

Representations of Sectarian Extremism in Selected Nigerian Novels

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Abstract

Sectarian terrorism has become one of the dominant thematic areas in contemporary literature and public discourse. Existing studies in literary criticism have interrogated western novels on the phenomenon more than Nigerian novels while those available in Nigerian novels concentrate mostly on trauma, neglecting the postcolonial comparative perspective of representing Islamist (sectarianism and terrorism). Edward Said and Elleke Boehmer's aspects of Postcolonial theory are deployed to interrogate how the binary construction of self/other, good/evil is interrogated and deconstructed in relation to religious fundamentalism in connection with power relation between the terrorist and the terrorised. Elnathan John's *Born on a Tuesday* (*Tuesday*) and Adaobi Nwaubani's *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* (*Baobab Tree*) are purposively selected for this study because of their in-depth, prosaic representations of terrorism and they are subjected to interpretive analyses. Terrorism or extremism is depicted as perpetrated by extremist Muslims in *Tuesday*, while, in *Baobab Tree*, the perpetrators are portrayed as non-Muslims, despite appropriating Islam as their ideology. Similarly, *Tuesday* focalises the perpetrators while *Baobab Tree* narrativises the female victims' experience of terrorism. The postcolonial condition that stimulates sectarian terrorism is also portrayed in *Tuesday*. Significantly, the authors' gender influences their plotting of terrorism. This paper concludes that the two Nigerian writers narrativise sectarian terrorism in the Nigerian state differently, to suit their visions based on given points and contend that Islamic sectarian terrorism may be a more appropriate term than the generic Islamic terrorism.

Introduction

Terrorism is a difficult word to define due to its politicisation by different state hegemonic structures (Ditrych 2; Jenkins 5-6). This accentuates the dictum that one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter. To postcolonialist critics like Boehmer and Morton, the discourse of terrorism is framed around a hegemonic perception that constructs the enemy other as the terrorist. Although the history of terrorism is more documented in the West than in Africa, however, it is generally agreed that terrorism is perpetrated by both state and non-state actors. Thus, terrorism is broadly categorised into state and non-state terrorism. Frank and Guber define terrorism as “politically, religiously or ideologically motivated acts” (10). Law opines that terrorism is based on the tripod of the perpetrators, who act against the few – the victims – and the reaction of many, the audience. Hence, non-state terrorism is perpetrated by non-state actors against states or their representatives to accomplish a particular goal, mostly political/religious, through the mechanism of fear and extreme

violence. A good example is Islamic sectarian terrorism. In this study, terrorism is posited as symbolic acts of extreme violence that is perpetrated by state or non-state actors to instil fear in a designated population based on peculiar motives ranging from religious to secular.

Terrorism in Africa significantly started from slavery. Mbembe states that “any historical account of the rise of modern terror needs to address slavery” (21). He expounds that the plantation systems are spaces of state of exception where masters possessed the *necropower* to make a slave live or die. Thus, transatlantic slavery was one of the most horrible experiences of terror on a large scale. Mbembe further asserts that a slave experienced three losses: loss of home, loss of rights over his or her body, and loss of political rights. Similarly, the colonial dispensation was perpetrated with overt terrorism and this ontology made the anti-colonial fighters adopt terrorism-as-resistance, as a tactic to regain liberty from the colonialists. According to Thomas, “rural dispossession, forcible relocation of populations, insurgency, and repression” (218) characterised the French colonialism in Algeria. For example, France during the colonial era practised a double standard in Algeria using uncivil methods in contrast to its democratic principles in France. The colonial terrorism and anti-colonial terrorism/resistance of the FLN prompted Frantz Fanon's writing of *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Regarding terrorism in Africa, Solomon quotes Oladosu Ayinde's unique categorisation of terrorism in Africa into three phases namely: Afro-Oriental, Afro-Occidental and Afro-Global (4). The first is the incursion of Arabs into Africa to look for slaves to further their economic development while the second phase is the incursion of Europeans into Africa for slaves and the third is the colonisation of Africa. This *sui generis* perspective shows different types of terrorist violence that have been perpetrated in Africa but which have not been mapped as a part of the wider and global discourse of terrorism. Therefore, we posit that the fourth category is Afro-centred terrorism which is the terrorisation of Africans by Africans. Since the independence of most African states, the most common forms of terrorism in Africa are religious and state terrorism. These forms of terrorism are based on “varied legacies of colonialism” (269), adopting Olaniyan's description, which comprises socio-economic, political, religious, and cultural conditions that have morphed into different complex circumstances. However, one of the most prominent is the use of sectarian Islam as a facilitator of resistance, violence, and terrorism. Islam, we contend, is very heterogeneous but the ideological wrangling among the different sects and movements has birthed various gradations of violence that have snowballed into jihadi campaigns and terrorism.

