room minutes before he detonates bombs at Kenyatta International Conference Centre where the president, the prime minister and their ministers are meeting to discuss forming a unity government.

4.2 The Return and Reign of Despair

African countries right after their independence were confronted by disillusionment. The expectation to enjoy democracy and economic prosperity has been denied. Instead they have been destined to face another milestone marking the beginning of the new era wherein efforts are much needed to endure and survive under the multilayered challenges with a combined attribute of existing and new facets of sociopolitical mayhems. The leaders whom Africans counted on betrayed them. The journey that was expected to take African people towards liberty, democracy, and peace started to rattle over the bumpy road it chose to take. The air of independence that once breathed all over the flora and fauna of the continent is a mere reminiscence. Mukoma opens his novel with a scenario that reflects how pinned to African peoples' life the postcolonial intricacies are.

A day before the explosion at the Norfolk Hotel, O and I stood in the middle of the infamous Ngong Forest, looking at the body of what had once been a suit-wearing tall black man. Devoured by the wild animals of Ngong, the man's corpse looked more like an animal carcass. This was the worst kind of death—the victim barely resembled a human being (Mukoma 2013, P. 8).

The opening paragraph of this novel begins with a gloomy and desperate mood emanating from the narrators description of where he and his coworker O are located. The narrative account about Ngong Forest, which has been referred to as infamous, coupled with the scenic description of the body that was recovered from the forest creates a tense mood wherein readers right at the beginning of their engagement with the novel begin to have the impression that this particular place is notorious. Besides, the powerful comparison between what the man looked like when he was alive and what the body looks like postulates that the forest is such a horrendous place where wild beasts feast over the body of humans. Moreover, it also portrays the locale as such a ghost haunted place where bodies of the dead remain undiscovered or unseen for long time as a result of which wild animals feed on human body. From the stated points, one can conclude that Ngong Forest is depicted as a doomed place where (the forest symbolizes the existing nature of Africa as) hopelessness, helplessness and nothingness reign.

Furthermore, the narrator offers a view that reveals how hellish the situation in Kenya has been. This is evident in:

I hadn't been in Kenya that long, but I could rattle off names: J. M. Kariuki, a radical of this or that, tortured to death, his body discovered by a herd boy. Robert Ouko, a well-groomed politician who had allegedly committed suicide in Ngong: first, he maimed himself, and then, when he didn't bleed to death, he set himself on fire before finally shooting himself in the head. Witnesses for the prosecution and defense all died mysteriously, including the herd boy who, again, had found the body. It was always a herd boy, venturing into the depths of the forest, who found the dead body (Mukoma 2013, P. 8).

Ngong forest has been portrayed as a place where persons are tortured to death without the authority or the public having clue about what is going on and even what went on until herdsmen who for their own routine go to the forest encumber on what can be taken as a news. (This also metaphorically indicates that the neo-colonizers who come to Africa either in the mask of Media or NGO) spread such a dark image of the continent to the world). Besides, the forest is described as the deathliest of all where coldblooded murders and suicides are committed. In addition, Robert Ouka's death still remains mysterious since the novel presents what is thought to be a supposition showing how he horrendously killed himself rather than revealing what exactly caused the death. Furthermore, the story builds up on the narratives that persistently depict the invisible hands that mysteriously pluck out all the witnesses and defense, including the heard boy who had found the body and go unpunished. Thus, this fortifies the colonial view that portrays Africa as unmanageable, unfathomable and lackluster.

Depicting Africa as a land of an unknown sinister prevails as Ishmael and his friends meet Amos Apará's father in the United States of America. The old man, Apará's father, reiterates "He got bit by the Africa bug, just like you—you dig? And Africa has taken his life. I know coz, you see, son, my wife, she saw it before she passed on a year ago. She tells me ... don't wait for our boy, he ain't coming back." In this excerpt, the old man's words depict how much deep seated the belief of depicting Africa as a place from which one cannot return home safely. Moreover, the expression "He got bit by Africa bug" has a power to portray the continent as an alien place infested with bloodthirsty creatures wherein the continent itself takes advantage to claim lives.

It has been repeatedly recited that Ngong forest is the hardest place from which safe return is unimaginable. In a way that resonates with this premise, Ishmael points out:

“This place, it reminds me how lucky I am—just to be alive, to be walking out of here,” he said. “Any excuse to smoke up?” I said, not believing a single word. He laughed. “No, Ishmael, any excuse to celebrate life,” and he blew the dark marijuana smoke into the forest. It was a long mile or so to the road and, as O sank deeper into his joint, I sank deeper into my mind, listening to the forest. There are several kinds of quiet: one kind is where everything around you is quiet, another is where everything around you is in rhythm and you are not—like the quiet that comes with white noise. The quiet in Ngong Forest was the noisy kind. We were no more or less loud than the wind forcing its way through the trees, or the laughing hyenas, roaring leopards, and God knows what else; we humans just happened to be making a different sound (Mukoma 2013, p. 11).

In the above quotation, the narrator depicts how desperate the situation in the Ngong forest is. The frantic situation of the forest coupled with the dialogue between Ishmael and O makes it clear to conclude that life in Ngong forest and Kenya can easily be snatched. Besides, it is also apparent that O is bewildered and pessimist about life in which he asks Ishmael if there is any reason to celebrate life and blows dark smoke from his marijuana into the forest.

Moreover, Ishmael renders a comparative quietness of the noise of the white and the quietness of the Ngong forest in which the later serves as a play ground for contradictory phenomena. Ishmael says that he and the things around him are quite despite the fact that everything is in its own rhythm. The quietness that Ishmael is referring to in the Ngong forest represents the inactiveness, and lifelessness of the human condition that is in rhythm though the rhythm is not in harmony with what is supposed to be alive compared to the noise and the silence in the white world. Besides, Ishmael’s reference to the noise of the wild beasts portrays Africa as a place that is cut from the rest of the world.

The tendency to reveal the multifarious problems the continent lingers in continues to pileup as one flip through the pages. One of the continents problems is civil war wherein AK-47 plays pivotal role in African lives. The following extract depicts the abundance of AK-47 and the nickname given to it owing to its multiple functions on the soil of the continent.

The white men had semi-automatics I had never seen before—the latest offerings from our fine American firearms industry, I could tell. Only Jamal had an AK-47—the African cigarette—an apt name because in some parts of the continent, the AK, like cigarettes, functioned as money, a medium of exchange (Mukoma 2013, p. 61).

In the above extract, Ishmael proudly speaks about the semi-automatic weapon which he hails as the latest offerings from fine American firearms industry. These arms are yet in the hands of the white men. Ishmael seems astonished by the new technology his country is introducing to the continent that is lagging behind the world in many ways. He also continues to make a reference to an AK-47 as an African cigarette, commenting on the appropriateness of the nickname, and the reason why it is called so. Moreover, Ishmael is depicting the African practice in which AK-47 decides on the matters that are closely tied to African life—from blood shedding to bartering.

Furthermore, it could also be scrutinized in light of the symbolic meaning of in whose hands the arms are. In here, the semi-automatic weapons are held by the white men while Jamal, an African, is in possession of an AK-47 that is old enough compared to the guns in the hands of the white men. From this, it could be deduced that the Americans hold an overall superiority in terms of innovation and possession while the African is always in a peripheral position holding back to what has been purported to be an outdated practice.

Africa has also been depicted as a land of perpetual discord and chaos. The narrator gives a vivid description of a country torn apart by violence and trying to crawl out of the adversity. Ishmael remarks that he and his colleagues returned to a country which was still trying to claw its way out of hell despite the fact that things had calmed down except for some riots which he compares to a wedding celebration as opposed to the violence the country had been through in the previous days. What is more, in “Reconciliation was looking possible, and the government and the opposition party had started talks about sharing power.” there appears to be an attempt to portray African politicians as those who crave for seizure of power than struggling for the just causes of their own people. In the above quotation, the issue of reconciliation is not something aligned to bringing peace and prosperity to the Kenyan people rather than power sharing among the rival political parties.

Apart from the selfishness of the rivaling political parties, the types of crimes reported in the novel speak for the incapability of the politicians to maintain law and order as they ascend to power. Ishmael says: “Since O and I set up what we had cleverly named the Black Star Agency three years ago, we had been working the strangest of cases: from missing penises—easy to solve with a sharp knee to the groin—to cheating spouses to rigged local council elections.” One

of the strangest cases, the case of ‘missing penises’ which they came across portrays the peculiarity and absurdity of the criminal case which might have not ever been reported elsewhere, if not in Kenya. Furthermore, Ishmael reiterates that he and O dealt with the sort of crimes that the century and the outside world might have taken as a fairytale. Thus, the extract offers a vantage point from which one could judge Africa as a land of insurmountable suffering.

4.3 Electoral Violence

Dauda et al (2019) observe that there exist quite varying views on democratic governance and the future of democracy in Africa. The reason for this is as a result of the manner in which elections are being handled which has arguably made it difficult to ascertain or describe an election to be free, fair or credible. Especially, tensions escalate and security falls under threat during elections in most parts of the continent. Discord at an individual politician and/or collective political rival parties’ level have been depicted as an integral component of the day to day activity in Africa. Africa, for that matter, has been depicted as a continent lingering in the vicious circle of insecurity by way of creating different scenarios. The ghost of conflict that hankers for the smell of fresh African blood about to be spilt seems lurking down around the spots. This atmosphere is palpable in:

“Nothing to worry about,” a man holding on to a Tusker bottle drunkenly chimed in. “We like to kill a little during election time—but we don’t have the stomach for Rwanda. This will pass. A little bloodletting to bless the democracy ... A Chinese machete? My noggin is like a fortress—impenetrable.” Encouraged by the laughter, he stood up, chugged the rest of the beer, and broke the Tusker bottle on his head (Mukoma 2013, p. 14).

The above extract depicts the absurdity in which ordinary citizens ready themselves for the upcoming sacrifice to be paid in the name of democracy though a sort of attempt has been made to show that it will not be similar to the Rwandan bloodletting that claimed close to a million lives. From this ironic reference to the looming disaster, it could be inferred that bloodletting is not something strange for Africans until it takes its toll on multiple hundreds of lives. As well, it could also be deduced that democracy is something that one cannot enjoy or think about without sacrifices paid during elections. (Dreadfully, such sacrifice is meaningless because after the election the people never see democracy in practice). Meanwhile, the extract also purports that the issue of democracy for Africa is episodic epilepsy that relapses during election time. Indeed,

this holds true to the multiple jeopardy the continent has been suffering from in the wake of elections and regime changes that took place across the continent. Moreover, the inebriated man's conditions show how Africans await elections that bring them death and hopelessness instead of hope and renewed life.

There seems to be an attempt to show how much far-reaching the suffering of Africans is even long after any sort of violence dissipates. Moreover, there is also a tendency to show how much an uphill task for Africans to avoid vulnerability in their lives no matter how hard they try and how far they travel as long as they are in Africa. As can be seen in, "Years ago, O and I had rescued Janet from a rapist and a life that would have spiraled down to hell." Janet is a refugee who fled to Kenya along with her parents in order to escape from the Rwandan genocide. Though she has managed to survive the calamity in her country, her tribulation seems unfinished yet. Another ordeal that awaited her in Kenya was (is) rape to which women in many African countries become subjected. Janet's situation gives an impression that if someone escapes from a certain debacle, another waits for them at the other gate.

The novel takes another turn to show how ordinary refugees themselves inflict disaster upon themselves. The refugees who fled Rwanda to Kenya are depicted as desperate and nonchalant. This scenario is evident in the following excerpt:

Janet was Mary's unofficially adopted daughter, now a first-year at Nairobi University. Her real parents still lived in Mathare, still drank copious amounts of the illegal changaa. Rwandan refugees, they had found their salvation in self-destruction (Mukoma 2013, p. 17).

The above extract suggests that Janet's real parents who are living in Mathare are indulged in an illegal action which in its own turn show the extent to which they are indifferent when seen against what is termed as an 'illegal' in the host country. The excerpt could be interpreted from two angles. On one hand, the narrator is telling the readers that Janet's parents take an outlawed drink in abundance. The changa could have been outlawed for it may have a negative impact on human beings' wellness. Nonetheless, Janet's parents who have been referred to as "Rwandan refugees, they had found their salvation in self-destruction." appear to be negligent to what the changa may cause to their health.

As well, they seem to be recklessly taking risks of deportation or facing any form of legal actions. In here, it is possible to deduce that the Rwandans/Africans are characterized as beings that do not use their wits to mull over the consequences of their actions. The other point to reckon could be the representation of Africa and its people. Here, when Rwandans are labeled as the ones who find their salvation in self-destruction, it may also give the readers a critical insight that Africans flee conflict areas instinctively though they are not conscious of punishing or hurting themselves owing to their unwise practices.

Moving far on the other end of Africans' fiasco, the novel attempts to emphasize the very fact that all sources of Africa's overarching troubles are imported. While the issues of democracy and elections that facilitate the preconditions for the bloodletting are imports from the West, the machetes that serve as a tool to carry out the bloodletting are from China. This could be taken as Mukoma's attempt to show that all sources of Africa's problems are imported. In fact, most of the scenarios build on referring to Africans as those who could not identify the chaff from the wheat.

“This piece—I am angry that motherfuckers can't see that Chinese machetes are not for farming—and the rhetoric, I know it too well,” Muddy was saying. “Muddy, you see Rwanda in fucking everything. This is Kenya. We know violence—remember, when other Africans were begging for independence, we were out in the forests fighting,” O responded. “Well, Castro Mao Guevara, I know the rhetoric—people were saying similar things in Rwanda—‘a little blood-letting,’ you Kenyans call it? There is no such thing as a little bloodletting,” she said, managing not to sound bitter (Mukoma 2013, p. 17).

The above extract presents the facets of comparison to choose between the two 'bads'. Through the words of Muddy we can find an element that substantiates a claim that all sorts of Africa's problems are imports. At the same time, it is possible to make a conjecture that Africans and their leaders import all the ideas and the objects without analyzing what it is for. Besides, in a dialogue between her (Muddy) and O, we can further examine the political ideologies that African elites borrow from abroad and try to pump in the citizens' mind.

As it has been indicated earlier, African elites adopt different political ideologies without contemplating their suitability for the existential needs of their people. As elections appear they pledge to follow the footsteps of some revolutionaries whom they regard as model to mold the social, political and economic future of their respective countries. However, all ideological

stances that African elites take as epitomes of ideal life go in a wrong way and ruin African life. Yet again, O seems accepting that ‘little bloodletting’ if it won’t go that far as what had happened in Rwanda. Thus, O’s characterization in the novel could also be taken as representation of some of the politicians that don’t feel deeply about the suffering of their fellow citizens.

4.4 Dehumanization of African Lives

Once again, the novel keeps on touching multifarious issues in order to depict the value and attention African life is given. As it has been a point of discussion in multiple avenues, the news media show bias in the course of giving coverage to the lives claimed by natural and manmade disasters. In this novel, Mukoma brings this issue to the mind of his readers by presenting how the death toll from the 1998 attack victims had been reported. As it could be comprehended from the following excerpt, “In 1998, it was twelve Americans, all of them with names, against about two hundred nameless Kenyans—collateral damage,” the death of the twelve Americans with names is reported against about two hundred nameless Kenyans whose names have received no attention owing to their nationality. The above extract shows us that the Kenyans’ blood that had been spilt on their soil didn’t receive the proper honor that a human soul deserves to receive rather than serving the statistics of the lives claimed by the disaster. The phrase, ‘collateral damage’ substantiates the claim that the lives of that some two hundred nameless Africans is an additional but subordinate story to be covered compared to the twelve American lives claimed.

Mukoma keeps on portraying how much Kenyan life is cheap in the following extract;

Now, I knew a bit about the Pineapple Canning Company because poor kids sometimes sneaked through the barbed wire to steal the fruit, and once in a while an Alsatian guard dog would maul one of them to death. It would make the news, but of course no prosecutions ever followed (Mukoma 2013, p. 179).

The above extract shows us the circumstances under which loss of African life grabs the attention of the media. Besides, it is also possible to decipher from the extract that the purpose of reporting the loss of that African soul is to foreground the criminal facet of the poor African kids than pushing way forward to establish a tribunal that deals with the case to prosecute the so called development partners of African countries that continued trampling on the rights and liberty of Africans in their countries even after their countries got their independence from their

colonial masters. The same scenario had been observed in reality in South Africa wherein black South Africans were subjected to giant dogs' attack. Though the story received from South Africa during those days shook the world, no prosecution followed. Likewise, Mukoma reflects on how Africans are suffering in their own countries in the hands of their politicians and the foreigners that conquered the land of Africa in a renewed strategy called investment.

Furthermore, it has been portrayed in the novel that the Americans never fail to shy away from omitting Africans and give prominence to their dignity in whatever circumstance talking about loss of life surfaces the conversation. This is evident in the following extract;

Think about it—you are a terrorist organization; you explode a bomb in the middle of Nairobi, killing ten Americans ...” Jason was saying. “It’s funny how you Americans never count the African dead ...” O interrupted. “Okay, and fifty Kenyans, but it’s not you they want to kill ...” Jason said, trying to correct himself (Mukoma 2013, p. 50).

As it could be clearly seen in the above extract, the conversation between the American guy Jason and his African counterpart O reveals the fact that Americans who are here in Africa for their own mission are running after their own interest without giving a little honor the soul of a human being deserves to receive. This is manifest in O's response to Jason's utterance in which Jason himself sticks to counting the number of American victims whose number remains insignificant compared to dozens of Africans who died alongside ten Americans. Though O shows his disappointment with how Americans never count the African dead, Jason struggles to justify why they rule out the African dead by insisting that the terrorists are out there to kill Americans not Africans. In here, Jason fails to give credence to the death of Africans. From Jason's reference to Africans, it could be deduced that he considers African life as something like the life of the guinea pig whose death or life doesn't affect the state of affairs.

4.5 Systemic Corruption

This section of the analysis will reveal the aspect of the novel under scrutiny that draws the readers' attention to the face of Africa wherein bribery rules over the flora and fauna of the continent. One of the prime issues the novel repeatedly brings to the fore is the agenda of corruption. The following two lines extract taken from the novel tells how cash operates any sort of criminal activity. “I didn't take that seriously—this was Kenya, where \$200 bought you a

murder and \$20,000 a small massacre. At the right price and in the right hands a bomb could be placed anywhere.” As it can be inferred from the extract, what a small sum of money would do is clearly put stating the possibility any perpetrator could opt for, be it a murder or a massacre. Besides, the novel subtly tells the readers that the country is Kenya where any of its citizens can be bought and manipulated for \$200.

Apart from depicting Kenyans as mercenaries, the novel also foregrounds the weakness of the security apparatus of the country in a very devious way. Furthermore, the frailty of the security apparatus is communicated in a much accentuated manner claiming that the system is wobbling to the extent of failing to prevent ‘a small massacre’ that \$20,000 would buy. The novel projects one with a good sum of money could turn the whole country into hell. This is evident in ‘At the right price and in the right hands a bomb could be placed anywhere.’ Therefore, the above extracts taken from the novel tend to postulate Kenya as a country whose citizens from all walks of life would sell it for an insignificant amount of money if they get the opportunity to do so. Thus, one would resort to a conclusion that Kenyans are such a cash maniac people whose moral decadence could stretch up to selling their own country.

Moreover, the kernel of the moral decadence the country is undergoing has also been portrayed as follows; “We had ruled out Nguni—and without it costing us anything. Because, in Kenya, the truth costs. A Kenyan reporter for CNN had been fired because he was bribing witnesses. But how else was he going to get the truth”? As it could be judged from the vantage point of any culture, be it African or Western, it is moral principle to speak the truth. Nonetheless, this universal moral principle will not be potent in Kenya unless it is vitalized by cash. As it could be inferred from the extract, a Kenyan reporter for CNN was trying to bribe a witness since he knew that it is impossible to get what someone is looking for without reaching out for the money in their pocket as far as the country is Kenya, and in Kenya, the truth costs.

The novel under scrutiny also portrays Nairobi as a place where cops and robbers sit at the same table, eat and drink just like African Buffalos, Zebras, Lions and Hyenas flock together in African forests. The above interpretation could be corroborated (with Ishmael’s narration as :) by what Ishmael narrates as follows: “O walked back in to find a party—cops and robbers eating and drinking to the lives saved.” An attempt made to compare African wild life with that of the

life in the African tavern emanates from the analogous scenario the novel in question offers the readers. This is due to the fact that the beasts do not spend the entirety of their time hunting for there are preys; likewise, the cops in the tavern do not hunt the robbers for they are under the same ceiling unless there is any reason impelling them to do so. The novel's depiction of the cops and the robbers' situation portrays the irresponsibility of the cops who repeatedly fail to discharge their duty.

The novel in question clearly portrays the soft spot of the security apparatus which one way or the other represents the overall erratic administration in Kenya.

Hassan was an ex-military man. Tall and in his sixties, with an ill-fitting suit on a body used to standing and sitting straight, Hassan had been called in from the military to combat crime. He didn't believe in "innocent until proven guilty." In fact, he didn't believe in ascertaining guilt. Suspicion, and only poor young men from the slums were suspicious, meant a bullet to the head. Kenyans loved him for it—he was a man of action and that's what counted (Mukoma 2013, p. 35).

The above extract reveals the dire situation the poor young men march through owing to the imprudent recruitment process that brings unfit and unscientific security officers to position. The above extract like many instances presented in the preceding sections of this thesis remains multilayered in a way that shows the symbiotic relationship between crime, poor administration, and ignorance. If we take the motto "innocent until proven guilty", no one does have the right to call the suspect 'criminal', or otherwise it is considered as breaching a legal provision. The 'innocent until proven guilty' aphorism for Hassan is like searching a black cat in a dark room. For him suspicion and poverty are the two grounds on which he gives his judgment.

Through Hassan, the novel under scrutiny depicts how unprofessional the security officers are leading its way to a plausible conjecture that if the well-off commits a crime, they will go unpunished. Besides, the bizarre in the Kenyan security system is depicted as a component of the crisis the country is wrestling with. Furthermore, Hassan is the one regarded by the state as a true solution to the crime tearing the country apart while in effect he himself becomes part of the problem. From this vantage point, it could be concluded that the novel also depicts the government structure that is filled with unfit, unprofessional and irrational personnel.

It is also evident in the novel that these unfit, unprofessional and irrational personnel the country is counting on are predisposed to the cancerous problem, corruption. The novel in question offers the readers the perspective from which this issue could be conceived as follows:

He was at the club to buy and sell American dollars to tourists and wealthy Kenyans. It was illegal, of course, but legality could be easily bought—and so he operated freely, so freely that he had set up shop in one of spa rooms. He even had regular business hours, 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. (Mukoma 2013, p. 57).

Foreign currency is one of the plights of African countries in their attempt to fairly participate in the global competitive market. Coupled with a very poor performance of the countries in generating foreign currency, black-market foreign currency exchange remains the major powerhouse for criminals across the continent. The above extract also shows an active role that black-market foreign currency exchange plays in the despicable crime gully the country is plunged in. It is also manifest in the chosen extract that the legal system which is supposed to be the pillar of law and order itself is eaten up by the crime.

The above extract apparently portrays the magnitude of the lawlessness that reigned over the Kenyan soil by foregrounding the possibility of committing any kind of crime as long as enough cash is in place to bribe the security officers. An attempt was also made to show how strong the muscle of good cash is to make anything as it never was in Kenya. As has been cited elsewhere in this section, “At the right price and in the right hands a bomb could be placed anywhere.” corresponds with “It was illegal, of course, but legality could be easily bought—and so he operated freely, so freely that he had set up shop in one of spa rooms.” Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the novel in question vividly depicted Kenya which has been ripped off by bribery and crime.

Furthermore, the following excerpt also shows the extent to which committing all sorts of crime in Nairobi is just a mundane matter.

We were used to bad things being done only at night—daylight, at least the morning, was supposed to be the time when the good and bad guys got some sleep, or caught up with their loved ones, or prepared for war later, at night. In “*Nairobi*,” we woke up, unlocked the heavily barred doors and windows to let some fresh air in, and tried to remember a time when night did not turn your home into a prison. Morning was life itself, a reminder that you had survived the night (Mukoma 2013, p. 62).

The above extract articulates all types of earthly crimes and sins that have coiled themselves tightly around the neck of the country. It could be inferred from the above extract that the bad things that are done at night or at daylight are the day to day phenomena in Nairobi, a city which has been stylistically renamed as “Nairobierry” in the novel to show that robbery has become an inalienable aspect of the city. It has also been depicted that morning is the time that heralds addition of a new day to the life span of a living thing elsewhere where peace, law and order reign albeit Nairobi’s curiosity to see the usual bright and blissful color under its sky. Instead, the morning may emerge with an embarrassing crime scene wherein cheating husbands and wives are caught in the embrace of other spouses’ arms in Nairobi. Besides, the above extract depicts that surviving each night in Nairobi is like surviving a tsunami that may wash you away while you are in a sweet sleep. The narrator describes it as “Morning was life itself, a reminder that you had survived the night.” This description shows how precious the morning that comes into one’s life under the sky of Nairobi.

The other instance that depicts how truth could be distorted in Africa in the face of all these adversaries is presented in Ishmael’s report on their experience in the northern part of Kenya. He narrates:

There was a photograph of O and me in northern Kenya surrounded by Somali men. I remembered that trip; we had gone to report a death to the relatives of a Somali man killed by thieves in Nairobi. There was a trophy photograph of O and me, both of us armed, standing by two dead men. But the reality was that we had ambushed some bank robbers and managed to kill two of them. A reporter had rushed to the scene and taken the photograph. Then there was one of Muddy with an AK-47 in what appeared to be a death camp. Out of context, the photograph made it seem like she was the one doing the killing. I knew the photo too well (Mukoma 2013, p. 66).

The above extract expands into the other corner of the country where similar crimes are committed. As could be comprehended from the extract, the crime that had claimed the life of a Somali man in Nairobi is paving the way to project the sophisticated and daring crimes committed in the North. The revelation of Ishmael and his colleagues’ attack on the bank robbers foregrounds that robbery is prevalent across the corridors they managed to move through. In the meanwhile, this particular extract portrays that any presence at the crime scene or engagement in salvaging the damage that the crime could cause may render an innocent person a suspect. Moreover, the narrator tells the readers that all sort of emotional blackmail could be in place for

manipulation if someone is sought. Consequently, one could deduce from the above extract that serving justice or saving life or property from theft and damage in Kenya may render anyone liable to accusations.

There is also another instance that depicts the mightiness of the crime that could easily devour all the stakeholders working to curb it. The following extract postulates: “They could have just shot us and walked away—the mystery of our deaths would find an explanation—home invasion gone bad, drunken dispute over women, revenge killings.” The narrator depicts how the security and intelligence workers lives could be lost rather in vain. The futility of the crime investigation process is depicted in light of the possible and usual explanation the police give whenever life is lost instead of preventing crime and coming up with a strong findings once a crime is committed. In fact, the possible explanations suggested by the narrator one way or the other imply that crimes such as home invasion, drunken dispute over women and revenge killings are some of the common cases causing havoc in Kenya.

“Kenya is no longer safe for you—not for a while, anyway. There are some people asking about you. The only reason they haven’t found you is the chaos—and they’re afraid of getting caught in one of those roadblocks ...” he said, smiling as if to suggest that at least the violence was good for something. “You, how did you get here?” O asked him. “I know what they don’t—a white man in a car with diplomatic plates is safe. Fucking mercenaries are fucking cowards. You know why? Because they want to live to spend the money,” he said. “How do you know they are mercenaries?” Muddy asked. “Because they are not mine—and no one knows who they are ... independent contractors—call them by whatever name,” Jason answered (Mkoma 2013, p. 121).

4.6 Gender Stereotypes

In most African cultures, women occupy the lowest societal position. It is also common that African feminists claim that African female suffer double oppression due to their skin color and the patriarchal culture. However, the third generation of African writers began to include psychoactive intellectual female characters that play a leading role in any activity deemed impossible for women. Similarly, the novel in question offers the readers a vantage point from which they could decipher how women are perceived by their society and how they cope up with the situation to prove that all assumptions and prejudices held towards women are nothing than a construct.

When Mary was very small, our culture did not allow her to sit with men as they slaughtered a goat and drank muratina—the traditional brew. When she asked why, her father told her it was because she was not a man. “‘What is the difference between a man and a woman?’ my daughter asked. “‘Men wear trousers and women don’t,’ Ngatia answered, thinking that was the end of it as Mary walked back to the house. A few minutes later, she walked out wearing, or rather being worn by, her father’s best pair of pants. “‘I am a man now,’ Mary said when she made it back to us. Defeated, the men had to let her stay. My daughter never let difference stop her from becoming what she wanted and marrying the man she wanted. In her own gentle constant way, she was better than all of us. As her mother I failed her,” Mumbi concluded, and broke into tears (Mukoma 2013, p. 119).

The above extract depicts the place given to women in Kikuyu culture. As it is common to many African cultures, the women are not entitled to dine with men, and they are sometimes stigmatized owing to various traditional constructs, this is not an exception to Mary. However, the novel depicts Mary the grownup who decided on her own fate as a courageous and unyielding female beginning from her early childhood wherein she challenged her father and broke the barrier that tackle many African women from going after their dreams.

Moreover, Mukoma subtly tells his readers that the criterion that has long been used by the community to designate social role was as such illusionary. This is evident in Mumbi’s testimony that recites how Mary turned what seemed concrete wall into ashes by wearing her father’s best pair of pants. It needs to be noted that the answer that Ngatia gave Mary may seem feeble, but it shows the weakest and funniest logic that kept African women stuck in domestic affairs. Mukoma calls attention to the new generation of Africa to rise against the long held belief regarding women. This could also be inferred from Mumbi’s lamentation that if a woman goes for her dream nothing can stop her if the traditional beliefs repressing and characterizing women as feeble and insignificant are rectified.

