

POSTCOLONIALITY AND VALUE SYSTEM IN SELECTED PLAYS OF CHRIS ANYOKWU

Dr. Ijeoma Precious Obiyor

Department of English
Olabisi Onabanjo University
Ago-Iwoye Ogun state Nigeria.

Preshe1973@gmail.com +234-8033070121

Abstract

The collapse of value has been a major challenge in postcolonial Nigeria. It is discovered that much attention is yet to be paid on the interrogation of social value systems in the works of Chris Anyokwu. This paper seeks to explore value systems in selected plays of Chris Anyokwu with a view to unravelling the values portrayed in the plays in the light of postcolonial construct. The paper adopted Mahatma Gandhi's (1933) postcolonial theory in '*Hind Swaraj*' which provides contextual values that are relevant in investigating the social, economic, educational, religious and political issues in the plays selected based on their depth of coverage of issues related to value system. Findings revealed that educational, political, economic, and social values permeate the selected plays. Further findings revealed that the conscious use of Gandhi's 'soul force', which enables an individual to deliberately develop a conscience that supersedes the social conscience that is essential if the individual must uphold values pertinent to national development. The paper concluded that value systems could be used to address social, political and economic problems in a nation by prioritising those values which can engender attitudinal change and promote national development.

Keywords: Ethical politics, Leadership, Postcolonial, Transformation, Value,

Word count: 192

INTRODUCTION

Africans, from the pre-colonial era, emphasise a society where everyone is everyone's brother's keeper where payment is made for goods left along the roadside even if the seller is nowhere in sight. The youths used to see the acquisition of wealth and success as an offshoot of hard work and skill. This value system is the essence of the African nature which is also the natural order of African existence. It defines their cultural identity and their development.

Value system reflects through the beliefs and moral principles a particular society has come to absorb as a way of life and become acceptable social behaviour. 'Africans, from the pre-colonial era, have their peculiar culture which is evidenced in their ways of life. Their value systems, as elements of their culture, are depicted in marriage relationships, communal living, religious practices, and legal system' (Madukwe & Madukwe, 2010, p. 264). These values were firmly rooted in the extended family system in Africa, reflecting integrity, honesty, selfless service and justice. 'The Nigerian culture promotes courtesy and respect for elders, mutual love, peace and harmony' (Olayemi, 2020, p. 412). Failure to uphold these values is believed to attract

consequences and this helped in upholding the values. According to Omosule (2021), 'The pre-colonial era was particularly fruitful through the manifest recognition of the subsisting myths, such recognition conferred moral probity and collective acceptance of the immanence of the deities/taboo, and the negation of which attracted fatal consequences' (p.37).

However, there comes a shift in some of the stable African traditional positive value structure with '... the eventual contact with the Western culture through coloniality and, with the subsequent upsurge of globalisation, these values are not only being challenged but also eroded' (Madukwe & Madukwe, 2010, p. 264). The society thrives in high level of moral decadence and misplaced values. According to Kasongo (2010), 'One could infer that when (westernisation was) exported to African countries, the hidden side of modernism was materialist interest and not only human or social development' (p.314). This materialist interest in modernism brings with it all manner of vices.

Today, modern Nigerian society lacks moral values and grapples with many behavioural problems of dishonesty, drug abuse, assaults, insults, gangsterism, violent demonstrations, vandalism, examination malpractices, robbery, secret cult activities and killings. The Corruption Perception Index 2021, as reported by Transparency International, indicates that Nigeria is the second most corrupt country in West Africa. Furthermore, according to the Global Peace Index 2021, Nigeria ranks 146 among 163 independent nations and territories according to the level of peacefulness, making Nigeria the 8th least peaceful country.

The eroded value system gained its footing through postcolonial leadership that neglected African values in pursuit of material wealth and fame. As a result, corruption becomes noticeable in all facets of Nigerian society. It is prevalent in our education, economic, political, religious, and social life that Nigerians earnestly yearn for a more practical approach to eradicate the problem. 'Consequent upon this onslaught on the African values systems by the Western values...with its negative and positive impact, what should be the response of Africans to salvage their pristine values that shaped their society morally, economically, politically and religiously in the past' (Madukwe & Madukwe, 2010, p. 264), becomes a subject of discourse under postcolonial literature.