In Nigeria, the most prominent form of terrorism since its independence is perpetrated by Boko Haram. The group's genesis can be traced to different puritanical Islamic groups like the Al Sunna wal Jamma, Muhajirun, and the Yan Tatsine led by Mohammed Marwa. Boko Haram calls itself “*Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad* or People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad” (Solomon 86). The popular name, Boko Haram, was assigned to it by the people because the group rejected western education. Since 2009, literary writers, both Nigerian and foreigners, have depicted the phenomenon differently through their literary expressions. Some examples include the selected novels, *Girl* by Edna O'Brien, *The Chibok Girls: Our Story* (Drama) by Wole Oguntokun, *A Humanist Ode for Chibok, Leah* (Poetry) by Wole Soyinka.

Postcolonial Reflections on Literature and Terrorism

Postcolonial theory usually interrogates the relationship between the coloniser (the dominator) and the colonised (the dominated) in terms of power negotiation. Ashcroft et al provide a clearer insight by explicating the hyphenated concept of postcolonialism in two

dimensions: the first conceives “post-colonialism” as covering “all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present” (Ashcroft et al 2) which means there is continuity by subverting the temporality of the “post” in postcolonialism. The second conception of “post-colonialism” is based on “cross-cultural criticism” (Ashcroft et al 2) which is underscored by concepts of hybridity, syncretism, and the like. Within the ambits of postcolonialism, there has been a contest on the borderline between resistance against imperial hegemony and terrorism. Frantz Fanon's seminal work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, provides an opening to the colonial terror that breeds counter-terror, as well as bottom-top resistance. Fanon contends subtly that colonialism, as well as its apron string, imperialism, thrives on violence which prompts counter-violence. While Fanon reifies the reciprocity of violence between the coloniser and the colonised, he conceptualises the anticolonial struggle as resistance rather than terrorism. However, at a closer look, we posit that there is parallelism between the anti-colonial violent struggle and terrorism, like in the case of Algeria. Despite this, Fanon's postcolonialism is unequivocal that violence breeds violence. Hence, Bhabha accuses Fanon's writings of being divisive, a position, which, in itself, is subjective.

Similarly, Said (*The Question of Palestine*) states that certain actions are designated terrorism when perpetrated by non-state actors while the same actions are perceived as 'national security' when executed by the state which illustrates state hegemony (88) and further asseverates that terrorism has been conflated with Islam to serve prejudiced purposes (*Orientalism* 348). An apt illustration of this is the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. The corollary is that Palestinians are branded terrorists while Israeli extreme violence is designated national security. Therefore, the Palestinian's violence is amplified while that of the Israelis is downplayed and this underscores the contradictions and hypocrisy of representation and naming which Said (*The Question of Palestine*) connects to the West's generalist perception of Palestinians as terrorists. In the reading of Said's *The Question of Palestine* (1980), the representation of terrorism as resistance and an inevitable option for voicing the repressed is presented as the Palestinian contestation against Zionism and the acquisition of Palestinian lands (39).

Postcolonialism has interrogated the generalist, stereotypical and homogenising frame of representing the non-western subject as terrorists in western novels. Such include the equation of Islam generally to terrorism, which Gray opines is the result of the disappearance of communism (32). Thus, Islam, an othered religion, becomes the new enemy of the West, therefore, orientalisng the Other. This manifests in the negative and stereotypical representation of Islam in literary expressions. Scanlan observes that popular American novelists, like Don DeLillo, John Updike, and Sherman Alexie, also deploy this frame of representation and contends that “none of these writers creates a context large enough to include ordinary Muslims, people with differing political and religious perspective” (267). Boehmer in a parallel argument enunciates the necessity of perceiving terrorism from the perspective of the neo-imperial order (the coloniser) too and its implication on the colonised (143), Hence, while terrorism is condemnable, it has become a form of resistance to neo-imperial impulse too which underscores the necessity of a historical perspective to terrorism.

In contemporary postcolonial states like Nigeria, neo-imperial proclivities are promoted by the state and its actors coupled with the debilitating socioeconomic situation and this postcolonial condition breeds violence and terrorism. For the postcolonial understanding of the representation of terrorism, there is, therefore, a need not to only dwell rigorously on the representation of terrorists/terrorism, by western authors, in western texts,

but also to apprehend how African writers, Nigerian in this case, do the same in their literary expressions, simulating the various politics of representations like binary construction, othering and stereotyping. Also, it is pertinent to examine how the writers deconstruct the relationship between Islam and terrorism paying attention to contexts and socio-economic dynamism, unlike the depoliticised posture that is dominant in most 9/11 novels.

