

## LEADERSHIP FAILURE AND HUMAN BRUTALITY IN IGBA OGBOLE'S *ARROWS OF ANGUISH*

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### **Abstract**

This paper titled Leadership Failure and Human Brutality in Ogbole's *Arrows of Anguish* probes leadership failure in a society and attributes its cause to the high level of insensitivity and ineptitude of leaders. The insensitivity of leaders poses a great challenge for people especially the Oladam Community; challenges ranging from neglect of the educational sector, lack of basic amenities, and corruption. The paper also investigates human brutality that emanates from corruption, jealousy, envy, and betrayal which are some major themes in *Arrows of Anguish*. As a qualitative study, the paper adopts realism as a theoretical framework in its analysis. Realism is a literary movement that began in the nineteenth century and was applied to novels when there was advancement of science and technology, and it bothers itself with how true life is depicted in a text. This paper concerns itself with the realism of subject matter as classified by George Becker to elucidate the themes portrayed in the text and how real they are and can apply to the society. Using realism in its analysis, the paper establishes that self-sacrifice and selflessness are good leadership styles and attributes that can develop a people and a community. The paper finds that only selfless leaders enhance the society as they are sensitive to a people's plight; and that only when people rid themselves of jealousy, envy, and betrayal would there be a cordial interrelationship. The paper therefore concludes that *Arrows of Anguish* is a committed text that relates themes that are observable in Nigeria and implores readers to emulate good leadership style emphasising selflessness and sacrifice of people for a better society.

**Keywords:** Arrows of Anguish, Brutality, Failure, Human, Leadership, Realism,

### **Introduction**

Failed leadership is the bane of contemporary Nigerian society and indeed other African nations. Families, communities, nations, or societies at whatever level are plagued with the issue of failed leadership. Leaders have become inept and insensitive to people's challenges. There is no motivation as the leaders demonstrate lackadaisical attitudes and complicity where they should act swiftly, assertively, and with modesty. Leaders are corrupt, selfish, and insensitive to the people's challenges. Such insensitivity affects society negatively at whatever level. Commenting on the issue of leadership failure in Nigeria,

Chinua Achebe states that; "there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility and to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmark of true leadership" (1). This quotation insinuates that, basically, the major problem with Nigeria is that leaders have become too selfish and corrupt and they are not interested in setting good examples to be emulated.

Leaders have refused to be responsible and are mostly interested in personal gains, not minding the effect on the led. According to

Christian C. Onwudiwe “many people are in politics for the wrong reasons. They are in politics simply to use their political positions and influence to amass personal wealth for themselves and to reward their family members and cronies alike” (41).

Considering the poor socio-political and socio-economic state of the country, most people desire to acquire leadership positions not necessarily to serve as leaders should, by setting good examples, but to amass wealth that accompanies such positions since politics has become more lucrative than other professions. Onwudiwe is therefore on point to assert that people rule for their selfish interests and to reward their families and cronies, they take fat salaries and are experts at diverting funds to their private purses thus allowing poverty and privations affect the society.

This ineptitude has continued over time in Nigeria because leaders place people where they should never have been due to their “long legs” or “god-fathers”. The syndrome has continually put the country at a disadvantaged position. Though the government claims to be fighting corruption, as reported in the media almost on a daily basis, in the real sense, the government is facilitating corruption of those in positions as it has not shown any enthusiasm in taking drastic measures to prosecute the corrupt to deter other corrupt elements, thus, corruption has become an ailment that people have come to live with.

This paper focuses on the effects bad leadership has on a people in *Arrows of Anguish*, showcasing the high level of insecurity resulting from failed leadership. The paper exposes the challenges of the people of Oladam kingdom and human brutality which emanates from corruption, jealousy, envy, and betrayal. The paper also investigates the actions of the Oladam youths and how they challenge the youths in Nigeria to fight to liberate people from bad leadership as the sovereignty of the state rest on the people and not on bad leaders that have made life miserable. The paper uses the lens of realism to analyse the text. It utilises George Becker’s realism of subject matter which concerns itself with issues that are real and immediately visible around to present the themes reflected in the text that depict the Nigerian

situation.