Thus, the notion that the intrusion of Western civilisation dislocated traditional values all over Africa is no more a question in postcolonial literature. African writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, Ayi Kwei Armah, Kofi Awoonor, Ferdinand Oyono, Esiaba Irobi, Ola Rotimi, Zulu Sofola, Femi Osofisan, Chris Anyokwu to mention a few, have articulated the breakdown in social values in Africa in their works. Obasola (2015) posits, '...for there to be sanity in our social and political lives as a nation, we must covet the principles enshrined in our moral values' (p.1). This view is a major frontline of value system in relation to post-colonialism.

Irele (2007) also asserts, that Western civilisation, with its upheavals, has a positive light that individual members of the African society should embrace for national development. He suggests that Africans should develop a new state of mind that will positively affect their outlook on Western civilisation and the world. This assertion again echoes the views of Gandhi (1933), Said (1978), Fanon (2007), Bhabha (2004) and Derrida (1997) on the liberation of the African mind from colonial materialism.

Examining the issue of underdevelopment of African nations, vis-à-vis the Nigerian society, various studies have investigated value systems using different methodologies and theoretical approaches. Osaat and Omordu (2011) adopted the philosophical approach to evaluate the value system and its effect on Nigerian education, while Enato (2018) critically evaluated the impact of Westernisation on the Esan community. Igbaniho (2016) adopted functional structuralism to investigate the role of social studies education on sustainable development in Bayelsa State, while Adedigba and Wahab (2020) adopted an analytical approach to examine moral value degeneration in Nigeria. However, studies are yet to investigate value systems from Gandhi (1933)'s postcolonial perspective. This paper engages the cultural principles outlined in Gandhi (1933)'s *Hind Swaraj*, which is a critique on modern values to interrogate value systems in the selected plays.

The blatant neglect of Nigeria core values by the individual members of the society is what Gandhi (1933) conceived as the effect of colonialism and Western civilisation in his *Hind Swaraj or Home Rule*. Gandhi's (1933) political theory, which he proposed for the Indian community, gives value to freedom, equality, justice, rights and duties. Gandhi notes that the Western political concept does not promote the spirit of duty and selfless service, which is the most crucial element of his political theory. He believes that Western civilisation influences the mind of the individual members of the society which elicits the exhibition of certain deviant behaviours such as greed, corruption, war, individualism and all forms of oppression. He further asserts that moral behaviour is nothing but to 'attain mastery over one's mind.' (p.3) Gandhi (1933) identifies the mind as the foundation for reformation which defines the value a society holds. This assertion aligns with Irele's (2007) elucidation on the role of the individual members of the society in relation to national development. Irele's position explicates the difference between being aware of a concept and internalising the meaning of the concept. This paper thus proffers an alternative approach to implementing national values towards national development.

Anyokwu Chris is an emergent scholar whose works have not been subjected to extensive critical attention. This conclusion emanated from the fact that only one of his selected plays was reviewed by the editor of an online newspaper, The Trumpet, Dr, Adiele in his article titled, *Stolen Future: Time for Recovery*, on July 5, 2022. Other critical examinations of his works are on his collection of poems, *Naked truth* (2015): Onuoha (2018), and Alabi, & Ajiboye (2023). The paper argues that Anyokwu's works have not enjoyed much scholarly attention. Thus, it was noted that there are few significant examination of the selected plays of the playwright from Gandhi's postcolonial perspective.

Operational Definition of Terms

The definitions of some terms as used in this research are given below:

National development: The ability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people

Postcoloniality: The historical period or state of affairs representing the aftermath or Western colonialism

Political: This means relating to the way power is achieved and used in a society.

Post-colonial Theory: A literary theory or critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were once, or are now, colonies of other countries.