The Notion of Islamic (Sectarian) Terrorism and Literary Expressions

The literary response to terrorism in its modern sense has been mostly predominant in western literary works and examples include Lord Byron's 'Ourika', Joseph Conrad's *Secret Agents*, and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Dynamiter*, among others (Houen 28). Kubiak postulates that there are three typologies of terrorist narratives which also overlap (296). The first typology is conceptualised as “writing of terrorist groups by themselves” (Kubiak 296) and renamed by Frank and Guber as “literature by terrorist” (9). This typology is mostly propagandist and full of the “rhetoric of terror” (Simpson 9). The second is “narratives about terrorism” which Frank and Guber label “terrorism in literature” (9) with the bracketed explanation of “terrorism as a literary theme” (9). However, we contend that the classification of terrorism in literature as just a literary theme is simplistic and neglects the complex nature of terrorism in literature (see Scanlan for other dimensions). Equally, we posit that Kubiak's second typology can be subdivided into active narratives about terrorism and passive narratives about terrorism. Active narratives about terrorism make terrorism the main subject while passive narratives about terrorism make terrorism a subplot like in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. The third is narrative terrorism, which Frank and Guber call literary terrorism. The selected Nigerian fictional texts in this study are active narratives about terrorism.

John's *Born on a Tuesday* and Nwaubani's *Buried beneath the Baobab Tree* are the contemporary Nigerian novels selected for analyses in this section. *Born on a Tuesday* fictionally represents the postcolonial condition that birthed Boko Haram in Nigeria by depicting Islamic sectarian conflicts and rivalries as well as its violent and terror effects in northern Nigeria, adopting Sokoto as a metaphor. Although Unigwe (2016), in an online publication, states that “John steers away from making this novel about Boko Haram”; however, her review does not consider the author's vision in the novel as representing the conditions that led to the evolution of Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Islam in Nigeria was established by the influence of the Sokoto Caliphate and the 'Kanem Bornu' kingdom (Anugwom 31). Also, colonialism strengthened the evolution of the Muslim identity in Nigeria. Mohammed traces the growth of Islam in northern Nigeria and Nigeria further to the “centuries of contact with Muslim North Africa through trans-Saharan trade, the agency of the Kanem-Borno empire before the nineteenth century and the Sokoto Caliphate since the 1804 jihad” (11). Equally, the pre-Fodio epoch in Hausa regions was polytheist until the jihad of the nineteenth century. Anugwom contends that Uthman dan Fodio's jihad and the notions of pure Islam sets “an immutable background to contemporary Islam in Nigeria” (32). The Sufi brotherhoods of Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya are the major Islamic groups in Nigeria. Other Islamic groups that evolved later include the *Izalatul Bidi'a wa Ikhamatis Sunnah* (People Committed to the Removal of Innovations in Islam), also known as Izala, and the Shiite body of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria.

In the postcolonial Nigerian state, Islam, as a colonial legacy, plays an essential role in all sectors. Falola (2003) states that there is a strong link between Islam and politics, especially in Nigeria. He avers that Islam is a cohesive force in Nigeria and that tensions will

continue in Nigeria and Africa in the forms of “inter- and intrareligious conflicts” (167) based on ideological differences. These are aggravated by differing political interests and complicated by the postcolonial condition of government's ineptitude and debilitating socio-economic condition of the masses in the postcolony, climaxing in “symbolic Othering that... has given way to a new set of oppositional identities” (Taoua 211). Hence, Falola's analysis of the interconnection between Islam and politics in Nigeria (167), especially in northern Nigeria, forms the background of the selected Nigerian novels in this paper. This postcolonial condition prompts violence that degenerates into terrorism.

In the 1970s, according to Tarhbalouti, there was an evolution of various Islamic movements in Northern Nigeria and this development occurred in tandem with the establishment of the Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia, which “became the intellectual centre of Salafism and attracted students from all Muslim countries”. Izala, a Salafist-Wahhabi group, is one of the Islamic movements in Nigeria and has played a major role in the subtle radicalisation of Muslim youths in northern Nigeria. According to Hundeyin, the official name given to Izala by Sheikh Ismail Idris is “*Jama'atu Izalati Bid'ah Wa Iqamatus Sunnah* (Society of Removal of Innovation and Re-establishment of the Sunnah), also known as JIBWIS”. Harnischfeger states that the Izala “sought to purify a lax and adulterated Islam” (43) and considers whoever does not follow their “literal interpretation of Islam” (43) as impure, therefore, creating a culture of differentiation among Muslims which prepared the ground for Boko Haram. Izala drew membership from the youths, who abhorred their parents for following magical ways and promoted equality between all ethnic groups. Harnischfeger describes Boko Haram “as a spiritual offshoot of Izala” (48) and parallels Izala's preaching like hostility towards the Tijaniyya and Sufi mysticism to that of Boko Haram. However, members of Boko Haram detest the Izala clerics for their corrupt relationship with the political class.