The novel in question keeps portraying how Africans and their culture designate women’s place in any social status. The novel unravels the paradoxical attitude that Africans have towards women under diverse circumstances. The following extract embodies this self-contradictory view:

O stepped away from him. “Take off your pajamas,” he said, in a tone that sounded more like a suggestion than a command. “I will most certainly not, I am old enough to be your father,” Kimani said defiantly. “And not in front of a woman young enough to be my daughter,” he added, pointing at Muddy, who merely shrugged. This is what it boiled down to. Kimani had information

we needed—and we had his life in our hands, and between the two was his dignity. And not just dignity but that inviolable bond that holds societies together—that even in great adversity is upheld. This wasn't just a Kenyan thing; in each society there are some things that are worse than death. For Kimani, it was for an elder of social standing to strip naked in front of a young woman (Mukoma 2013, p. 195).

In the above extract, Kimani insists that he is old enough to strip naked in front of a young woman. As could be explicated from the extract, Kimani is not refusing to take off his pajamas because he respects a woman rather than sticking to the cultural position that is given to a man and a woman. This is manifest in the statement that reveals Kimani is more concerned about his dignity as a man to go naked before a woman. It could be inferred from the novel that women are characterized as beings that don't have equal role and position in their societies rather than serving as flavors that sweeten the humiliation of a man sought to be belittled. The narrator further depicts that what makes worse for Kimani stripping naked in front of a young woman is not because he recognizes women as equals or sacred, instead it is of the social standing that reminds him of the situation like something worse than death.

Similarly, after his ordeal in the bathroom, Kimani continues struggling to insist that men are superior. This is revealed in, "I would like to get dressed ... I assure you of my full cooperation. Let's talk—like men," he said, trying to reclaim his dignity and eyeing Muddy. He took the clothes, dressed, and washed the blood off his face. He adjusted his tie and tugged at his shirt cuffs. The suit really did make the man: he was back to being the commanding elderly African (Mukoma 2013, p.195)." This instance embodies the fact that talking like men is noble.

The narrator points up the fact that Kimani's agony emanates not from being disgraced, but from being shamed in front of a woman whom he regards as unequal. Moreover, the narrator comically comments on the views held regarding what makes women and men different. As could be recalled from the preceding part of this section, Mary's mother Mumbi recites that Mary identified trousers are the only thing differentiating between men and women in her early childhood. Likewise, the above extract depicts that the suit is something that gives distinctive look to men, but not gender superiority.

In tandem with the above representation, it is possible to explore how the old generation of Africa represented by Kimani identifies women. The following instance illustrates this point:

“But do you know who I really am?” he asked in return. “Why don’t you tell us,” Muddy said to him carelessly. He glared at her and I knew she was on to something. If there was one thing this guy wasn’t used to, it was women talking to him as if they were equals. The extract depicts the contradicting realm in which a woman takes Kimani by surprise as opposed to his long held belief. The above extract blatantly tells that women are not regarded as equals. Contrary to that, it could also be inferred from the given context that Muddy is not the sort of woman that the culture has positioned as unequal instead she characterizes a woman that disfigures the identity given to women in many African cultures. Through Muddy, Mukoma forges a new identity of women that symbolizes courage, strength and equality.

4.7 Ethnocentrism and Provincialism

Africans are regarded as traditional societies that cling to their social and cultural ethos. Within their cultural dictums, Africans since long have had a tradition of sharing, communal living, and established codes of conduct. However, the novel under scrutiny seems to show the disintegration of African societies’ values that stem from the epidemic like socio-cultural and political crisis plaguing the countries after the declaration of their independence from direct rule of their colonial masters. Mukoma gives his readers a glimpse into the post-millennium i.e., post 2007 cultural and political landscape of Kenya. As many scholars put, civil war is one of the salient topics postcolonial African writers attempt to address. Likewise, Mukoma in the novel under investigation draws the attention of his readers to the most pressing issues tormenting Africans even after decades lapsed since they began exercising self-rule.

One of the main problems emerging as defining attributes of Africa is interethnic violence that break anywhere and anytime in the wake of elections or coup attempts. Though postelection or post coup clashes might have been taken as an inevitable phenomenon in Africa, Mukoma highlights the far reaching toll it is taking on current day’s Africa.

“They won’t let me bury my wife,” O said, looking straight ahead after we’d been driving for an hour or so in silence. “I bought that piece of land, and built that house for my mother, and they will not let me bury my dead wife.” He sounded like he was a bit amused by the ridiculousness of it all, as if he couldn’t believe it. “Why? Isn’t that the custom?” I asked. He helped me piece together the reason why. Mary was a Kikuyu and O, a Luo. Living in Nairobi, isolated from their fellow ethnic groups, it had never been an issue—as far as I could tell. In fact, until it was time to bury her, I, as an outsider, couldn’t tell they were from

different ethnic groups. They spoke to each other in English but I had always assumed that it was for my benefit. I suppose it's the difference between interracial marriages in New York and in some backwater Midwestern town (Mukoma 2013, p. 88).

The above extract depicts not only the ethnically divided Kenya but how the ethnic cleavage between the Kikuyu and the Luo stripped off the kinship ties that Africans in various cultures cherish. As one could spell out from the narrator's account, the marriage between Mary and O has been compared to the interracial marriage, a marriage between two people from different races. Mary and O are both Kenyans though they spoke to each other in English as a couple from two different countries or races. This comparison lays a good ground on which one could judge the absurdity of condemning interethnic marriage while there is a marriage between two persons from two different races. As it could be inferred from the extract, both O and Mary lost their ethnic and linguistic identities to English. In fact, this has not been an issue for both, especially for O until the time to bury the deceased Mary brought him the hardest challenge in his life.

Even though O bought a plot of land and built a house for his mother in a place inhabited by the Luo, he knew that he will not be allowed to bury Mary since she was from Kikuyu. The novel, therefore, depicts that Kenya's social fabric has been torn apart by ethnocentric views to the extent of denying a burial to one's own in-law. The novel also portrays the cultural practice of the Kikuyu that worsened O's situation when Mary's parents told them that a woman marries into her husband's ethnicity and will no longer be considered member of her own society. Though there has been such a cultural trend in Kenya, Mukoma attempts to depict how ethnocentrism is driving Kenya into hell. To do so, he draws on a wider context to reveal how ethnocentrism is demolishing Africa and darkening its hope. This is palpable in:

Weeds, I knew that term in the context of Rwanda—Muddy, a Tutsi, had been called a “weed.” In the Kenyan context, the Luos and Kikuyus saw each other as weeds. “You and me, Ishmael, we come from a different world—we have us on one side and criminals on the other—and what matters is getting the criminal even when ethnicity and race run interference. You know what I mean? That's where we draw the line. In my mother's world, one's ethnicity matters more than life and death itself. She is my wife. I am her son. She is her daughter. But not today—today, ethnicity is god,” O lamented (Mukoma 2013, p. 88).

The above extract juxtaposes the Kenyan situation with the Rwandan genocide to show the adversity of ethnocentrism. The extract offers the labeling “weeds” that culminated in the worst tragedy of the 1994 Rwandan genocide and now, being used by both the Luos and Kikuyus to

identify the either side. The usage of the word “weeds” signifies the impending ethnic blood shedding between the Luos and the Kikuyus. What is more, the extract portrays that current day’s Kenya is being consumed by the flame of ethnocentrism which had not been as such an issue in olden days. This is evident in “In my mother’s world, one’s ethnicity matters more than life and death itself. She is my wife. I am her son. She is her daughter. But not today—today, ethnicity is god,” O lamented.” From O’s lamentation it is possible to construe that the novel in question attempts to call the attention of its readers to the fact that current day’s Africa is facing a giant, but a much neglected challenge that would put its existence into a total peril. It could be seen from the given extract that a mother has guts to deny her own in-law a burial place in which O bitterly speaks about how ethnocentrism is making his mother wicked and inhuman.

Besides, the novel depicts the hostility of ethnocentrism that is spreading like a wildfire to affect those who have not ever been wary of the damage it could cause. In here, O is one of those who have never thought of ethnicity as a defining factor in their life.

O’s marriage had added another dimension to his duality—to his ability to be violent and cruel when in the cruel and violent world of our investigations, and to be loving without residual feelings of guilt when in the loving world of Mary. That balance had collapsed. Now the duality that allowed him to be a Luo married to a Kikuyu had also collapsed under the pressure of the day’s ethnic politics—and it was costing him his home and a burial place for his wife (Mukoma 2013, p. 89).

The above extract entails the far reaching impact of the day’s ethnic politics in Kenya that is taking everything that O had as his possession. In the first place, the novel presents the fact that O has been denied a burial place on a plot of land which he had bought and built a house for his mother. This is the first symbolic possession that he lost owing to the day’s ethnic politics that even caused a rift between his own mother and himself. The other fact that the novel portrays is that O had a loving heart from which he fetched all the water of love to quench Mary’s thirst unreservedly without paying a heed to their ethnic difference. Now, all has gone down the drain and O is left with nothing in hand owing to the pressure of the day’s ethnic politics. From this, it is possible to conclude that the novel in question portrays the new face of Africa’s stiff challenge that needs to be countered before it turns the continent into ashes.

Furthermore, it is often taken for granted that a mother accords with her child on what gives him happiness. Nevertheless, Mukoma gives the readers a twisted look at the scene to emphasize that

ethnocentric political ideology has already dismantled the social and emotional affinity that a mother and a son would have. This is palpable in:

“What did you tell your mother ... the clan?” I asked him. “I told her that I loved my wife and that they might as well have killed me too. I asked her how I could bury my wife elsewhere and still call this place home? How can I come back here? How do I forgive that? And how do I live with myself after costing Mary her life? I asked her all those questions and you know what she told me? She said she understands my pain but this was no longer just about a man and his wife, but about what our people want,” he explained, anger carrying each word. “O, she seemed genuinely in pain,” I said to him. “Pain without action is useless to me,” he replied tensely (Mukoma 2013, p. 90).

The above extract illustrates how the day’s ethnocentric view put the sharpened edge of the knife on the rope that held the family and the society together in a manner that accelerated the emotional and psychological fall apart of the society. It is apparent that the conversation between Ishmael and O shows that O’s mother is no longer concerned with her son’s feelings rather than striving to catch-up with the pace of the day’s ethnic politics that is causing such a visible rift between a mother and the son whose bond seems eternally unbreakable. Therefore, it could be elucidated from the context of the above extract that ethnocentrism is one of the unbridled problems submerging Africa into a sticky pool that needs immediate attention.

The novel under scrutiny also offers a vantage point from which one could examine how ethnocentrism made Kenyans hardhearted to their compatriots while others who came from other countries receive proper treatment that human beings ought to. The following excerpt would be one of the scenarios embedding the nuance of the claim that Kenyans are being forced to feel strange in their own country owing to the day’s ethnic politics.

“Can the others please identify themselves?” he asked. “My name is Muddy and this is my home,” Muddy yelled from the back. “This is not your home. You are our guest and we treat guests with respect. You too may pass,” the man replied. “And the third person? Who are you?” the man asked, pointing at O (Mukoma 2013, p. 103).

The above extract is taken from the portion of the novel that dwells on the heightened stage of postelection interethnic rampage between the Luos and the Kikuyus wherein everything appeared to be apocalyptic. As it could be deciphered from the extract, the conversation between Muddy and the ringleader indicates that the ethnic Kikuyus are out there to find ethnic Luos not non-Kenyans. It is plausible to presume that the novel in question projects the core of

ethnocentric syndrome that drove Kenyans into complete state of delirium wherein they failed to have the starkest mercy on fellow Kenyans who are from a different ethnic background.

Furthermore, the novel depicts the bewildering circumstance under which innocent Kenyans lives were claimed in vain. This claim could be substantiated with an excerpt taken from the novel as follows;

“Let the man go, just let him go—what has he done to you? Do you even know his name?” I asked the leader. “Do you know what they are doing to our people in Kisumu? Did you hear about the church in the Rift Valley? Little children, women—screaming—burning to death?” the man asked me. The passion in his voice—this was not going to be easy. “That man, he had nothing to do with it. Nothing at all—this is not justice, this is murder,” I said to him, thinking I could nudge the little flame of humanity I heard in his voice into empathy. “Murder? Justice? You think I care? It is one less of them,” he screamed at me. He yelled something in Kikuyu to his men. We heard loud screams and then silence except for the rustling as the murderers emerged from the bushes. The man was dead. There was nothing we could have done for him (Mukoma 2013, p. 104).

As it could be inferred from the above extract, the Kikuyus are murdering innocent Luos for a mere reason that they are ethnically Luo. The magnitude of the damage the two ethnic groups caused to each other has also been stated. The damage caused, as could be explicated from the extract, ranges from burning churches to burning little children and women to death. Therefore, it is possible to infer from the given extract that ethnocentrism is a phenomenon of the current day’s Kenya that is drying up rationality from the minds of Kenyans and sterilizing fraternity among Kenyans. The extract also purports that ethnocentric Kenyans are committing all these atrocities without mulling over what it means to be human. The idea embedded in “Do you even know his name?” portrays that it is suffice to kill a person in Kenya as far as the victim is from an ethnic group that is sought by the perpetrators.

The enormity of the interethnic clash has also been given a finer nuance by way of creating vivid contexts that could easily captivate readers’ attention. The following extract describes the width of the mayhem;

We turned on the radio to the BBC and that was when we realized the extent of it all. Our experience was just a taste of what everyone else was going through. We could hear alarm in the reporter’s voice—in the slums of Kibera and Mathare, violence had already broken out—ethnicity pitted against ethnicity. In Kisumu, Kikuyus were being pulled out of their homes and cars and killed. The police had killed unarmed protestors from the opposition. Some of

the opposition leaders had gone back to their constituents to organize them into militia. Abroad, different ethnicities were collecting money for their brethren. Some white tourists had been beaten up. The police deployed in the rural areas had broken along ethnic lines, and had gone on a killing rampage. In less than an hour, the country had become unrecognizable. The violence that had been circling around us for so long, touching down every now and then, had descended on the whole country him (Mukoma 2013, p. 10).

The above text illustrates that the whole country has already fallen in the goring interethnic violence. Above all, the above extract depicts politicians who resort to their constituents and safe haven to fuel up the clash that is turning Kenya into a blood pond. This is one of the aspects of current day's Africa whereby politicians gamble on the lives of the citizens whom they claim to be fighting for. The extract apparently refers to the politicians who retreat to their constituents and recruit fighters who face their own countrymen. When the ones in their country are busy with recruiting militia, the ones overseas collect money for their ethnicities. From both sides, those who recruit militia and those who collect money alike are working for their ethnicities, not their great country. Ethnic Kikuyus and Luos are killing each other on the ground that the either side is from a different ethnicity. Furthermore, the extract also portrays the magnitude of the wreckage Kenya is lingering in by way offering a vantage point from which one could judge how apocalyptic the situation is.

It has also been highlighted the above extract that the security forces that have been deployed to restore law and order had already broken along ethnic lines and had gone on killing rampage. This is what makes the situation desperate. Mukoma, in this novel, reveals that Africa is facing a new and incurable disease that would gradually deteriorate its form and would send it into total ruin. Apart from what the novel under scrutiny depicts, it possible to reckon the major source of current day's Africa's problem. As history may testify, incidents related to coups are declining across the continent in recent years compared to what had been happening in the 1980s and 1990s. However, it is undeniable fact that in multiethnic African countries, ethnocentrism is posing major challenges that threaten their existence. The novel under investigation also attempts to bring the attention of the readers and literary scholars to ethnocentrism that will turn countries into ashes if not given due and timely attention.

4.8 Dependency and Foreign Interference

African politicians have received strong criticisms from African writers since the time of independence. Among the novelists who astutely exposed the predicaments of African politicians, Aikwe Armah and Chinua Achebe occupy the leading edge. These two prominent writers in their works “The Beautyful Ones are not yet born” and “A man of the people” showed the avaricious and pretentious corrupt African leadership. The aforementioned canonical works criticize African leaders those who rely on feeding their people on bread of hope in order to ascend to power and fail to demonstrate commitment towards the fulfillment of the promises. Such a representation holds African leaders themselves responsible for all the anomalies that result in public grievances or uprisings. Unlike numerous postcolonial African novels that foreground the shattered dreams of Africa owing to its corrupt leaders, Mukoma attempts to reflect the duality of the problem that is putting African leadership in what seems to be irremediable political epilepsy. He portrays African politicians who work for their own personal achievement at the expense of their people and their countries on the one hand, and the world’s powerful government’s involvement to unsettle Africa on the other hand. Mukoma gives the scenario as follows;

In Kenya, after creating a vacuum, our fronts are going to be called in to help guide and stabilize the government. “Look here, my friends, we have disaster prevention programs for just about everything—epidemics, floods and hurricanes, wildfires—but not for political disasters. People die from hunger because of bad politics, malaria has not been eradicated because of bad governance, and then there is war. This is where we come in. We manage political disasters before they happen,” he said, banging his hand on the table excitedly (Mukoma 2013, p. 198).

The above extract purports that the invisible hands of foreign powers create a means by which African leaders leave their doors wide open and appeal for help from the countries that stir the situations. The above extract postulates that Kenyan politicians lack the quality to independently run the administrative tasks that any sovereign government is supposed to. It is possible to infer from the given extract that the government is held responsible for all sorts of the country’s problems ranging from manmade to natural disasters. The narrator, who is indeed a Kenyan and working for IDESC, states that the leaders in the Kenyan government are unable to address a single problem the country is facing. The narrator underscores that all sorts of problem stem

from bad governance, and the IDESC is there upon the invitation of the Kenyan weak government to rectify the problem of the country.

Furthermore, the novel under scrutiny also depicts that the instability in Kenya is not solely attributable to Kenyan government's poor leadership. This is evident in:

“Kenya is our coming-out party. We are going to take Kenya, bring it to its knees, and then rebuild it,” he said. “Why not start with Somalia?” I asked. “Are you listening to anything I’m saying? You have to have institutions; cut off the head, replace the organs, transfuse blood, and something new and beautiful grows. Somalia is a Frankenstein of a state,” he continued, explaining patiently (Mukoma 2013, p. 198).

As it could be inferred from the extract, Kimani a man working for IDESC is telling the whole secret that the West with its so called humanitarian organizations is behind any political instability in Kenya. Kimani tells O and Ishmael that Kenya is wanted since it has more or less what seems to be considered a government compared to Somalia, a failed state described as a Frankenstein of a state. The novel breathes that the political elites in Kenyan government are important for them to succeed in any business the IDESC does in the guise of donation, relief and rescue efforts whenever any explosion or disaster devours Kenya. The novel introduces the IDESC, its activities and all the big names affiliated with it. The following extract offers the context as follows:

“Two things: am I a genius or a genius? Carter, Mandela, and Tutu all belong to the same organization—the Elders, you know it—moral influence to shape a world gone rogue. Oh yeah, and ‘cigar in Monica Lewinsky’s you know what’ Smoking Bill Clinton is also associated with it. The four of your men who worked for Reagan, Thatcher, the IMF, and the World Bank—they are all board members of an organization called International Democracy and Economic Security Council, or IDESC,” she said. “What does IDESC do?” I asked her. “They promote international democracy and economic security,” she said with a laugh. “No dirt on them from anywhere.” She hung up and texted me the address of the IDESC office. It was in Oakland (Mukoma 2013, p. 184).

The above extract presents a telephone conversation between Helen and Ishmael. Helen is a computer technician who cracked Sahara's MacBook's password and decrypted some of the encrypted files. It is after successfully accessing the data on Sahara's laptop that she converses with Ishmael. Through their conversation, Mukoma, sarcastically tells the readers that Carter, Mandela and Tutu whose words and orders can easily influence the world, especially Africa and

its leaders are all attached to the organization that through its workers and CIA agents at the USA embassy in Nairobi plotted the Norfolk hotel bombing for which Al Qaida and Al Shabab are blamed to have been behind. The video footage they obtained from the CCTV camera showed the image of four men whom Ishmael and O suspected to have planted the bombs at the Norfolk Hotel. Ishmael and O are tracking these suspects down.

The novel under scrutiny, as could be explicated from the above extract, creates a link between the entities that claim to be Africa's development partners and the flip side of their involvement in Africa's affairs. This is evident in Helen's utterance in which she declares that the four men sought by Ishmael and O are all board members of an organization called International Democracy and Economic Security Council, or IDESC. Helen adds that these men had also worked for Reagan, Thatcher, the IMF and the World Bank. The novel under study in due course reveals that the four men affiliated with the IDESC are all behind the Norfolk Hotel bombing.

The above texts depict that Africa is languishing in misery due to its leaders' gullibility and the interference of the world powers that put their fingers in the continent's every apple-pie order. Indeed, Mukoma attempts to call on the new generation of Africa to be critical in analyzing the situations when it comes to governance and diplomacy. It could also be concluded that Mukoma is declaring that Africa's fate is still being decided by the neocolonial powers as African political elites are oblivious to what is practically happening to themselves and the people they believe to be leading.

The novel in question takes the interference of the world's competing powers in the affairs of the continents that terribly suffered from the burden of colonialism on the larger scale and makes it plausible for readers to contemplate about the postcolonial era's political landscape of the former colonies and the meddling of the world powers in the era of what is called 'globalization'. The extract taken from the novel gives a context that resonates with the given stand point as follows;

Muddy and I woke O up, and we went to Joe Sherry's office. After trying to connect a couple of times, we finally opened the file, which turned out to be an IDESC Project Assessment File put together by the New York-based African Open Society. It was a study of the military coups that had assassinated political leaders of all stripes, and the counter-coups that had in turn killed off the military leaders. It looked at revolutions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America where sitting leadership had been tried, jailed, or simply killed off. It factored in the interference of U.S. and Russian governments in these coups and revolutions and the conclusion was always the same—

the body cannot survive without its head, no matter how rotten. But even with successful operations, hundreds if not thousands of people would die before a new non-corrupt leadership could be formed and installed (Mukoma 2013, p. 209).

The meddling of the U.S and Russia has been plainly stated in the above extract in a way that creates a vantage point from which one could examine the historical and circumstantial phenomena related to coups and revolutions across Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The extract depicts that the revolutions and coups whether failed or successful are all the projects of U.S and Russia. It also reveals that the two powers are behind the establishment of tribunals to try African, Asian and Latin American deposed and sitting leaders to install new leaderships that would suit their interests down to the ground no matter how gruesome their actions' consequences could be.

Many African countries criticize International Criminal Court (ICC) of The Hague claiming that the court is a kangaroo court established to try ex and/or sitting African leaders on the pretext of war crimes and any accusation deemed necessary to interfere in the affairs of the developing countries. African leaders allege that the court has never been seen attempting to bring sitting or former leaders of U.S or European countries who could be held liable for various crimes to the tribunal. On a similar line of argument, it could be said that the above extract gives the tinge of African leaders' discontent with the courts established to proceed with the trial of African leaders in their own countries and abroad. The extract seems to be resonant with the emerging concerns most African leaders raise against the legitimacy of the ICC and Western meddling in the affairs of their respective countries.

More to the point, the novel under study establishes a link between the possible ways that the West through its charity organizations and intelligence networks lead third world countries into chaos. This could be inferred from the following extract;

The bottom line was that the study gave the IDESC Africa project a 25 percent chance of success. In the end, the good people at the African Open Society were asking whether that 25 percent chance was worth the risk of destroying a country and the loss of thousands of lives. Sahara and IDESC had answered yes; the future was worth a little blood-letting in the present. We looked over and over the document, trying to understand it—figures and percentages about human life. People playing the gods of change, life measured against life (Mukoma 2013, p. 210).

The above extract offers a clear context wherein the role of the IDESC Africa project in the destructions claiming African lives has been revealed. As it could be understood, Ishmael and his colleagues are going through the documents that they found at the IDESC office. Ishmael reflects on the brutality of Sahara and IDESC claiming that both of them yielded to the idea of destroying the whole country whose likelihood of success has been reported 25% based on the study conducted. The extract also shows that ‘some good people at the African Open Society’ showed their concern whether destroying the whole country and thousands of lives would bear the anticipated fruit. The extract also depicts that if the IDESC and Sahara give it a go, the whole country will be blown no matter how hard ‘some good people at the African Open Society’ try to slow the process of causing all the impending disaster.

Accordingly, it is possible to conclude that the novel in question portrays the peripheral position African lives and African countries are given due to the vulnerability of their political elites’ incompetence and the West’s interference. The interference of the West in causing mayhem in Kenya has remained the axis of the story with IDESC serving as the orbit of the story. The retrospective look at what had happened two years before the Norfolk Hotel bombing portrays how systematically planned the violence shaking the country to its core is. The following extract is worth looking at;

IDESC was planning to set off bombs in Kenya. The purpose: to destabilize the government by targeting leaders from all the political parties. In the absence of the leadership class, IDESC would take over stewardship of the country and cultivate a new leadership recruited from the youth who respected democracy—a second independence, Mpande explained. “Like things in Afghanistan and Iraq have worked so well,” Muddy said. “That’s not our work—it was a stupid and foolhardy move. In Iraq, Afghanistan, the policy is: invade, destroy the sitting government, then try to build an opposition, or a new government from the opposition and the leftovers. It is like trying to cure cancer with cancer. No, our goal was to eradicate all of them, the sitting government, the opposition—leave the country without leadership, scoop out the cancer, and then let a new leadership emerge from the people themselves ... with a gentle guiding hand from IDESC (Mukoma 2013, p. 212).”

The above extract makes a clear reference to the U.S which regards itself as a maker and breaker of the global politics. In fact, the U.S plays active role in the global politics. Apart from its unquestionable political dominance across the world, U.S actively engages with the political dynamics of African, Asian and Latin American countries in order to install leaders that would help it as a proxy to promote its national interest in the guise of helping countries exercise true

democracy. The above extract compares and contrasts the approaches by which U.S meddles in the politics of Africa and Asia. The above extract reveals that it is through entities operating in the name of NGOs that the U.S works towards attainment of its interests in African countries while it follows a military conquest and visible interventions in Asian countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. As one could infer from the extract, it is shown that African and Asian leaders are characterized as problems to the people.

The representation of African and Asian leaders in the above extract depicts that the U.S is doing whatever likes owing to the incompetence of the political elites. The approach followed to destabilize Africa is assassinating political figures from the incumbent and opposition parties to bewilder and scare the government as if the control is totally out of its hand. Consequently, U.S elements such as IDESC and their likes grab the opportunity to stir the situation. The narrative accounts connecting the storyline render how the arithmetic is done to attain the result of the West's conspiracy as follows:

“Obviously things aren't working out ...” I started to say but he interrupted me. “Ours was not to create the circumstances; it was to take advantage of them. At the right time, take out the opposition and the ruling party and then offer interim stewardship that comes with economic assistance, security, and nurturing of leadership by forward-looking youth ... As you can see, we weren't wrong about Kenya. All the signs were there—I don't need to tell you that ...” he said as he pointed in the direction of Dandora (Mukoma 2013, p. 212).

The above extract reveals Mpande's explanation on how the IDESC operates in Kenya. As it could be inferred from the extract it is unknown whether Mpande is still in the IDESC. However, it is made clear that the IDESC doesn't create the circumstances; it takes the advantage instead. It is possible to make sense of the above extract as an instance depicting the credulity of African politicians whereby foreign powers take the advantage of exploiting what is left to chance. As to the saying “disturb the water to catch the fish”, the network of the West in Kenya factored in the Norfolk Hotel bombing according to the narrative account obtained from the novel.

It is also worth mapping the relationship between the extracts offered to substantiate the earlier interpretations. In view of that it is possible to make an inference that the Achilles heel of the continent is the politicians who ran after their own interest putting the public interest and national security aside which in turn results in compromising the economy and security. The rapport between African political elites and the West has also been portrayed as a ladder that

takes them up to one of the highest positions in the IMF and UN. The novel under scrutiny offers the matter as follows;

Needed to make a move, move fast, business as usual—ordinary language to explain the planning of terror and death, I thought to myself. I had a fuller picture now—imagine all you want to do in this world is some good. You go from trouble spot to trouble spot and do your best to make a difference. You start in the Peace Corps in some village somewhere, drilling wells and building makeshift schools. When you leave, in spite of your efforts, the well dries up and the school decides to stop admitting girls because a local fat cat angling for political office has decided it is against African culture. You get another job where you have more power and you continue up the do-gooder ladder until you land in some of the most powerful offices in the world—of former U.S. presidents, world monetary organizations, the United Nations—and still nothing is changing (Mukoma 2013, p. 214).

The degree of selfishness among African political elites has been portrayed in various contexts. Similarly, the extract depicts that those who venture in politics aspire for self-fulfillment rather than striving to change the lives of their people languishing in abject poverty and disease. The novel in question offered a vast array of examples depicting the shortsightedness and selfishness of African political elites wherein the issue of power-sharing and similar scenarios depicting ineptness of the political elites that come to the fore. The above extract, like some of the preceding extracts, illustrates that the elites undergo a sort of political metamorphosis that helps them to make their dream come true. As could be inferred from the given extract, the African actors do all the activities from a very intention of showing allegiance to the West which will in return offer them posts in one of the most powerful offices.

Chapter Five

5.0 Post-independence Disenchantment in *The Orchard of the Lost Souls*

5.1 Synopsis of *The Orchard of the Lost Souls*

The novel opens as Kawsar, an elderly woman, intervenes on behalf of Deqo, an orphaned refugee about to be punished for giving a bad performance during a government-sponsored rally. Her act of defiance allows the orphan girl a chance to escape, but the police simply arrest Kawsar instead. Following a brutal interrogation scene, a hospitalized Kawsar advises her neighbor Dahabo against revenge, claiming that her interrogator is merely “a child of her time.” Dahabo rejects her friend’s ambivalence and replies, “No, it is the other way around. Those with sick hearts have made the time what it is.”

As Mohamed’s main characters reveal the stories behind their scarred hearts, readers are invited to puzzle over the relationship between personality and circumstance. It initially seems clear that Kawsar’s nascent rebelliousness stems entirely from the pain of losing her only child, Hodan, who dared once to protest the military regime. However, it is eventually revealed that Kawsar’s husband also took a stand against corruption when he served as chief of police. This appears to lend credence to Kawsar’s suggestion that “Hodan must have got it from somewhere.”