### **Theoretical Framework: Realism**

Realism is a literary theory that emanated from the nineteenth century. It concerns itself with things that are experimental and have streaks of real life events in them. Realism bothers itself with how true life events are depicted or constructed in texts. This carries readers along because many of such events have either been witnessed, experimented, observed, or experienced as raised in the texts. Realism has to do with verisimilitude which is authenticity and the central issue is what is real, that is what is immediately visible around. The key founders of Realism according to Ferdinand Iorbee Asoo are George Lukacs who is best known for critical and social realism (22); Maxim Gorky who termed socialist realism ‘revolutionary romanticism’ (23); Damian Grant who in 1970 came out with conscientious and conscious realism (23) George Becker who isolates a dozen more types of realism categorizing them into realism of subject matter, realism of techniques, and realism of philosophy.

According to Ajima, realism helps authors “to create a storyline that seems real to life” (4). This means the narration should have streaks of real-life happenings. Also, Vajime states that realist writers present real issues and sufferings of the oppressed. This creates the illusion of actual and ordinary experiences that readers associate with. Realism therefore enables writers and readers/audience to present and read about real life experience thus, a realist piece reflects the experiences that readers associate with. Also, Iorwuese Gogo and Laura Haruna Banke assert that the focus of realism is “on the ordinary people or characters, morality and authenticity and simplicity of the text. The realist [thought] an artist should concern himself with the here and now, with everyday events, with his own environment and with the movement ... of his time” (96). This brings out the major concern of the realist, which is the issue observable in the environment at the moment. Lastly, Chris Rohman suggests that “realism generally denotes the attempt to present the world as it appears to the everyday senses” (366).

The presentation concerning realism is not necessarily a review of what the theory is from

others' perspective but it to garner from the explanations the major concern or what to look out for in realist text, which is basically identifying the real life situations verifiable in literatures. This paper adopts the realism of subject matter to elucidate the reality of the content portrayed in *Arrows of Anguish*. The paper evaluates the aspects of realism in the text noting the real life events in Nigeria that are reflected in the novel thus constituting realism of subject matter in the text. The whole essence is to see how correctly and realistic the text reflects real life in Oladam as evident in Nigeria.

### **Synopsis of the Text**

*Arrows of Anguish* is a story of Adache and how he sacrificed his life to salvage the people of Oladam community. Set in Oladam, a rural community in Idoma nation of Benue State, the novel relates the anguish and neglect of the community by its leaders and especially the police and other security agents of Oladam. The novel opens with the community meeting to discuss the way forward concerning their plight. Adache as the protagonist is bereaved of his wife due to poverty coupled with jealousy and medical negligence. He is affected by the sufferings in Oladam where roads are in a deplorable state, poor health care facilities lead to deaths of patients who would have survived, lack of water and other social amenities and little or no social responsibilities from wealthy sons and daughters of the community. To worsen their situation, Oladam kingdom is invaded by herdsmen, who maim people, rape women and girls, leave others injured, homeless, and kill at will to occupy farmers' lands. These herdsmen appear to have the power and connivance of security structures as they ransack the community, butcher adults, and go away scot free without being arrested. Tired of this sort of life, Adache decides to salvage the situation by offering himself as sacrifice to obtain a potent power to send away the invaders from their community. The youths of the community also liaise with elders of the community in seeking ways to better their situation, and because all hands are on deck, the people of Oladam succeed in their pursuit of a peaceful society as their gods answer their plea of overcoming the herdsmen.

### **Leadership Failure and its Effects in *Arrows of***

### ***Anguish***

Where there is ill leadership, the people suffer untold hardship, and this leads to bitterness and despair. The reason people aspire to be leaders today is not farfetched: people aspire for positions to enrich themselves, and as a result there is a high rate of insensitivity, corruption, and ineptitude. Those that are elected into public office focus on amassing wealth by diverting public funds to their private purses, therefore they become insensitive to the challenges of the masses and ordinary people. Ogbole states that "the dance steps of today are difficult to learn ... corruption, insecurity, deceit, and selfishness have become our way of life. Our cherished customs and values of honesty, truthfulness, and right living are fast disappearing" (11 – 12). The society is plagued with these vices as mentioned by Ogbole. Truthfulness, honesty, and right living which translates to leadership by example is fast waning. Leaders have become lovers of themselves, highly deceitful and selfish and it is affecting the society negatively. In the text, the Chairman of the local government demonstrates great level of insensitivity to the woes of Oladam community. Countless times, the community members visit the Chief Executive of the local government to decry the state of their roads and health care but the chairman does nothing.