According to Tarhbalouti, Izala was founded in the city of Jos under Sheikh Ismail Idris but the group relied on the “teachings of Sheikh Abubakar Gumi”. Izala benefitted from Saudi funding to propagate Salafism in Nigeria and it called for the implementation of Sharia law and the removal of innovation, religious practices that are not backed by the Quran and Sunnah. However, the first generation of the Izala members, according to Tarhbalouti, were concerned with local issues, “anti-Sufi resentment”, unlike the second generation who integrated the local issues with global Islamic issues. The second generation was led by young graduates from Saudi Arabia, like Adam Ja'afar, who was Mohammed Yusuf's mentor. Rifts started among members of the second generation of the Izala movement and this led to a fissure that birthed two subgroups. The first subgroup drew closer to the state while members of the second subgroup remained at arm's length with the state, thereby creating numerous local Salafist-Wahhabi sects with doctrinal differences. Ja'afar's group, *Ahlussunnah*, according to Tarhbalouti, was one of the most prominent and was based in Kano state. On the contrary, contemporary Izala has aligned more with the government.

What popularised Izala was the emergence of Boko Haram from Ja'afar's sect. Yusuf was described as more radical and forbade his followers from accepting Western education or taking jobs from the state. Ja'afar and his religious scion, Mohammed Yusuf, had doctrinal differences which made Yusuf create his movement, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati wal-Jihad*. The difference between the previous Izala groups and Yusuf's sect is that his movement believes in using “violence to implement its ideology”. Ja'afar and Yusuf had theological arguments and debates that culminated in the killing of Ja'afar by Boko Haram members in 2007. This presumably forms the background of John's *Born on a Tuesday* that depicts the schism that developed between Sheikh Jamal and Malam Abdul-Nur, symbolic

references to Ja'afar and Mohammed Yusuf.

Representing Sectarian Terrorism in the Selected Texts

Born on a Tuesday is an eponymous and witness narrative. It is narrated from the perspective of Ahmad, an adolescent *almajirai*, whose sobriquet is Dantala which means born on a Tuesday. *Born on a Tuesday* appropriates the binary construct of religious liberalism and extremism to portray the characters of Alhaji Usman, Sheikh Jamal, on one side, and Malam Abdul-Nur, Sheikh's assistant, on the other side. Sheikh Jamal belonged to the popular Izala group before opting for the establishment of his sect which is based on the liberal puritan Salafi-Wahhabi ideology but depends on political funding provided by Alhaji Usman and funding from international patriots. However, Malam Abdul-Nur believes in the absolutist and puritanical Salafist ideology that considers anything outside the Quran and Sunnah as unacceptable and subverts jurisprudence. This portrayal foregrounds the heterogeneity in the interpretation of the Quran by many Islamic sects/movements based on various contemporary/contextual socio-political and socio-economic conditions. However, this right/wrong paradigm is faulty, based on the hypocrisy of Sheikh Jamal and the unethical proclivities of his actions, and foregrounds the question of ethics in practicing Islam.

On the contrary, Nwaubani deploys the Muslim/non-Muslim paradigm to depict Boko Haram terrorists as non-Muslims. Malam Isa, Aisha's husband refers to the Boko Haram terrorists as a group of criminals. However, instead of appropriating the popular Manichean construct of good/liberal Muslim versus bad/extreme Muslim like in *Born on a Tuesday*, Nwaubani deconstructs the paradigm through the characters who contend that "Boko Haram has nothing to do with Islam" (165). To characters like Malam Isa, Aisha, and Malam Shettima, the members of Boko Haram are not practicing any form of Islam. This approach by Nwaubani is a discontinuity from the popular liberal/extremist paradigm of portraying Islamic (sectarian) terrorism.

The representation of Islamic terrorism in *Buried beneath the Baobab Tree* is diametrically opposite to the narrativisation in *Born on a Tuesday* because the victim's perspective is predominant more than the perpetrators. The novel depicts females as the greater victims of Islamic terrorism through the kidnapping of the anonymous narrator, a young girl, later renamed Salamatu, as well as many girls, women, and children by Boko Haram from a village close to Izghe in Borno. The narrativisation of Boko Haram terrorism in the novel represents the story of the margin that Mazza (2019) designates "a lesser-known story" (339) unlike the popular Chibok Girls' story. While John's *Born on a Tuesday* portrays the prelude of and the postcolonial condition that birthed Boko Haram terrorism, Nwaubani's *Buried beneath the Baobab Tree*, on the contrary, depicts the heart of Boko Haram terrorism from the victim's perspective.