Theme: This means the underlying topic of a discussion or a recurring idea in an artistic work

Values: These are principles or standards of behaviour

Synopsis of the selected plays

Stolen Future (2006) is about a young graduate, Feye, who cannot get a job after years of searching. He runs into a prostitute, Agbon, who tells him she is into prostitution due to her inability to get employment after graduation. The young man in question, Feye, lives in the boy's quarters of his uncle, who is a corrupt politician and represents the older generation, corrupt politicians who are not ready to allow the younger generations to contribute to nation's development. Instead, they amass wealth for themselves, which they lavish in philandering and property acquisition. **At the end of the play, Feye and Agbon resolve to make a change in their lives. They cultivate an attitude that reflects positive values towards development.**

Ufuoma (2007), the prologue presents a funeral procession that symbolises the deadness of the institution of learning, where moral values and principles should be the modus operandi of the education of the youths in society. The playwright examines the high level of moral decadence seen in our tertiary institutions. He reveals the display of materialism, revealed in the character of Ufuoma; the frustration and challenges one faces in upholding positive values. The play portrays corruption and exam malpractices in the University environment and the perversion of values in Nigerian society.

Homecoming (2008) is a play that centres on materialism, ethnic rivalry and corruption at the leadership level, which hinders national development. There is a juxtaposition of two ideologies, one representing the progressive mindset that promotes good moral values and principles for national development and the other representing greed and self-centredness towards self-development and gratification. The play exposes our political leaders' neglect of positive value system and its effect on national development. The plot reveals the factors that hinder progressive political leadership. At the end, it reveals corrupt leadership in the polity as endemic but can be resolved with a conscious effort to denigrate negative values.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literary works that portray colonial discourse consider topics and issues that promote Western influence, emphasising the benefit of colonialism as a roadmap of civilisation to the colonised, which are represented as uncivilised, barbaric and crude. This view triggered responses from African writers and thinkers on the issue of colonial representations giving birth to the concept of post colonialism.

Thus, post-colonialism first emerged as a reaction in defence of colonialism: exploitation, oppression, racial otherness and power. Its initial focus is on society, the effect of colonialism on the colonised and how colonial constructs affect society. This is first noted in Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* (1933) but attracted a literary consideration in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978).

Criticism of Said's *Orientalism* took post-colonialism as a theory to the platform where it pays attention to the new perception of individuals living in formerly colonised society, their culture, and its clash with Western culture. As a result, Said's (1978) position becomes the central idea of postcolonial theory for several literary critics.

However, looking at its etymological construct, it suggests a sequential series. It also bears the connotation of something contradictory to the stance recognised by colonialism because, according to Gail and Wolfrey (2001) '... all aspects of contemporary African cultural life have been influenced - often powerfully- by the transition of African societies through colonialism.' (p. 200). The extract refers to the imbalance created by the effect of Western culture and ideologies on traditional African society. Furthermore, it resulted in a deviation from the norm, which could be seen as a deviation from the objects of value system. This paper identifies this deviation as what created the significant gap affecting modern African nation's development.

Post-colonialism is also viewed by different schools of thought from the context of a set of political, philosophical or theoretical requests provoked by the colonial project and its aftermath. These different schools of thought are built around the concept of otherness, resistance, ambivalence and hybrid identity. We have those that advocate criticism of colonial politics and economics, calling for practical revolution or reform. Among these are Gandhi, who sought a revolution without arms; Fanon, who advocates violent revolution, Nandy and Foucault who added a militant approach to their form of revolution while Sartre and Said used the media as a medium for their revolution. The other school of thought comprises those that stressed on colonialism moral blindness and the cultural regeneration required in the wake of that subjugation. We have Jacques Derrida, Homi Bhabha, Khatibi Abdelkebir, and Glissant Edouard under the school of thought.