From the narrative, in trying to find solutions to ameliorate the people's suffering, one of the youths, Ikwuntole Okpe suggests "we should march to the local government secretariat with a powerful petition of their continued neglect! After all, we put all those big men and women there! And we did so for them to work for our good ..." (34). Another youth adds, that:

I agree that we visit the local government and demand action. That office is supposed to be equipping the Health care centre and building as well as maintaining rural feeder roads. We will demand action in those areas and warn them that, unless they act without delay, we will stop their agents from collecting revenue everywhere in Oladam! (35)

The statement is a demonstration that the youths are aware and worried by the decrepit state of their health care facility and bad or inaccessible roads. They people are also aware that it is the responsibility of leaders to fix healthcare facilities and inaccessible roads since the people perform their roles by paying taxes. The efforts of the youths and elders of the community yield no fruition as nothing is done by the local government chairman, which amounts to being insensitive to the challenges of the led and this is a realistic representation visible in Nigeria.

Again, the leaders of today are hardly ever seen by the masses to deliberate on the perturbing challenges in a community. Once elected into public offices, most leaders stay aloof from their communities. This too is lamented in the text thus, “we visited many of our sons and daughters far and wide; we went to the local government chairman but were unable to see him, we also tried to see the governor but were told he travelled out of town” (50). This is a typical depiction of politicians in Nigeria today, they create ‘artificial scarcity’ – hardly seen when they become political office holders and paying no attention to those who voted them into power. The masses hardly ever meet with the executives to discuss their challenges, this is akin to the kind of leadership failure as demonstrated in *Arrows of Anguish*. The text illuminates the laxity on the part of leaders even where stakeholders of the community are bothered about the development of their place. The leadership is nonchalant about the challenges of the people, evident in the failure to address challenges. This amounts to being insensitive to the ordeals of the masses. The insensitivity on the part of leaders thickens their skin to the extent that they are nonchalant to the state of education and welfare of the masses.

#### **Lack of Basic Amenities and Neglect of Educational Sector in *Arrows of Anguish***

The resultant effect of leadership insensitivity, corruption, and selfishness also leads to the deteriorating state of the community’s healthcare facility. Where the leaders fail to provide social service even though the people pay their regular taxes, the health centre lacks qualified medical personnel and drugs. This could result to avoidable deaths and pose a danger to prospective

clients that visit such facilities. This is reflected in the text, thus; “... sympathisers discussed Echeune’s passing in low tones and whispers, expressing bitterness that if the Healthcare had been properly equipped, she might have been saved. They dreaded their own fate should they fall sick and were unable to access quick and quality treatment” (19). The quotation emphasises how people die for lack of medical attention. Apart from the physical deaths the people in the community are faced with psychological trauma of falling ill as they cannot access quality treatment in their community. This alone is capable of aggravating certain situations, for instance lacking the facilities to treat patients leads to the king’s death after an accident. It is also reported that a pregnant woman died at the health centre while struggling in labour on her own. Pregnant women are under utmost care and attention in health facilities but where a pregnant woman struggles on her own in labour in spite of the fact that she is in a facility shows neglect on the part of the medical personnel. This observation is also a truthful reflection of healthcare centres especially in the rural settings where one person is left in a whole centre to attend to patients and sometimes such a personnel may lack competence and experience.

Apart from the fact that the dilapidated healthcare facility lacks medical personnel, the roads of Oladam community are in a deplorable state. We find I the narrative that journeying on the road: “was tedious because of the rugged and uneven state of the road – more of a footpath with overgrown bushes, shrubs, and overhanging tree branches – all of which tested the navigational skills of the vehicle drivers. The wiser lot mounted motorcycles or bicycles, with which they easily meandered through the hellish passage” (21). The quotation describes the deplorable state of the roads. The author describes the road as a ‘hellish passage’ and laments that “... the roads are so bad that some vehicle owners choose to park at the centre and use commercial motorcycles known as okada. This way, they save time, stress and avoid damage to their vehicles” (23). Inaccessible roads are more stressful to ply and consume more time than good roads. This alone alienates the community from its elite group who fear that their vehicle may get damaged. Bad roads are seen as

another terrible effect of ill leadership as constructed in the text. This relates to the Nigerian situation where even federal highways are in a deplorable state not to mention the rural roads that are mostly inaccessible.