Mohamed’s two other main characters, Filsan and Deqo, draw attention to the misogyny that seems to permeate their country. Early in the novel, Filsan, an Internal Security officer, earns a meeting with the esteemed General Haaruun but she quickly discovers that he is only interested in parading her in front of foreign dignitaries and molesting her in the back seat of his Mercedes. As for Deqo, the child who is saved by Kawsar’s act of defiance, she faces similar difficulties after being adopted by a prostitute named Nasra. Deqo emerges from her time with Nasra possessing little more than a confused sense of her burgeoning womanhood. As readers will expect, the lives of these three women converge once again by the novel’s end.

5.2 Shattered Dreams

Africa as a continent passed through fateful encounters in terms of social, political and economic progresses. African writers, politicians and opinion leaders have been exerting unrelenting efforts for the betterment of the continents' sociopolitical circumstances. As a historical fact, after the continent gained its independence from European colonizers, its own children failed to translate their superfluous promises into action. The new breed of African leaders who were supposed to be patriotic and true public servants turned out to be renegades. The expectation to enjoy democracy and economic prosperity has been denied. Instead they have been greeted by multilayered challenges. The air of independence that once breathed all over the flora and fauna of the continent turned into a mere wish. All these human experiences are not an exception to Somalia.

The sociopolitical realities that Somalia leaped through exhibited the entirety of the post independence anomalies several countries had experienced. Moreover, it may not be an exaggeration if it is said that Somalia is one of the countries that witnessed enormous exodus of the people in the quest for refuge. One of the major causes of the problems could be the social reality that started to unfold as the rift between Somali factions began to widen. Besides, Nadifa's novel reiterates that the Somalis' gullibility as a people played its role in the imminent fall apart of the country. The following extract reveals the trajectory of the sociopolitical circumstances of the country;

Hodan had slept nestled against Kawsar's shoulder on days like this, when the people had still been gullible enough to celebrate the regime with real emotion, when the shine of independence had made everything magical – our first Somali textbooks, our first airline, everything a wonder. It was the star that caused all the grief: that five pointed star on the flag, with each point signifying a part of the Somali motherland, had led the country into war with Kenya and then Ethiopia, had fed a ruinous desire to reclaim territory that was long gone. The last defeat changed everything. After seventy-nine the guns that were turned outward reversed position and became trained on Somalis instead, the fury of humiliated men blowing back over the Haud Desert (Nadifa 2013, p. 15).

Like the citizens of any other country declaring its independence from the yoke of colonialism, Somalis went into uncontrollable state of euphoria. The novel in question clearly shows how ecstatic the people of Somalia were due to the fact that Somalia is having its textbooks, airlines

and even its people are happening to witness their country having its own flag with a five pointed star on it. That flag with a five pointed star on it which was a source of jubilation for the Somalis whom Nadifa regards as gullible has turned out to be source of their agony. The beginning of their independence like any other African people made them to expect the road ahead to be peaceful and prosperous. However, Somalia failed to deliver peace that its citizens expected; instead the leaders led the country into war with Kenya and Ethiopia to claim territories assumed to be belonging to Somalia.

The novel under scrutiny is an account of the existential and societal realities of the neo-colonial Somali nation. This corroborates with Ahmad Aijaz's (1995, p. 78) assertion that "all third-world texts are necessarily... to be read as... national allegories". The theme of postcolonial disillusionment and hopelessness in the above extract thus becomes an allegory of the history of Somalia, which Kehinde (2004, p. 229) on his part labels as the metaphorical representation of neo-colonial African nations, which are encumbered with dislocation, alienation, depression and deprivation. Kehinde's assertion resonates with the extract's theme that the Somalis those who once upon a time expected to enjoy the freedom they had long been craving for are alienated, depressed and reprieved.

Moreover, the Somalis who at some point in time expected to see the blossoming of peace and democracy are confronted with an ugly truth. This is palpable in the following extract;

The young nomadic boy who knew how to hobble a camel and ease a tick out of a sheep's flesh has become a deity. A blasphemer, thinks Kawsar as his face floats up at her, both he and his servant Haaruun. Before she remembers where she is, she spits violently at the sight, drawing a gasp from the spectators around her. 'What are you doing?' Dahabo exclaims, squeezing Kawsar's upper arm tightly. Kawsar doesn't know, she isn't really there; she just saw a face that disgusted her and reacted. The expressions in the aisle below reflect shock and fear that she has drawn attention to them, but Kawsar cannot comprehend that fear anymore, it seems so paltry and pointless in comparison to what she has lived through (Nadifa 2013, p. 19).

The above extract through Kawsar foregrounds the fact that Somalia has been destined to fall in the hand of an inept leader whom she portrays as politically and morally incompetent to lead. Indeed, interpreting the above extract from Ahmad Aijaz's (1995, p. 78) point of view portrays that the regime that was leading Somalia was of no help to the country and its people. Kawsar,

one of the central characters in the novel, describes the leader that ascended to power as a being who has never acquired the knowledge and experience qualifying him for the post. This reveals that Nadifa is critical of the sociopolitical dynamics that deprived the Somalis of the right to elect their leader.

Apart from electing their leader, the above extract shows that the Somalis lived in fear and agony under the leadership of unqualified and tyrant leaders. The two characters, Kawsar and Dahabo depict at least two facets of the Somali people. It could be interpreted that Kawsar's frantic gestures foreground the furrow of the sea way that the earlier section of the Somali people from the colonial era navigated through to the day of the nation's independence expecting that the independent Somalia would be a country where democracy and stability are enjoyed by the people when in essence it shows how the expectation of the generation had been denied. Besides, it circumnavigates across the contour of attitudes towards the regime. In this regard, while Kawsar posits the generation whose dreams has been shattered, Dahabo could be taken as a canvas upon which the tyranny of the regime that made the Somalis docile followers is painted.

The novel also shows the stride that the sociopolitical circumstances in Somalia had taken. Nadifa offered certain contingent sociopolitical contexts that can help her reader to clearly observe how things went from bad to worse. She offers the context as follows:

It had been frequented by Somalis returning from jobs overseas, sailors and oil workers mostly, and Farah would spend his evenings over there talking politics. Between seventy-eight and eighty-one the hotel made the neighbourhood lively with weddings and the reappearance of long-lost men. But then in eighty-one the tone of the place changed; there was no joy just congregations with furrowed brows gathered to lament the ever worsening situation. First the doctors in Hargeisa hospital were arrested for trying to improve conditions for their patients, then the student demonstrations broke out following their death sentences, and finally the National Freedom Movement, formed by Somalis living in London, began military action to remove the dictatorship. Since then the hotel has cast an ominous pall over the street. Unsubtle spies pace its perimeter by day and return at night to drag guests away at gunpoint; it has become a secretive place from which you can almost hear the ticking of a bomb (Nadifa 2013, p. 89).

The above extract clearly shows the trajectory of the sociopolitical circumstance of Somalia. The scene of the hotel where all the Somalis from all corners of the world and all walks of life meet appears to show the two ends from where Somalis' hope began to blossom and where it started

to wilt. The hotel as a venue hosted all sort of social events between seventy-eight and eighty-one. These years as to the novel in question represent years of happiness in which people wedded whom they loved and reunited with the long lost ones. It is after eighty-one that the Somalis' dream to live in peace and harmony began to shatter.

Nadifa's novel shows how dismayed the Somalis were by the deteriorating sociopolitical conditions. She reveals the magnitude of the cruelty of the regime by exposing its crackdown on the doctors in Hargeisa hospital for trying to improve handling of their patients. Improving the condition of the patients in hospital can, by no means, be considered political intention. Nevertheless, the regime that was lurking to tighten its grip on power used it as a pretext to detain the intelligentsia that it feared to be posing a threat to its power.

Working to subdue public expressions and annihilating oppositions is not an uncommon practice in many third world countries. Especially, in Africa the metamorphosis cycle of utter dictatorship appears to be passing through such steps as detaining or executing the erudite section of the society on which the public at large counts to see changes, cracking down on demonstrators, and ultimately venturing into full scale war with armed and unarmed forces to maintain seizure of power. As it could be explicated from the above extract, the regime did and does everything it opted for so as to prevent any attempt made to rectify the sociopolitical ills observed from the other side. Subsequently, the hopeful Somalis who dreamt of seeing their country enjoying peace and democracy happened to witness the denial of their expectations and the shattering of their dreams.

5.3 The Hypocrisy of Leadership

African leaders pamper themselves with exquisite and expensive festivals while their peoples languish in poverty and unrest. They invest everything they please on such festivals since such large gatherings serve as a platform to play a propaganda game. Leaders that are reminiscent of Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and Idi Amin Dada of Uganda epitomize the pretense of despot African leaders who ultimately end up in an overthrow. In spite of bravely facing the sociopolitical challenges their countries are grappling with, several African leaders opt for deception until some revolutions unseat them. In this respect, Nadifa Mohammed portrays the contagious hypocrisy of African leadership even in the time of great national crisis.

Nadifa, through her novel, depicts the situation in Somalia as the country braces itself for the war between the rebels and the government. Nonetheless, the regime appears to be ardently working on events that would potentially showcase the government as if it is amassing love and support from the citizens. The regime, as portrayed in the novel under scrutiny, has forced every section of the society to attend and participate in the event with the aim of deceiving the foreign dignitaries in attendance.

They look like illustrations in a school textbook, everybody equal in the same garments and just a few lines on the face or a stooped back delineating age. That is the way the government seems to want them – simple, smiling cartoons with no demands or needs of their own. Now those cartoons have come to life – not tilling, weaving or working in a factory like on the shilling notes, but trudging to a celebration that they are forced to attend. They walk through the backstreets, the sky above slowly getting paler and paler, until they reach the sports stadium. The *Guddi* activists in armbands are asking what neighborhood they belong to and counting them as they enter the gate. ‘There’s Oodweyne watching over us,’ yells Dahabo, pointing up. ‘Shush!’ whispers Maryam. ‘They’ll hear you.’ (Nadifa 2013, p. 11).

The above extract shows that the tyrant regime is pretending to be supported by the public while all sections of the society are forced to attend the celebrations. The hypocrisy of the tyrant regime is apparently revealed in the senselessness of the students that is compared to illustrations in a school textbook. Moreover, the presence of the *Guddi* activists who count the entrants bespeaks the participants of the celebration are under heavy control of the dictatorial regime. The instance of the two ladies who are trying to hush each other up owing to the presence of Oodweyne fortifies the degree of repression the citizens are afflicted with. The portion of the story, that shows how scared the citizens are, has a sort of literary allusion to George Orwell’s 1984 wherein the leader is depicted as an omnipotent and omnipresent to oversee every activity.

The regimes hypocrisy in the face of an impending disaster is further projected by the fact that it even went to the extent of overcrowding the stadium with the throng of people drawn from diverse walk of life. These parts of the society who may or may not have clue about what is going on in their own country are forced to abandon their routines and attend the celebration so far as their presence helps the regime to appear as if the whole country is out in support of the leaders. The kernel of this interpretation could be deciphered from the following extract;

The mothers of the revolution have been called from their kitchens, from their chores, to show foreign dignitaries how loved the regime is, how grateful they are for the milk and

peace it has brought them. It needs women to make it seem human. Beyond Dahabo's pointed finger is a mammoth painting of the dictator, hanging over the stadium like a new sun, rays emerging from around his head. The painters have tried to soften that merciless, hangdog face but have succeeded only in throwing it off balance – the chin too long, the nose too bulbous, the eyes asymmetrical. The only accurate part is the short, clipped moustache modelled on that German leader. (Nadifa 2013, p. 2)

The novel under scrutiny clearly tells that all these sections of the society are summoned to help the regime deceive foreign dignitaries who are attending the celebration. The author mockingly tells her reader that the people are gathered to pay their homage to the regime that brought them milk and peace. Nadifa gives life to her satirical presentation of the gratitude the regime is embracing by explicitly referring to the leader as a dictator. The above extract wherein the author describes the mammoth painting of the dictator reminds the reader of V.S Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* 1974, a novel regarded to be describing Mobutu's regime. Naipaul in this novel exposes the tyranny of Mobutu Sese Seko and the overall mishap the country went through. In Naipaul's novel, the leader whose country is caught in war and violence remains negligent to the reality and focuses on cult building by hanging paintings portraying his might. By the same token, Nadifa draws on the atmosphere at the stadium where the mocking portrait of the dictator is hanging. She tells that the painters have tried to hide the leader's mercilessness which she compares to Adolf Hitler of Germany in deeds and appearance.

The novel in question offers a vantage point from which one can see the sociopolitical crisis Somalia is engulfed in even though the tyrant regime is prioritizing pretention than action. The following excerpt gives partial view of the sociopolitical crisis wrapped around the country's neck;

While the other children practice the songs they will sing at the parade, Deqo's attention is drawn back towards the refugee camp, the semi-circular wooden aqals suddenly nothing more than speckles on the surface of the earth. The grain warehouse and various clinics constantly surrounded by milling refugees are invisible from here; the bitterness, the sadness far away. The road snakes down towards Hargeisa, the landscape bare apart from the occasional aloe bush, animal bone and plastic shoe, the only difference from the camp being the freshness of the air (Nadifa 2013, p. 5).

The above extract reveals the paradox happening in Somalia via Deqo that is one of the novel's notable characters. Deqo represents several innocent souls that are paying dearly for the crimes they have never committed. Deqo is an abandoned child who was raised in a refugee camp. Her

abandonment and the refugee camp apparently depict that the leader who is organizing such a gigantic parade and celebration is more concerned with his comfort than the suffering of the citizens of the country that forced a mother abandon her child and the citizens, their homes. It can also be concluded from the extract that the camp life itself is full of discords, bitterness and sadness that shows how hellish the country is during the reign of the leader who is despicably gathering these people for his own individual interest rather than improving the livelihood of the people.

Nadifa subtly tells how disillusioned the Somali people are. She develops theme of disillusionment by way of juxtaposing the Independence Day celebration and the historical current celebration of the text as follows:

The October Twenty-first festivals are poor imitations of the Independence Day celebrations, Kawsar thinks – like a bad husband reminding his unhappy wife of the good times they once shared while knowing that they would never return. When the British had left on 26 June 1960, everyone had poured out of their homes in their Eid clothes and gathered at the municipal *khayriyo* between the national bank and prison. It was as if they were drunk, wild; girls got pregnant that night and when asked who the father of their child was, they would reply: ‘Ask the flag.’ That night, crushed within a mixed crowd as the Somali flag was raised for the first time, Kawsar had lost a long, gold earring that was part of her dowry, but Farah hadn’t cared – he’d said it was a gift to the new nation (Nadifa 2013, p. 15).

The above extract offers the futility of the efforts put together in the preparation and undertakings of the October 21st celebration compared to Somali’s Independence Day on the day the whole Somalia went into absolute jubilation. The novel under scrutiny shows how happy the entire population of Somalia was on the 26th of June 1960 when Somalia hoisted its flag as an independent nation. It succinctly bespeaks that all that the Somalis were left with was the memory of the celebration that didn’t last for long. On a similar note, the novel foregrounds the fact that all sections of the society were euphoric as a result of which girls got pregnant to give birth to children whose fathers are unknown. This could be taken as a symbolic representation of the responsibility that the new born independent Somalia took into its hands and failed to care for and nurture until it fully grows to a democratic structure of governance that would have a lasting peace and happiness for Somalia and its people.

It appears as if Nadifa is criticizing the expectations that Somalis had upon their independence from their colonial ruler. A conjecture could be made that the Independence Day celebration which was genuine and authentic was far better than the October 21st celebration which is forcing the citizens to attend without compliance. It means that the Somalis, though their dreams shattered and their expectations denied, celebrated their independence day willingly and wholeheartedly. On the contrary, the current celebration which is depicted as a gathering where people are forcibly brought together epitomizes the Somali people whose expectation to enjoy freedom and democracy had been denied by a pretentious tyrant regime that utilizes the people as a fuel to its propaganda.

What turns out to be most striking about the novel in question is its presentation of the regime's pretention. As it could be recalled from the earlier excerpt, all sections of the society have been summoned to cover-up the vanity and tyranny of the regime in the presence of foreign dignitaries: "The mothers of the revolution have been called from their kitchens, from their chores, to show foreign dignitaries how loved the regime is, how grateful they are for the milk and peace it has brought them (Nadifa Mohamed 2013, p. 2)". This excerpt satirizes the regime that pretends to be praised by its people for bringing them peace while in actual sense the country is preparing for bloody war.

The police service had purged all of those who challenged the government's edicts and now no outrage was inconceivable. Oodweyne's proclamations were becoming more menacing; his nickname 'Big Voice' was intended to mock his radio interludes but the words he spoke in that deep percussive drawl were increasing in violence and hubris. He wanted all citizens to know that no one would get the better of him; that it would take death to unseat him (Nadifa 2013, p. 93).

The tyrant leader's masquerade appears to be taken off owing to the growing concern that posed a threat to his throne. As it could be deciphered from the above extract, the tyrant Oodweyne who pretended to be loved and respected by his people in the presence of foreign dignitaries is taking on his real job which is intimidation and tribulation of the people whom he rules over. This is evident in excerpt: "Oodweyne's proclamations were becoming more menacing; his nickname 'Big Voice' was intended to mock his radio interludes but the words he spoke in that deep percussive drawl were increasing in violence and hubris (Nadifa 2013, p. 93)". Thus, the leader who tried to appear loved and thanked by his people has ventured in issuing warnings that

he his merciless to punish those who try to shake his seat until death does. This is typical behavior of most African leaders who pretend to be democratic and real servant of their peoples before the West, when in actual practice, they are bloodthirsty despots bringing all the calamities upon their impoverished citizens.

Following the grotesque warnings issued and subsequent measures taken, the nation has gone into complete state of disarray. This is manifest in the following extract:

Kawsar's heart wavers between recrimination and understanding. Times have changed so deeply; life had been cheap, easy and slow-paced, but now it is cheap in another way, certainly not easy and the hours of darkness have been stolen and made dangerous. People are made to scuttle about in the daytime, trying to live full lives in half their allotted time. The shops are bare as the subsidized rice and flour have disappeared to allow the government to obtain more foreign loans; instead of home-grown maize and sorghum, sacks of USAID donations smuggled in from the refugee camps are on sale in the market at ridiculous prices (Nadifa 2013, p. 99).

As it could be inferred from the above text, people are doing whatever their capacity allowed them to do in this time of great crisis. The pretentious tyrant regime that is bringing war and suffering to its people is adding injury to their wounds by hoarding the subsidized food items in an effort to obtain more foreign loans. The government that is supposed to minimize the suffering of its people and improve their living condition is being an active agent. It is apparently put that sacks of USAID donations are smuggled from refugee camps. Stealing donated food from refugee camps and selling it in the market shows how ham-fisted the tyrant regime is and how meaningless life has become.

5.4 Despondency and Defeat

This section builds on the account of the story that entails Nadifa Mohammed's astute depiction of the downward spiral trajectory of the sociopolitical reality of Somalia and its people. Nadifa weaves together the experience of Somalia and its people which during the heyday of Somalia's independence enjoyed jubilation accompanied by a glimmer of hope for a democratic and prosperous Somalia. Moreover, the novel in question reveals the sociopolitical circumstance in which Somalis' hope starts to dim and their energy starts to drain. The state of affairs that the novel in question builds on Filsan and Kawsar is a representative sample of the human

experience entangled in a back and forth oscillation of sociopolitical reality that determines the citizens' fate.

Nadifa depicts two vigorous and gallant ladies who once counted on the patronage of their men and a place they belong to: Filsan a young soldier who always tries to become a strong and decent figure her father demanded her to be imagines to prove herself worth of the set standard, and Kawsar a lady in her fifties relying on her social capital and a reminiscence of her husband's legacy. Nadifa juxtaposes the experiences of Somalia's new generation which seem to be incognizant of the colonial experience and the other with colonial and postcolonial experiences in a way that makes tradeoff between the sociopolitical circumstances of the two eras. Nadifa offers the context as follows:

Filsan watches as Kawsar is escorted to a group cell. She walks slowly but shows no emotion; she moves like a tourist on a tour of the place, looking left and right as if to say, 'Yes, yes, everything is as it should be.' The barred doors click behind her and then she is gone, swallowed up in the guts of the police station to be digested and excreted out another day. *Saylada dadka*, thinks Kawsar. This is where her journey ends, in the 'people market'. From here the fortunate ones will be ransomed out while others end up in the hospital morgue or disappear into prisons all over the country. This was the place that had broken her child. She looks around, imagining where Hodan might have sat that first night after she was arrested with her classmates. The cell is large with walls that had once been painted white but are now gangrened and blackened with mould. It is little more than a dungeon with around thirty women and girls spread across its concrete floor (Nadifa 2013, p. 22).

As it could be deciphered from the above extract, Nadifa portrays the desperation that is casting its shadow on the Somalis who had seen a glimmer of hope following the departure of the British colonial force. Kawsar who enjoyed the jubilation of independence represents Somalia and its entire populace that aspired to be great and felt the pride of being independent. In spite of the fact that Kawsar's pride in the accumulated memory of the independence time appears to be succumbing to the succeeding generation's unwise patriotism that is giving rise to individuals' ego, Nadifa foregrounds that Somalia is stuck in an undefined sociopolitical realm where it is difficult to tell whether the path takes the country forward or backwards. This is manifested in Filsan a young soldier who is extremely eager to destroy a lady who is as old as her mother. While Kawsar's life which was once as bright as a broad day light limps into the dark tunnel, Filsan's life is at the grip of the steering wheel which guides the future of these two souls' future into a particular direction.

The excerpt shows that Filsan who represents the textual current of Somalia's generation; a generation oblivious to the historical past of Somalia and its future shattering the dream of the country and leading it into a total state of disarray. This can be further explained taking the life that Kawsar had been leading over years since independence until the day that ordained her to fall in the hand of Filsan. Nadifa offers the reader a god view of anomalies that always engulf the dream of Somalis and send them into sense of complete loss. The chain of dejection seem to be generational wherein parents are ordained to see the sufferings their children have been going through. This is show in: "This is where her journey ends, in the 'people market'. From here the fortunate ones will be ransomed out while others end up in the hospital morgue or disappear into prisons all over the country. This was the place that had broken her child." The novel gives a vivid depiction of how much overarching Somalia's sociopolitical crisis was.

Kawsar, one of the central characters of the novel under scrutiny, serves as a camera that moves across the corners and corridors of the jail to accurately capture the scene and effectively create a mood. The following extract shows the various souls dragged away from their lives' track and put to bleakness;

'Take a seat, *eddo*,' an inmate breast-feeding a child calls out. Kawsar hesitates. It is clear from the woman's jaundiced eyes and gaudy dress that she is a prostitute. The woman shifts over on her mat and pats the floor. 'What's a lady like you doing in a place like this?' 'I couldn't take any more of them, I realised.' Kawsar crouches down slowly onto the woven straw mat. 'What did you do?' she prods, teasing her nipple back into the baby's mouth. Kawsar shrugs. 'What can I do? I just told the *Guddi* to stop beating a child.' 'Those bastards. You were lucky they didn't beat you. Look here,' she points to the infant's temple, 'see that dent? It's where a policeman's stick caught him during a raid. No apology, no nothing.' Kawsar strokes the fine, smooth skin of the boy's forehead. Before he has even reached his first birthday he has been marked by the violent world surrounding him; perhaps he will be unable to see or hear or walk in the future and that won't matter to anyone but this drunk, sloppy mother feeding him her poison through her milk. 'He's beautiful,' she says (Nadifa 2013, p. 22-23).

The above extract reveals the sociopolitical situation of Somalia in which preventing and fighting criminality turns out to be a crime. The conversation between Kawsar and the mother embodies theme of lawlessness that shatters the aspirations of the citizens. It is apparently put in relation to Kawsar and the affairs with which she is one way or the other connected that Somalia of the past whose independence she had celebrated and expected to blossom is stridently

plunging into unfathomable pit of social and political intricacies. The heyday of Somalia's independence which Kawsar recalls and lived to its fullest ecstasy was supposed to be the milestone from which Somalia's progress in the fields of democracy and stability should have started to take shape. Nevertheless, Kawsar a lady who has lived across the contours of Somalia's history appears to be a canvas upon which the trajectory of Somalia's sociopolitical landscape is painted.

The novel in question offers a clear view of the sociopolitical reality of Somalia wherein the tyrants manipulate the populace as their own property let alone establishing democratic government that would be in a good position of addressing the most pressing challenges of the nation. Kawsar who is forced to attend the celebration taking place at the stadium had the moral audacity to defend an orphan girl whom the *Guddis* were severely beating.

In spite of the effort she exerted to straighten what is often regarded as a moral and legal offense, her reward turned out to be imprisonment. This entails the ineptness of the government structure to maintain law and order at all levels of administration in a way that serves justice. A substantial inference can be made from the ground on which Kawsar is jailed. As it could be deciphered from the novel, Kawsar didn't commit any offense except of her attempt to stop the *Guddis* from causing further damage to an orphan little girl upon whom the curse of the country has already fallen.

Furthermore, the abhorrent deeds of the tyrant government's forces have also been depicted as an additional burden to the sections of the society that lead destitute life. The epitome of this section of the society is a mother conversing with Kawsar. The extract implies that the woman in conversation with Kawsar is a prostitute. No clue has been given why she is in jail with her baby in her embrace. The mother tells Kawsar the brutality of the *Guddis* who left a visible scar on her baby's forehead and his fate unpredictable, whether the boy will be physically impaired or not. The child whose body bears a scar he sustained from police brutality could also be seen as an allegorical representation of the young Somalia that is sustaining injuries which will leave a lasting scar upon its history thereby leaving its future unpredictable whether it will manage to survive as a nation or not.

The other abysmal image Nadifa portrays in her novel resides in the following text;

The jail is where people's stories end, thinks Kawsar. Whoever you are, whatever ambitions you nurse, however many twists and turns it has taken to arrive there, it is like the heart of a spider's web that you eventually wind your way to. More women and girls have entered the cell and there are about fifty prisoners now. No one has used the bucket but the prostitute's son has made a mess that still stinks an hour later. The lack of space means the youngest inmates are forced to stand; some of them are street-looking girls who seem unruffled by the whole experience, while others tremble in school uniforms. They crowd around her for comfort and she wishes she could extend her arms around all of them, Hodan must have wept through the night in this dank hole (Nadifa 2013, p. 31).

As it can be inferred from the above extract, Nadifa shows how interknitted and continuous Somalia's maladies are. The novel in question offers the image of prison life in an attempt to foreground the deep-seated suffering Somalia and its people have been undergoing. Nadifa in this particular section of her novel shows the fact that Somalis drawn from different walks of life are put in one gloomy setting regardless of their social class or any boundary demarcating their social status. This in its own turn shows that the regime which was once supposed to redeem the Somalis hope happened to pileup sufferings upon Somalis from the haves to the have-nots. Furthermore, characters such as Kawsar depict the wickedness and ineptness of the regime that drags the citizens who were in a favorable situation to poverty when in practical and political senses should have improved the life of the destitute.

5.5 Gender Positioning

Gender issues appear to be contentious in literature. This is mainly due to the roles assigned to female characters in literature. When the spot light is placed on African women, the magnitude of the suffering and the burdens they carry upon their shoulders become more pressing than other women's living in other corners of the world. Agboadannon (2018, p. 7) upholds that "From girlhood to womanhood, the African woman has had to contend with many issues that restrain her 'being' as she journeys through life's winding cycles dictated by culture and cult. The woman's role has hitherto been canopied to the kitchen and to other chores that are akin to her femininity, while the men do the political talking and decision-making that unfortunately also affect the voiceless woman". Even though some literary works by African writers left females' role in politics void, a considerable amount of works that portray women's agency in politics started to proliferate and capture the attention of diverse academic community.

‘Comrade! Come join us.’ It is Haaruun. Filsan’s knees click as she walks to his side. The American has his hand on Haaruun’s shoulder, his grey shirt wet under the arms. ‘You speak English, right?’ ‘I do, sir.’ Filsan is self-conscious about her strong accent but has studied well. ‘I was just telling our American friend how strong Somali women are, that we don’t have any of that purdah here. Women work, they fight in our military, serve as engineers, spies, doctors. Isn’t it so?’ ‘Absolutely, we are not like other women.’ She nods fervently. ‘I bet you this girl could strip a Kalashnikov in a minute,’ the General boasts, placing his gold-rimmed sunglasses on top of his bald head. ‘Yes, and she could annihilate an Ethiopian battalion while unicycling. I don’t doubt it,’ the American laughs. ‘Look, buddy . . .’ General Haaruun grabs Filsan’s hand and raises it before twirling her around. ‘You’re going to tell me that American women can be trained killers and still look this good?’ (Nadifa 2013, p. 28)

It may not be a wonder for someone who is familiar with Somali literature to find assertive, conscious, and brave female characters. The role of female characters in the novel under scrutiny remains intact with what seems to be a norm in real world Somalia where most of the activities vital for the continuity of family-life are female-headed. Nadifa seems to take the females role to the front. In the above extract, the novel projects how important Filsan is. The voice in the above text is a male voice, a man superior to Filsan in terms of the rank that both have in the army. Haaruun tells the American how the entire Somali women are strong in general, and Filsan is in particular. The extract tells that Somali women work, fight in the military, serve as engineers, spies, doctors. Women are described as potent as their male counterparts in executing all sorts of tasks that are run by men.

The novel foregrounds Filsan as a brave and able woman who can prove herself worthy of accomplishing any mission regarded as the highest order of heroism. An instance for this claim can be taken from the portion of the extract in which the general himself speaks of Filsan’s courage and caliber to outmaneuver an Ethiopian battalion. What makes the general’s confidence in Filsan unique is the fact that Ethiopia is such a haunting force for Somalia as far as the issue of war is concerned. Somalia had conceded a bitter and historic defeat when it provoked Ethiopia in an effort to annex the Ogaden region to its territory. It is true that Ethiopian army is one of the most efficient and feared armies in this part of the continent. It is from the country’s previous experience with Ethiopia that he considers Ethiopian army as the highest standard against which all successes are judged. Thus, it is from this vantage point that he tells the bravery and potency of Filsan that traverse the ordinary and go to the extent of annihilating an Ethiopian battalion.