Jane Hiddleston (2014) summarises these different perspectives of some postcolonial theorists and critics on postcolonial themes. Hiddleston (2014) presenting Foucault's (1972) view on postcolonial questions identified his inclination on knowledge and representation, and his belief in the relationship between the power structure of any society and knowledge. She notes also, that Sartre (2001) postcolonial view agrees with that of Foucault's on the concept of the relationship between power and knowledge and further stresses that knowledge must not be imposed. According to Hiddleston (2014), 'Said's notion of common humanity demands an awareness of the requirement of freedom and of the ability to create oneself independent of imposed structures of mastery and imperialist knowledge' (p. 96). In other words, humanity should have an understanding that identifies a threshold that is not bound by imaginary circumstances that create divisions but to note that our world is shaped by intricate and stormy forces and identifies oneself in it.

Thus, from the appraisal above, Postcolonial theorists and critics give various definitions to the term post-colonialism. These definitions emanate from the different views of postcolonial thinkers and critics on the effect of colonialism on the colonised. Ashcroft's (2001) perspective on the views of different postcolonial theorists and critics analyses these perceptions from the opinion of a period, a concept beyond a period and a form of criticism. He says, 'Post-colonialism means many things and embraces a dizzying array of critical practices' (p.7). Ashcroft (2001) notes that colonial contact created a condition that is a product of the *epistemological* and mental orientations. This condition is the self-centred mind-set of a typical African man. Ashcroft (2001)

added that, ‘... the term ‘post-colonialism’ has come to represent increasingly indiscriminate attention to cultural differences and marginality of all kinds, whether as a consequence of the historical experience of colonialism or not’ (p.10). In other words, post-colonialism is also defined with regard to its discourse which relates to all forms of injustice and marginalisation in colonised societies which affect their colonial history.

Finally, post-colonialism is also seen as a discourse on the interactions of the various sectors of society with power and knowledge and their effect on the colonised society. Thus, it is not out of place to conclude according to Omosule (2021), that ‘Post-colonialism becomes a platform for the discussion of the challenges of the pre and colonial era’ (p.31)

Gandhi proposes theories that are related to life experiences and promulgate traditional values as superior to colonial values early before post-colonialism was seen as a concept. He challenges colonial dominance and condemns and denigrates all colonial ideals and policies. This places Gandhi as the foremost postcolonial theorist. This view is corroborated by Trivedi’s (2011)’s assertion ‘In view particularly of his direct role in India and wider influence abroad as a leader of the movement for anti-colonial nationalist liberation and decolonisation, Gandhi would appear to have a valid claim to be called the father of postcolonial world as well’ (p.522). This is actually true for before the advent of early postcolonial writers and critics such as Said, Bhabha, Spivak and others, the issues of postcolonial studies were extensively dealt with in Gandhi’s (1933) *Hind Swaraj* as a means for Indian liberation.

The issues raised by Gandhi centre on self-rule, a proposition that advocates a dismantling of Western values and economic and political structures to embrace native (African) value system. Pradhan (2018) states, ‘Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj* repudiates the colonial dominance in all its forms by dint of a severe criticism’ (p.86). The philosophy behind *Hind Swaraj* reveals the true meaning of self-governance (independence) for the interest and development of every member of the Indian society vis-à-vis colonised societies.

Chakrabarty (2011) notes, that Gandhi’s (1933) political theory is unique in that it proposes policies that reject not only Western political values and morals but also vicious traditional social structures, norms, and values. Gandhi’s (1933) ethical politics centres on the relationship between political leadership and social reform. This theory posits the search for political leadership that is purposeful and humane. This paper agrees with Gandhi’s (1933) proposal for humanitarian and purposeful leadership as the object of focus for Nigeria’s national values. It suggests a way to eradicate corruption in Nigeria.

The political principles of Gandhi (1933) are the thematic construct portrayed in the selected plays of Chris Anyokwu under the theme of values. The selected plays present societies that reflect modern imperialism constructed and disseminated through political leadership, oppression and killings. Additionally, the selected plays present situations and actions that reveal obvious striving towards freedom through individual transformation to align with the performance of duty and observance of morality towards national development. Chris Anyokwu’s selected plays deploy the tool of postcolonial discourse on values to call for a political transformation that aligns with Gandhi’s (1933) ethical politics.