The people of Oladam lack portable water which is also attributed to leadership failure resulting from corruption and neglect by public office holders. Evidently, from the text, the king states that:

Enumabia spring, our only source of clean water is fast drying up .... The only borehole the government dug far back stopped bringing out water about ten years ago. As if that misfortune is not enough, the engine for pumping the water has since been uprooted and carried away by thieves. Is there anyone here who didn't hear of this unbelievable theft of government property, in spite of the existence of day and night guards? (12 – 3)

Where there is no potable water a people is wretched and afflicted with water related ailments. The people decry lack of potable water and the attendant effects of the critical issue. Water is life and as seen from the quotation, the community's only source of clean water is fast drying. This is a great challenge that should be addressed but the leaders of the community seem to lack the wisdom to provide water for the community. The borehole mentioned in the quote above had stopped pumping water for more than ten years and people left to their fate. Then the theft of the engine to pump water compounds the problem of the community. This exposes the failure of leaders to act to curb ills in the society. The theft could have been probed and the culprit dealt with to deter others intending to commit such crimes. This is the reason the king wonders why a government property guarded day and night will get lost. Any theft in a government organization with guards on duty indicates that there is usually a connivance with insiders to cart away an item. It also ironic that the people assigned to guard public property are the very ones that steal such them.

The people's problem is huge, apart from lacking water, even their educational sector is

neglected not only by the government but also by the elite group of the community. St. Jude's primary school is neglected even by those who attended the school and have become wealthy people. The community makes constant attempts to better their lives but they lack the support of those in authority and the wealthy. As a consensual agreement, Mr. Abah Akor, the Headmaster of the school is to lead the committee that would liaise with the wealthy people to cause a rebirth for the land (15 – 16). It is an indication that, at the grassroots, the people make constant efforts to better their lives but the apathy of those in authority makes it difficult for the dreams of the people to be realized. Instead, the people get empty promises from public office holders and the well-placed members of the community who should, ordinarily, have the zeal to assist in the development of their community.

Schools at local levels are aided by the community members in spite of government assistance. The Oladam community seeks help from old students of the school but gets no assistance. One of the characters, Adache in his thought is provoked, thus he states:

St, Jude's had produced great men and women who had made a mark on the society in their various fields of endeavor. He needed no crystal ball to know that with the quality of people who passed through this school and their positions in society, they had no plausible explanation for turning their back on their old school. (8)

Ogbole notes the insensitivity and lack of social responsibility of individuals as a reality in the society today. He therefore depicts this in the text as the great men and women of St. Jude neglect their alma mater, so do the wealthy neglect their social responsibility, probably attributing it to paucity of funds.

Furthermore, we encounter the challenge of herdsmen invasion in communities of the text. This also is the reality of the Nigerian society. This is another facet that exposes leadership failure and insensitivity. In the text, herdsmen invade Oladam and allow their herds to move recklessly all over the land. It is recorded that "they destroy farms, eat up or damage crops and fill the place with dung



after feeding fat on the sweat of the people” (24). The community depends on their land for living as they are predominantly farmers like majority of Nigerian communities. Yet their land is invaded by herdsmen “who carry big weapons and move about like warriors through conquered territories” (25). Ogbole compares herders with warriors in the text, thus insinuating that rather than carry sticks and rods as they used to back in the 1980s, the herdsmen now move about like gallant soldiers/warriors with sophisticated weapons aiming to conquer and occupy.

The herdsmen invasion causes deaths and terrible damages on farmlands as their animals wander about (28). It is reported in the text that Okakra, one of the community members, lost his life as to the herdsmen; “I guess you guys have heard about the death of Okakra, the palm wine tapper?” asked Adanu, one of the sympathisers who had accompanied Adache. “Yes, we have” Ikwuntole answered snappily. “We heard how cows snuffed the life out of him in broad daylight” (24). This showcases the use of dialogue as employed by Ogbole to bring to reality the haunting effect of the herdsmen attack on communities. Apart from the damages on farmlands, the invasion is responsible for deaths like Okakra’s death in the text. The herdsmen also rape and kill house wives on farms and begin to contest land ownership with the community. It is again reported in the narration that “our worst menace is the herdsmen and their cows. The cattle destroy our farms while the hooligans rape women. If you dare challenge them, they gun you down or stab whoever without hesitation. The result is that our people, particularly the females, are today scared of going to their farms ... Hunger – in fact, famine – lurks around the corner” (33–4). The foregoing quotation highlights the enormous damages caused by the herdsmen invasion and how it affects the community. Farms are damaged, people are killed and women/girls are raped and have become scared of going to farms. The long term effect is famine in the face of such constant invasion. The attack is persistent in Oladam as Ogbole maintains that herdsmen defy reason and appeals by the elders and attack Udabodo “which resulted in the killing of five people, raping and wounding of many” (41).