Equally, John portrays the sectarianism inherent in Islam as the postcolonial condition for Islamic sectarian terrorism, thereby reifying the heterogeneity in Islam, and undermining the generalist designation, Islamic terrorism. According to Dantala, the adolescent narrator in *Born on a Tuesday* "No one likes Shiites in Sokoto. Everyone believes they are dangerous, especially those of them who go to Iran to study and the Shiite malams who take *money* from *Hezbollah* to fight Dariqas and the Izalas" (107). The portrayal of these Islamic sects as heterogeneous in *Born on a Tuesday* deconstructs the gaze of an outsider who conceives Islam as homogeneous. While Haqiqiy, Sheikh Jamal's movement, aims to promote a liberal Salafi-Wahhabi ideology that proselytises to convert, Malam Abdul-Nur is the opposite. However, Nwaubani does not represent this deconstructed perspective of Islam. She deploys the Muslim/non-Muslim paradigm, a form of paradigm

shift from bad Muslim to non-Muslim.

Also, Nwaubani in *Buried beneath the Baobab Tree* represents Boko Haram terrorism as Islamic terrorism based on expansionism, kidnapping, modern slavery, and forceful conversion of victims to facilitate the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate that repudiates western education and promotes extreme Sharia law. Conversely, John in *Born on a Tuesday* focalises Islamic sectarian politics as possessing an expansionist motive to gain more followers for personal and political patronage which later morphs to Islamic (sectarian) terrorism in the case of Malam Abdul-Nur. As Sheikh Jamal expounds his objective to Dantala: “As far as Niger and Mali is how far he wants to take this movement” (114). This study, therefore, theorises that there are two types of religious fundamentalists, namely the non-violent or passive religious fundamentalist who holds the religious text as sacred, this can be the Bible, Quran, or any other religious text, and will rather push their beliefs primarily through proselytisation or opinionated views instead of resorting to violence. This type includes religious theorists like Sayyid Qutb while the second category is the violent or active religious fundamentalist who combines violence with all the features of the passive religious fundamentalist. This theorisation is the basis of the binary paradigm of representing religious fundamentalists in *Born on a Tuesday*. Malam Abdul-Nur's representation is the other side of the conformist binary paradigm which makes him a veritable example of a violent religious fundamentalist who evolves into a terrorist. He fans the embers of Islamic sectarianism to promote terror(ism). He radicalises those who worship at the mosque through his literal interpretation of the Quran, by appropriating some popular jihadi discourse that is anti-western and anti-modern. His narratives are parallel to that of Muhammed Yusuf, the founder of the Boko Haram sect, whose sermons reject “secularism, democracy, Western education and Westernisation” (Mohammed 14). Abdul-Nur's core areas of contesting modernity are projecting the adverse effects of neocolonialism and western education, which Mohammed attributes to the disdain for the link between *boko* (Western Education), the colonial state, and Christian missionaries.

John and Nwaubani also examine conversion to Islam as a site of powerplay and necropower. In *Born on a Tuesday*, the character of Gabriel who later converts to Islam and adopts the name Jibril valorises the binary representation of liberal Muslim versus violent or radical Muslim and the process of conversion. Jibril is Malam Abdul-Nur's brother. While Sheikh Jamal believes in subtle proselytisation that leads to conversion, Malam Abdul-Nur is the opposite. Hence, Jibril is used as an experiment to show how Sheikh Jamal converts without using force. The same method was employed in the conversion of Malam Abdul-Nur, contrary to Malam Abdul-Nur, whose approach is imbricated in violence by hitting, beating, or flogging Jibril. However, Jibril's acceptance to convert, based on Sheikh Jamal's preselytisation, without further resistance, is simplistic and keys into a model of fantastic representation of converting an adolescent who has no option. This fantastical representation is simplistic because Jibril, being an adolescent, could have run away as he later does at the end of the narrative, without waiting to witness his brother become a terrorist that cuts off a boy's hand for stealing meat. Equally, in Nwaubani's *Buried beneath the Baobab Tree*, conversion becomes an agency of survival for the Christian girls and women and this enunciates the rejection of death as an option but survival as a bridge for psychical acceptance of the loss of their rights and privileges as human beings. According to the anonymous narrator who later becomes Salamatu, “Sarah and I shift to his left-hand side with other Christian women and girls, while Aisha stands on the right side with the Muslims” (121). This representation evinces that religion still plays a crucial role in the fate of the victims of terrorism. While Magdalene accepts death as an option, the narrator, her friend

(Sarah), and the others appropriate conversion as a mediating agent of subtle submission to their “new masters” and survival. Forced conversion to another religion in terrorism subjugates free will and reason but makes it an agency of survival to mediate a present relief from the closure of death. Hence, forced conversion is a weapon deployed by both Malam Abdul-Nur in John's novel and the Boko Haram terrorists in Nwaubani's.