Value is a sociological concept perceived in the context of what is moral, positive, significant, suitable, needed and constructive. Obro (2021) states that ‘... values connote acceptable standards, idea, way of doing things and living a virtuous life in society’ (p.68). To function effectively, every organisation and institution must have operational value. An institution that does not have an operational value heads to the brink. As a social being, man needs value in relationships, which gives the relationship focus and direction. Anwuluorah and Asike (2015) posit that ‘... values are fundamental in all human societies and activities’ (p.192). Isola (2010) notes that value development is essential to national development. Ajero and Oyinloye (2011) emphasise more on Falade and Orugbemi’s (2011) view on the relationship between national values and morals to national development. This relationship gives credence to the need for a practical reflection of Nigeria’s national values. Obro (2021) submits that ‘... values provide a workable guide to serve as a check, an objective or rule to be observed by all citizens as it concerns national development’ (p.71). Thus, ethical values must guide the political policies of any society.

There are various definitions of value from different writers, and these definitions point to reflections of value. Value reflects. We see value as it reflects in the relationship between the people and the system of society. These are the various definitions of value by some writers and critics. Osanakpo (2015) evaluates value as ‘... beliefs or convictions that guide and direct a person’s behaviour, purpose and vision’ (p.6). Ajero (2016) sees value as ‘... elements that give identity, transformation and development or progress to an individual and the entire society’ (p.23). Arigbabu (2016) defines *value* as ‘... abstract trans-situational goals, varying in importance that pertains to desirable end-states or behaviours and guide selection or evaluation of behaviours and events’ (p.86). Akpan and Okoro (2018) define *value* as ‘... qualities that define a people; they have a major influence on people’s behaviour and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in solving problems, taking decisions or setting goals’ (p.124).

Thus, from these writers’ and critics’ different definitions of value, certain fundamental concepts are apparent, which portray that value reflects, through attitudinal change towards a desirable end, through understanding the positive workings of existence, determining the individual’s behaviour and revealing that the physical reflections of value and the object of value lie in the individual’s mind.

Postcolonial discourse, as it relates to individual and national development, hinges on the revolution of the individual mind, a re-orientation of the individual mind towards a deconstruction of colonial views. Irele (2007) submits that African nations’ development falls on these noted points; a revolution of the African mind and the adoption of the spirit of development that must consume an African man’s rationale.

Mahatma Gandhi (1933) opines that the spirit of development thrives in an atmosphere of ethical politics. Civilisation should be a process that exposes prevalent defects and arouses among the people particular desirable sentiments through an understanding of widespread feelings and giving expressions to them.

Evidently, values are not mere representations of reality but constitutive of that reality. Reading Gandhi’s (1933) *Hind Swaraj* from Nigam’s (2009) perspective reveals that civilisation should be a proposition for the spirit of creativity and service to humanity devoid of any form of violence.

Gandhi (1933) notes, that ‘Civilisation is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms’ (p.49). It also reveals certain conditions that are visible hindrances to Nigerian development. The condition of corruption, bribery, ethnic rivalry, nepotism and killings we find in Nigeria today is what Gandhi (1933) identified long ago as modern predicaments, estrangement, disenchantment and loss of connection with humanity’s fundamental relationship to nature. How else could one explain the deplorable conditions in Nigeria? Thus, Gandhi (1933) in *Hind Swaraj*, according to Nigam (2009), reveals an existential truth of life. Nigam (2009) also presents the significance of *Hind Swaraj’s* existential frame as ‘... a way of looking at the world’ and ‘posits the beauty of slowness’ (p.43). Modern civilisation comes with ‘speed syndrome’ in every facet of existence; fast food, get-rich-quick, and the *go-go-go* slogan of motivational speakers. The speed syndrome shaped the object of values and morals, bringing various vicious crimes and violence. Nigam (2009) proposes a reading of Gandhi to elucidate how a nation can embrace development as it rejects the speed syndrome.