Elders of the community give into reason as they consistently report the perturbing issue to the security praying for relief and also call on the leaders of the herdsmen to adopt dialogue as a way forward but the leaders decline intervention in the situation, from all indications. The people’s lives are in danger so long as the invasion on farmlands by herdsmen continues. The effect of the invasion is death, famine, psychological trauma as it is reported that women and girls have become paranoid of being raped and have stopped going to farms.

The reality of herdsmen invasion cuts across the nation as reflected in the Mbaise (Igbo) man’s speech in the text: “if you think the kinds of weapon they carry are for killing animals, you’re wrong they use it freely on innocent people and perceived enemies when questioned about crops destroyed by their cows” (25). The menace of herdsmen invasion on communities and the enormous effect is a reality in Nigeria. The issue of killings and damages is constantly reported to security agencies but they hardly ever help communities. The system is biased and favours the herdsmen who constantly oppress rural communities making the security structures appear complicit.

#### **Complicity of Security Forces in Escalating the Security Problem in *Arrows of Anguish***

Most security structures of the state at different level are bias and tend to marginalise or oppress certain groups of people while favouring others. In the Oladam community the case is no different. The many reports to the security agencies about the challenges of the community are met with deaf ears. The narration claims that in times of attacks when the issue is reported “to the security people, they sang their usual song of being on top of the situation” (62). This is a display of nonchalance as well as insensitivity demonstrated by the security personnel. Despite the insensitivity, the community elders, in order to fulfil all righteousness, report every attack, including the fear of a new attacks: “after this meeting, we report our fear of new attack to the security people. They may do nothing, but we would have done our own part” (49). The statement indicates that the people perceive security is complicit and usually do nothing in the face of the killings and other heinous

crimes meted out by the herdsmen on the community.

The failure of security personnel to protect the people is obvious as the youth of Oladam, tired of the situation, decide to make their sufferings known to the world. The narration records that the youths mount road blocks to get money to develop their healthcare:

we shall ensure that for two hours, no vehicle passes through Oladam either way. After two hours' hold-up, we shall allow certain categories of vehicles whether buses, taxis, lorries, or private cars to pass, but on the payment of a fee. Commercial vehicles will pay #3000 each, while private vehicles will pay #5000. No government vehicle shall be allowed to pass on the first day...(146)

To get governments attention and make known their sufferings to the world, the people decide to mount road blocks and also come up with a solution to tackle the situation since the security agencies are nonchalant about their predicament. They intend to make people aware of their sufferings and to receive the attention of the government, they however extort money from car owners the same manner public officers exploit the masses.

The numerous reports to the security personnels that are met with deaf ears is a reality in Nigeria. Security structures have become government's agents for tormenting the masses, they remember their primary assignment of protecting the people only when beckoned by their principals. This is why they swiftly act when they hear that the youths and elders in Oladam are out to salvage their situation:

the security people swooped on the place soon enough, their speed of arrival strengthened the allegation or suspicion that they were in the heart of a conspiracy to sabotage Oladam's progress. If this had been a herdsmen attack on Oladam they would not have showed up, some locals grumbled. (149)

The statement depicts the challenge of most

communities in the country that suffer the incursion of herdsmen. Security people become numb during such times, they fail in their primary duty of protecting the citizens. This implies the herders are now above the laws of the land. Again, when the Oladam Community beseech their deity for help and the god of Oshirimi intervenes in their pathetic situation to save the people, the police arrest the people of Oladam, which shows a form of prejudice on the side of security agencies. To expatiate on this complicity, the narration states:

with unusual zeal the operative dashed after innocent citizens engaged in their workaday, business or just hanging around the square, those who could, raced like the deer until the captors lost them. Those who could not were kicked, bludgeoned, and herded like sheep into police pick-up vans. As some of the vans zoomed off. The herdsmen's leaders who had visited the local government chairman earlier in the day and two of his workers were seen jumping down from the front cabin of another pickup. (186)

This portrays the inability of government security agencies to defend the people as and when needed. Their protection is sold to people that can afford it as evident in the Oladam situation. When the herdsmen dismember people including pregnant women, nothing is done by the security agents. No arrest is done. However, immediately the herdsmen and/or their cows are affected, security men swing to quick action, arresting community people. The fact that the herdsmen leader accompanies police and the local government chairman to make arrests leaves one wondering the kind of protection the people of Oladam enjoy from the security operatives. The situation is realistic and can be likened to the Nigerian situation where herdsmen and bandits have the cover of security personnel in times of their operation. Ogbole also investigates the humaneness of people as it affects interpersonal relationship and the community at large. He frowns at human brutality or cruelty as explored in the next section.