Also, the Islamic sectarian terrorism, represented in *Born on a Tuesday*, culminates in the use of systematic violence against the state: attacking police stations, throwing bombs at soldiers, and the slaughtering of Sheikh Jamal as well as taking away his head. The killing of Sheikh Jamal is symbolic, communicative, and metaphoric. He is slaughtered, to instil terror, and his head is taken away and it is a metaphor for the removal of the religious head of Sheikh's movement. It is not surprising that after Sheikh's death, the movement collapses and its leadership disperse. On the contrary, Nwaubani in *Buried beneath the Baobab Tree* employs the kidnapping of the narrator and other villagers to portray Islamic terrorism as modern slavery that traumatises its victims and objectifies them.

Gendering and Mobile Female Agencies in the Selected Texts

The two authors subtly genderise their representation of Islamic (sectarian) terrorism. In John's *Born on a Tuesday*, female characters are not amply represented in the space of extreme violence/terrorism whether as perpetrators or as victims except Malam Abdul-Nur's wife who suffers terrible beatings from him. Even her experience is reported by Jibril which means John's female characters are subjected to *masculinised* representation. However, although Nwaubani's *Buried beneath the Baobab Tree* focalises the female victims in terrorism, she presents a more balanced representation of male/female relationships in Islamic terrorism by deconstructing the power play between the two genders, the female agencies in terrorism, and their mobile status. Hence, Nwaubani's representation centralises the trauma and terrorisation of girls and women as victims of terrorism, unlike John's representation that centralises the male gender in terrorism as sole perpetrators which Nwaubani contradicts by presenting the male/female systemic organisation of terrorism.

Nwaubani represents females' experience in terrorism as a reincarnation of slavery in disguise. The victims are objectified and this invokes **Mbembe's** analysis of the plantation as a site of necropower. In *Buried beneath the Baobab Tree*, the Boko Haram leader states that “You belong to Boko haram... You are now our slaves” (119). Terrorism is slavery in disguise and depicted as a patriarchal means of dominating the female victims who are turned into slaves for the domestic activities of the terrorists. The culture of slavery, imbricated in terrorism, also includes the subjection of the victims to *living dead* conditions which include poor feeding and forceful acquisition for sexual pleasures. Also, renaming is appropriated as a tool of objectifying the victims and a means of erasure of the past. The narrator is renamed Salamatu while her friend is renamed Zainab. For the victims, it becomes a loss of being because of the plantation condition they are subjected to. However, John's *Born on a Tuesday* presents Islamic (sectarian) terrorism as only a male affair.

Similarly, in Nwaubani's novel, Boko Haram terrorists institute both male and female mediating agents at various sites of power. The women agents also possess parallel powers as the male agents. They proselytise the girls and women and mould them according to the wish of the Boko Haram vanguard. The first is Amira who teaches the converts how to dress as Muslims, serves them food, and prepares them for their next phase as wives of Boko Haram men. Fanne performs similar functions and maintains order among the wives of the Boko Haram terrorists as well as trains them for suicide bombing. She teaches the new wives

how to appease their husbands and how to please them. She mediates settlements between the girls and their husbands as well as the wish of the Boko Haram leadership to turn them into an asset of sacrifice by radicalising them and sending them on suicide bombing missions as typified by Zainab. According to Fanne, 'Allah does not allow men to fight women... you brave women of brave fighters have to be the ones to fight infidel women for Allah' (p. 224). This vision depicts women as co-perpetrators in Islamic (sectarian) terrorism.