This paper agrees with this view because, at the level of slowness, it pays attention to policies that promote development and maybe eradicate destructive competitions. However, the get-rich-quick syndrome brings all manner of evil, which is visible in our society; ritual killings for protection by the Yahoo boys and the politicians alike, kidnapping demanding vast amounts of ransoms, the focus being to acquire wealth and live a vivid life within the shortest time.

APPLICATION/ANALYSIS

Homecoming (2008) presents a community whose ideology of a developing society hinges on materialism and whose leaders are corrupt. The protagonist, Iberi, is portrayed as a leader to reveal character presentation of one who upholds national values and morals needed for national development. Iberi believes that national development pivots on positive value system. In projecting the theme of value system, the play portrays Iberi and Peter using what they say and do, to show that it takes a strong individualistic drive and belief to stand above the general ideology that does not encourage national development. Peter and Iberi, as university students, years back have the strong revolutionary spirit to change the corruption in the leadership of the society of the play, and it borders on upholding progressive value system.

However, when both find themselves in a leadership position; Peter lost his values by embracing the prevalent social value system; a system that favours materialism, self-aggrandisement, and greed.

Iberi: Peter, you disappoint me. You were called the “Fire-eating revolutionary” in the university. You were a student union leader. You organized countless “Aluta” struggles way back then. You were the rallying-point of student unionism when we were in the university. And, I was just one of your proteges back then. Just Publicity Secretary to you. You taught me the fundamentals of people-oriented, issue-based politics. And now, you and I are fortunate enough to serve our people on a larger platform. Must we betray our revolutionary heritage? (Anyokwu 2008:24).

According to Iberi, progressive value system is highlighted as “... fundamentals of people-oriented, issue-based politics.” The actions of Iberi, in the play pursue a discourse that suggests

the ability of an individual to make a difference by having a strong resolution. The objective being to re-orientate and infuse into the society a kind of self-transforming mind-set that is free from negative western influence.

Iberi decides to make a difference and refused to be affected by the prevailing norm irrespective of the sacrifice he has to make. Iberi pursues a form of politics that Gandhi advocates, politics that is "... meant for the improvement of the lives of our people" (Anyokwu 2008:22). Also in the play, the character of Akura reflects the effect of having negative value system in society. At the beginning of the play, a group of women is seen discussing on the personality of Akura yet, he was celebrated by his community because he uses his wealth to play the 'Santa Claus', dispensing favours and helping the indigent. As such, nobody queries the source of his wealth.

Thus, it is revealed that Akura's sudden wealth immediately he delves into politics is a clear indication of the rot in the political system. In the play, it is a general knowledge in the community that Akura, a secondary school drop-out could not run his business and lived most of his years as a rapist and a crook, yet the society celebrates him. This indicates the tragedy in a society riddled with negative value system. This is what Gandhi sees as the offshoot of civilisation which should be eradicated for a progressive society. Embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds is a welcome development so long as the immediate community of the corrupt leader benefits from the loot. Nigeria while embracing modern civilisation should reject the spirit that discourages ethical politics.

Thus, we see from the society of the play that acceptable behaviour is not about what is right for the general good but what is good for personal gain. Bodily welfare becomes the object of life as noted by Gandhi. This, the play portrays as negative value system.

Also, the principle that promotes negative value system is revealed in Chris Anyokwu's *Stolen future* (2006), there, Uncle Biggs represents the ideological power that feeds Feye with a knowledge that institutes a society where development is equated with leadership of amassing wealth, embezzling funds meant for national development, and promoting different levels of corruptions. There is the ideology of a society where the youths are seen as incapable of reasoning or taking up any leadership role. Feye's society's view of success in education is one that lacks moral ethics, one that encourages mediocrity, perjury and bribery.

Uncle Biggs: Did you say something about the manager?

Feye: Yes, he seems to be ...ah-

Uncle Biggs: Come out with it. After her, *abi*? That pig! I'll get him yet.