### **Human Brutality in *Arrows of Anguish***

There's the recognition that people are not animals amongst human beings, yet people treat others as animals thus dehumanising them. Humanity is not appreciated. Many people today, out of selfish interests, have become cruel to the extent that it is a new normal to see wickedness and cruelty committed against persons without qualms. This answers why "herdsmen would butcher adults, pluck out their eyes and private parts and rip unborn babies out of pregnant women, while burning others alive in their huts" (177). This showcases diverse areas of human brutality; a gangrene that has devoured most people in the society especially in these days of herdsmen attack and banditry in Nigeria.

*Arrows of Anguish* explores brutality as a result of selfishness, and envy. The selfish desire of leaders, to get rich quick or to get wealthier no matter the manner of wealth acquisition is another reality in Nigeria, and the text prominently portrays this syndrome in the characters of Chief Ije, Ogodo, and Une. Chief Ije, though a titled chief, betrays his people by conspiring with the enemy for wealth in return, and out of the envy and greed for leadership position. This is indicated in the novel, thus:

Chief Ije sought to leave the meeting to continue with his treacherous collusion with the enemy and draw Oladam into greater problems to fire his selfish ambition. Like many men of his ilk, his desire for wealth, fame, and power had benumbed his sense of patriotism and humaneness. He was one of those who leaked information to the herdsmen about happenings in the kingdom. He sold the Ikpo youths to the security personnel concerning the Okwunja operation, and the herdsmen paid him well for his services. (86)

This shows that a titled Chief betrays his community for wealth and power and derobes himself of any humaneness. Ije is a depiction of the reality of those who would sacrifice anything to get wealth and fame. It is also recorded that he sells out to also wreak havoc in the community so that the ruling chief would be considered

incompetent and incapable, thus paving way for him to assume the leadership stool:

Chief Ije was gradually torn apart by envy and greed. His mind was not at all on helping the kingdom out of its woes. Instead, with king Unugbo out of the way, he preferred that Oladam's calamities would increase so that Ojecheme would be seen as incompetent and incapable. Then perhaps he would be begged to assume the leadership. (85 – 6)

This showcases the greedy and selfish manner a person can act so as to debase another fellow for want of power or wealth, and how people cause havoc for others simply to shine. Pursued by his desire to lead the people of Oladam, Ije engages in wickedness. He is responsible for the king's accident and subsequent death. This is acute brutality and betrayal. As a high chief in the community, Ije does not protect the land; he aligns himself with the herdsmen to unleash atrocities on the people of his kingdom. He symbolises the many out there in Nigeria that have pledged their allegiance to the herdsmen thus selling out their communities or those who out of selfish interest engage in desperate measures of human wickedness against others.

Secondly, Ogodo and her mother Une are seen as symbols of betrayal because they both conspire and subsequently kill Echeune. Adache's love for Ogodo could not lead to marriage because he got entangled with Echeune. Out of jealousy or envy, Ogodo gets even by eliminating Echeune which is human brutality. This is evident in Ogodo's confessional statement, thus; True, I caused the death" she blubbered with a burst of energy ... "Echeune ... I just couldn't bear the pain of losing you. I couldn't stand the thought of you in another woman's arms every night" (166). Also, Une, Ogodo's mother too connived with her daughter to get Echeune out of the way. As the medicine man exposed her stating; "your daughter cried for help but got poison. Her mother encouraged her not to give up, ... Une sent her daughter here ... their wish was done under a simple but wicked oath! That Ogodo never eats from the same bowl with this man. Obviously, she couldn't keep that deadly oath. (167) There is the



connivance of Ogodo with her mother, Une, to delete Echeune out of their way to having what they desire. Jealousy or envy is a phenomenon that does not respect humanity and leads to death as portrayed in the novel reflecting the reality in the society and reflecting how wicked the heart of man is.

The text treats envy and its negative effect as demonstrated in children too. Oduh, even as a child is envious of Adache's children who are his cousins. He dislikes the children due to the enormous attention given to them. The narration states "Oduh had never liked his cousins due to envy. They lived and schooled in town while he was sentenced to a life of farming and hunting the back woods. ... Village folks fell over themselves to hobnob with them" (118). The singular fact of the children getting attention more than Oduh makes him mastermind the children's return to their father using a rumour he heard about their father and Ogodo. The text thus insinuates that jealousy and envy is engrained in people and needs to be done away with otherwise it is very poisonous, the text therefore upholds self-sacrifice as expatiated below.