In Nwaubani's *Buried beneath the Baobab Tree*, women, as victims of terrorism, also possess a mobile status. Nwaubani deploys the institution of marriage as a mode of mobility from slaves to wives which connotes a hierarchical movement from general slaves to 'a slave of one man' (p. 208) with rights and privileges like sleeping in a tarpaulin tent instead of under an open sky. This mobility creates complex power relations between females or women in terrorism. The vertical hierarchical representation of women in terrorism depicts the mediating agents, like Amira and Fanne, as occupying the highest position, followed by the wives while the slaves occupy the lowest rung of the ladder. Equally, the marriage of the girls to the Boko Haram men symbolises the myth of virgins on earth as a gift, a simulation of the virgins in Paradise. The virgins are *Houris*, which Senoussi and Mortad contend are *Hour al-Ayn* in Paradise, described in the Quran as "virgin and alluring women" (507) and are offered by God to martyrs that fight for his course. Also, the process of the marriage institution is rewritten for the girls as the narrator asks "who will accept the groom's proposal on my behalf?" (196). Rather than the female victims being offered for marriage by their parents and relatives, they are substituted with the "Leader" who acts as their sole proprietor, arrogating to himself the legal and familial role of "giving" them away to their husbands. The marriage ought to be a two-way process of proposal and acceptance, but, in this instance, it is a one-way process of giving the brides to their Boko Haram husbands without the permission of the girls or their relatives.

Marriage also serves as a platform for Nwaubani to schematise the women in terrorist enclaves as belonging to two categories. The first category is the assimilationist category while the second is the resistant group. Zainab, who is married to an affable Boko Haram terrorist, Ali, which makes her fall in love, epitomises the first type while Salamatu belongs to the second type. Zainab assimilates and develops the belonging syndrome. She is a metaphor of the girls and women in terrorist captivity that develop the assimilationist syndrome of their captors. She accepts the rationale for the terrorism of Boko Haram and identifies with it. On the contrary, Salamatu is an example of girls and women who are victims and develop a defence mechanism, reject belonging or identifying with their captors. Salamatu is married to the man in the mask, with the sobriquet Osama, who believes only in "matrimonial commands" (210).

Similarly, the representation of the effect of terrorism on the girls or women within the institution of marriage differs. Within the assimilationist model, Zainab finds love and is *rewarded* with a mission of suicide bombing. On the contrary, Salamatu, the narrator, the resistant one, earns her freedom but with pregnancy. She is haunted by the trauma of the "man in the mask" and the uncertainty of the future, she wonders how "the mother of a child with bad blood can lift her head high among normal human beings" (292). Thus, in the representation of women as victims, within the ambits of Boko Haram terrorism, Nwaubani deploys the binary construct of assimilationist victims and resistant victims, through the characters of Zainab and Salamatu, respectively, to explain the social circumstances that prompt the acceptance or rejection of Boko Haram ideology by their female victims. The corollary of this representation is that women as victims of terrorism experience various and differing power plays and human relationships that alter them differently. However, all these

genderised nuances are not in John's *Born on a Tuesday*.

Postcolonial Condition and Sectarian Terrorism in the Selected Novels

Invoking Taoua's essay, the postcolonial condition evinces the inhibiting or provocative societal disorders, mostly contradictory, that succeeded the decolonisation processes and euphoria in most postcolonial nation-states (218). These circumstances are anathema to the hope of dividends of decolonisation in the postcolony what Taoua describes in Ayi Kwei Armah's novels as "the toll the failure of nationalism takes on the intimate self and its longing for wholeness and authenticity" (218). This condition includes disillusionment, poverty, neo-compartmentalisation based on class, state oppression/repression, and terror(ism) that breeds resistant counter-terror, evolving alternative spaces for critiquing socio-political and socio-economic conditions like the mosque as a religious-political space, intra- and inter-religious conflicts.

One aspect of the postcolonial condition of terror represented in *Born on a Tuesday* is complicity and it focalises compromised ethics and hypocrisy that precipitates Islamic sectarian terrorism. Sheikh Jamal and Alhaji Usman are complicit in making Malam Abdul-Nur an extremist/terrorist. Sheikh Jamal says this about Abdul-Nur "he is stubborn as a donkey, but not useless...I still need him" (132). This means Sheikh Jamal employs him as an instrument to further his selfish motives and grow the movement. Equally, when Alhaji Usman acquiesces to send Malam Abdul-Nur to Saudi Arabia as proposed by Sheikh, he is also complicit in the transformation of Malam Abdul-Nur into a terrorist. In converse to the binary paradigm of conformist Muslim versus violent Muslim, as terrorists, in *Born on a Tuesday*, the differentiation collapses when examined from the prism of religion and politics. Both Sheikh Jamal and Malam Abdul-Nur compromise their ethics in different ways. Malam Abdul-Nur steals from "the box at the back of the mosque" (101). Interestingly, Sheikh Jamal is not different. Paradoxically, he colludes with Alhaji Usman to inflate the funds spent by the movement and the amount expended on projects.