Feye: The Manager wants a bribe before he will employ me.

Uncle Biggs: [*Encouraged*]. You mean it? Then, give him something. ...

Feye: How, Uncle?

Uncle Biggs: Oh, nothing much. ... Now, when do you intend going to the secretariat again?

Feye: Can't say. I just don't seem to like the way things are done there. Too much corruption.

The excerpt above, presents an image of a society where academic excellence is not recognised. Uncle Biggs sees nothing wrong in taking a false oath and in giving out bribes. To him that is an

acceptable norm which he deems fit to teach his younger cousin, Feye, who represents the future of the society. Uncle Biggs as portrayed in the play represents a reflection of leadership operating with negative value system.

Uncle Biggs control over Feye literally makes the “*future*” redundant and frustrated; his driving force being greed and selfishness. Gandhi posits that “The saving of the labour of the individual should be the object and not human greed the motive.” (Gandhi 1933:9).

Feye: I don’t blame them. The value-system of our age is upside-down. And it is
Power-perverts like you that set the standards. Our fathers had eaten the wild
Grapes and our teeth are set on edge. (Anyokwu 2006:55)

The deterioration expressed above is as a result of the eroded value system. It is thus obvious, that Nigeria does not have the appropriate value system that can promote decency and honour. The Government Ministry in the play is riddled with “Salaried indolence”, “Institutionalisation of mediocrity”, “Revenue allocation based on cliques, secret society, Tribal formulae and –” (Anyokwu 2006:25). The leadership of the society lacks the moral strand to change what has become the norm rather it forces the members of the society to follow the evil continuous circle which according to Uncle Biggs is the “... ways of the world” (Anyokwu 2006:2).

Also, there is another character, Agbon, a university graduate that has the essence of the appropriate mind-set capable of projecting positive value system. Agbon and Feye represent the few individuals in the society who believe that Nigeria can still forge a way out of their muck with positive mind-set. They are both graduates of a tertiary institution who after their years in the university could not get decent jobs as a result of corruption bred by the leadership with no social and economic value system. Both refused to be affected by the general belief traversing the society. The play through the character portrayal of Agbon iterates that instituting a progressive value system comes from an inward transformation of the individual members of society towards national development.

In Chris Anyokwu’s *Ufuoma* (2007), the playwright presents a setting of a university environment, where value is given to egoistic politics. There is a dearth of academic excellence which is a fulcrum to national development. Joseph, a younger lecturer is seen caught up with the noxious power scrimmage of the university environment. In one of his lectures, Joseph, reveals to us the social values in the traditional Nigerian society. But with the intrusion of Western civilisation comes the dearth of such values.

Student 3: Under normal circumstances, we hold dear social values
such as ...em...hard work, honesty, dignity of labour, merit
and so forth.

Joseph: Thank you so much. Any other attempt? Yes, you.

Student 4: When values and ideals are destroyed, we have an
enthronement of perversities: nepotism, godfatherism,
archaïdemia, plagiarism, personality cults and other kindred
ills. (Anyokwu 2007:21)

Thus, in the play, these incongruities are portrayed through the characters of Ufuoma, a student in the university, who is not ready to study but rather wants to earn a good result through the use of

her body and Prof. Durojaiye and Farajimi who have neglected the crux of academic excellence for their selfish gains and greed thereby giving rise to the whole idea of the glorification of vulgarity and mediocrity notable in our tertiary institutions. However, Joseph, a lecturer, vowed to ensure that the students under him deserve their results, unlike his senior colleague, Prof. Farajimi who has given up and has decided to flow with the tide.

At the end of the play, a possibility in the ideology of having a positive value system if an individual can stand up for the change is revealed. We see Ufuoma, a changed person and the rotten system cleansed as seen in the newspaper headlines in the play.