#### **Self-Sacrifice and Selflessness of Good Leadership in *Arrows of Anguish***

It has earlier been mentioned that public officials in the country use their offices to enrich themselves at the expense of the ordinary people in Nigeria. Leaders are aware that they can get away with their criminality since punitive measures in place appear to be against only the led. Leaders siphon public funds for private purposes, they are highly selfish and are only lovers of themselves. As it should be with a good leader, *Arrows of Anguish* has a leader, Adache, who demonstrates a high level of selflessness by putting people and his community first. Observing that the police, at the behest of the local government chairman, continually harass innocent people even after the Oshimiri intervention, he singularly decides to seek power with which he puts an end to his community's travails. He decides to put an end to the "arrows of anguish falling in torrents and piercing the heart and soul of Oladam" (186).

*Arrows of Anguish* metaphorically describe the peoples' troubles in the quotation, the emphasis is to bare the fact that a single person

would bear the burden of the whole community at a huge price. From the text, the priest warns but Adache would rather pay a great price by cutting down his life span and choosing to sacrifice his life for his people: "de spirits dey happy with your broda. People wey de gree make dis kain sacrifice no plenty o" (194). Here, the text appears in pidgin English to express the priest's impression and promote its being a Nigerian text. It is because leaders hardly sacrifice self for others that the society is in turmoil. However, Adache's selflessness is a confirmation that all hope is not lost as there are people who would consider salvaging a community worthwhile as indicated in the narration. Thus; "though delighted that he had been imbued with power, having now come away from the scene, he was able to think through the price he must pay. In the end, he assured his heart that it was worth it" (194). The statement above records the price people must pay for certain actions and applauds the self-sacrifice of a person to salvage the community. Adache from the excerpt obtains power to salvage the situation of his community. He acquires power that he does not use to enrich himself like most leaders do. He rather uses his power to put an end to the arrows of anguish faced by his people. This is one quality that is hardly found in Nigerian leaders today, yet, it is possible, and this makes the text a realistic text as solutions to problem do not come on the platter of gold.

Imbued with power as reflected in the text, Adache asks the Chairman for the release of youths that are detained without breaking any law (196). He also demands that in one week the Oladam Health Centre be equipped satisfactorily and orders that the herdsmen be directed to clear out of Oladam in three days (196). He "released a whoosh from his mouth that spilled liquid fire all over his would be assailant" (196), when one herdsman charged at him with his sword in the chairman's office. "The chairman and his guest remained frozen on their seats" (196). Adache meets the herders that were reluctant to leave at Udabodo during his tour to inspect the level of compliance with his directives. Adache "raised a loud incantation. Instantly many cattle broke into a wobble; several shrank and crumbled on their abdomen, while others ran amok! On witnessing

this unprecedented, fearsome phenomenon, the herdsmen handlers fled in many directions ...” (197). It is reported again that “the LG chairman had miraculously and fully equipped the Oladam central Health Centre within days and more; he facilitated the exodus of the herdsmen and had apologized to the elders for the past neglect as well as harassment. Finally, he had resigned from office” (199).

The excerpts above are emphasised to showcase the selfless nature of a true leader tired of the travails of his people. He seeks and obtains power that he knows would put an end to his community’s travails rather than use such to intimidate and oppress others as is the business of today. It is pertinent to note that after issuing an ultimatum to the chairman for instant action, he goes out to inspect whether or not the orders are obeyed, during which he notices some loopholes and acts accordingly. This is what is lacking in today’s leaders and is rather facilitating poor leadership. People are not ready to sacrifice for selfless service, Adache serves as an epitome of self-sacrifice and selflessness that should be emulated by leaders if they would ever be good leaders. Of course, the text does not let him go unrewarded which indicates that there is a reward for this kind of sacrifice as well.

### **Critique of Cultural Solutions Proffered to the Societal Ills in *Arrows of Anguish***

From the text, every offence is traditionally punished or frowned at depending on the gravity, this serves as a deterrence to intending offenders. *Arrows of Anguish*, as a committed text, calls for Nigerians to frown at, and punish offences appropriately to deter others from duplicating such offences. To curb human wickedness and cruelty, the text lets Ogoto and her mother die as punishment for their crime of betrayal and killing Echeune, Adache’s wife. The gods of Oladam eliminate them accordingly (170), thus making a statement that ill be punished appropriately for a better society. The text showcases the potency of the traditional values of a community by giving much power to the gods in Oladam. Also, chief Ije’s crime of betraying the community by selling out to the herders and also masterminding the death of king Unugbo is punished by the gods to discourage intending offenders. *Arrows of*

*Anguish* allows the gods to wipe out chief Ije and his entire family after he confesses to his crime to serve as deterrence for others (105 – 6). Even when the people and elders of Oladam choose only to banish Ije and his family, in his attempt to escape punishment, the “gods meted out swift and ferocious judgment on Ije and his nuclear family” (109). Ije and his family are thus banished forever by the gods.