In fact most of the novels written by Somali authors are not disdainful in their treatment of female characters. In a world where females are given a peripheral position in the sociopolitical spheres, the novel under scrutiny portrays female characters as beings who manage to perform difficult tasks which are totally regarded impossible for females in many cultures. Even though Somali writers almost unanimously approve the ability of females to accomplish any activity as effectively as their male counter parts do, Nadifa on her part brings to the readers' attention the other facet of the social reality. She didn't shy away from telling the fact that the male characters who praise the females for their bravery never avoided succumbing to their sexual urges. This can be deciphered from the following extract;

She straightens her back and stands tall. Even in her uniform they see nothing more than breasts and a hole. He knows who her father is but still parades her like a prostitute. A waiter stops to glance at her; chest puffed out, barely a breath escaping her lips, she must look ready to burst. 'Go to hell!' she hisses. He purses his lips to blow a kiss and grabs an empty glass from a nearby table. One tear escapes down her left cheek and she scrapes it quickly away. The sky is black outside now, her reflection in the window shortened and stumpy-looking; she looks like an abandoned child on the verge of breaking down (Nadifa 2013, p. 29).

The above extract gives the context in which the general who showered Filsan with praises for the bravery he hopes she would show has now set his mind on her sexuality. Nadifa in here offers her readers the layer of females' experiences in their social relationship with their male counterparts. It is shown that the males who believe in women's ability to perform other tasks fail to escape lusting after their subjects. This appears to reveal the latent attitude that males have towards the females. Though Filsan's strength seems to be constructed, the kernel of the above extract depicts the fact that there are moments when women appear to be nothing than sexual objects that are designed and created to give men sexual gratification. Such an experience, as can be deciphered from the extract, takes its toll on females' psychosocial condition.

The extract clearly illustrates how disgusted with the general's action Filsan is. The excerpt portrays the suffering she is going through because of the way the general parades her. The excerpt implies that all the males who are around her see nothing than breasts and genitals. The gaze of the waiter and the action of the general ignited a flame of wrath as a result of which she hisses to herself. It is also possible to spell out how painful her experience is from the excerpt.

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that Somali women are subject to oppressions when it comes to the body politics like any other women.

Furthermore, Filsan's ordeal shows the structural oppression that the Somali women experience in spite of their innate assertiveness. The novel at hand builds on a prolonged storyline that portrays the tempting situation in which Filsan fights and emerges as a winner of the battle albeit the challenges awaiting her ahead. The following extract corroborates this point of departure;

Think about what is good for you.' Both his arms wrap around her, one hand padding around for her belt and zip. The driver's eyes are still on them. Filsan grabs General Haaruun's hand and throws it away. 'No! No! No!' She hits his chest with both palms at each word. 'Don't touch me.' 'Stop the car!' he shouts. They screech to a stop and the jeeps behind fan out around the car. Reaching around to the door handle, he opens the passenger door and pushes Filsan out of the car. '*Abu kintiro*, you cunt, make your own way home.' Filsan lands on her knees in plain view of may be twenty soldiers, the jeep headlights making the scene as bright as day. The door thuds behind her and the Mercedes skids and then drives off. Darkness huddles around her as the convoy pulls away. She rises to her feet, her head whirring, and walks to the nearest light source (Nadifa 2013, p. 30-31).

As can be deciphered from the above extract, the general is trying to do anything he pleases in the presence of his driver and escorts. Nadifa develops themes embodying male-female relationship in a paradoxical way. As it could be elucidated from the previous extracts, the same person, general Haaruun who testified the bravery of Somali women to his American friend uses his power to sexually harass Filsan. The extract shows that Somali women live amidst the social condition wherein they put up with rights violation for a mere reason that they are female. The corrupt practice of the general epitomizes the molestations the patriarchal hegemony imposes upon African women. It seems that the general considers his action as normal in spite of Filsan's unwelcoming gesture.

All the more, it is clearly depicted that it is the general who is enraged by the ongoing incident rather than the Filsan. It is apparently stipulated in the above extract that the general is using all his power to emotionally debilitate Filsan wing to the fact that she blocked his sexual advance towards her. Even though Filsan is crafted as a strong and assertive woman in her own way, the novel seems to reveal the peripheral position women hold when their power is weighed against high profile figures like general Haaruun. Nadifa's story construction can be taken as a mirror that reflects the reality of Somali women who live in two worlds. One of the two worlds

attempted to be shown in this case is the instance in which the general brags of the Somali women's gallantry while the second one is built on the socio-cultural foundation in which women are subjected to rights infringements.

The extract taken from the novel offers a clear view of the situation in which the general tramples on Filsan's right and insults her. The novel procedurally puts the stumbling block that African women are ordained to pass if they should attain their personal goals. It is worth noting the excerpt that describes the general's actions and words. After opening the passenger door he shouts vulgar words calling her: "Abu *kintiro*, you cunt, make your own way home.' The general's insult embodies the attitude of an imagined male community towards a female's body. The general's insult coupled with his action is shown to have a devastating effect upon Filsan as a result of which she lands on her knees in plain view of the onlookers. Furthermore, it is possible to decipher from the context that Filsan is such a strong and resilient woman who overcomes all the burdens and challenges of the patriarchal ideology.

Nadifa's story navigates across women's life regardless of age and profession. She develops themes that reveal the sociopolitical intricacies whose spillover casts dark shadow on women's life. The novel in question establishes a basis on which readers can reckon the burden of Somali women irrespective of where the subjects stand in the social sphere. The following extract gives a substantive example;

'How much did Nasra tell you about what she does?' he asks, scratching his stubble. Deqo shakes her head but doesn't reply. 'Don't look like your world's caved in, good girls like you are usually the most popular, you'll make a fine living.' Deqo bolts for the door before he has finished speaking but he grabs her ankle and wrestles her to the floor. As she screams he covers her mouth with his hand; his fingers taste of tobacco and ghee. Deqo bites down on them until she tastes blood, but he rips his hand away and punches her mouth. 'China! Stalin!' she cries. 'They won't help you!' he sneers. He pulls her skirt up; she is not wearing knickers because she had washed the two pairs that she owns in the morning. She sees a black stiletto on the floor and reaches for it while he is trying to prise open her legs. He doesn't see it coming as she forces the heel into his eye. He is thrown back in pain. She pitches the shoe to the side then escapes from the room (Nadifa 2013, p. 79).

As one could comprehend from the above text, Deqo who is one of the major female characters epitomizing the ordeals of Somali women is confronted with a new challenge. The novel under scrutiny reflects the ugly face of Somali women's life through the ordeals of Deqo and her mother who abandoned her. Deqo who was abandoned by her own mother had been raised in a

Red Cross camp until she was taken to the stadium where she started the most challenging and unending journey. Deqo's situation symbolizes the reality of many African women who for an economic reason fail to raise their children. By the same token, Deqo's mother abandoned her due to economic reason and her whereabouts is not mentioned in the novel. Even though Deqo has passed through various ups and downs, her experience which is quoted above foregrounds how poverty is taking its toll upon African women.

The tribulation of several women who lead a miserable life as prostitutes has been depicted in relation to Deqo's new world. Deqo who used to sleep in a ditch finds this place to be relatively safe. It is revealed in the novel that the women who make their living on prostitution undergo social segregation and frequent assaults from the males. This paves the way for the readers to see how males perceive and live with women who are economically disadvantaged. Nadifa develops a theme that shows the harshness of women's economic condition which leaves them vulnerable to the male community scavenging to take advantage of their situations rather than helping. The novel in question appears to show how courageous and unyielding Deqo is in the face of all gigantic challenges she faces.

Furthermore, the extract gives a clear view of the social setting wherein Deqo symbolically confronts a mammoth problem and overcomes it. This could be interpreted as the real world socioeconomic challenges Somali women live with throughout their lives which in turn could be attributed to the political system or the social structure in the country. Apart from the sufferings they share with other women who live in other corners of the world, African women are subjected to rape and other forms of exploitations which Nadifa astutely developed in this novel.

5.6 Military Crackdown

Years after their independence and even longer, Africans continued to remain in struggles. What makes this phase of their struggle different from the previous one is that they are struggling against the tyranny of African despots. In this respect, African regimes are known for their unparalleled crackdown on oppositions and those promoting different political ideologies. It is still an uncommon fashion for most African nations to witness peaceful political power transfer from the incumbent regime to an opposition or a political party different from the ruling one. Moreover, African regimes commit various forms of human rights violations to secure and

tighten their hold on power. They can take measures to evade the sufferings of their citizens from the international community to extent of expelling diplomats and foreign media. Indeed, armed struggle seems to be a tradition for African politicians than peaceful struggles.

Even though rare demonstrations take place in Africa, they don't last longer peacefully. They soon turn out to be bloody and lethal paving the way for continuous unrests. This allows the incumbent regimes to annihilate rival politicians in the guise of restoring calm. Nadifa's novel portrays an array of sociopolitical circumstances prevailing in Somalia. The fear of the public and the imminence of large scale unrest are observed in the following extract;

Hands grab her and push past, some almost dragging her down, but there is nowhere to escape to, the south side of the bridge blocked by another line of soldiers. The schoolchildren fall over each other trying to avoid the rigid, stinging batons. Their fists are now open in surrender, held aloft as if in promise of good behaviour. Deqo trips over a boy and falls at the feet of a soldier; he grasps her dress in one hand and the boy's arm in the other and drags them over to a massive lorry waiting beside the road. The bed of the truck is so high the soldier has to let the boy go to throw Deqo into it with both hands; the boy follows and then other captive students. Reaching for the soldier's hand, Deqo tries to plead with him to let her go but he slaps her in the mouth. The taste of blood on her tongue, she looks around in shock at the flying skirts and limbs, as more and more children are forced into the vehicle. Black netting covers the side but that is the only difference between it and livestock trucks. An older boy with long ringlets down his neck tears a hole in the netting and clammers out the side, and other brave ones follow him. Deqo peers down at the distant ground, too afraid to try (Nadifa 2013, p. 43).

Deqo finds herself in a total state of disarray as she is greeted with demonstrators. Deqo whose life is full of encounters serves as a focalizer leading across places where events take place. The exact place where she is engulfed in an ocean of school children is a bridge connecting two ends surrounded by armed soldiers. The extract offers two faces of the human experience wherein Deqo represents the souls that are toiling to win their daily meal and the students, those who have got an additional question to be answered. The above extract projects a complex social condition in which citizens of a country with divergent views and pursuit end up in the merciless hands of the regime. Regardless of their purposes, both Deqo and the protesters are children. This leads to an inference that Somali children are the ones who are most vulnerable.

Moreover, it is apparently put in the novel under scrutiny that the sociopolitical intricacies prior to Deqo's birth forced her mother to abandon her. Even though she was raised by the Red Cross

in a refugee camp, the perpetual sociopolitical maladies of Somalia dragged her out of her sanctuary. Deqo could be taken as a marker of Somalis' suffering that traverses generations. The other point worth noting from the above extract appears to be the soldiers' brutality towards the school children who are mentally and physically unprepared to cope up with the measures being taken. Among other things, Deqo's situation gives a heart wrenching experience to the reader by showing the severity of the children's suffering. As it could be recalled, Deqo has been searching for a meal when she was arrested along with the school children. Instead of getting something to eat, she undergoes the worst kind of experience as the soldier slaps her and she feels the taste of her own blood rather than food.

The novel continues to show how the Somali people from the haves to the have-nots are suffering indiscriminately under the tyranny of the regime.

Deqo turns her head away and purses her lips. I don't owe you anything, she thinks. In fact I should be angry with you for causing trouble, stupid girl. She doesn't understand why the schoolchildren and soldiers keep fighting. They all have food, all have homes and parents, what is there to squabble over? They should go to the refugee camp and see what life is like there. She covers her feet with her hands, ashamed by her dusty, long-nailed toes, the calloused, scaly skin, her red cotton smock fraying at every hem. Pulling her knees together she draws away from the boys sitting nearby. They do not hold their bodies as far away from her as they do the schoolgirls, she notices; there is barely an inch between her and any of the boys' limbs. They always nudge her in the street too, making her feel small and grubby. There isn't any dhobi-smell about them, only musk as sharp as vinegar that rubs onto her skin as they fall against her with the truck's tortuous drive (Nadifa 2013, p. 44).

The dissonance between the Somalis appears to be a factor that impacts their relationships even in hard times when they are rather required to stand together to liberate themselves from the despotic regime. As it could be inferred from the extract, Deqo a homeless and hopeless girl offers to help the other school girl who was sobbing. Even though Deqo pities the girl when she already got her own problem, the girl whom Deqo later realizes to be one of the school children causing all these troubles repels her. The incident between Deqo and the school girl seems to show the ideological incongruence of the Somali people as a result of which successive regimes manage to satisfy their power gluttony.

Furthermore, the novel depicts the fact that Somalia is an abode for citizens with different degree of suffering. This is shown in Deqo's impression wherein she considers the fight between

soldiers and school children nonsense. For her the most pressing issues are all about safety, shelter and food. She wonders why the school children and soldiers keep fighting when the school children have food, homes and parents. Besides, Deqo wishes the school children would see what life is like at the refugee camp. She thinks that the students who are staging protests fail to understand the likes of her are still careworn and fighting the hardest battle in life to get what these schoolchildren have already secured. The novel clearly depicts the magnitude of Deqo's suffering by making a reference to her cloth and body parts while on the contrast the school children's fragrance and cleanliness is foregrounded.

What's more, the novel takes the readers aboard to show the multilayered facet of Somalis' suffering which is however perceived differently among the Somalis themselves. The appalling condition of Somalia's prison in which the country's nationals are subjected to various forms of physical and psychological injuries is accessible from the following extract;

A few steps into the cell she is overcome by the stench of excrement. Older prisoners have to sit up and move to make room for the protestors and complain loudly at the intrusion. Four young women with their hair in thick plaits huddle together along the back wall. One of the large women kicks at them and shouts, 'Roohi, move it'; they obey and she spreads out her rush mat in the small space they had shared. Some of the schoolgirls start snivelling again as they look around the cell. Deqo rolls her eyes at them; she feels superior to these naive, sheltered girls who protest while knowing nothing of what the real world is like. They cannot appreciate the roof above that will keep them dry the bodies that will keep them warm, the dripping tap in the corner that will quench their thirst. The women and girls shift constantly trying to stand as far from the waste bucket as possible. Every breath Deqo takes is shallow and cautious; this smell sends her back to the refugee camp and the cholera outbreak that ended Anab's life and nearly her own, both of them falling asleep but only one of them waking up. In the ditch she has at least become accustomed to space and the fresh scent of trees (Nadifa 2013, p. 45).

There is an indiscriminate detention in the novel that reflects how unconscious of its deeds the regime is. The novel reveals that the students along with Deqo who is clueless about what is going on around are taken to prisons. It is clearly indicated in the novel that there are people of diverse social, economic, and age backgrounds that are brought together in an immensely overcrowded and nasty prison. The prison appears to be filthy which in turn could be seen as an allegorical representation of Somalia under the tyrant regime turning the whole country into an inescapable hell. This inference becomes palpable especially when seen in relation to Deqo who

spends her life in ditches. She finds the smell of the jail repugnant. The author seems to offer comparative feelings of Deqo and the school children whose clothes' fragrance was appreciated in the novel. Let alone the school children who have been in good hands, Deqo finds the condition of the prison dismal.

Furthermore, it has been shown that the jail is overcrowded to the extent that prisoners are supposed to take turns to seat, or rest. The novel focuses on the cell in which females are confined. It totally develops pessimist and gloomy theme that bespeaks the ultimatum the country is in. The inmates are shown to be complaining about the arrival of new prisoners rather than demanding their own release. Taken as the existential condition of the prisoners, their mind seems to be set up on spending the rest of their life in jail owing to the sociopolitical reality that exposed them to the life they are currently leading.

On the other hand, the extract could be taken as an implied reference to Somalis who are trying to follow a conformist approach rather than taking measures against the regime that restricted them to a sociopolitical confinement. Besides, Deqo's assessment of the cell and the school children could also be taken as an allegory of the Somalis living the sociopolitical reality of the time. Deqo could be taken as the citizens who are extremely impoverished and thus have no political questions to be answered while the students embody the educated and somehow economically stable portion of the Somalis striving to attain certain political and social transformations. What renders the novel very captivating is its juxtaposition of different milieus. It draws on the vista of experiences ranging across street life and refugee camp to show the extent to which the overarching sociopolitical intricacy of Somalia affected the citizens' lives. The novel in question draws an image of Somalia doomed to destructions. Apart from the manmade disasters, natural disaster seems competing with the factions worsening the country's sociopolitical situations.

She recalls standing on Farah's Land Rover on a hill looking down on villages where maybe only one or two straw roofs were above the water, men, women, children marooned on them. All across the agricultural areas fed by the Juba and Shebelle the scene was repeated, a year's harvest rotting underneath the invisible soil. It was the first time the young country had needed to beg the former colonial rulers, and since then the government hasn't stopped asking; from floods to famines to tractors and x-ray machines, prayer mats turned to the west and knees bent in supplication. Ever since the Italians and British had gone, the country had seemed besieged by difficulties, whether natural, economic or political. The Europeans must

have left a bone-deep curse as they were departing, raising long-dead *jinnns* like Oodweyne in their wake to turn everything to sand and waste (Nadifa 2013, p. 122-23).

The existing sociopolitical crisis in the country is represented as an issue beyond human's capacity to address. Nadifa creates a link between the colonial and postcolonial situation of Somalia to give a comparative view of the relative security the citizens enjoyed. The novel draws on the natural disaster that for the first time put the capability of Somalia on trial to survive on its own as a young nation creeping away from colonialism's hangover. The above extract reveals the fact that the young country succumbed to natural disaster which as a matter of fate proved its limbs lame to survive on its own unless former colonizers stretch-out their helping hands. This is depicted in the flooding incident that had taken the whole country awash.

The extract mentions all sorts of the damages caused by the flood. It reveals that the country which had at least started to survive on the infrastructure the colonial power left behind as one of the rarest positive fingerprints is no longer in a position to have control over any earthly belonging. The post independence sociopolitical reality coupled with natural disaster taking its toll on the country appeared to have been constructed in a way that bespeaks the precarious situation of the country worse than the colonial days. An instance for this argument can be elucidated from: "Ever since the Italians and British had gone, the country had seemed besieged by difficulties, whether natural, economic or political. The Europeans must have left a bone-deep curse as they were departing, raising long-dead *jinnns* like Oodweyne in their wake to turn everything to sand and waste".

The novel's presentation of the post independence sociopolitical intricacies evoke a depressive mood that embodies the magnitude of the plague the country is exposed to. The novel shows how deep seated and perpetual the impact of colonization is upon the country in social, political and economic terms which in turn forced Somalia to remain dependent upon foreign powers' patronage. The other point worth noting seems to show the author's pessimism towards the sociopolitical condition of the country wherein all sociopolitical maladies of the country are projected as a bone deep curse. It seems that Nadifa is calling the attention of her readers to the fact that Somalia's sociopolitical intricacies that started to take shape after independence and are continuing to cause havocs need to be urgently confronted to build a country safe and sound for its citizens.

Chapter Six

6.0 Modern Days' Sociopolitical Intricacies in Kyomuhendo's *Waiting*

6.1 Synopsis of *Waiting*

Waiting presents events through the eyes of Alinda, a 13 year old girl who provides a knit, family portrait in the village of Hoima. Life is normal, calm and sane. Alinda's mother is pregnant. Kaaka, Alinda's grandmother, is some kind of sage. In the first part of the book, a communal thread of togetherness, with the spirit of neighborliness easily unify the individuals who come from different regions, and belong to various ethnic groups, into the community. News of war arrive in the village. Staying inside houses at night becomes unsafe. Alinda's family and others move out of their homes every night to a secret hideout in the bush. There is Uncle Kembo who is Father's young brother. Nyinabarongo, a neighbour, the old man (no name), and the Lendu woman, who comes from Congo.

Eventually, Kaaka gets tired of rolling up her blankets to go out and sleeps in the cold. Mother too thinks it's futile for her to be outside. Given how heavy she is, she wouldn't be able to run if the rebels showed up. Mother gets weaker and Alinda assumes the running of household chores, dividing roles for herself, Maya, her sister, and Tendo, her brother. Mother's time draws near. Part one ends in a dramatic and symbolic way. Gunshots ring out on the night when Mother is giving birth. Kaaka ends up being killed.

In part two, Alinda is raising the baby who is sickly and cries a lot. The Lendu woman is accused of bewitching the baby. Father's heart softens towards her when she visits and brings some sugar. She also knows herbs that restore the baby's health and herbs that treat soldiers' wounds. Privately, the Lendu woman reveals herself to Alinda and a bit of history. Uncle Kembo too has a survival story in which he changed his name to Abdullah, was circumcised, converted to Islam and rewarded. Part two ends on the same theme note as part one. There is another misfortune and a new life introduced. The old man steps on a landmine and his leg has to be amputated. Jungu, Alinda's friend whose father is Indian and mother African, joins the household.

In part three, the liberators arrive. Alinda is psychologically troubled and Nyinabarongo takes over most of the household responsibilities, including Father. Jungu minds the baby. Tendo is excited about the liberators and joins them. There is celebration in the village; slaughtering animals, eating and being merry. The liberators pack their bags and vanish one night without warning. Tendo too. Jungu is heartbroken and goes in search of Bahati. In the end, there is an earthquake and continuous heavy rains that crack up some houses and wash away others.

6.2 Imminence of the Dooms Day

African peoples seem to be destined to lead their ordinary lives like a sailor who struggles to navigate over the surface of an ocean hit by a powerful wave. This is evident in a number of literary productions published during the colonial and postcolonial period. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, and *A Man of the People*, in this respect, serve as a good example to show how the Nigerian people's life had gone through different stages of transformations. Achebe's works are hailed as monumental ones by their virtue of reflecting the sociopolitical reality of the Nigerian public. By the same token, Ngugi Wathiongo's *The River Between*, *Devil on the Cross* and other works receive acclaims from scholars and literary critics. Apart from the works of the literary giants who established themselves as an emblem of the continent's literary tradition, a number of authors from all corners of the continent produced literary works that draw on diverse historical, economic, social and political experiences of African peoples.

As one part of the continent, East African countries wherein Uganda is one of the member states passed through several sociopolitical circumstances. Unlike other parts of the continent, the East African region is known to the world by recurring natural and manmade problems. Political instability is the main reason for the suffering and underdevelopment of the region despite the fact that other African countries suffer from similar problems to a varied degree. Goretti Kyomuhendo postulates the sociopolitical circumstances of Uganda, a country whose citizens dearly paid the cost of life with their blood under the tyranny of despots and power craving rebels. Kyomuhendo offers a compelling context that narrates the situation of the people of Hoima, a village where the novel *Waiting* is set as follows;

It was Saturday evening. Tendo was perched high up on one of the inner branches of the big mango tree, which threw hazy shadows over the large compound. Its leaves trembled despite the lack of wind, and one wafted slowly down from the branch and fell before us. "It's announcing a visitor," Kaaka said, picking up the leaf and turning it slowly over in her hand. "A visitor "A visitor who comes from far away, and has no intention of returning—like the leaf." (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 13)

Kyomuhendo offers a vivid depiction of the gloomy and hazy atmosphere that is engulfing the mundane day to day lives of the Ugandans. The excerpt portrays a compound where a group of perplexed people are gathered. It renders the story in a way that bespeaks how Ugandans foretell what the future may hold for them. The extract depicts a family that seems to be aware of the

upcoming dismal sociopolitical condition, yet unwilling to take any measure neither to mitigate the adversary nor to reverse it. This is manifest in an instance where Kaaka, one of the characters, says “Its leaves trembled despite the lack of wind, and one wafted slowly down from the branch and fell before us. “It’s announcing a visitor,” Kaaka said, picking up the leaf and turning it slowly over in her hand. “A visitor, a visitor who comes from far away, and has no intention of returning—like the leaf (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 13).”

Kaka’s words and gesture corroborate a claim that the family is aware of the imminent change that would put the whole dwellers’ in a disadvantaged condition. As it could be deciphered from the above extract, Kaaka expresses her fear in a clear sense that a visitor that will not return back to its place of departure is about to arrive. The above extract depicts the sense of helplessness that wrapped itself around Kaaka’s flesh and soul. The excerpt bespeaks that Kaaka has already succumbed to the challenge long before she is faced with it. Therefore, depending on the interpretation of the above extract, it could be said that Kyomuhendo hints at Ugandans’ lack of preparation to proactively combat any form of challenge that poses threats to their survival even if they know that the mishap is inevitable.

Furthermore, the novel under scrutiny builds a story that clearly exhibits how terrorized Kaaka and the people with whom she is in a conversation. In Africa and in other parts of the world where wars are fought, civilians become victims of severe psychological and physical harms. In Africa, where war seems to be considered as a prerequisite to achieve a sociopolitical change, the damage it causes to civilians is profound and long-lasting since the continent is lagging behind the world in technology that can minimize the degree of damage any kind of disaster causes. To this end, Kyomuhendo constructed a story in which she illustrated the multifaceted impact of war upon the lives of Africans;

“No one seems to be eating these days. I’ve told you again and again, if these men come, they’ll kill you unless you have enough energy to run, and run fast.” “What about you, Kaaka?” Maya asked her. “Won’t you run?” “Me?” she answered, pointing at her chest with the thumb of her right hand. “Me, I am not going to run away again. I will stay right here. At my age, what I have seen, I have seen. What I have eaten, I have eaten.” The sky was beginning to darken with gloomy gray clouds, swelling, racing, and dissolving into each other. The sun had hidden its face in fear of the angry clouds. Wind whistled through the coffee and banana plantations, and the bushes were violently shaken (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 14).

The above extract clearly shows the psychological impact of the unidentified group of men who are yet to come into view. It is evident in a conversation that takes place between Kaaka and Maya that everyone in the village has lost appetite due to the wind of terror which is breathing gloominess and submissiveness. The spirit of fear that reigned over the horizon of the village haunted everyone to the extent of accepting death without hesitation. This shows that the elder characters' hope and aspiration to see the light at the end of the tunnel has already stagnated. Kaaka could be considered as a prototype of the older generation of Ugandans who have been going through different stages of sociopolitical circumstances and ultimately ceased to think that things will change.

The whole dwellers seem to be detracted from the usual routine human beings perform for survival. The severity of the sociopolitical crisis they are facing is manifest in: "No one seems to be eating these days. I've told you again and again, if these men come, they'll kill you unless you have enough energy to run, and run fast (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 14)." The excerpt depicts the profoundness of the looming disaster's impact upon the residents' day to day life wherein some of them have already lost the appetite to live let alone eating. Summerfield (1991, p. 160) elucidates the psychosocial impact of war reminding the readers that all the wars that have been fought over the recent decades have caused a number of disorders which are termed as "concentration-camp syndrome, war neurosis, combat exhaustion syndrome, survivor syndrome and, currently, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)".

Summerfield continues to state that some of the after effects of war with enduring and frequently incapacitating states of mind and body may include sleep disturbance, lability of mood (including sadness and irritability), undue fatigue, poor concentration, and diminished powers of memory. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the characters depicted in this part of the novel are incapacitated to act in a way that positively affect their lives owing to the war.

Furthermore, the novel under study reveals that the citizens are fed up with the hide and seek life they are leading. Kyomuhendo astutely constructs a story line that depicts the uninterrupted toll the war is taking on the ordinary public until they choose to accept whatever consequence their fate might bring to their vicinity. The novel projects a context in which a reader may clearly see desperate situations and human souls at daggers drawn.

The dwellers' day to day life which they consider to have reached an impasse is palpable in a conversation between the characters that includes Alinda's pregnant mother utterance: "I don't blame the old woman,' Mother went on, shrugging her shoulders. 'I don't see much use in my coming out here either. I can't run. They would still kill me if they found us here.' (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 16)" What is more, Alinda's mother tries to mollify the folks around her who complain that they are severely hurt by the fact that they are sleeping in the jungles instead of safely sheltering in their houses. Besides, Alinda's mother implicitly tells herself and the people around her that the soldiers from whom the village residents are hiding are ruthless enough to kill a pregnant woman. The novel in question reveals the sociopolitical atmosphere wherein citizens are frozen from making any sort of decision with the hope that life goes on.

Noting the increase in the global humanitarian crisis caused by war, Summerfield (1991, p. 159), states that Africa in particular suffered a dramatic escalation in the 1980s, not just in the number but also in the scale of wars, some augmented by famine. He adds that mortality rates during the acute phase of displacement reach up to 60 times the expected rates. Moreover, he avows that eighty per cent of refugees are in non-industrialized countries and many of them among the poorest in the world. He concludes that sixty per cent of refugees in Africa receive no assistance.

6.3 Harassment and Tribulations

Studies reveal that the psychological impact of conflict on the people living in the areas affected by wars is as dreadful as the casualties resulting from the wars. Even though conventional war is considered to be fought between rival armed groups, there exist circumstances wherein civilians become targeted for various reasons in modern politically motivated violence. In this regard, Summerfield (1996, p. 1) maintains that a key element of modern political violence is the creation of states of terror to penetrate the entire fabric of grassroots social relations, as well as subjective mental life, as a means of social control. It is to these ends that most acts of torture and violence towards civilian populations are directed, rather than to the extracting of information. By the same token, the sociopolitical experience reflected in Kyomuhendo's novel corroborates with Summerfield's assertion as one could understand it from the following extract:

Father opened the foldaway chair he had carried and leaned it against a tree trunk some distance from where we sat. He beckoned to Tendo to give him the spear and he plunged it into in the soft ground beside the chair. Then he folded his heavy coat and placed it on the

back of the chair. “Uncle Kembo and I are going to scout around first,” he told us. “Tendo, whistle if you hear anything.” But Tendo had already stretched out on the mat, his head covered with a blanket. He grumbled that he was exhausted from the *sentry* job he had to do every day (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 16).

The panic that has engulfed the whole community in the village manifests itself in what son and father do on regular basis. It is shown that the men carry spear and other traditional protective weapons which in practical terms are of no comparison to the machine guns owned by the active agents of the conflict from which Tendo and his father anxiously guard the village community. Moreover, the other two people are on duty to gather information about what is going on in their surroundings. The whole folks in the area are busy hearkening to any movement which is posing threat to their lives. The conflict in the area as one can easily decipher from the extract has put the lives of the dwellers in a state of anomy.