Ufuoma: (*Takes paper and reads out loud*) “FG Tackles Rot in Universities”, “National Assembly Enacts New Education Act”, “Federal House of Representatives overhauls Education Sector”, “Hope rises for Nigerian Universities...”
(Anyokwu 2007: 51)

CONCLUSION

This paper examines postcoloniality and value system and its significance to national development using Mahatma Gandhi’s political theory, a form of postcolonial perspective that calls for the eradication of politics of inequality and greed. The selected plays present some characters that reflect the negative value system in Nigeria. These negative values promote underdevelopment, and reveal that an adoption of the traditional value system; that recognises hard work, integrity, and objective-based leadership; into the political setting of our society will bring a significant change to our society.

The paper also reveals some negative effect of leadership with negative values and morals. The negative effects identified are: the education system becomes a platform for producing nonentities, high level of corruption, bribery, philandering and prostitution, leadership position’s main objective becomes amassing of wealth for personal gains and development of society is neglected as political leaders gratify themselves. The paper brought to fore the significance of leadership with positive value system to national development and locates the selected plays for further critical interpretations.

REFERENCES

- Anyokwu, C. (2006). *Stolen future*. Lagos: LearnRite Publishers Services
- _____. (2007). *Ufuoma*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- _____. (2008). *Homecoming*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Ashcroft, B. (2001). *Postcolonial transformation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ashcroft, et al. (2013). (3rd Ed.) *Postcolonial studies: The key concepts*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Bernard, A. Elmarsafy, Z. and Murray, SF. (2015). Introduction: What postcolonial theory does say. In *What postcolonial theory doesn’t say*. Routledge research in postcolonial literature. Routledge, 1-2. Retrieved on 5 May, 2018.
- Edwards, J. (2008). *Postcolonial literature (Readers’ guide to essential criticism)*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillian
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge & the discourse on language*. New York:

- Pantheon Books.
- Gail Ching-Ling Low & Wolfreys, J. (2001). Postcolonialism and the difficulty of difference in *Introducing literary theories: A guide and glossary*. Julian Wolfreys. (Ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Gandhi, L. (1998). Postcolonial theory: A critical introduction. ARIEL. Vol. 2, 4.
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/44732>.
- Gandhi, M. (1933). *Hind Swaraj or Indian home rule*. Jitendra T Desai Navjivan Publishing House. www.mkgandhi.org. Retrieved 5 May, 2018.
- Gikandi, S. (2004). Poststructuralism and postcolonial discourse in *The Cambridge companion to postcolonial literary studies*. Neil Lazarus (Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hiddleston, J. (2014) *Understanding postcolonialism*. London: Routledge.
- Innes, C. (2014). African literature in English in *Encyclopedia of literature and criticism*. Martin Coyle, Peter Garside, Malcom Kelsall, & John Peck. (Eds.) London: Routledge.
- Irele, A. (2007) In praise of alienation in *African literature: An anthology of criticism and theory*. Olaniyan Tejumola & Quayson Ato (Eds.). UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Ngugi Wa, T. (2007). Writers in politics: The power of words and the words of power in *African literature: An anthology of criticism and theory*. Olaniyan Tejumola & Quayson Ato (Eds.). UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Olufemi, T. (2010). *How colonialism pre-empted modernity in Africa*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Robert, N. (2010). Foucault studies. No.9, pp. 111-144, September 2010.
- Ramone, J. (2011). Re-setting boundaries in postcolonial theories: Postcolonial theories. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Subir, S. Rashmi, V. (2015). Marxism and postcolonial theory: What's left of the debate? DOI: 10.117/0896920515616263. Crs.Sagepub.com. Retrieved 21st January, 2019.
- Karunakar, P. (2016). An essay on Gandhian political theory. <https://www.mkgandhi.org/article/slgandhian-political-theory> . html. Retrieved 2 February 2016. 'Gandhi Marg' v. 38, 384.
- Parel, A. J. Pax Gandhiana: The political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. New York: Oxford University Press
- Vijay, M., Hodge, B. (1991). What is post (-) colonialism in new literary history. Vol. 36, 3. Published online 30 June, 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502369108582124>. Retrieved 26, February 2019.
- Young, R. (2003). *Postcolonialism: A very Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.