Another prominent depiction of employing traditional means to solve their problem in the text is the permanent solution they put to the herdsmen harassment. It is recorded that herdsmen became bolder as they moved everywhere, even in Oladam central. The herdsmen didn’t have the courtesy to pay respect to elders and leaders as they entered the community (82). The influx of herdsmen overwhelms the community. It becomes clear that the herdsmen are above the laws of the land and can do anything since they are backed by the security agencies. The community realises and thinks, “we must stop looking for legal ways to address the challenges they pose”(174)! In the realisation that the security agents tilt more towards the invaders and offer nothing tangible in terms of protecting the citizens, they stop their total reliance on the state security agencies and seek to protect themselves. The elders and youths thus cry out to their gods for a solution to the problem, and eventually get the desired solution. The god of Oshimiri intervenes as evident in the dialogue by the herdsmen leader and the Chairman that:

Something strange and terrible e don happen por de Okwungaga road”  
“Yes, what happened?” “Sudden, mighty darkness cobber ebrewear at once”, he continued in his broken English “when it clear, my feefle dem sis or sebin trailer with shanu coming, dem come disafear with dem dereba and moto boy. Apter searching, we find cow down, down de hill bottom, dem die all shanu, zhefeefle, ebretin, dukan su” he concluded, brushing one palm repeatedly off the other”. (185)

Their dialogue is one out of the many used in

*Arrows of Anguish* to relate the story using the linguistic freshness of Nigerian English which can equally lend the novel to a postcolonial study. The quotation therefore reports the strange incidence that gives the community victory over their attackers, that is, how herdsmen all die at Okwungaga road to the amazement of the reporter.

The text illustrates the people's belief in their gods since legal means continually fail them, they resort to their traditional god of Oshimiri that is ever waiting for them to ask. They also know that the gods of Oladam will not abandon them (186). And their gods visit vengeance on their behalf, as they expected. This demonstrates that even without the aid of government, the people can look inward and bring about a lasting solution to perturbing issues using traditional values, which is a culturally based approach to solving problems. The culturally based approach is also another method of solving societal problems in the society as demonstrated in the text. Considering the present scientific age in which the world operates, modern writers should also address how to scientifically and progressively move their societies forward in order to catch up with the rest of the world that has gone to the moon, mars and so on. Can Africans afford to continue to rely on pseudo-spiritual/cultural practices to liberate their society from the numerous problems staring them in the face? The author has proffered trad-esoteric solutions to addressing the social problems exposed in the community of Oladam. Though it is not the place of the critic to prescribe the formula an author should adopt in his or her writings, the critic owes the larger society the debt of pointing the way forward to more realistically based avenues of solving societal problems.

### **Conclusion**

This paper, using the lens of realism, has

explored leadership failure and human brutality in the Oladam community of *Arrows of Anguish*. The paper establishes that poor leadership brings about untold hardship due to leaders' insensitivity to the travails of a society. The paper makes a statement that insensitivity in the society breeds lack of social amenities like potable water, and results in ill-equipped healthcare centres, neglect of the educational sector as is the case in Nigeria now, and worst of all the herdsmen invasion to conquer and occupy other people's lands. The paper also investigates the diverse ways in which people are ill-treated and dehumanised leading to deaths and psychological trauma. The paper further links the challenges in *Arrows of Anguish* to those prevalent in Nigeria, thus stating that the text has investigated real life events in so far as it has depicted what people really do.

Emphasising self-sacrifice and selflessness, that are traits of good leadership in *Arrows of Anguish*, the paper applauds the community's efforts to ameliorate their suffering by acting in unity. The paper also upholds the need for a true leader exemplified in the character of Adache who salvages the torrents of anguish faced by the Oladam community. This paper concludes that only a committed true leader can take people to the Promised Land where there would be peace, unity, and love as demonstrated by Adache, who uses his power to direct massive positive change for his community within a short period. The paper therefore urges writers to also adopt other scientifically based and modern realistic avenues as viable ways of addressing societal problems. However, one must commend *Arrows of Anguish* in its ability to expose the prevailing social ills that are ravaging the average Nigerian society and proffering cultural solutions to such problems.

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