More to the point, the novel under scrutiny clearly shows that the conflict that has started to cover larger expanses detracted the people from leading organized and planned life. This is palpable in: “Uncle Kembo and I are going to scout around first,” he told us. “Tendo, whistle if you hear anything.” But Tendo had already stretched out on the mat, his head covered with a blanket. He grumbled that he was exhausted from the sentry job he had to do every day (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 16)”. As it could be explicated from this portion of the novel, the residents have no plan of action to perform activities that will win them their daily bread rather than spending each of the moments in a delirious manner wandering from one corner to the other corner of where they live. Therefore, the catastrophic sociopolitical intricacy that is casting its shadow on the lives of ordinary Ugandans has been apparently fleshed out in Kyomuhendo’s novel under scrutiny.

In addition to conflicts, the novel in question foregrounds that the suffering of Africans emanate from different sources. At this juncture point, Kyomuhendo reveals that Africa is a place where its citizens face deaths that could have been prevented if it had been in another part of the world where science and technologies are advanced.

Another child had been born between Maya and me, but she had died of measles when she was two-years-old. I was about four at the time. Mother used to smear her with red soil from the anthill and put her in a dark room so that the measles would not affect her eyesight. Mother said that if she had been immunized, she might have survived. But there were no

vaccines. The hospital always said they were out of stock. I had also suffered from measles, and so had Tendo (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 23).

The story of Maya and her family portrays the tragic loss of a two years old baby whose life could have been spared if there had been medication. As it is shown in the above extract, there are at least two reasons for the loss of life. While lack of proper education that is portrayed in the mother's smearing of a child with the red soil as a replacement for seeking a medical service appears as one reason, the shortage of supplying service providers with the necessary equipments and materials turns out to be the other reason for the suffering Africans seem to be destined to go through as opposed to the western world. All the ills plaguing Africans' lives are attributable to the leadership under which the citizens on the soil suffer regardless of the category of the anomalies.

Governments that run their respective countries are responsible to develop infrastructure that mitigate the burden of the society. One of the root causes of Africa's problem is illiteracy or lack of proper schooling that lays foundation for the whole social, economic and political states of affairs. Nonetheless, African leaders often fail to demonstrate their commitments to lead their peoples out of poverty and ignorance rather than aggravating the problems weighing down on Africans. The case in point is apparently depicted in the novel under investigation. This is evident in the practice of a mother that smeared its child with a red soil to find her a cure for measles that ultimately led the baby girl to death. On the other hand, it has been shown that attempt had been made to get the child some medicine as the drug stores run out of stock. Thus, the two scenarios that are drawn in the novel purport that the core problem of Africa is the leaders' ineptness to sustainably solve their peoples' problems.

The bitter truth that one could easily find out while mulling over the sociopolitical realities in Africa is that the politicians are avaricious, shortsighted and extremely self-opinionated. Even though most of the armed groups on the soil of the continent tag themselves 'liberators', the peoples with whom such armed groups declare allegiance suffer in the war and even after the war is over.

"It's only our districts that haven't fallen to the Liberators," Father added. "That's why they're running to hide here, and terrorize us." "But what are these so-called Liberators thinking?" Uncle Kembo spoke again. "How can they liberate just one part of the country?"

How do they expect us to defend ourselves?” “The only thing for us to do is to sleep in the banana plantation. It’s safer there. Last night was a wake-up call. Next time they will finish us off,” the old man said, as if he were looking death in the eye (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 34).

The reaction of the people who are looking at the situation of the country clearly shows that the warring parties are in conflict for their own causes, not for the causes of the people. The above extract offers a vantage point from which the civilians are assessing the commitment of the warring parties. As it is shown, most of the territories have fallen to the so called liberators fighting against the incumbent regime’s army. However, the assessment of the characters renders both parties at war negligent of the safety of the people. It is portrayed in the above excerpt that on one hand the soldiers on the run are terrorizing the dwellers living in the area that remained in their hands while the so-called liberators are portrayed as satisfied with the victory they have already achieved by driving out the incumbent regime’s soldiers.

The people living in the area that is bracing for an imminent war apparently declare that there is nothing they expect from either of the two warring factions. The people’s deep distrust on the two groups fighting for power is evident in the characters’ conversation as shown in: ““How can they liberate just one part of the country? How do they expect us to defend ourselves?” “The only thing for us to do is to sleep in the banana plantation. It’s safer there. Last night was a wake-up call. Next time they will finish us off,” the old man said, as if he were looking death in the eye (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 34)”. This portion of the extract used in here vividly portrays the characters’ attitude towards the so-called liberators and the soldiers with whom they are fighting. The level of insecurity the villagers feel and the extent of their distrust on both groups are foregrounded in the old man’s alarming remark about the previous night and the next measure they should take in order to avoid any disaster that may result from the clash of the titans.

6.4 The Impact of Political Instability

The vicious circle third world countries are trapped in stems from lack of good governance. In third world countries in general and Africa in particular citizens suffer from the consequences of the decisions politicians make. The decision making process of politicians which includes a number of managerial activities of a given country directly influences the lives of the people over whom they preside. A synthesis paper by UKAID corroborate the aforementioned claim that governance is the way countries and societies manage their affairs politically and the way

power and authority are exercised. The paper postulates that for the poorest and most vulnerable, the difference that good, or particularly bad, governance, makes to their lives is profound: the inability of government institutions to prevent conflict, provide basic security, or basic services can have life-or-death consequences (UK AID, P.3).

The adverse impact of unstable political atmosphere on the lives of the people has been projected in Kyomuhendo's novel being studied. The following extract offers how the wars that have been fought over years left the Ugandans to odious poverty;

“She’s still removing my jiggers,” Kaaka answered. “I don’t know where these small parasites come from. I seem to be the only one they like. It must be that my skin is wrinkled and soft.” “They’re not small, Kaaka,” Maya said. “Look at this one,” she added, holding up a big jigger, which was impaled on the tip of the safety pin that she was using to extract the parasites from Kaaka’s fingers and toes. “You must put paraffin in the holes where the jiggers have been,” Nyinabarongo said, “otherwise they will grow into big wounds.” (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 35).

It is undeniable fact that economic prosperity at an individual and community level can only be achieved in a place where political stability has taken form. However, if the political atmosphere is turbulent and the incumbent government is engaged in extinguishing the fires that go ablaze from stem to stern, it becomes hard to the sitting leaders to address the sociopolitical issues that demand immediate attention before securing their seat. Similarly, the scenario given in the above extract portrays the poverty-stricken section of the Ugandan society. It bespeaks that the Ugandans living under the sky of warfare are leading a destitute life that prevails in the conversation taking place between Kaaka and Maya.

Parasites such as jiggers attack humans who fail to keep their environmental and personal hygiene. Besides, the extract reveals the magnitude of impoverished life Kaaka and Maya are leading. One can infer from the context that Kaaka is adversely affected by jiggers which can lead her to other health problems. The extract seems to be laying a ground upon which a reader could understand the socioeconomic problem the political instability in Uganda brought to the nationals of the country.

Furthermore, the novel under scrutiny draws on the fragmentation of the society’s relationship which is severely affected by the ongoing war. It gives a tragic account of a family that comes

under an unbearable psychosocial impact of the war. The novel under investigation compellingly describes a situation in which a mother in painful labor is left to fate by her husband and daughter. The tragedy is purported in: “Father came in and stood looking at her for some time. “We’re going now,” he said. “Come and fetch me if you need me.” I nodded. I was very worried about Mother. I felt hot tears burn my eyes, but I blinked them away. I did not want her to see me crying. But suppose . . . The uneasy feeling made my stomach rumble and my legs become weak (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 40)”.

Another important point that reveals how dreary the sociopolitical reality in the textually represented Uganda had become during those days is, the above context in which a daughter who has felt the pain of her mother and a husband who is supposed to be eager to welcome his new born baby leave a precious woman in the family to the impending disaster. As a cultural ethos and inherent human nature, it is abnormal to have the guts to be harsh on a woman in a labor. However, the novel under scrutiny foregrounds the point that the ongoing sociopolitical intricacy is as such deep rooted to the extent of disintegrating a family.

What is more, the novel under investigation clearly demonstrates the brutality and inhumane deeds of the soldiers as shown in the following excerpt;

Kaaka slowly managed to sit up. The soldier who had assaulted her muttered something, and the other soldiers laughed as if they were drunk. Kaaka spoke again, “Go, you beasts! I have to attend to a woman giving birth to a baby who will be more useful than you. How can you beat a woman old enough to be your great-grandmother? “Do you think you can scare me? Me, who used to beat my husband until he urinated in his trousers? Heeeeh,” she laughed. “If you are real men, go and fight with your enemy, instead of coming here to terrorize a poor harmless old woman like me. Eh?” “What’s wrong with her?” Father was beside himself. “Only one of them needs to understand her, and she’s dead!” The soldier whom she had addressed pointed his gun at her and fired. Then he fired again, aiming at her stomach. The other soldiers had walked away; one who seemed to be their leader shouted at him to follow them. The soldier kicked Kaaka once more and she screamed loudly. Then he turned around and began to walk away. The sound of their footsteps beat loudly on the dry earth (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 44).

The above extract is quite a representative sample of the overall anomaly Uganda had sunk in. A series of a heart wrenching sociopolitical entanglement started to take shape in the novel as a mother in labor faces a fate of abandonment by the members of her family at the most critical time in life as a consequence of the ghost of death hovering in the skies of that part of Uganda.

As it has been stated, the novel in question depicts the brutality of the soldiers towards the Ugandans whom they find on their way.

The novel revealed the trajectory of the violence that went upward spirals from terrifying the whole villagers that have already been cut off the rest of the country to separation of family members. The community represented in the novel enjoyed togetherness and love even though the death angel was lurking around their vicinity. Nevertheless, the novel under scrutiny foregrounds the doomsday like apocalyptic vision where in a husband abandons his wife in labor. What is more, there is also an instance in which the unbreakable family bond apparently becomes brittle.

Besides, the text draws on very sensitive issues in African cultures. It is to be recalled that the family bond grows stronger and stronger as the wheel of time turns no matter which specific society or geography that particular culture belongs to. Thus, it can be said that the mayhem of the day that Uganda had been caught in has been portrayed on par with a doomsday or judgment day where humans are supposed to choose between the path that leads to either a hell or a paradise at a stage where it is totally impossible to choose where the consequence of their choice gets them. Nonetheless, Kyomuhendo's novel offers a clearer view of the Ugandan sociopolitical intricacy that resulted in an apocalyptic circumstance of a family. This is to be deciphered from the extract that no earthly challenge can suit a word apocalyptic to define the experience of these family members.

Above and beyond, the above extract through the narrator tells the readers that the whole family remembers are witnessing the cataclysm happening to their loved ones from their hiding place. Moreover, their response to the tragedy has also been depicted in a way that shows the psychological devastation it is causing to them. The psychological reminiscence of the tragedy that the family members in focus observe at the time of the event will remain to haunt them as long as they are alive. Kyomuhendo's story narration seems to show the level of destruction that transcends the normal and physical human experience. More to the point, the novel under investigation can be regarded as a literary text that strongly demonstrated the multifarious effects of the war which Ugandans are affected by back in those days.

In summary, Summerfield (1996) offers a note that clarifies the psychosocial effect of the war on the survivors of such conflicts in his paper entitled “The Impact of War and Atrocity on Civilian Populations: Basic Principles for NGO Interventions and a Critique of Psychosocial Trauma Projects” saying that “The mutilated bodies of those abducted by security agents, dumped in a public place, are props in a political theatre meant to stun a whole society. Not only is there little recognition of the distinction between combatant and civilian, or of any obligation to spare women, children and the elderly, but the valued institutions and way of life of a whole population can be targeted. It is depressingly clear that such strategies are highly effective (1996, p. 1)”.

6.5 The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre.

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

W. B. Yeats

The war torn Uganda as represented in Goretta Kyomuhendo’s novel is in a total state of upheaval. It depicts the sociopolitical intricacies that are keeping their sharpened edge on the rope holding Uganda together to exist as a nation. However, it is shown in the novel that the center can no longer hold together. The following extract offers the epicenter of the spiral that is about to send tremors throughout the altar on which the sanity of Uganda has been consecrated.

We had learned about the details of the war a month before, when Father returned from the city where he had worked at the Main Post Office as a clerk. He told us that President Idi Amin was about to be overthrown by a combined force of Ugandans who lived in exile and the Tanzanian soldiers who were assisting them. The soldiers were advancing quickly, heading for Kampala from the southwestern border that Uganda shared with Tanzania. The districts along that route were already in the hands of the Liberators. Amin’s soldiers were looting shops, hospitals, banks, and private homes in the city. They wanted to seize as much as they could before the Liberators arrived. Some were fleeing towards the West Nile and Northern Ugandan regions, their home areas. People had vacated the city in fear of both the advancing Liberators and the fleeing soldiers. No one knew what each group was likely to do to civilians (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 20).

The above excerpt demonstrates the reality that ordinary citizens are aware of the inevitable breakdown of the government structure. Besides, it is purported in the narrator's voice that the man who used to work at the post office as a clerk is now jobless which indicates the beginning of the crack that gradually develops into a bigger rift that accelerates the fall apart of the government structure paving the way for anarchy in which any capable force can do whatever they desire and go without being held accountable for their deeds. It is evidently shown in the extract that the staggering regime is by no means in control of power that enables it to maintain law and order. There is a clear reference to the movement of the opposition army advancing quickly towards Kamapala. The encroachment of the liberation army that is aided by Tanzania is a beacon of the incumbent regime's demise. For that reason, there exists vacuum in maintaining law and order.

Above and beyond, Amin's soldiers who were once in charge of guarding the safety of the citizen have now turned into robbers and thieves. This shows the crumbling of Uganda as a nation due to the fact that the soldiers who were guarding public institutions such as banks, hospitals and privately owned shops from anybody perpetrating damage against such institutions have been transfigured into beasts and started snatching any valuable that catches their eyes on their way. Therefore, the state of anomy created in Uganda as portrayed in Kyomuhendo's novel demonstrates the depth of disintegration the war brought to the sociopolitical stability of the country.

Moreover, it is clearly demonstrated that the civilians are the ones who are adversely affected by the ongoing war. The above extract towards its end reiterates that it is the people who are subjected to the devastating psychosocial impact of the conflict as shown in: "People had vacated the city in fear of both the advancing Liberators and the fleeing soldiers. No one knew what each group was likely to do to civilians (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 20)". An important point that is made in this portion of the novel, like issues stressed in the other three novels chosen for this project, demonstrates that African factions who engage in warfare with a pretext of bringing economic prosperity and democracy to their people are nothing than hypocrites who strive to satiate their hunger to seize power.

On a wider spectrum, the following extract vividly depicts the total state of havoc where in civilians and other entities appear to be vulnerable to the impending disaster that could batter their lives and properties in unprecedented way.

Our district was situated on one of the highways that led, via Lake Albert, to the West Nile and northern regions, and so, Amin's soldiers were using it as their exit route. And they had come in large numbers, invading the town of Hoima, looting, and killing people at night. The bush and banana plantations were the safest places to sleep, and during the day most homes posted a sentry in a tree to watch out for the soldiers. All shops, churches, schools, banks, hospitals, and police stations were closed, and most people had retreated to the villages, which were much safer. The soldiers, who felt they had nothing more to lose as the Liberators approached, had taken over Hoima town and had set up roadblocks from which they attacked people trying to move from one location to another (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 20).

The town of Hoima has become a play ground for the human tragedy as feared by the civilians. The scale of the adversary resulting from the war appears to be apparent and obvious. Amin's soldiers who arrive in large numbers seem to be desperate and rabid owing to the fact that they are aggressively looting and killing people whom they have once upon a time guarded from dangers. It is unquestionable that soldiers are guardians of their people. Nevertheless, the novel under scrutiny draws a scenario in which member of the national armed force function like bodyguards of an individual presiding over millions of people. It is indeed a tradition in most African countries to engage in a deconstruction and reconstruction tasks in an effort to erase the reminiscence of the government that has been in power before the new one rather than engaging in a governance system overhaul.

The tradition of dismantling everything that belongs to the overthrown government instills animosity and fear among the security apparatus that were servants of the regime rather than guardians of the people. It is from this point of departure that government soldiers all a sudden turn into tugs. On a similar line of thought, the novel in question labels the soldiers who were recognized as official armed force of the country as the president's private soldiers after the ousts of Amin. This could also be considered as an additional point the novel under scrutiny wants to bring to the attention of the readers. As it could be inferred from the excerpt, the former soldiers who are at the moment bandits have turned their gun barrels towards civilians. It is possible to decipher two interpretations from the given circumstance. On the one hand, the soldiers' brutality towards civilians proves that in Africa, armed forces are not built on the principles that

prioritize the interest of their country over the leaders' safety; and the other impression the extract gives is that all armed groups in Africa fight for the best interest of their leaders rather than establishing governance structure that ensures economic prosperity and democracy.

Furthermore, the novel in question portrays the moral decadence the country has succumbed to under the leadership of Amin's tyranny. Controversies surround discussions centering on democracy and democratization process in Africa. Some argue that democracy is a luxury for the continent languishing in abject poverty while others say democracy is not about economy, rather it is a bout fundamental human rights to live.

Apart from the above debates, Kyomuhendo brings to the fore the unimaginable decisions Ugandans were forced to make under the tyranny of Idi Amin Dada. Amin was forcing the followers of other faiths to convert to Islam or face death as a result of which Ugandans were abstained from performing rituals such as burials as shown in "There were only a few people at the burial because they were too scared to come out of their houses for fear of meeting the soldiers, who continued to roam around the village. The day they shot Kaaka, they also killed two other villagers, whom they had met at the Center, coming from a church meeting (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 61)". It is palpable in here that Amin's soldiers were summarily killing civilians who defied their orders to convert to Islam.

6.6 Gender Stereotypes

In African cultures women are perceived and given different social positions. The positions given to women in most African cultures is tangential even though their contribution to the overall activities the family or community rely on. Regardless of the cultural diversities the continent hosts women's identity is crafted in manner that puts them at the background no matter how brave or hard working the women figures under the spot light are. The magnitude of discrimination intensifies when it comes to Africans. In this respect, Krishnan (2014 p. 67) states that African women, in other words, are identified as both other by virtue of gender and other by virtue of ethnic identity, two facets which can be neither separated nor treated as equivalent but instead function through a complex relational process. Besides, African women participate in the activities that win their family members and receive no recognition for their contribution in sustaining the family ties.

Even though the role that women play in supporting their families is a pivotal as their male counterparts, they are depicted as dependants or beings that cannot survive on their own. Kyomuhendo seems to be attesting the perception in the following extract:

Jungu's mother had just lost her husband, who had worked in the cotton mill. Every day she went to the mill to collect the money that was her late husband's salary, and the manager kept telling her to come back the next day. A month went by like that and she still had not gotten the money. Every time she went to meet that Indian, she returned home tired and crying. After about three months her stomach grew big and round. She did not say who had made her pregnant, and she never got her money (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 27).

The above excerpt depicts that Jungu's mother is dependent upon her husband even after his death. The extract portrays that she doesn't have her own job on which she lives. What is clear in the above extract is that Jungu's mother had no job and still doesn't have any to support her life except asking for what her deceased husband might have left behind. No single mention has been made as a reason why she is jobless rather than depicting her as a woman who frequently goes to the cotton mill where her husband had been working in search of payment. Moreover, no one appears to be out there to help this woman who desperately visits the cotton mill where she meets with an Indian man who might have impregnated her.

The saddest thing about Jingu's mother is that she toiled for months where very single visit of hers to the cotton mill ended up in exhaustion and tears to bear no fruits rather than bringing her another burden, pregnancy. What is more, the novel purports that the Indian man has taken advantage of her to gratify his sexual desire rather than solving Jingu's mother's problem. Therefore, an inference could be made from the above context that African women in general, Ugandan women in particular are exposed to several exploitations against which they do not make their voice heard as with Jingu's mother who kept the identity of the man who impregnated her.

Apart from demonstrating how women's voice is silenced, Kyomuhendo skillfully constructs a narrative demonstrating the overarching problem African women's lives are chained to. In most parts of the continent, African women begin their journey that is filled with suffering and tribulations at early age where they start to learn how to live with exploitation and oppression. The following excerpt the experience of women on whose shoulders the burden of the whole family has fallen;

I am seated next to her, holding the baby. He has refused to take milk because his gums are covered with weals. He is crying silently, his mouth opening and closing like a baby bird when it wants to drink water. I stand up and put him on my shoulder and start rocking him back and forth. His head dangles from his soft neck, and I quickly place my right hand at his nape to support him. Saliva, mixed with blood, dribbles from the corner of his mouth onto my dress. Maya comes back from the well carrying the big earthen pot on her head. She asks me to help her put it down. Stupid girl, can't she see I am holding the sick child? (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 48)

The above excerpt taken from the novel under scrutiny entails the horrible experiences that African women endure to go through. It is unfortunate that the child at the center of the excerpt is an orphan whose mother had died of over bleeding while giving birth. It has been shown in the novel that the child became an orphan because of the fact that Kaaka who was attending to his mother while giving birth had been killed by the soldiers. It was at that particular moment that the lone mother managed to give birth in the attendance of no one who could help. Following her mother's death, the responsibility to care for the ailing baby has fallen on Alinda's shoulders which in its own set reflects the intricacy of life African women are destined to lead.

It is not as such difficult for a reader to imagine how nerve-racking the situation for Alinda, the narrator in the above extract, who witnessed all the tragedies that devoured the lives of her loved ones. Following the adversary the war had brought to the entire nation, Alinda as an African woman, is now grappling with the herculean tasks the war and fate befallen her. As it has been stipulated in the novel, the female characters are manifestly taking on the responsibilities of caring for the family members regardless of the age of the male family members. Subsequently, the above excerpt demonstrates that the female characters are the ones who deal with the family affairs where they receive no help from the male members of the family. A textual instance that substantiates this claim is apparently stated in "Saliva, mixed with blood, dribbles from the corner of his mouth onto my dress. Maya comes back from the well carrying the big earthen pot on her head. She asks me to help her put it down (Goretti Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 48)". Above and beyond, the novel under scrutiny reveals the higher order structural oppression African women are subjected to:

"My daughter,' her mother told her. 'This means you will never get married! People like you, who possess such medicine, belong to the community. They can never leave. It would have been fine were you a boy, because then you would marry and remain here in your community. But as a girl, you have to go away when you get married, and you cannot transfer

your luck to anyone else!’ “‘But I want to get married, Mother,’ Kaaka begged. ‘I am already in love!’ “‘That cannot be.’ “‘But I am already pregnant, Mother. I was just going to tell you. My man wants to marry me immediately!’ “‘You have shamed me, my daughter. We will have to visit a strong medicine man that will make the pregnancy invisible, so that when you do marry, no one will suspect that you were already pregnant (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 62).”

While discussing traditional gender roles, Tyson (2006) confesses that she considers herself as a recovering patriarchal woman who has taken for granted the norms and values of patriarchy which she defines as any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles that give prominence to men as omnipotent and infallible. To borrow her own words: “these gender roles have been used very successfully to justify inequities, which still occur today, such as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision-making positions (in the family as well as in politics, academia, and the corporate world)”. Concomitantly, the traditional gender role assigned to female characters in the novel under investigation is highly affected by patriarchal ideology.

The extract demonstrates that a woman who is in love with a man of her own is deprived of the right to decide on her own life due to the patriarchal culture in which ideas that incapacitate women’s independent decision making power are embedded. Kaaka is begging her mom to marry a man whose future baby she already carries in her womb. Nonetheless, for she is considered to be a female who has wisdom of traditional medicine, the culture doesn’t allow her to marry. On the contrary, the extract reveals that it would be possible for her to marry if she were male. This shows that a male who has the wisdom of traditional medicine can marry while a female with similar wisdom is banned by the tradition from exercising her right.

What is more, the patriarchal ideology appears to be deep-seated and dogmatic as it can be elucidated from the context in which Kaaka tells her mother that she is already pregnant. The extract clearly shows the repressive nature of the culture which treats Kaaka unfairly. The extract comparatively portrays the traditional gender role given to both the male and female characters. Kaaka’s mother tells the fact that their culture doesn’t allow a girl who has wisdom of traditional medicine to marry, and she will rather face discrimination that sends her into exile from her community if by chance she is known to have breached the tradition’s provision.

Besides, the extract demonstrates that Kaaka's mother is anxious about her child's pregnancy and vowing to consult "a strong medicine man that will make the pregnancy invisible". This once again portrays that the patriarchal ideology is taking its toll on the lives of both a mother and a daughter. Therefore, Tyson's assertion on gender roles that she articulates as a weapon that has been used very successfully to justify inequities, which still occur today, such as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision-making positions, resonates with Kaaka's experience. Another instance that corroborates Tyson's argument is provided as follows;

"What is it?" I asked. "I don't know, I will open it tomorrow so we can look at it properly in daylight." "Tell me about Bahati," I said. "Do you love him?" "He's a very nice person. He's genuine and sincere, and above all, dependable. He's an orphan, and before he joined the army, he used to live with his uncle who didn't treat him well." She paused for a moment. "He wants to be loved, and often asks me to hold him. He also longs for a family of his own. He loves children very much. And yes, I love him. I want to go with him when they leave. I want to live with him in Tanzania, and I can also become a soldier!" "Are there women soldiers among them? I've not seen any." "No, he said their commanders think women are unfit both physically and mentally for fighting. But I can be the first!" (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 83).

Kyomuhendo in this particular portion of her novel brings to the fore that genuine, loving and tender heart of an African woman vis-à-vis the patriarchal ideology that deemphasizes the potency of women and assigns them peripheral roles. It is vividly demonstrated in the above extract that Alinda is expressing how profoundly she loves Bahati, a Tanzanian soldier with whom she established an intimate relationship. Moreover, Kyomuhendo, through Alinda, portrays the tender and genuine heart African women have for those whom they love. As it could be comprehended from the excerpt, Alinda doesn't care about the care that she received from her lover Bahati. Her attention is completely pinned to his positive attributes, a character which in its own set, foregrounds Kyomuhendo's tactful portrayal of African women as optimist, nurturing and caring beings as opposed to the patriarchal ideology that is filled with prejudices.

Furthermore, the novel under investigation juxtaposes women's self-conception and the patriarchal ideology. The extract foregrounds the positive qualities that would easily reveal the fact that women have a strong belief in themselves to accomplish the tasks that have been considered to be good in the hands of the men in spite of the myths constructed to subtly discourage women from claiming equal position in various decision making activities. It is in

here that Tyson (2006) reiterates the traditional gender roles have been successfully used to justify marginalization of women from equal access to leadership and decision-making positions convincing them that they are not fit for careers in such areas as mathematics and engineering.

Likewise, Kyomuhendo attests the presence of a patriarchal ideology that justifies the exclusion of women from becoming the member of the armed force in: “I want to live with him in Tanzania, and I can also become a soldier!” “Are there women soldiers among them? I’ve not seen any.” “No, he said their commanders think women are unfit both physically and mentally for fighting. But I can be the first! (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 83) ”. It is apparent from the conversation that Alinda is such a psychologically strong female character that stands firm against the patriarchal ideology.

Chapter Seven

7.0 Alienation and National Disillusionment in *Crossbones*

7.1 Synopsis of *Crossbones*

Crossbones is set in Somalia where airport security personnel are armed with whips. Children face summary execution for the crime of going to the wrong house. On the country's dusty and forsaken streets, the men whom the outside world has condemned as pirates appear as the community's confidantes. The Somali government in Farah's novel seems to exist only to lob provocative taunts at the country's heavily armed neighbor Ethiopia, and to be a journalist means being a target for assassination.

Into this atmosphere of chaos and continuous threat come two brothers of Somali ancestry, both lured back to the country of their forebears in search of answers. Malik, a freelance journalist based in New York, has come to report on the doings of the country's dysfunctional, religiously fundamentalist government, the Union of Islamic Courts. Although Malik has previously reported from Iraq, the Congo, and Afghanistan, nothing has quite prepared him for the reception that awaits him on the streets of Mogadiscio. For Malik's older brother, Ahl, the search for information has a more personal, and therefore more desperate, character: his high school aged stepson, Taxliil, has run away from his comfortable, middleclass home in Minneapolis. Word has reached the family that Taxliil, under the influence of a jihadist imam, has traveled to Somalia, intent on training as a suicide bomber. The searches commenced by Malik and Ahl transform at once into a race against time.

Along the winding road that leads them toward the knowledge they seek, Malik and Ahl have many other lessons waiting for them. Malik will have his property confiscated by armed thugs in the name of "the good of all," and he will help bear the casket of a murdered journalist to his grave. In the destitute, crime infested region of Puntland, Ahl forms friendships of convenience with known pirates and sets himself continually at peril. Both brothers discover that little in this land is what it seems and that, of all the things in short supply, truth can come at the most terrible price of all.

7.2 Religious Fundamentalism

The novel under scrutiny pops on an engaging encounter of a young Shabaab member who is disoriented and trying hard to regain the right path that would lead him to his envisaged destination. The coming into view of the young man's situation in the opening part of the novel emerges as a beacon of the multifarious thematic preoccupations bound to unfold as the readers flip between the pages. As Cambara offers to help,

He asks her to tell him the way to the qiblah. She takes her time, wondering if he is one of the young Shabaab mules assigned to do their dirty work. The poor sod must be mistaking the qiblah—the Arabic term for the direction in which a praying Muslim faces—for north, she thinks. She wonders if he is a grown man with the voice of a boy, or a boy in the body of a man. They stand on the dirt road, in East Wardhiigley, a rundown district of Mogadiscio, sizing each other up (Farah 2011, p. 9).

What is important about the above extract is that Farah crafted the two characters in a way that denotes the young Shabaab conscripts who are allegedly at a complete loss for joining the group that has not gained popularity among the Somalis. This is evident in Cambara's reference to LittleThing as '...one of the young Shabaab mules assigned to do their dirty work' that what the Shabaab does is regarded as something abhorrent. Besides, it could also be inferred from the given context that the young man whom Cambara describes as a poor sod who mistook the way to qiblah represents the young Shabaab draftees who joined the group without having a clear understanding of the dictates of Islam and why they put themselves to sacrifice.