This compromises the ethics of Sheikh Jamal as a religious leader and Alhaji Usman as a religious patriot and depicts them as hypocrites. Thus, one may surmise that Malam Abdul-Nur has witnessed all this before leaving the movement and this makes it impossible for Sheikh and Alhaji Usman to correct him, despite knowing that he was a thief stealing from the coffers of the movement. Considering the disposition of the three characters to money, their morality is compromised and this collapses the paradigm of differentiation in their representation. The lust for money, in different and very corrupt ways, shows the thin line that exists between ideology and Islamic sectarian terrorism.

Similarly, in Nwaubani's novel, Boko Haram terrorists are portrayed as using Islam for self-actualisation and acquisition of the female gender for sexual gratification. Boko Haram institutes mediating agents at various sites of power that proselytise their victims just like Malam Abdul-Nur, in Elnathan John's novel, radicalises his followers through Islamic puritanical rhetoric. These mediating agents entrench submission and sexual acquisition which compromises their religious ethical teachings and depict their hypocrisy. Al-Bakura and Malam Adamu are a representation of these agents whose role is to compel the submission of the girls and women and proselytise them to be 'good Muslims'. These agents deploy fear as a weapon of submission and this prompts nightmares and hallucinations in the victims and blur the line between the real and the imaginary. Malam Adamu teaches them the Quran based on Boko Haram's interpretation, makes sure they pray at dawn and appropriates the word 'infidel' as a metaphor of denigration like Malam Abdul-Nur. However, despite being their agent of proselytisation, he also doubles as a sexual predator. According to

Salamatu, the narrator, “He tiptoes into our sleeping area after dark, noiseless as a shadow, taps a woman or two, and beckons her to follow him out quietly” (148). Malam Adamu's sexual predatory of the girls and women symbolises compromised ethics and the hypocrisy of the Islamic ideology that underpins Islamic terrorism.

The postcolonial condition of socioeconomic deprivation and poverty connects religion to (trans)national politics as reified by John in *Born on a Tuesday*. Alhaji Usman is used as a postcolonial metonymic image of the elite, in an average Islamic society. He religiously performs *sadaka* – giving alms and feeding the poor – at the mosque in Sokoto, subtly employing philanthropism as a mode of garnering support for his political ambition. Through him, the author shows that there is a link between religion and politics, the former provides the followership while the latter supplies the money that finances the former. Alhaji Usman is depicted as someone who represents political funding and religious power conflated in one as he maintains a fluid relationship between the Islamic sectarian movement and state politics.

Equally, John's *Born on a Tuesday* depicts Islamic sectarian terrorism as possessing a symmetrical connection between Islamic sectarian politics and what we classify as funding. Funding, in this context, signifies the pecuniary resources that are provided by different religious and political sources. The novel portrays funding as promoting Islamic sectarian politics. The bulk of the funding is sourced from transnational religious groups with Islamic sectarian interests. This portrayal typifies the transnationalism of the local Islamic sects. According to Dantala, the adolescent narrator “No one likes Shiites in Sokoto. Everyone believes they are dangerous, especially those of them who go to Iran to study and the Shiite malams who take *money* from *Hezbollah* to fight *Dariqas* and the *Izalas*” (107). Sheikh Jamal's movement is sponsored by certain groups in Saudi Arabia and England. This religious funding makes the sects further the interest of the transnational religious organisations locally and proselytise the mind of their followers towards the attainment of the goals of these international groups. Furthermore, the narrative shows that there is a connection between the religious funding from Islamic transnational groups based in Saudi Arabia and the perpetuation of Islamic sectarian terrorism. For example, Malam Abdul-Nur Mohammed's journey to Saudi Arabia and the funding he receives serve as the bridge between the dawah period and the establishment of his violent group. Thus, the novel shows that religious funding serves as a means of survival and funding of sectarian ideologies.

Conclusion

Elnathan John and Adaobi Nwaubani represent Islamic (sectarian) terrorism from different perspectives. Nwaubani's vision represents women in terrorism both as victims and as mediating agents and depicts the complexities of women's experiences. The narrative focalises the several stories of different girls and women who have experienced Boko Haram terrorism in different ways as well as the uncertain future faced by these victims. It is therefore possible to assert that Nwaubani has portrayed a mostly female gender-specific vision of terrorism unlike John's *Born on a Tuesday* where the representation of Islamic terrorism is sited in Islamic sectarian ideological differences and varying postcolonial condition and developments. Also, John's *Born on a Tuesday* and Adaobi Nwaubani's *Buried beneath the Baobab Tree* signify novels/narratives about Boko Haram terrorism as an emergent subgenre of Nigerian literature that accounts for the representation/plotting of the Boko Haram terrorists, their victims and the trauma of the experience. Equally, we contend that the term “Islamic sectarian terrorism” is more appropriate than the generalist “Islamic terrorism” that focalises the whole of Islam as a mechanism of terrorism.

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