Farah offers a detailed description of the Little Thing toiling under the heavy load of the carryall whereby the Little Thing along his way tries to recompose himself and pretend to be alright while his situation crystal clear for the onlooker. This sort of dramatic irony adds up to Farah's portrayal of the Shabaab who believe to be strong enough to defend Islam and Somalia while they are as feeble as the LittleThing when seen from another angle. Apart from depicting the self unconsciousness of the Shabaab who claim to be guardian of Islam and liberator of the people of Somalia, the novel in question draws on the wider vista of religious fanaticism in a way that amplifies Farah's concern over the wide spreading of such a pressing issue. The transnational aspect of religious extremism could be weighed out from the following extract;

The Muslim world, from what he can tell, is at a crossroads, where several competing tendencies meet. One path is a burgeoning umma, a community of the faithful as conceived in the minds of Islamists who see themselves in deadly rivalry with both moderate or secularist Muslims and people of other faiths. The way Malik sees it, Somali religionists of radical persuasion are provoking a confrontation with the Ethiopian empire in hopes of pitting the Muslim world against Christian-led Ethiopia, even though Ethiopia, being militarily stronger and an ally of the United States, is very likely to gain the upper hand in the face-off. Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, India and Pakistan, two nations with nuclear potential, are locking horns. With Afghanistan turned into a theater and Chechnya haplessly caught in the fray, several countries' political and territorial concerns converge at oblique angles (Farah 2011, p. 20).

Malik who had been working as a foreign correspondent in the Congo, Afghanistan and Iraq knows the horror of war. However, the current place is the land of his ancestry, a place where a part of his belonged. What appears most tormenting for Malik in here is that the rift that the Islamists are creating among the Muslims of various religious tendency and people of other faiths. The narrator, through the thoughts of Malik, offers the readers that the fast growing religious fanaticism is putting the Muslim world in a perilous condition in general and Somalia in particular. As it could be inferred from the above extract, the Muslim world is in the grip of the Islamists who see themselves in deadly rivalry with both moderate/secularist Muslims and people of other faiths. It is manifestly brought out that the religionists who attempted to impose their radical ideology on Muslims and people of other faiths, in so far as history is concerned, brought perpetual mishap that put the Muslim world in a bleak situation.

The above extract also offers the degree to which religious fanaticism endangered the Muslim world rather than improving their socioeconomic conditions. In an attempt to foreground the dire situation in which religious extremism puts the world, Farah has referred to Afghanistan and Chechnya whom religious fanaticism put in a precarious situation. It has also been shown that the Islamic Court is declaring war against Ethiopia, a country with better military personnel and hardware compared to the Shabaab, to debilitate the lives of the Somali people who have been suffering in the hands of local warlords and now in the hands of the Shabaab a group which will prove to the Somali people of no help once Ethiopia launches its attack in retaliation. It is therefore palpable to conclude that the religionists that provoke other countries or people of other faiths are having their prime role for the suffering of the Somali people.

Furthermore, Farah views the textual current situation of Somalia on a par with the historical reality of the country led by the dictatorial regime wherein the citizens were ruled with an iron fist. An observation from Jeebleh, one of the characters of the novel under study, offers a wider gaze into the context;

Alone, Jeebleh drinks his tea, and thinks back to the days when the former dictator ran the country, and when censorship was at its severest; when telephone tapping was common; when one handed over his passport to the immigration officer at the airport on returning from abroad and was expected to collect it from the Ministry of the Interior a week later. There is nothing new, is there? The present situation is nothing but dictatorship by another name. He leafs through an illustrated picture book of ancient Mogadiscio, thinking that Somalis, long familiar with dictatorships of socialist vintage, are now getting accustomed to a brand of religionist authoritarianism. But the imposition of will by religious fiat is still the imposition of will. Jeebleh also worryingly remembers reading about the target assassination of several former army officers, peace activists killed at home late at night in full view of their wives and children, intellectuals eliminated, allegedly, by Shabaab operatives, who saw them as threats to their Taliban-inspired interpretation of Islam (Farah 2011, p. 24).

Farah interweaves the historical past of Somalia to the textual current of the country in order to show the long history of tyranny in whose hand Somalia and its people have been suffering. Farah clearly demonstrates how tough and inhibiting the censorship and bureaucratic procedures were during the military dictatorship. However, it is apparent in the above extract that Farah's reference to the historical past of Somalia is not merely showing the decades old dictatorship that took its toll on Somalia and its people, rather it is an attempt to amplify the tyranny of the religionists who in their turn brought a renewed and gnawing turbulence to the land. As it could be deciphered from the excerpt, the predecessors of the Shabaab were blamed for engaging in a stern censorship and slackened bureaucracy while the Shabaab operatives were depicted as culprits who have engaged in heinous crimes.

Furthermore, what renders the Shabaab abominable is that its operatives have killed several former army officers and peace activist in full view of their wives and children. The killings that the Shabaab culprits commit shows the barbarity of the group in whose hand Somalia and its people have fallen. It is also worth noting that the religionists primarily commit all sorts of crime against humanity in the name of Taliban-inspired Islam, not in intent to build a better Somalia. The Shabaab aspiration to attain the Taliban-inspired Islam and form an Islamic empire in the horn of Africa foregrounds the fact that Somalia and its people are not yet ordained to liberate

themselves from the yoke of tyranny which continued to put the fate of the country in a murky situation. The extract also offers a vantage point from which one could see how Shabaab is bringing Somalia to a total halt by assassinating intellectuals who would contribute to the country in many arenas.

The religionists who kept annihilating what they deem 'Anti-Islam' seem to be oblivious to the core values of Islamic dictates whereby they resort to take actions against what their ego impels them to act against.

Dajjal says, "He has deleted several files that were not complimentary about the Courts and the photo of a nude girl serving as a screen saver." It rankles Jeebleh that BigBeard has deemed the photograph of his one-year-old granddaughter, soaped and naked as she stands in a bathtub, "pornographic." It goes to show how much energy religionists of the parochial variety squander on matters of little or no significance (Farah 2011, p. 24).

The religionists who are represented by BigBeard, one of the characters among high profile members of the courts, appeared to be extremely indulged in stroking their own ego to the point of showing how gullible and uncanny they are. Their naivety is resonant in Dajjal's retort wherein he makes a direct reference to the act of deleting his one year old granddaughter's photo which BigBeard has deemed pornographic. As well, the religionists have been revealed as awkward entity who fail to identify the worthwhile of the subject on which they invest their time and energy let alone forming a government that has a structure to administer a country. Apart from their engagement in trivial matters, their futility and belligerence could be explicated in a context as follows;

Nothing sums up the foolishness better than the declaration the Courts' defense spokesman makes, when he vows that Allah is on the side of the Courts and it is his intention to lead an invasion into Ethiopia and to defeat the army of infidels. He says, "I promise that with God's will, the Army of the Faithful will conquer Ethiopia in less than three weeks, and it being Ramadan, the holy month, we will break our fast in Addis Ababa (Farah 2011, p. 109).

Farah, through his narrator, sternly gives a picture of the Courts' defense spokesman declaring war against Ethiopia which he ascribes to utter foolishness. Farah brings to the forth that Somalia has fallen in the hands of the religionists who fail to recognize the fact that they are pitting the Somali people against Ethiopia, a country which can easily route them out of their own territories let alone conceding defeat to them. Such a provocative and shortsighted declaration of the courts

foregrounds the naivety of the courts and the suffering of the Somali people in the hands of a group that doesn't have the necessary caliber to run a government that is competent enough to cope up with the political maturity the century requires.

Meanwhile, the member of the Islamic Courts and the Shabaab operatives have also been depicted as an anti Islam owing to their actions. The single track minded agenda Shabaab hankers for could be examined as follows;

“I do not approve of Shabaab's actions. They are not fighting for liberty but to gain power. They are not fighting for the national interest; they are fighting for sectional interest, insofar as they are fighting on behalf of a specific segment of Somali society, the radical fringe.” Ahl says, “What about fighting for Islam?” Kala-Saar says, “Islam is under no threat. Nor do I think that stoning a thirteen-year-old accused of adultery and then sparing her rapist constitutes preserving the good name of Islam. Rather, it denigrates the reputation of the faith. Do you think that imposing a type of veil indigenous to other societies on Somali women is a good thing? Or banning music, disallowing sports on TV, stopping veiled women in the street on their way home or to the market and checking if they are or aren't wearing bras?” (Farah 2011, p. 169).

The conversation between Ahl and Kala-Saar depicts the divergent views the Somalis hold regarding the Shabaab. Kala-Saar, a university professor symbolizing the erudite section of the Somali society, reiterates that the Shabaab group is fighting for power, a seizure of power that will not receive a warm welcome from the majority of the Somali people and instead may pave the way for another debacle in as far as the interest of the secularist Muslims or followers of other faiths is not accommodated. Through Kala-Saar, Farah reveals the outlandish actions of the Courts that neither concord with the century's philosophy nor the fundamental tenets of Islam. Farah also reveals actions of the courts as what could be termed as disgracing Islam and annihilating the Somali culture.

A reference to stoning a thirteen year old accused of adultery and sparing her rapist epitomizes the shallowness of the Shabaab's understanding of Islam. Yet, the Courts due to their uncanny moves are also imposing a culture alien to the Somali women and at times infringing upon their right to dress the way they like. Most importantly, the religionists' acts of banning music, disallowing sports on TV, and checking whether the veiled women are wearing bras summons the attention of the readers to the fact that the religious fanatics are oblivious to all the moral and legal grounds.

It is also possible to have a plain look at the menacing situation Somalia is caught up in;

“The men from the Courts have shut down all the movie houses,” Qasiir replies. “Movies are xaraam—forbidden. Nothing, not even Bollywood; no music at tea houses. It is all serious religious stuff. This is resulting in young people becoming bored and in seeing life as very tough, tedious.” “What was it like in the days of the warlords?” “Those were brutes, the warlords. And they perpetrated indescribable cruelties against the unarmed civilians.” “I meant, what was life like for the young? You were young in those days and a member of a clan-based militia, weren’t you?” “Despite the terribleness of the times,” Qasiir says, “we had some fun, in our own way. We watched films, some of them Italian or American classics, played the music of our choice, we threw parties, we danced, we did everything the young everywhere enjoy doing. We even watched blue movies. There were a couple of places run by Zanzibari refugees where you could rent those. Of course, the warlords were terrible to most people, especially anyone who belonged to one of the weaker clan families or who wasn’t armed (Farah 2011, p. 72).

The above extract offers a customized array of Somalia’s sociopolitical landscape that enables to navigate between the historical past of the country and its current situation as it experiences another form of tyranny. As it could be inferred from the given context, tyranny for Somalia and its people is not a new phenomenon, except of the modus operandi of the tyranny which appears to be quite linked to the historical reality of the Somali people. In here, taking note of the comparison between the Courts and warlords remains imperative since the rendering of the above extract relied on the tyranny of the war lords to foreground how things have gone from bad to worse under the authority of the courts.

In spite of its political fragility, Somalia during the era of warlords has been depicted as a safer country wherein the young Somalis were able to get access to entertainment facilities to the point of watching blue movies that would call condemnation by death on someone in the hands of the Shabaab operatives if it were today. The Courts that consider themselves as vanguard of Islam and liberators of Somalia nonetheless have cast a dark shadow on the lives of the young Somalis making life boring and miserable.

Another important theme which a reader may find interesting is a point that reflects on the Zanzibari refugees who owned their own business in Somalia during the era of warlords. Once again, it could be deduced that Farah presents the relative freedom that let alone the Somalis, the Zanzibari refugees had enjoyed during what is recorded one of the tyrant regimes Somalia has ever had after its independence. Rendering all sorts of the military dictatorship that inflicted

suffering on the Somalis offer a vantage point from which one could understand how much harsher the suffering of the Somali people is compared to what was once deemed harsh administration.

7.3 Foreign Powers' Interference

Apart from the religious fanaticism propagated by the courts, the novel in question also depicts the influence and contribution of foreign countries to the situations in Somalia. Besides, the novel offers how the involvement of foreign countries in the affairs of the country in whatever way has been received by the Somalis who live abroad and those whose lives are embattled due to the existential reality they face on daily basis.

Bile perks up when he hears all this. "You see, my dearest, everything happens for a reason. Illegal fishing in Somali waters and the resultant piracy. The Ethiopian invasion. The American involvement in Somali politics. Al Qaeda's presence in the peninsula. The Courts and their failings, apparent only to those of us who live in Mogadiscio. Somalis in the diaspora say, 'But at least they brought peace to the country.' Those of us who live inside the country and who know better say, 'At what price?' I doubt if that has been worth it. After all, the devastation being visited on the country following the Ethiopian invasion could have been avoided. If only!" (Farah 2011, p. 46)

The above extract presents the source of all adversities that plague Somalia as meddling of foreign powers in the affairs of the country. For Bile, one of the characters, foreign powers got a reason to interfere in Somali politics. Most of the characters in the novel claimed that a number of countries are exploiting Somalia's natural resources and causing environmental degradation by illegally fishing in Somali waters. Farah depicts that the Ethiopian invasion and other movements that cause instability in Somalia are orchestrated by foreign countries in order to divert the attention of the Somalis from their own national interest. As it could be inferred from the given extract, Bile claims that the Somalis who are living in the country are mindful of foreign powers' involvement one way or the other in the upheaval that is tearing apart Somalia while he stresses the fact that the Somalis in the diaspora fail to comprehend that it is foreign powers involvement that is causing all the damage to the country.

The invisible hands that are causing havocs in Somalia are portrayed in several ways in an attempt to reveal the carousel politics of which Somalia and its people have become victims. The following extract may appear relevant to show one of the contexts portraying the magnitude of

insecurity the Somalis who live in Mogadisco witness as part of their daily encounter with fate. The delirious situation to which the Somalis are strange is mainly manifest in “Cambara says to Malik, “Be on your guard; journalists are under constant threat. There are fifth columnists, some working in cahoots with the religionists and others with foreign forces intent on destabilizing an already destabilized country.” The case in point reveals a situation in which the journalists come under constant attack by a ghost like entity called ‘fifth columnists’. Through Cambara’s words the novel in question labels foreign powers as catalysts to accelerate the fallapart of the country whose stability is already on a downward spiral.

Although Cambara’s claim avoided putting a name to any force that she thinks is behind the problem in Somalia, there are circumstances in which various countries have been mentioned as active agents of the horrendous tribulations plaguing Somalia and its people. The author further makes a clear reference to CIA as sponsoring one of the warring parties, as shown in the following extract from a dialogue that Malik exchanges with Dajaal and Jeebleh;

Satisfied now that he has filled several pages with his scribbles, Malik asks, “How far are we from the Siinlay?” He is referring to the spot where the fiercest battle between the CIA-funded warlords and the religionists occurred, ending with the religionists running the warlords out of the city. “Siinlay is far,” replies Dajaal. “What about the Bakhaaraha market complex?” “Too late,” says Dajaal. Jeebleh adds, “Besides, you need a whole day.” Dajaal looks at his watch and switches on the radio, just in time to hear a religionist announcing that the army of the faithful in control of much of Somalia is declaring war on Ethiopia. Jeebleh says, “This is madness.” Dajaal says, “This foolish man declaring war on Ethiopia thinks, erroneously, that invading the strongest military power in this part of Africa will be a walk in the park. It won’t be.” Silence reigns until they get to the apartment (Farah 2011, p. 48).

The issue of foreign powers’ interference in the Somali politics is further revealed as the narrator describes Siinlay. The warring parties, the warlords sponsored by CIA and the religionists by an unknown group from the Arab world are turning Somalia into a battle field though the above context unveiled that the battle came to an end with the religionists driving the CIA sponsored warlords out of the city. It is at times indispensable to look at the religionists’ warmongering tendency as they provoke Ethiopia, a country thought to have the support of the United States of America and the strongest military power in this part of Africa. This provocative and self inflicting act of the religionists reveals a proxy war between the radical fringes and the U.S.

Therefore, a conclusion could be reached from the given points that the Somali people's ordeal is due to an ardent need of foreign powers' wish fulfillment.

Moreover, the novelist continues to portray both the religionists and the warlords as entities who are unwary of foreign powers' support and the resultant effect the war they are caught in might have on the fate of their country. Besides, in various sections of the novel, all the warring parties have been depicted as sectarian and unwelcoming to Somalis of divergent religious and political views. The cleavage between Somali politicians created favorable condition for foreign powers to exploit the country's resource by aiding the groups at war. The following conversation between Malik and Qasiir reveals the support some wealthy Arabs allegedly give to the Shabaab;

Malik, emboldened by what he has just heard, asks, "What benefits, apart from being a member of a group of idealists, do the youths who join Shabaab receive?" "Shabaab has plenty of money," Qasiir says. "Where do they get it?" "I can only repeat what I've heard others say." Qasiir resumes his typing. "That they receive large sums from religious charities set up by wealthy Arabs. I'm sure you know more than I do about this." (Farah 2011, p. 73)

What becomes important about the above extract emerges from the very fact that the religionists who are causing excruciating pain to the Somalis whom they deem secularist or infidel springs from the Taliban-inspired version of Islam which many Muslim countries and the international community at large view as source of terrorism. America and its allies ousted the Taliban government from power in Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks and since then the U.S has been spearheading what is thought to be war on terrorism. On the other hand, other groups who are antagonists to America's active involvement in various international issues finance any group that fights the West.

As a faction that committed itself to the Taliban-inspired religious extremism, Shabaab receives large sum of money from religious charities set up by wealthy Arabs. The financial support Shabaab receives from foreign countries once again proves direct involvement of foreign countries in the Somali crisis. The CIA aiding the warlords from one side and the Arab funders financing the Shabaab from the other side do nothing to Somalia and its people than adding fuel to the fire consuming it.

With regard to foreign powers' involvement in Somalia's politics, the novelist seems to be foregrounding the fact that foreign powers including the UN do not seem to show interest in

quelling the turbulence in the region as long as they freely exploit Somalia's natural resource in the guise of antipiracy campaign. The conversation between Ahl and Fidno sets the context as follows;

“One question for my benefit,” Ahl says. “Why would the UN Security Council pass a resolution authorizing countries to contribute to an anti-piracy coalition if this august body is aware that these same countries are fishing illegally and in an unregulated manner in the waters of Somalia?” “Because the UN is at the service of the powerful veto-wielding countries that fund its programs and pay its electricity bills, the salaries of its staff,” Fidno replies (Farah 2011, p. 117).

Unlike the warring factions whom foreign powers manipulate to achieve their intended missions, Fidno, one of the characters representing the pirates, seems to be complaining about Somalia's national interest and the international community's unrelenting effort to destabilize the country. As one could explicate from the given extract, the UN Security Council, the highest international regulatory body, which of course many critics dub a neocolonial weapon, pass a resolution authorizing the countries that are fishing illegally and in an unregulated manner in the waters of Somalia to do whatever they like on the proviso of antipiracy campaign.

It has also been argued that the problem of Somalia emanates from other countries' involvement in its affairs that led the country into disintegration. The disintegration of the country rendered it unprotected as a result of which foreign forces resorted to exploit its natural resources and dump their wastes in its waters. The novel under scrutiny reveals that Somali politicians are in the state of disarray as a result of which they rendered their country out of kilter. The following extract reveals the number of countries one way or the other promoting their own agenda;

“Is it fair to assume that every single Somali politician has a different paymaster outside this country from whom he receives instructions, and whose interests he serves?” Malik is remembering that a UN annual situation report on Somalia, published the previous year, claimed that there were twelve countries involved in the Somali conflict—Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Libya, Egypt, Kenya, Iraq, China, Italy, the United States, France, and Britain (Farah 2011, p. 132).

The country appears to be like a delicious food served for a host of guests at a banquet table. The above extract clearly shows that twelve countries from across the globe are having their hands in the Somali case which allegedly turned the country into a hell on the earth. The extract reveals how incompetent and dissonant the country's politicians are apart from accusing foreign powers'

meddling in the affairs of the country. It blames the politicians for serving the interests of their paymasters rather than serving their national interest. There is also a tendency to show that the Somalis suffering emanates from foreign powers' interference in the affairs of the country and the incapability of the groups that regard themselves as guardians of the country.

Jeebleh is aware that among the Somalis with whom he has discussed the subject of piracy, many without reservation condemn the illegal foreign vessels fishing in the Somali Sea. They say that this unchecked robbery has caused joblessness among fishermen and led them to piracy. In fact, Somali fishermen appealed to the United Nations and the international community to help rid them of the large number of foreign vessels, estimated in 2005 at about seven hundred, engaged in unlicensed fishing off the country's southern shores. The country profile compiled by the United Nations' own Food and Agricultural Organization in 2005 confirmed that not only were these vessels plundering Somalia's marine resources but many of them were also dumping rubbish—nuclear and chemical waste (Farah 2011, p. 45).

7.4 Human Trafficking and Piracy

As the case with real world's depiction of the Horn region, Crossbones also takes its turn to give the readers an insider's projection of the historical reality of the place which many international media outlets have tended to exemplify the notoriety and wretchedness of war torn regions before some countries from the Arab world came into view to add their names to the list. The novel under scrutiny draws on the desperate situation of migrants whose fate has befallen them in the hands of human traffickers. It also portrays the defunct bureaucracy that is stretched across the so called autonomous state of Puntland and war torn Somalia.

Despite his attempt not to sound disapproving, Ahl's voice strikes a note of discord when he asks Warsame, "Has the city always been like this?" As if in mitigation, Warsame says, "The state is autonomous, albeit dysfunctional. Our economy is underdeveloped. We are a city under siege, with immigrants from Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Tanzania. They all want to make their way to Yemen and Europe, courtesy of the human traffickers who exploit them as stowaways in flimsy boats—just to escape from here." "Everyone comes because there is peace here?" Warsame says, "There is of course the lucrative potential of piracy, given Bosaso's strategic location. Taken together, these features attract all sorts of riffraff." "Do you have any idea what the population of the city is and what percentage of its residents are local?" Ahl asks. "No one knows the number of its residents." Ahl is aware that you need to put certain structures in place before it is possible to take a census. He says, "Because everything here is ad hoc." Warsame nods and adds, "And life must go on." (Farah 2011, p. 56)

The conversation between Ahl and Warsame reveals Bosaso's wreckage which symbolizes the paralyzed system of administration which criminals of all type take advantage of though there seem to be a relative peace and stability compared to Mogadiscio. It could also be inferred from the extract that migrants from the neighboring countries such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Tanzania are taken as indicators of the widespread dismal situation that the region is lingering in. It is also indicative of the fact that the city is serving as a hub for criminals who engage in human trafficking and piracy. This is evident in Warsame's description of the state as an autonomous albeit dysfunctional. Bosaso is taken as a prototype of most of the places in the region whereby symbolic government structures are in place, but impotent to maintain law and order that straightens the crooked. Besides, it could be inferred from the extract that the region is such a place where citizens opt for likely death than leading a dreary life.

Warsame's reflection, "They all want to make their way to Yemen and Europe, courtesy of the human traffickers who exploit them as stowaways in flimsy boats—just to escape from here.", testifies that the place is such a calamitous that migrants harboring in the city want to break away from the place at any cost. Another instance that portrays the city as wobbly and intricate emerges from a conversation between Ahl and Warsame in which they talk about census. The point here is, their conversation foregrounds the fact that the city doesn't have a certain structure that helps to conduct a census as one form of bureaucratic practices.

Moreover, it is explicitly stated in the extract that everything in Bosaso is ad hoc even though life must go on. The tentativeness manifested in the novel under scrutiny could be considered as a symbolic representation of administration in Africa wherein successive regimes endeavor to achieve their own goals than establishing long lasting systems that would benefit their respective countries. The gullibility of the warlords that turned Somalia into a haunting place and the subsequent sufferings inflicted on the Somalis can be grasped as follows;

Ahl sits with his mobile phone close by, yet it does not ring. He thinks that misfortune has followed the Somalis who fled their warring homeland; braved the seas; and put up with rape, daily harassment, corruption, and abuse. Just when they were on safe ground, they turned on themselves, with their young setting up armed gangs, as if they were out to prove that they could be better at cruelty than their elders. Somali-on-Somali violence in the Twin Cities rivaled Somali-on-Somali violence in their civil war-torn homeland (Farah 2011, p. 29).

Furthermore, the source of the Somalis' malady has also been attributed to various factors as postulated through Ahl's thought. The first point raised as an apparent reason for the Somalis to flee their country is the unceasing war between the Somalis wielding guns to fight one another across generations on trivial issues that caused a massive exodus. Besides, the abysmal situations such as rape, harassment, corruption, and abuse that became an integral part of the Somalis' lives who survived various life threatening challenges are attributed to the vindictiveness of the warring parties who turned Somalia, into a civil war torn country.

The suffering of the Somalis in exile and the perpetual war taking place across time in the country reveals the level of intricacy the situation in Somalia reached. The severity of the humanitarian condition in Somalia can also be deciphered from: "The stark reality, the dire conditions of most Somalis, the absence of food and environmental security, the never-ending conflict: each of these will have an impact on the future. From this perspective, Ahl views the future as one might view a troubled country marked by despoliation, devastation, and more poverty." As it could be reckoned from the given context, Somalia is caught up in adversary that would lead the country into further escalation that threatens its future to survive as a country.

The catastrophic situation in the region and Somalia, as it could be recalled from earlier instances, has been mainly attributed to the crumbling of the regimes and rise of anarchists. At times, the suffering of the Somalis and the bureaucratic fragility in the country are reflected in the following observation:

Mogadiscio has lost whatever shape it used to have and is now as featureless as a ground-down cog in a broken machine. He is deeply disturbed that it is no longer the metropolis with which he is familiar, its current residents imported to raise a fighting force. Everywhere he looks, destitute men, women, and children in near rags wearily trudge by, many of them emaciated, their bellies swollen with undiagnosed illnesses, their eyes hosts to swarms of roaming flies. They seem exhausted, inarticulate with fear and vigilance, which imposes a further formlessness (Farah 2011, p. 91).

Mogadiscio, according to the above extract is totally wrecked that it is compared to a ground down cog in a broken machine. The city which had in its historical past had a structure and fulfilled the basic criteria to be a metropolis is no longer in shape. It has after all become a place where insurgents incubate and the hope of the residents die away. Broadly speaking, Farah in his novel tries to show the nexus between the pre-war Somalia and the historical reality during the

war. Hence, he clearly depicts the dire situation in which the Somalis of all ages appallingly suffer. Likewise, he portrays the magnitude of the damage caused to Somalia by showing the disfigured face of Mogadiscio and the miserable life the residents are leading. Farah compellingly portrays the total destruction caused to Somalia in a manner that seems to be an apocalyptic vision of the country's future.

In a similar line of thought, Farah through his characters asserts that it is the overall moral decadence that led the country into its current situation. The conversation between Bile and Jeebly is indicative of this point; "Bile tells Jeebleh that their guest in the annex has been ratting them out to the Courts. He can't help it, the poor sod. He seems to hope that squealing on them to the religionists will lead him to the gravy train. "It is the thing to do in Somalia these days. No scruples. No probity. This is what's got us to where we are. Helpless." The reason behind Somalia's crisis, according to the above extract, is the moral decadence characterized by indecency and wickedness. As it could be inferred from the context, Somalia is in a state of affairs where a friend or a family member wouldn't scruple to betray the hands that fed him/her if there was money in it for him/her. Thus, it shows the disintegration of the social value which in its own turn paved the way for the country's debacle rendering it doomed to failure.

It appears to be incontestable that a community that is no longer subservient to its own social value finds it hard to obey a legal or social structure alien to the land, especially in a country afflicted by civil war. As it has been indicated in the above extract, Farah reiterates that the country is in a state of disarray owing to the deterioration of morality. Above and beyond, Farah portrays how much far reaching the problem is providing various scenes. The characters' sense of insecurity bespeaks the reign of anarchy as could be inferred from the following excerpt;

Ahl has his door ajar, preparing to get out and check on how the beast is faring, but at that very moment Warsame puts the vehicle in motion, and Ahl pulls the car door shut. "I wish we had stopped," Ahl says. "Hereabouts," Fidno says, "we're all fearful of making fatal mistakes. More than ever, one must be wary of the unruliness of crowds, living in a place where there is a total breakdown of law and order. You can get yourself into sticky situations if you aren't careful. I am speaking of crowds waiting at the behest of their unreasonable greed, a crowd turning into a mob." Warsame, seemingly bemused, stays out of it (Farah 2011, p. 78).

The above instance reveals the ferociousness of the situation in Mogadiscio apparently referring to a total breakdown of law and order. This is manifest in the characters' description of the bewildered crowd that doesn't identify what is legal and what is not since there is no government structure that maintains law and order. The novel in question, in this particular quote, shows the social fragmentation that reflects the historical reality of the war torn Somalia in which any powerful group or individual can do whatever they please to satiate their greed. This emanates from the crises the country is languishing in for which the novelist accuses all the warring parties trying to forcibly impose their ideology on the country. The novelist condenses his idea in a manner that vividly depicts the intricacy of the situations in Somalia and the causal relationship between the contradicting ideologies and the subsequent human suffering.

On a wider spectrum, the novel under study reflects on the market sector which is ripping off the public money and aiding the Courts that are the leading cause of instability in the country since the mayhem brings the business persons a fortune. As it is evidently stated in the given novel, "the fact that the market supported the Courts with weapons and funds tipped the balance in their favor. ... It offers immense profits in a country where business doesn't pay tax, as there are no state structures in place to levy or collect it." Thus, it could be summed up that the Somali business persons have also prioritized their own personal gains at the expense of their country's sovereignty and fellow Somalis' wellbeing.

The novel through Qasiir, Malik's confidant and one of the perceptible characters, unfolds how the country is infested with avaricious entities that take the opportunity to attain their gains by selling either commodity at exorbitant prices or supporting the militia while the lives of the citizens become threatened and the future of the country darkened. In what seems a deliberately composed paragraph to summarize the salient points assessed in this section of the analysis, the narrator of the novel offers the following heart wrenching experience Malik faces;

Too embarrassed to admit to his own fear, he walks away, sorry for the Ethiopian, killed in a war in a country about which he probably remained ignorant until the moment of his death. He feels sorry, too, for the Somali youths kicking the dead Ethiopian, an ill-educated, ill-informed lot, as unfamiliar with the concept of respect for the dead as they are with Islam. Blame it on decades of civil war, in which these youths haven't gone to schools, haven't lived in homes where there is the semblance of harmony and functionality. Blame it, too, on the current Somali political class, who are equally ill educated and equally self-centered, and who behave inhumanely toward others. Malik's sickened heart sicker than ever, he feels as if he is

complicit in these terrible doings, because he cannot find a way to stop them (Farah 2011, p. 176).

7.5 Representation of Somali Identity

Farah, as a diasporic writer reflects themes of identity oscillating in the hearts and minds of his central characters whose affinity with Somalia and other places has been represented in several ways that will be examined in this section. Most importantly, this section will focus on how belongingness and identities are represented in the novel under consideration.

To begin with, most of the characters partaking in the storyline represent individuals descending from interracial marriages. Besides, some of the characters have lived in different continents adapting to diverse psychosocial makeup. Thus, the textual instances to be considered in this section of the analysis will substantially dwell on how individuals and groups are represented in a way that forges a particular identity. As many postcolonial African writers and literary scholars state a return to ancestry plays key role in reaffirming one's identity. This is not an exception to Farah who offers the characters reconnecting with land of their ancestry.

Jeebleh is visiting Mogadiscio for the first time in a decade. His son-in-law, Malik, a freelance journalist based in New York, has come along, too, intending to write articles about the ancestral land he has never seen. Now, watching half a dozen bearded men in white robes with whips in their hands, Malik looks disturbed. Born in Aden, Yemen, of a Somali father and a Malay-Chinese mother, Malik was brought up partly in Malaysia, a most orderly ~~country~~. He learned Somali as a child but has not spoken it continuously, and because of this, his hearing cannot accommodate the alien harshness of these bearded men's inflections as they bark instructions at passengers and porters alike. Jeebleh remembers his wife's refrain about Somalia: "That unfortunate country, cursed with those dreadful clanspeople, forever killing one another and everyone around them." Yet it is Judith, prone as she is to speaking out of turn and making embarrassing gaffes, who suggested that Jeebleh take Malik along and prevailed on their daughter, Amran, to give her consent (Farah 2011, p. 14).

Malik wanted to write a research based article about his ancestral land to which he somehow belonged. However, his arrival in his land of ancestry brings him a frantic feeling as he saw half a dozen bearded men conversing in a tone alien to him. As it could be inferred from the above excerpt, Malik was on his expedition to search his ancestral land which he craved for; however, what he found in Mogadiscio makes him ambivalent. Ambivalence is as to Bhaba (1994) a mental state at which a person remains indecisive on whether he belongs to a particular scenario.

This is manifest in Malik's experience. Besides, Jeebleh who unlike Malik had a visit to Somalia finds himself estranged as he recalls his wife's refrain about Somalia.

What pings into his mind purports that he is in a state of affairs in which he tries to figure out whether he has any affinity with these bearded men whom his wife described as cursed clans people turning Somalia into ashes. Malik and Jeebleh's experience clearly shows that the two Somalis are in a delirious state to identify whether they belong with the people whom they view as Other due to the pitch of their sound and way of dressing. It is also possible to interpret the final part of the excerpt attributing a peculiar characteristic to the Somalis as folks who speak at high pitch without waiting for their turn in conversations. There has also been a narratorial comment labeling the conversational behavior of the Somalis as embarrassing and dissonant.

Furthermore, themes of belongingness and searching for origin are prevalent across the story revolving around Malik and other prominent characters who have been longing to reunite with their people from whom they descended. There is also a sense of alienation/ambivalence among the characters that alternatively choose to belong and choose to alienate themselves to depict other identities. The narrator also comments on group identities which most often gave a distinctive identity to the Somalis.

Malik who oftentimes perceived the bearded men, the Shabaab members and the warlords as others becomes overwhelmed with a sense of belongingness as he moves across the city that is disfigured by the war. His sense of belongingness which gives him heartache comes into play as the land he is thinking about is what part of his belongs to. Malik's profound sense of Somali inheritance and belongingness is portrayed as follows: "Something in the shape of anger-as-madness sticks in Malik's gullet every time he visits a country in the throes of civil strife; but what makes this time unbearably hard to take is that this is his father's country, a land of which his father has seldom spoken with affection." (Farah 2011, p. 20)

Similarly, the novel in question foregrounds themes portraying identity crisis. Identity crisis is depicted through use of language which many African scholars like Ngugi Wathiong'o present as the prime constituent of one's identity. In light of Ngugi's claim, one may comprehend that the two brothers, Malik and Ahl who are already on a continuous journey used language as

marker of their belongingness and estrangement. The following extract offers a vantage point from which the prevailing theme could be explicated;

The two brothers set themselves apart from their birth communities, hardly socializing with the Yemenis with whom they had grown up in Aden, or with the new influx of Somalis with whom they shared a loose-knit communality. Later, when Minnesota became inundated with Somalis because the then governor offered them better facilities than they could have enjoyed in San Diego, Nashville, or other places where they had initially been concentrated, the two brothers communicated in whichever language would exclude those they did not wish to understand them: Somali when among Arabs, Chinese when among Somalis, and English with each other and when they wanted to be understood (Farah 2011, p. 27).

Malik and Ahl depict multiple features pertained to markers of identity. One of the salient themes serving as bedrock of identity construction in literature is exile. As it could be deciphered from the above context, both Ahl and Malik traveled across continents with different psychosocial makeup as a result of which they might be tempted to decide where they belong. Besides, they passed through physical and psychological displacements that make it difficult for them to clearly declare their belongingness to a particular place and culture since they are on continuous journey coupled with their familial pedigree that is a fusion of people from different cultures and continents.

To cite a particular instance, the two brothers use different languages in a way that serves their purpose. Ahl and Malik use language to position themselves in the world of their own where they want to be conceived as a part in view of the fact that they use language as a major tool that ensures their belongingness and rupture. What's more, the two brothers are mentally on continuous journey as long as they use language to rupture from the Somalis, the Arabs and the rest of the world. The fluidity of their engagement and disengagement with the circumstances around them and their surroundings depicts their sense of perpetual estrangement which foments what could be termed identity crisis.

Apart from individuals' sense of estrangement, Farah offers a context that appears to designate peculiarities to the Somalis. At one time, such a collective Somali identity construction is achieved by way of using an individual character as a representative of the whole group while at other times groups and their interaction with the phenomenon around them were used to represent the psychosocial makeup of the Somali people.

For example, Malik's father, an old man who disappeared and eventually married a teen in the deserts of Somalia, his ancestral land, has been used as a Somali who is worried about the continuity of his bloodline. This shows that the Somalis who had grown in their culture and later on left their country for another embrace the tradition of sustaining their lineage in spite of all the hurdles they face. This is evident in: "Their old man went totally native, as Malik liked to say, and married a woman in her late teens to produce additional offspring, in hope of making sure that his bloodline would not die out, a responsibility he no longer trusted either of his sons could fulfill."

Furthermore, the bond between Somalis and their socio-cultural makeup has also been portrayed via Malik. The construction of Somalis' identity has been sanctioned using Malik as bedrock upon which the intended identity would be forged. To this end, Malik's depiction as a ritualistic person may give the heart of the story that unravels how Somalis are harnessed to their culture no matter where they grew up.

Malik wants to be alone in the room with the sea view. Jeebleh knows how keen he is on ritual. He wishes to get to know his room better in order to domesticate it, a concept that will barely make sense to a Somali pastoralist. Once, on a family trip, Malik refused to unpack his clothes until he had communed with his room's vital force and exorcised it of its past demons (Farah 2011, p. 23).

The novel apparently revealed that Malik is someone who was born to a Somali father in Yemen and had not been to Somalia. Nevertheless, as opposed to what is common among those who were born in foreign countries and knew nothing about their ancestral culture, Malik turns out to be an adherent of a ritual practice which is common to Somali pastoralists. In here, what remains significant is the type of social practice that Malik exercises despite the fact that he hadn't had any exposure to the socio-cultural setting that maintained the practice. In this regard, one may understand that let alone who were born and raised miles away from their ancestral land and culture, those who relocate to the Western world soon lose a grip on their culture that in its own turn makes them prone to identity crisis. Nevertheless, Farah seems to be depicting the Somalis as aficionados to their culture and collective identity.

Apart from depicting Somalis as adherents of their culture, the novel in question also offers what seems to be portraying Somalis as folks who have intricate personalities. Among the portrayals, Somalis have been depicted as adamant people who do not have place for what the other world

would call logical argument certain human conversational scenarios. The cacophonous conversation between Dajaal and Gumaad in this respect typifies Somalis as folks who spend much of their time arguing on irrelevant topics which wouldn't be of any help or value as it could be explicated from the following extract:

Even after he buckles up and Dajaal puts the car in motion, Gumaad doesn't let it go. "Listen to you. 'In my car, we wear seat belts.' This is Bile's car, not yours. So you can't say 'my car.'" A jet of his saliva strikes Malik in the face, and he wipes it away discreetly. Jeebleh, amused, shakes his head at this pointless altercation, looking from Dajaal to Gumaad. What relevance does the ownership of a vehicle have to do with wearing or not wearing seat belts? But Somalis, he knows, seldom admit to red herrings. It is typical of them to confound issues, mistake a metonym for a synecdoche. While there is always a beginning to an argument, there is never an end, never a logical conclusion to their disputation. Somalis are in a rich form when holding forth; they are in their element when they are spilling blood (Farah 2011, p. 17).

The above excerpt makes an apparent reference to the Somalis giving them different attributes that bluntly depict their psychosocial circumstances. The altercation between the characters, specifically Dajaal and Gumaad represents the tendency to portray the Somalis as people who stick to a particular issue no matter what its bearings are. As it could be reckoned from the context, the two characters are arguing on the ownership of the vehicle rather than the safety cautions. This could be aligned to the rift between Somalis who subscribed to ideologies of different warring forces in Somalia without scrutinizing the worthwhile of a bone of contention tearing apart their country as evidenced in the novel.

Besides, Somalis have also been referred to as folks whose standpoint is unfathomable and whose personality is erratic. Farah, in this respect, tends to foreground the flimsiness of the Somalis that brought all the calamities upon themselves. He portrays the Somalis as beings who understand things paradoxically; this transpires in the narrator's comment on how amused Jeebleh is. The narrator reveals that Somalis have such a personality that is adept at renderings which one would consider as Farah's take on the identity of the Somali political elites that put the country in a perpetual warfare.

Furthermore, the same extract could be taken as an axiomatic representation of the Somalis. The excerpt evokes a scene that purports the Somalis engaging in a never ending and illogical disputation that usually ends up in dissonance than harmony. Farah, in this regard seems to be hinting at why the Somalis' problems failed to be resolved. Hence, it could be concluded that

Farah is critical of the social structure that served the incompetent politicians as a ladder to their ascendance to power. Above and beyond, Somalis have been represented as a homogeneous group who are exceptionally very alike in dealing with circumstantial human phenomena surrounding them. Like the above case in which Somalis have been depicted aimlessly debating on trivial topic, the following extract offers what may further corroborate the notion of the above interpretation;

Now Ahl hears the maids in the corridor making a loud ruckus over a missing broom, nearly coming to blows over it. How he wishes Somalis in Minnesota showed the concern for their sons' disappearance that these women do about a missing broom. The Somali imams at the mosques in Minnesota responsible for the young men's disappearances go unchallenged. The feeling among Somalis is that it is a "clan thing." The curse of it, Ahl thinks. Somalis, adept at surrounding themselves with smoke screens, relish confounding issues. You are seldom able to corner them, because they know how to give you the runaround (Farah 2011, p. 36).

It is important to note that the repetitive references made to the Somalis high pitched utterance one way or the other tends to delineate peculiarities to the Somalis. In addition, the portrayal of the conversational behavior of theirs and the thematic significance of the topic upon which they spend a great deal of time and energy substantiates what seems to be a deliberate representation of the Somalis. This attempt would once again be taken as a conscious poke at the Somalia's social structure that brought up the sticky political debate that glued the country to the political mayhem it lingers in.

Moreover, the Somali women's loud altercation over the missing broom is compared to the concern they show for their sons' disappearance. As has been observed in the above extract, Farah tries to foreground how much disarrayed the Somalis are in prioritizing what is most important in their lives. Hence, such a representation of the Somalis may amount to gross depiction of the Somalis as nonchalant social behavior which in its own turn amounted to the overall fragmentation of the country. What's more, the Somalis have also been represented as astute community in misguiding those who attempt to know their real intention. This is evident in "Somalis, adept at surrounding themselves with smoke screens, relish confounding issues. You are seldom able to corner them, because they know how to give you the runaround."

In addition to the indefinable trait in terms of tracing what the Somalis might think or do, the novel in question as well represents the Somalis as folks whose multifarious essences are

interwoven to the point that would hoodwink to differentiate between who is who amidst them. Brief, but multilayered representation of the Somalis, in this regard, has also been put to use as follows;

Jeebleh is neither surprised nor shocked to learn that they bought the machine from a shop presumably owned by BigBeard. After all, he thinks, Somalis are incestuous by nature, inseparable by temperament, and murderous by inclination; and such is their internecine closeness that quarreling is the norm—like twins fighting (Farah 2011, p. 90).

What appears to be unusual in other countries and in other social contexts has been represented as a usual trend when it comes to Jeebleh's emotional response to the fact that they bought the machine from the man they are trying to get rid of. In fact, what is important in the above extract is how the Somalis are described and why it matters. For that reason, the above extract overtly describes the Somalis through Jeebleh's thought as folks who are extremely interknitted and whose relationship is impenetrable. The Somalis, as one can infer from the given context, are represented as people who are captives of their deep-seated practices that torn the country apart in the advent of any ideology that turns out to be a bone of contentions for them to form factions and wage wars against their assumed rivals without reckoning the ultimate consequence of their moves. With this premise, Farah himself being a Somali seems to be showing the Somalis' predicaments as a result of which Somalia and its people live with socio-political maladies.

Chapter Eight

8.0 Comprehensive Summary of the Findings

This chapter offers the major thematic issues addressed in the selected novels. More specifically, an emphasis is given to the existing thematic convergences and divergences among the four selected East African novels. To that end, the postcolonial national and regional comparative model is used as a basis to sift through the foregrounded themes. Hence, this chapter will have two sections wherein the first section implicates thematic convergence among the chosen novels, and the later focuses on the perceptible thematic divergences.

8.1 Thematic Convergence among the Selected Novels

Several writers state that literature reflects the vista of human experiences. It is said that literature depicts the shared value and world view of a particular society. Besides, the values and experiences of societies that live in different countries and different geographical locations may converge at a certain angle due to the human experiences that impel authors to treat the thematic preoccupations. Especially, those literary works produced by authors emerging from similar historical and geographical circumstances are more likely to have thematic convergence in many ways.

Furthermore, Ogude (2011, p. 201) taking African literature as an indicator, states that African authors may be relatively late comers to the literary scene, but they are not alone in the making of emulation of each other's works as their compositional pattern. Ogude adds that such an affinity between literary works is known as intertextuality. The author affirms that intertextuality is a universally accepted practice and thus the study of African intertextuality, of how African writers' works flow into and shape one another, is a study of the unexpected connections and formal complexities which are spawned by African writers' influences one upon another (Ibid. p. 8). On a similar line of argument, this section of the dissertation discusses the thematic intertextuality or thematic convergence among the four selected novels based on postcolonial national and regional model.

8.1.1 The Return and Reign of Despair

African countries right after their independence were confronted by disillusionment. The expectation to enjoy democracy and economic prosperity has been denied. Instead they have been greeted by multilayered challenges. The leaders whom Africans counted on betrayed them. The journey that was expected to take African people towards liberty, democracy, and peace started to rattle over the bumpy road it chose to take. The air of independence that was once breathed all over the flora and fauna of the continent is a mere reminiscence. All these human experiences are among the salient thematic preoccupations the selected novels have in common.

To begin with, Somalia as a country with colonial experience has witnessed the aftereffects of colonialism since its heydays as an independent nation. In this respect, Nadifa Mohammed's novel reveals the sociopolitical realities that Somalia leaped through by exhibiting the entirety of the post independence anomalies. Moreover, it may not be an exaggeration if it is said that Somalia is one of the countries that witnessed enormous exodus of the people in the quest for refuge. One of the major causes of the problems could be the social reality that started to unfold as the rift between Somali factions began to widen. Besides, Nadifa reiterates that the Somalis' gullibility as a people played its role in the imminent fall apart of the country.

Like the citizens of any other country declaring its independence from the yoke of colonialism, Somalis went into uncontrollable state of euphoria. Nadifa clearly shows how ecstatic the people of Somalia were due to the fact that Somalia is having its textbooks, airlines and even its people are happening to witness their country having its own flag with a five pointed star on it. That flag with a five pointed star on it which was a source of jubilation for the Somalis whom Nadifa regards as gullible has turned out to be source of their agony. The beginning of their independence like any other African people made them to expect the road ahead to be peaceful and prosperous. However, Somalia failed to deliver peace that its citizens expected; instead the leaders led the country into war with Kenya and Ethiopia to claim territories assumed to be belonging to Somalia.

On the other spectrum, the novel offers the scene of the hotel where all the Somalis from all corners of the world and all walks of life meet which in turn appears to show the two ends from where Somalis' hope began to blossom and where it started to wilt. The hotel as a venue hosted

all sort of social events between seventy-eight and eighty-one. These years as to the novel in question represent years of happiness in which people wedded whom they loved and reunited with the long lost ones. It is after eighty-one that the Somalis' dream to live in peace and harmony began to shatter. Nadifa shows how dismayed the Somalis were by the deteriorating sociopolitical conditions. She reveals the magnitude of the cruelty of the regime by exposing its crackdown on the doctors in Hargeisa hospital for trying to improve handling of their patients. Improving the condition of the patients in hospital can, by no means, be considered political intention. Nevertheless, the regime that was lurking to tighten its grip on power used it as a pretext to detain the intelligentsia that it feared to be posing a threat to its power.

Working to subdue public expressions and annihilating oppositions is not an uncommon practice in many third world countries. Especially in Africa the metamorphosis cycle of utter dictatorship appears to be passing through such steps as detaining or executing the erudite section of the society on which the public at large counts to see changes, cracking down on demonstrators, and ultimately venturing into full scale war with armed and unarmed forces to maintain seizure of power. As it is showed in Nadifa's novel, the regime did and does everything it opted for so as to prevent any attempt made to rectify the sociopolitical ills observed from the other side. Subsequently, the hopeful Somalis who dreamt of seeing their country enjoying peace and democracy happened to witness the denial of their expectations and the shattering of their dreams.

Similarly, Kyomuhindo in her novel "*Waiting*" shows the sociopolitical reality the Ugandans endured under the leadership of Idi Amin. The novel develops a voice that seems to reverberate "the beautiful Ones are not yet born". It clearly depicts the fact that Amin's regime which the entire Uganda expected to bring peace and stability to the land soon started to perplex the citizens. The novel under scrutiny shows that the tyrant regime is pretending to be supported by the public while all sections of the society are forced to attend the celebrations. The novel reveals that Ugandans entered another chapter where their suffering intensifies rather than enjoying freedom that they had been longing for.

Kyomuhindo clearly shows the psychological impact of the unidentified group of men who are yet to come into view. It is evident in a conversation that takes place between Kaaka and Maya

that everyone in the village has lost appetite due to the wind of terror which is breathing gloominess and submissiveness. The spirit of fear that reigned over the horizon of the village haunted everyone to the extent of accepting death without hesitation. This shows that the elder characters' hope and aspiration to see the light at the end of the tunnel has already stagnated. Kaaka could be considered as a prototype of the older generation of Ugandans who have been going through different stages of sociopolitical circumstances and ultimately ceased to think that things will change.

The whole dwellers seem to be detracted from the usual routine human beings perform for survival. The severity of the sociopolitical crisis they are facing is manifest in: "No one seems to be eating these days. I've told you again and again, if these men come, they'll kill you unless you have enough energy to run, and run fast (Goretti Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 14)." The excerpt depicts the profoundness of the looming disaster's impact upon the residents' day to day life wherein some of them have already lost the appetite to live let alone eating. Summerfield (1991, p. 160) elucidates the psychosocial impact of war reminding the readers that all the wars that have been fought over the recent decades have caused a number of disorders which are termed as "concentration-camp syndrome, war neurosis, combat exhaustion syndrome, survivor syndrome and, currently, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)".

Africa's leadership that denies the expectation of its people has also been portrayed in Mukoma's novel. Mukoma foregrounds the sociopolitical reality Kenyans faced in the era supposed to be the epoch of aspirations for improved social, economic and political conditions. On the contrary, the sociopolitical reality of Africa is shown as an impediment for Africans looking forward to harvest the fruit of freedom, democracy and economic prosperity. Mukoma gives instances such as the horrendous situations in Ngong forest where wild beasts feast over the body of humans whose killer goes unpunished. He also offers the scale of lawlessness that shows people's pessimism towards the situation in Africa.

Besides, Africa has been depicted as a land of perpetual discord and chaos. The narrator gives a vivid description of a country torn apart by violence and trying to crawl out of the adversity. Ishmael remarks that he and his colleagues returned to a country which was still trying to claw its way out of hell despite the fact that things had calmed down except for some riots which he

compares to a wedding celebration as opposed to the violence the country had been through in the previous days. What is more, in “Reconciliation was looking possible, and the government and the opposition party had started talks about sharing power.” there appears to be an attempt to portray African politicians as those who crave for seizure of power than struggling for the just causes of their own people. In the above quotation, the issue of reconciliation is not something aligned to bringing peace and prosperity to the Kenyan people rather than power sharing among the rival political parties.

Nuruddin Farah’s *Crossbones* also throws a spark of light on what seems to be silently severing the shoots of hope as they begin to germinate in the African sociopolitical sphere of activity. He offers a customized array of Somalia’s sociopolitical landscape that enables the readers to navigate between the historical past of the country and its current situation as it experiences another form of tyranny. He postulates a context that tyranny for Somalia and its people is not a new phenomenon, except of the modus operandi of the tyranny which appears to be quite linked to the historical reality of the Somali people.

Farah analogically presents the two regimes, i.e., the Courts and warlords to foreground how things have gone from bad to worse under the administrative auspices of the courts. In spite of its political fragility, Somalia during the era of warlords has been depicted as a safer country wherein the young Somalis were able to get access to entertainment facilities to the point of watching blue movies that would call condemnation by death on someone in the hands of the Shabaab operatives if it were today. The Courts that consider themselves as vanguard of Islam and liberators of Somalia nonetheless have cast a dark shadow on the lives of the young Somalis making life boring and miserable.

Another important theme which a reader may find interesting in this novel is a point that reflects the Zanzibari refugees who owned their own business in Somalia during the era of warlords. Once again, it could be deduced that Farah presents the relative freedom that let alone the Somalis, the Zanzibari refugees had enjoyed during what is recorded as one of the tyrant regimes Somalia has ever had after its independence. Rendering all sorts of the military dictatorship that inflicted suffering on the Somalis offer a vantage point from which one could understand how

much harsher the suffering of the Somali people has become compared to what was once deemed harsh administration.

In sum, all the selected novels converge on the issue that Africa's sociopolitical situation for which lives have been sacrificed have not yet started to yield the fruits millions of Africans have been waiting to enjoy rather than opening new chapters of despondency and fear. In general, the novels under scrutiny bear an account of the existential and societal realities of the neo-colonial East African nations. This corroborates with Ahmad Aijaz's (1995, p. 78) assertion that "all third-world texts are necessarily... to be read as... national allegories". The theme of postcolonial disillusionment and hopelessness developed in the selected novels thus becomes an allegory of the history of Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda. By the same token, Kehinde (2004, p. 229) on his part labels the novels with such sociopolitical thematic preoccupations as the metaphorical representation of neo-colonial African nations, which are encumbered with dislocation, alienation, depression and deprivation. Kehinde's assertion resonates with the selected novels themes that develop stories of nations whose citizens who once upon a time expected to enjoy the freedom they had long been craving for become alienated, depressed and deprived.

8.1.2 Politically Incited Violence

The postcolonial sociopolitical crises that put Africans in perilous conditions are predominantly attributable to Africans who assume prominent political positions in their respective communities despite the fact that Africa's social, political and economic problems are mainly ascribed to the colonial experiences. Indeed, conflicts that erupt between various factions across the continent are among the chronic malignancy both the continent and the international community have long been trying to remove. On the other hand, conflicts that occur intermittently across the continent evidently continued to cause massive sociopolitical crises that have direct relationship with the continent's underdevelopment in many ways. Specially, the East African region is the most vulnerable part of the continent where numerous coups were undertaken and several civil wars were fought, and still going on in some countries within the region.

Among the reasons causing a number of conflicts in this part of the continent are intolerance to people of other ethnic group or/and religious faiths. These two issues are the emergent polemics in today's politics of East African countries. Scholars such as Parekh (2019, p. 262) argue that multiculturalism is developed against the backdrop of colonialism. The author adds that it denoted an attempt at subverting cultural hierarchy which implicitly or explicitly advocated cultural equality, meaning not so much the substantive equality of different cultures as their equal right to exist and flourish.

Moreover, Parekh upholds that multiculturalism holds that the liberal society's response to cultural diversity should be guided by three values that are central to it, namely liberty, equality and national unity. Minorities should not be subjected to coercive assimilation and should be free within the limits of the law to maintain their identity. They are entitled to equal treatment, and should not be subjected to discrimination and disadvantages on cultural grounds. The selected novels develop themes that portray scenarios that seem to be antithetical to the above discussed issues pertaining to multiculturalism.

Especially, Farah's and Mukoma's novels depict intolerance to multiculturalism on ethnic and religious terrains. Mukoma foregrounds the fact that Kenyans had been divided along ethnic lines and went into deadly interethnic conflicts. The novel depicts the horrendous killings that were carried out between ethnic Luos and Kikuyus. Mukoma depicts the adversary by way of offering different instances. It has been highlighted in the novel that the security forces that have been deployed to restore law and order had already broken along ethnic lines and had gone on killing rampage. This is what makes the situation desperate. Furthermore, Mukoma's novel reveals that Africa is facing a new and incurable disease that would gradually deteriorate its form and would send it into total ruin. Apart from what the novel under scrutiny depicts, it is possible to reckon the major source of current day Africa's problem.

As history may testify, incidents related to coups are declining across the continent in recent years compared to what had been happening in the 1980s and 1990s. However, it is undeniable fact that in multiethnic African countries, ethnocentrism is posing major challenges that threaten their existence. The novel under investigation also attempts to bring the attention of the readers and literary scholars to ethnocentrism that will turn countries into ashes if not given due and

timely attention. This novel also offers a vantage point from which one could examine how ethnocentrism made Kenyans hardhearted to their compatriots while others who came from other countries receive proper treatment that human beings ought to. Substantive contexts have also been offered to show how Kenyans are being forced to feel strange in their own country owing to the day's ethnic politics. The novel in question projects the core of ethnocentric syndrome that drove Kenyans into complete state of delirium wherein they failed to have the starkest mercy on fellow Kenyans who are from a different ethnic background.

The other East African nation plagued by politically motivated conflict is Somalia. As opposed to the root cause in Kenya, i.e. ethnocentrism, Somalia has been shown as a playground for blood shadings inspired by religious fundamentalism. Farah's novel builds the story that shows the ordeal Somalis have been subjected to go through centering on a journalist who had been working as a foreign correspondent in the Congo, Afghanistan and Iraq. However, the current place is the land of his ancestry, a place where a part of his belonged.

What appears most tormenting for Malik in here is that the rift that the Islamists are creating among the Muslims of various religious tendency and people of other faiths. The narrator, through the thoughts of Malik, offers a view to the readers that the fast growing religious fanaticism is putting the Muslim world in a perilous condition in general and Somalia in particular. Farah in this particular novel reveals that the Muslim world is in the grip of the Islamists who see themselves in deadly rivalry with both moderate/secularist Muslims and people of other faiths. It is manifestly brought out that the religionists who attempted to impose their radical ideology on Muslims and people of other faiths, in so far as history is concerned, brought perpetual mishap that put the Muslim world in a bleak situation.

In an attempt to foreground the dire situation in which religious extremism puts the world, Farah has referred to Afghanistan and Chechnya whom religious fanaticism set in a precarious situation. It has also been shown that the Islamic Court is declaring war against Ethiopia, a country with better military personnel and hardware compared to the Shabaab, to debilitate the lives of the Somali people who had been suffering in the hands of local warlords and now in the hands of the Shabaab a group which will prove to the Somali people of no help once Ethiopia launches its attack in retaliation. It is therefore palpable to conclude that the religionists that

provoke other countries or people of other faiths are the prime reason for the suffering of the Somali people.

The Ugandan case differs from Kenya and Somalia's when it comes to the causes of the conflicts. However, it is undeniable fact that the war fought on the soil of Uganda between Amin's soldiers and the rebels is nothing than politics. To this end, Kyomuhendo reveals the fact that Ugandans were divided along political ideologies to wage war against their fellow countrymen to worsen the situation of the civilians who are living in abject poverty. Kyomuhendo's novel depicts that Ugandans are panicked by the ongoing war. It is shown that the men carry spear and other traditional protective weapons which in practical terms are of no comparison to the machine guns owned by the active agents of the conflict from which the characters, Tendo and his father anxiously guard the village community. Furthermore, the whole folks in the area are busy hearkening to any movement which is posing threat to their lives. The conflict in the area as one can easily decipher from the novel has put the lives of the dwellers in a state of anomy.

More to the point, the novel under scrutiny clearly shows that the conflict that has started to cover larger expanses detracted the people from leading organized and planned life. This is palpable in: "Uncle Kembo and I are going to scout around first," he told us. "Tendo, whistle if you hear anything." But Tendo had already stretched out on the mat, his head covered with a blanket. He grumbled that he was exhausted from the sentry job he had to do every day (Kyomuhendo 2007, p. 16)". As it could be explicated from this portion of the novel, the residents have no plan of action to perform activities that will win them their daily bread rather than spending each of the moments in a delirious manner wandering from one corner to the other corner of where they live. Therefore, the catastrophic sociopolitical intricacy that is casting its shadow on the lives of ordinary Ugandans has been apparently fleshed out in Kyomuhendo's novel under scrutiny.

8.1.3 Inept Leadership and Foreign Powers' Interference

African politicians have received strong criticisms from African writers since the time of independence. Among the novelists who astutely exposed the predicaments of African politicians, Aikwe Armah and Chinua Achebe occupy the leading edge. These two prominent

writers in their works “The Beautiful Ones are not yet born” and “A man of the people” showed the avaricious and pretentious corrupt African leadership. The aforementioned canonical works criticize African leaders those who rely on feeding their people on bread of hope in order to ascend to power and fail to demonstrate commitment towards the fulfillment of the promises.

Such a representation holds African leaders themselves responsible for all the anomalies that result in public grievances or uprisings. Unlike numerous postcolonial African novels that foreground the shattered dreams of Africa owing to its corrupt leaders, the selected novels draw on overarching themes in addition to disillusionment. To begin with, Mukoma attempts to reflect the duality of the problem that is putting African leadership in what seems to be irremediable political epilepsy. He portrays African politicians as beings who work for their own personal achievement at the expense of their people and their countries on the one hand, and the world’s powerful government’s involvement to unsettle Africa on the other.

Mukoma boldly fleshes out the fact that the invisible hands of foreign powers create a means by which African leaders leave their doors wide open and appeal for help from the countries that stir the situations. He postulates that Kenyan politicians lack the quality to independently run the administrative tasks that any sovereign government is supposed to. It is possible to infer from the contexts given in the analysis section that the government is held responsible for all sorts of the country’s problems ranging from manmade to natural disasters. The narrator, who is indeed a Kenyan and working for IDESC, states that the leaders in the Kenyan government are unable to address a single problem the country is facing. The narrator underscores that all sorts of problems stem from bad governance, and the IDESC is there upon the invitation of the Kenyan weak government to rectify country’s problem.

Furthermore, the novel under scrutiny also depicts that the instability in Kenya is not solely attributable to Kenyan government’s poor leadership. This is evidently put in the novel through the voice of Kimani a man working for IDESC that the whole secret is that the West with its so called humanitarian organizations is behind any political instability in Kenya. Kimani tells O and Ishmael that Kenya is wanted since it has more or less what seems to be considered a government compared to Somalia, a failed state described as a Frankenstein of a state. The novel builds a theme that the political elites in Kenyan government are important for them to succeed

in any business the IDESC does in the guise of donation, relief and rescue efforts whenever any explosion or disaster devours Kenya. The novel introduces the IDESC, its activities and all the big names affiliated with it. The novel in question takes the interference of the world's competing powers in the affairs of the continents that terribly suffered from the burden of colonialism on the larger scale and makes it plausible for readers to contemplate about the postcolonial era's political landscape of the former colonies and the meddling of the world powers in the era of what is called 'globalization'.

Kiyumuhendo's novel also aims at exposing the ineptness and extreme greed of African leaders who are themselves problems for Africa rather than finding cure for the sociopolitical ills the continent is suffering from. She offers the situation of a Ugandan family. More specifically, the story of Maya and her family portrays the tragic loss of a two years old baby whose life could have been spared if there had been medication. In here, there are at least two reasons for the loss of life. While lack of proper education that is portrayed in the mother's smearing of a child with the red soil as a replacement for seeking a medical service appears as one reason, the shortage of supplying service providers with the necessary equipments and materials turns out to be the other reason for the suffering Africans seem to be destined to go through as opposed to the western world. All the ills plaguing Africans' lives are attributable to the leadership under which the citizens on the soil suffer regardless of the category of the anomalies.

Kiyumuhendo seems to reinforce an idea that governments that reign over their respective countries are responsible to develop infrastructure that mitigate the burden of the society. One of the root causes of Africa's problem is illiteracy or lack of proper schooling that lays foundation for the whole social, economic and political states of affairs. Nonetheless, African leaders often fail to demonstrate their commitments to lead their peoples out of poverty and ignorance rather than aggravating the problems weighing down on Africans. The case in point is apparently depicted in the novel under investigation. This is evident in the practice of a mother that smeared its child with a red soil to find her a cure for measles that ultimately led the baby girl to death.

Meanwhile, it has been shown that attempt had been made to get the child some medicine as the drug stores run out of stock. Thus, the two scenarios that are drawn in the novel purport that the core problem of Africa is the leaders' ineptness to sustainably solve their peoples' problems. The

bitter truth that one could easily find out while mulling over the sociopolitical realities in Africa is that the politicians are avaricious, shortsighted and extremely self-opinionated.

Nadifa's novel on the other hand reveals the ineptness of the then day's Somali administration and judges it charlatan. The pretense of the tyrant regime is apparently revealed in the senselessness of the students which is compared to illustrations in a school textbook. Moreover, the presence of the Guddi activists who count the entrants bespeaks the participants of the celebration are under heavy control of the dictatorial regime. The instance of the two ladies who are trying to hush each other up owing to the presence of Oodweyne fortifies the degree of repression the citizens are afflicted with. The portion of the story, that shows how scared the citizens are, has a sort of literary allusion to George Orwell's 1984 wherein the leader is depicted as an omnipotent and omnipresent to oversee every activity. The regime's hypocrisy in the face of an impending disaster is further projected by the fact that it even went to the extent of overcrowding the stadium with the throng of people drawn from diverse walk of life.

The novel under scrutiny clearly tells that all these sections of the society are summoned to help the regime deceive foreign dignitaries who are attending the celebration. The author mockingly tells her readers that the people are gathered to pay their homage to the regime which brought them milk and peace. Nadifa gives life to her satirical presentation of the gratitude the regime is embracing by explicitly referring to the leader as a dictator. Specifically, the portion of her novel in which she describes the mammoth painting of the dictator reminds the readers of V.S Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* 1974, a novel regarded to be describing Mobutu's regime. She tells that the painters have tried to hide the leader's mercilessness which she compares to Hitler of Germany in deeds and appearance.

When it comes to Farah's take on the subject of leadership in Somalia, he appears to be aligning the problem with the leaders' ineptness and foreign powers' interference in the Affairs of the countries. He offers a context in which he substantiates how massive the impact of foreign powers' meddling in the Somali causes is by revealing the fact that the warring parties i.e., the warlords sponsored by CIA and the religionists by an unknown group from the Arab world are turning Somalia into a battle field. It is at times indispensable to look at the religionists' warmongering tendency as they provoke Ethiopia, a country thought to have the support of the

United States of America and the strongest military power in this part of Africa. This provocative and self-inflicting act of the religionists reveals a proxy war between the radical fringes and the U.S. Therefore, a conclusion could be reached from the given points that the Somali people's ordeal is due to an ardent need of foreign powers' wish fulfillment.

Moreover, the novelist continues to portray both the religionists and the warlords as entities who are unwary of foreign powers' support and the resultant effect the war they are caught in might have on the fate of their country. Besides, in various sections of the novel, all the warring parties have been depicted as sectarian and unwelcoming to Somalis of divergent religious and political views. The cleavage between Somali politicians created favorable conditions for foreign powers to exploit the country's resources by aiding the groups at war. Unlike the warring factions whom foreign powers manipulate to achieve their intended missions, Fidno, one of the characters representing the pirates, seems to be complaining about Somalia's national interest and the international community's unrelenting effort to destabilize the country.

As it could be understood from the novel, the UN Security Council, the highest international regulatory body which of course many critics dub a neocolonial weapon, pass a resolution authorizing the countries that are fishing illegally and in an unregulated manner in the waters of Somalia to do whatever they like on the proviso of antipiracy campaign. It has also been argued that the problem of Somalia emanates from other countries' involvement in its affairs that led the country into disintegration. The disintegration of the country rendered it unprotected as a result of which foreign forces resorted to exploit its natural resources and dump their wastes in its waters. Farah reveals that Somali politicians are in the state of disarray as a result of which they rendered their country out of kilter.

8.1.4 Representation of Gender

Gender issues appear to be contentious in literature. This is mainly due to the roles assigned to female characters in literature. When the spot light is placed on African women, the magnitude of the suffering and the burdens they carry on their shoulders become more pressing than other women's living in other corners of the world. Agboadannon (2018, p. 7) upholds that "From girlhood to womanhood, the African woman has had to contend with many issues that restrain her 'being' as she journeys through life's winding cycles dictated by culture and cult.

The woman's role has hitherto been canopied to the kitchen and to other chores that are akin to her femininity, while the men do the political talking and decision-making that unfortunately also affect the voiceless woman". Even though some literary works by African writers left females' role in politics void, a considerable amount of works that portray women's agency in politics started to proliferate and capture the attention of diverse academic community. What is more, women are given different social positions in several African cultures. The position given to women in most African cultures is tangential even though their contribution to the overall activities the family or community relies on is indispensable. Regardless of the cultural diversities the continent hosts, women's identity is crafted in manner that puts them at the background no matter how brave or hard working the women figures under the spot light are.

The degree of discrimination deepens when it comes to Africans. In this respect, Krishnan (2014 p. 67) states that African women, in other words, are identified as both other by virtue of gender and other by virtue of ethnic identity, two facets which can be neither separated nor treated as equivalent but instead function through a complex relational process. Besides, African women participate in the activities that win bread for their family members and receive no recognition for their contribution in sustaining the family ties. Nonetheless, it may not be a wonder for someone who is familiar with Somali literature to find assertive, conscious, and brave female characters. The role of female characters in Nadifa's novel remains testimony for what seems to be a norm in real world Somalia where most of the activities vital for the continuity of family-life are female-headed. Nadifa seems to take the females role to the front.

Her novel projects how important women are by taking Filsan as a canvas to portray the attributes of women. Nadifa offers a context whereby she foregrounds Filsan's strength. Filsan's boss Haaruun tells the American how the entire Somali women are strong in general, and Filsan is in particular. There is an instance in which it is said that Somali women work, fight in the military, serve as engineers, spies, doctors. Women are described as potent as their male counterparts in executing all sorts of tasks that are run by men. Moreover, the novel foregrounds women through Filsan as brave and able who can prove themselves worthy of accomplishing any mission regarded as the highest order of heroism.

What's more, an instance for this claim can be taken from the portion of the novel in which the General himself speaks of Filsan's courage and caliber to outmaneuver an Ethiopian battalion. What makes the General's confidence in Filsan unique is the fact that Ethiopia is such a haunting force for Somalia as far as the issue of war is concerned. Somalia had conceded a bitter and historic defeat when it provoked Ethiopia in an effort to annex the Ogaden region to its territory. It is true that Ethiopian army is one of the most efficient and feared armies in this part of the continent. It is from the country's previous experience with Ethiopia that he considers Ethiopian army as the highest standard against which all successes are judged. Thus, it is from this vantage point that he tells the bravery and potency of Filsan that transcends beyond the ordinary and goes to the extent of annihilating an Ethiopian battalion.

Indeed, most of the novels written by Somali authors are not disdainful in their treatment of female characters. In a world where females are given a peripheral position in the sociopolitical spheres, the novel under scrutiny portrays female characters as beings who manage to perform difficult tasks which are totally regarded impossible for females in many cultures. Even though Somali writers almost unanimously approve the ability of females to accomplish any activity as effectively as their male counter parts do, Nadifa on her part brings to the readers' attention the other facet of the social reality. At times, she didn't shy away from telling the fact that the male characters who praise the females for their bravery never avoided succumbing to their sexual urges.

By the same token, Mukoma develops a narrative account that depicts the place given to women in Kikuyu culture. As it is common to many African cultures, the women are not entitled to dine with men, and they are sometimes stigmatized owing to various traditional constructs, this is not an exception to Mary. However, the novel depicts Mary the grownup who decided on her own fate as a courageous and unyielding female beginning from her early childhood wherein she challenged her father and broke the barrier that tackle many African women from going after their dreams. Moreover, Mukoma subtly tells his readers that the criterion that has long been used by the community to designate social role was as such illusionary. This is evident in Mumbi's testimony that recites how Mary turned what seemed concrete wall into ashes by wearing her father's best pair of pants. Mukoma calls attention to the new generation of Africa to

rise against the long held belief regarding women. This could also be inferred from Mumbi's lamentation that if a woman goes for her dream nothing can stop her.

Mukoma's novel keeps portraying how Africans and their culture designate women's place in any social status. The novel also unravels the paradoxical attitude that Africans have towards women under diverse circumstances. Kimani insists that he is old enough to strip naked in front of a young woman. As has been shown in the analysis, Kimani is not refusing to take off his pajamas because he respects a woman rather than sticking to the cultural position that is given to a man and a woman. This is manifest in the statement that reveals Kimani is more concerned about his dignity as a man to go naked before a woman. It could be inferred from the novel that women are characterized as beings that don't have equal role and position in their societies rather than serving as flavors that sweeten the humiliation of a man sought to be belittled. The narrator further depicts that what makes worse for Kimani stripping naked in front of a young woman is not because he recognizes women as equals or sacred, instead it is of the social standing that reminds him of the situation like something worse than death.

Even though the role that women play in supporting their families is as pivotal as their male counterparts', they are depicted as dependants or beings that cannot survive on their own. This is observable in Kyomuhendo's novel *Waiting*. The author portrays women's role by taking Jingu's mother as a focal character to serve her purpose. Jingu's mother is dependent upon her husband even after his death. The novel portrays that she doesn't have her own job on which she lives. What is clear in the novel under scrutiny is that Jingu's mother had no job and still doesn't have any to support her life except asking for what her deceased husband might have left behind. No single mention has been made as a reason why she is jobless rather than depicting her as a woman who frequently goes to the cotton mill in search of payment where her husband had been working. Moreover, no one appears to be out there to help this woman who desperately visits the cotton mill where she meets with an Indian man who might have impregnated her.

The saddest thing about Jingu's mother is that she toiled for months where very single visit of hers to the cotton mill ended up in exhaustion and tears to bear no fruits rather than bringing her another burden, pregnancy. What is more, the novel purports that the Indian man has taken advantage of her to gratify his sexual desire rather than solving Jingu's mother's problem.

Therefore, an inference could be made from the above context that African women in general, Ugandan women in particular are exposed to several exploitations against which they do not make their voice heard as with Jingu's mother who kept the identity of the man who impregnated her as a secret.

Apart from demonstrating how women's voice is silenced, Kyomuhendo skillfully constructs a narrative demonstrating the overarching problem African women's lives are chained to. In most parts of the continent, African women begin their journey that is filled with suffering and tribulations at early age where they start to learn how to live with exploitation and oppression. In this respect, Tyson (2006) confesses that she considers herself as a recovering patriarchal woman who has taken for granted the norms and values of patriarchy which in her own point of view defined as any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles that give prominence to men as omnipotent and infallible. Concomitantly, the traditional gender role assigned to female characters in the novel under investigation is highly affected by patriarchal ideology.

8.2 Thematic Divergence

The selected novels along their thematic convergence have brought out certain issues that make each novel different from the other novels used in this study. The core points that each novel raised show the extent to which a particular phenomenon or a set of experiences severely affected the lives of the people living in a country and historical milieu in which the selected novels have been set. To start with, Nuruddin Farah's *Cross Bones* (2013) emphasizes on the region's political potholes that made the area a difficult place to live in. For instance, through the conversation that took place between Ahl and Warsame, he reveals Bosaso's wreckage which symbolizes the paralyzed system of administration which criminals of all type take advantage of though there seems to be a relative peace and stability compared to Mogadiscio.

It could also be inferred from Farah's novel that migrants from the neighboring countries such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Tanzania are taken as indicators of the widespread dismal situation that the region is lingering in. It is also indicative of the fact that the city is serving as a hub for criminals who engage in human trafficking and piracy. This is evident in Warsame's description of the state as an autonomous albeit dysfunctional. Bosaso is taken as a prototype of most of the places in the region whereby symbolic government structures are in place, but impotent to maintain law and order that straightens the crooked.

Warsame's reflection, "They all want to make their way to Yemen and Europe, courtesy of the human traffickers who exploit them as stowaways in flimsy boats—just to escape from here.", testifies that the place is such a calamitous that migrants harboring in the city want to break away from the place at any cost. Another instance that portrays the city as wobbly and intricate emerges from a conversation between Ahl and Warsame in which they talk about census. The point here is, their conversation foregrounds the fact that the city doesn't have a certain structure that helps to conduct a census as one form of bureaucratic practices. Moreover, the tentativeness manifested in the novel under scrutiny could be considered as a symbolic representation of administration in Africa wherein successive regimes endeavor to achieve their own goals than establishing long lasting systems that would benefit their respective countries.

Mukoma on his part vocally developed a theme that vividly depicts the deep-seated moral decadence modern day Kenya is caught in. One of the prime issues the novel repeatedly brings to

the fore is the agenda of corruption. The following two lines extract taken from the novel tells how cash operates any sort of criminal activity. “I didn’t take that seriously—this was Kenya, where \$200 bought you a murder and \$20,000 a small massacre. At the right price and in the right hands a bomb could be placed anywhere.” As it can be inferred from the extract, what a small sum of money would do is clearly put stating the possibility any perpetrator could opt for, be it a murder or a massacre. Besides, the novel subtly tells the readers that the country is Kenya where any of its citizens can be bought and manipulated for \$200. Apart from depicting Kenyans as mercenaries, the novel also foregrounds the weakness of the security apparatus of the country in a very devious way. Furthermore, the frailty of the security apparatus is communicated in a much accentuated manner claiming that the system is wobbly to the extent of failing to prevent ‘a small massacre’ that \$20,000 would buy.

The novel projects that someone with a good sum of money could turn the whole country into hell. This is evident in ‘At the right price and in the right hands a bomb could be placed anywhere.’ Therefore, the above extracts taken from the novel tend to postulate Kenya as a country whose citizens from all walks of life would sell it for an insignificant amount of money if they get the opportunity to do so. Thus, one would resort to a conclusion that Kenyans are such a cash maniac people whose moral decadence could stretch up to selling their own country.

Moreover, the novel under scrutiny also portrays Nairobi as a place where cops and robbers sit at the same table, eat and drink just like African Buffalos, Zebras, Lions and Hyenas flock together in African forests. The above interpretation could be in what Ishmael narrates as follows: “O walked back in to find a party—cops and robbers eating and drinking to the lives saved.” An attempt made to compare African wild life with that of the life in the African tavern emanates from the analogous scenario the novel in question offers the readers. This is due to the fact that the beasts do not spend the entirety of their time hunting for there are preys; likewise, the cops in the tavern do not hunt the robbers for they are under the same ceiling unless there is any reason impelling them to do so. The novel’s depiction of the cops and the robbers’ situation portrays the irresponsibility of the cops who repeatedly fail to discharge their duty.

What appears to be an issue of divergence when it comes to Nadifa’s and Kyomuhendo’s novels is that both authors emphasized on gender roles. Nadifa in her novel offers her readers the layer

of females' experiences in their social relationship with their male counterparts. It is shown that the males who believe in women's ability to perform other tasks fail to escape lusting after their subjects. This appears to reveal the latent attitude that males have towards the females. Though Filsan's strength seems to be constructed, the kernel of the story depicts the fact that there are moments when women appear to be nothing than sexual objects that are designed and created to give men sexual gratification.

There is a section of the novel that portrays the suffering Filsan, one of the characters, is going through because of the way the general parades her. There is an implication that all the males who are around her see nothing than breasts and genitals. The gaze of the waiter and the action of the general ignited a flame of wrath as a result of which she hisses to herself. It is also possible to spell out how painful her experience is from the excerpt. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that Nadifa Mohammed emphasizes on the fact that Somali women are subject to oppressions when it comes to the body politics like any other women.

Similarly, Kyomuhendo's novel foregrounds women's position as inferior and oppressed while the male authors' novels boldly purport the gallantry and assertiveness of women. Apart from demonstrating how women's voice is silenced, Kyomuhendo skillfully constructs a narrative demonstrating the overarching problem African women's lives are chained to. In most parts of the continent, African women begin their journey that is filled with suffering and tribulations at early age where they start to learn how to live with exploitation and oppression. By the same token, the novel in question demonstrates that a woman who is in love with a man of her own is deprived of the right to decide on her own life due to the patriarchal culture which incapacitates women's independent decision making.

In *Waiting*, a female character Kaaka epitomizes how women's rights are violated by the patriarchal ideology owing to the fact that she is destined to beg her mom to marry a man whose future baby she already carries in her womb. Nonetheless, for she is considered to be a female who has wisdom of traditional medicine, the culture doesn't allow her to marry. On the contrary, the novel reveals that it would be possible for her to marry if she were male. This shows that a male who has the wisdom of traditional medicine can marry while a female with similar wisdom is banned by the tradition from exercising her right.

What is more, the patriarchal ideology appears to be deep-seated and dogmatic as it can be elucidated from the context in which Kaaka tells her mother that she is already pregnant. The novel clearly shows the repressive nature of the culture which treats Kaaka unfairly. The patriarchal culture's dictates on gender role has been given in which Kaaka's mother tells her daughter the fact that their culture doesn't allow a girl who has wisdom of traditional medicine to marry, and she will rather face discrimination that sends her into exile from her community if by chance she is known to have breached the tradition's provision. Above and beyond, Kaaka's mother is anxious about her child's pregnancy and vowing to consult "a strong medicine man that will make the pregnancy invisible". This point portrays the patriarchal ideology that is taking its toll on the lives of both the mother and the daughter. Therefore, Tyson's assertion on gender roles that she articulates as a weapon that has been used very successfully to justify inequities, which still occur today, such as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision-making positions, resonates with Kaaka's experience.

8.3 Conclusions

An investigation of the modern-day sociopolitical intricacies in selected Anglophone novels [Ca. 2005-2015] in light of national/regional model of postcolonial theory reveals that the novels selected from Kenya, Somalia, and Uganda dwell on the trajectory of sociopolitical intricacies that have been putting this part of Africa in long-lasting crisis. The causes of all the sociopolitical ills have their origin in colonial experiences. The modern-day sociopolitical intricacies i.e. religious fundamentalism, ethnocentrism, piracy, human trafficking, rampant corruption, inept leadership and foreign powers' interference in the affairs of the East African countries from which the novels are chosen have been discussed in separate chapters devoted to each of the novels under scrutiny.

After conducting a comparative analysis of the selected novels, the researcher came to conclude that Nadifa Mohamed's *The Orchard of Lost Souls* (2013) Nurudin Farha's *Cross Bones* (2011), Mukoma Wa Ngugi's *Black Star Nairobi* (2013) and Goretti Kyomuhendo's *Waiting* (2007) revealed the major factors that contributed to the political instability in the region leading to sporadic civil wars and mass exodus of the people. All the selected novels demonstrate that the major problems indicated in the analysis are not new phenomena to the time in which they have been published. The novels rather reveal that the early days of independence have their bearings on the current days' sociopolitical intricacies causing economic and humanitarian crisis in this part of the continent. With regard to thematic congruity, Ogede (2011) offers a substantive statement as follows:

Contemporary African authors make common cause despite the radical novelty of experimentation that each one of them puts on display; even a casual reading of their works reveals the thematic and stylistic lines that join them. They read one another's works and take possession of each other's materials, often breaking through barriers of ethnic chauvinism. Such interchange is integral to African writing and is a worthy object of investigation. *Looking Inward* explores for the first time in depth this intergenerational continuity, which hitherto has tended to be absent from the critical canon, and examines the overt and covert affinities—the intertextual reverberations—that pervade African writing, with the aim of leading readers to a coherent understanding of the practice of African literary relations (2011, p. x-xi).

Besides, Nurudin Farha's *Cross Bones* (2011) and Mukoma Wa Ngugi's *Black Star Nairobi* (2013) bring a new perspective into the sociopolitical spheres of the east African countries. The

two authors placed special emphasis on two captivating developments in the sociopolitical sphere of the Horn region inhabited by peoples of diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds. Farha establishes a link between Somalia's past and present to show the trajectory of the sociopolitical crisis Somalia has been leaping through beginning from its independence. In the selected novel, he revealed that the people of Somalia had been divided along political ideologies copied from the socialist countries and their opponents just to venture into civil war that led the country into anarchy for more than two decades.

Moreover, Farha demonstrated that Somalia has been in a continuous war with its neighbors owing to the uncalculated risks its leaders take across the course of time from Siad Bare's regime to the Union of Islamic Courts. Most importantly, Farha demonstrates that in the historical epoch of his novel, religious fundamentalism is the prime cause for the suffering and fall apart of Somalia. Above and beyond, he indicated that foreign powers' including Somalia's neighboring countries' interference in the affairs of the country coupled with ineptness of the so called administrative structure that ever ascend to power brought all forms of instabilities. The study concludes that after vividly showing the degree of damage done to Somalia and its people, Farha resorts to the point that religious fundamentalism which has never been good to its adherents is turning Somalia and the Muslim world into a perpetual turmoil.

On the other hand, Mukoma among the salient thematic preoccupations he raised in his novel emphasized on the fact that ethnocentrism is the fashion of the day that every feeble politician trades in. *Black Star Nairobi (2013)* reveals the horrendous ethnically motivated killings in which ethnic Luos and Kikuyus went into the killing rampage wherein the only criterion to slaughter a human was ethnicity. People were murdered for a mere reason that they are member of the target ethnic group. In line with, Mukoma indicated that politicians are the ones who are inciting ethnic conflicts while they enjoy protections. Mukoma's novel led the current researcher to a conclusion that ethnocentrism is one of the pressing issues Africans combat. The issue of ethnocentrism and religious fundamentalism is the most underrated and overlooked problem in Africa in general and in this part of the continent in particular. The novel under scrutiny also showed the moral decadence that led Kenya into gross corruption where robbery and bribery comfortably reign over the flora and fauna of the country.

Irrespective of the differences between their countries of origin, Nadifa Mohamed's *The Orchard of Lost Souls* (2013) and Goretti Kyomuhendo's *Waiting* (2007) reveal the postcolonial disillusionment. Specifically, these two authors offer a horrific view of civil war in which citizens are exposed to diverse form of traumas. The two female authors, centering the construction of the story line on female characters, reveal the fact that women are the most vulnerable section of the society. Both Nadifa and Kyomuhendo vibrantly showed the impact of war on the nations and hinted at the agents of the intricacies.

In summary, the selected novels have attempted to develop an inward looking perspective as opposed to the typical postcolonial African novels that subtly worked towards externalizing Africa's problems rather than finding and suggesting the way forward to rectify the latent and manifest problems the African continent is stuck in. In this regard, the current study has found out that contemporary African writers have broken the tradition of pointing fingers towards external forces while they are practically affected by the fact on the ground that Africans failed to develop an inward looking perspective in their literary tradition.

The works selected for the current study invariably called for integration of Africans to deracinate the sociopolitical maladies in unison. By the same token Ogede (2011, p. xiii) acknowledges that the arbitrary frontiers created by colonization might have been intended to isolate the African peoples. But barriers have been violated with ease by African authors. Ogede moves on saying that the grammar of relationships reflected in the works of Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, Ayi Kwei Armah and Bessie Head—to name only a few of the outstanding writers—clearly shows that imagination defies all limits, be they barriers of ethnicity, gender, religion, politics, or nationality. Cross-fertilization of ideas has flourished in Africa without restriction.

8.4. Implications

Literature goes beyond time and space to postulate a historical development of human conditions. It unravels the multiple layers of the human vexations, philosophy, cosmology, politics and entire life style that show the story line connecting the mortal with the deity, the flesh with the spirit. Since the nuances of literature and its scope stretch across the horizons, one needs to be as specific as possible in dealing with the essence of ideas emerging on the pathway to the investigation of literary materials. Contemporary literary products that proliferated after the demise of colonialism, which are officially termed as Postcolonial literature and one of the repositories of literary trends and knowledge, have been fertile ground for researchers so far.

Conducting literary research within the confines of postcolonial theory calls for an eclectic approach. This is due to the proliferation of philosophical and political themes that digress from the tenets of postcolonialism and render it insufficient to address the emergent sociopolitical thematic preoccupations. Kalliney (2008, p. 146) corroborates the claim that postcolonial theory has reached an impasse because it fails to grasp, much less adequately critique, the emerging system of world sovereignty commonly called globalization. In their estimation, postcolonial theory is something from which scholars of globalization can learn, but recent political and economic developments have left postcolonial studies unprepared to assess the political contradictions of our current world. Postcolonialists have offered a surprisingly muted reply, effectively ceding the discourse of contemporary world politics and culture to critics of globalization. Thus, the current study forwards the following implications that may serve as ramification of the recurrent calls for a more methodical and eclectic approach to postcolonial African literature;

It is undeniable fact that any form of research requires a wider and comprehensive examination to draw wide-ranging and complete recommendations. Relying on this credence scheme, the following recommendations are given. It needs to be noticed that these points are listed to bring the attention of future researchers and other potential beneficiaries to the themes explored in the current study.

- Politicians may find the finding of this study awakening to pay attention to the issues novelists stylistically address in their works since the much neglected extremist thoughts that are taking the continent to imminent peril are recorded and recited in the selected literary works.
- Universities may benefit from the current study by encouraging interdisciplinary and collaborative studies so that research works such as the current project would be enriched by the expertise of the scholars from other disciplines from which theories are adopted in a way that encourages cross-fertilization of ideas.
- The findings of the current study apparently call for a comparative study of East African literature using an eclectic approach to show the emergent sociopolitical themes that have been given little or no attention in postcolonial African literature.
- The findings of this study also hint at the necessity of reconsidering the latent and prevalent sociopolitical realities of Africa by African novelists to remedy the modern-day sociopolitical maladies of the continent.
- The findings of the current study also suggest that it would be better if African writers follow in the footprint of Farah and Mukoma to reveal that most of the current days' sociopolitical maladies of the continent are attributable to Africans themselves trade in the established tradition of blame shifting game African elites play.
- On the other end, the current study implicates that African elites should reconsider their diplomatic relationship with the West since the West's engagement in what is called humanitarian activity, aid, diplomacy, and consultancy have bearings on the sociopolitical circumstance of African countries.

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