

## Literature as a Mirror of History and Society: A Case Study of OkeyNdibe's Arrows of Rain

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### **Abstract**

To know History is to be forearmed. Literature is one of the most excellent tools and gift of society. While many writers write to entertain, literature can achieve much more than the entertainment function. It also exposes to and informs the reader about events that happened in the past. It is not out of point to say that history, which is the society's memory, should go hand-in-hand with literature to the end that community would be informed, educated, and armed. Through literature, the entirety of humanity is further revealed and bared to the people. In this study, we shall discuss the relationship between literature and history and their impact and relevance to society, using the text, Arrows of Rain by OkeyNdibe.

**Keywords:** arrows of rain, history, literature, historiography, okeyndibe, society

## 1. Introduction

Literature does not and cannot exist in a vacuum because it is influenced by the events and verifiable natural experiences of man. This is because it aims to inform the target audience. History, on the other hand, captures significant events and experiences of people who mark out particular periods of their life. In comparison, history and literature have some affinity. Literature embodies issues that are inspired by and drawn from events that affect the lives of the people. It does not mean that there would be no literature in the absence of history, or that there would be no history in the lack of literature. The position of this paper is that history informs literature, and literature captures history in its attempt to recreate life.

In almost all literature of the world, there must be some form of historical element or portrayal of history. This is simply because such works discuss events that took place during the period of their creation.

Apart from the fact that literature collects data from history, it is worthy of note that literature affects society, so long as it means to inform, educate and entertain. Because of this, literature is often expected to carry a message that will positively affect its readers.

This study is therefore aimed at explaining the affinity between history and literature, as well as their relevance in society. This is important because a country like Nigeria, with her experiences of wars and decadence, could do with literature that portrays her community and culture as it draws attention to the problems in the society and suggests solutions to them. To achieve this, it is needful to consult history, as it is popularly implied that "in other not to make mistakes, one should take corrections from the past."

This study aims at explaining the related literature has to history. In this, it discusses the need for literature to embody issues that affect the people over time. This study also means to portray the relevance of literature and history to society as a means of pointing out society's problems and suggesting solutions to them.

This research restricts itself to the study and analysis of OkeyNdibe's *Arrows of Rain* set in a fictitious society named Madia. The researchers shall be drawing from the themes, setting and characters in the novel to explain the affinity between history and literature, and their relevance to society.

Because this study has to do with history and literature as well as their relevance to society, we will be adopting the historical and sociological theoretical frameworks. Sociological theories explain the relationships or relatedness of specific facts in the social world. The aspect of sociological theory adopted in this study is the critical theory. According to Crossman(2019) in her article on *major sociological theories*, critical theory is a type of theory that aims to critique society, social structures, and systems of power and foster egalitarian change.

## 2. Literature Review

We have stated earlier that history and literature have some affinity, and that they are both relevant to society. For literature to maintain its relevance, it must pay attention to the history of the people and their experiences. It is for this reason that this study is carried out, to promote literature as a means of addressing society. Briefly, we will take a look at what other scholars have to say concerning this subject.

There is a saying that African literature is a long song of mood because it consists of different experiences of the different periods in African history. The point is that one way to get the attention of a person or reader is by first, presenting to them the issues that concern and matter the most to them that they're familiar with and can relate to. Apart from historical events, there are also contemporary experiences. These are essential features of societally a relevant literary work.

On the relevance of history to literature and their interrelatedness, according to Nwahunanya (2012)

Like most of their counterparts on other continents, many African novelists recognize the relevance of history to novelistic art, especially as the African novel tends to center on the immediate problems of contemporary African society. Such novelist often fall back on history to explain the problems of the present (p. 247).

By recognizing the relevance of history to novelistic art, what Nwahunanya (2012) means is that Africa has been in transition since colonization. From pre-colonization to post-independence. These periods are characterised by subjugation, post-colonial crises of decadence, war, disillusionment, and various other social ills. But it is not just capturing history that interests these writers.

The researchers believe it was this awakening that Okey Ndibe had in mind when he wrote *Arrows of Rain*. This awakening is emphasised through the life of the chief character "Bukuru" and the state of Madia. When we take a look at Bukuru, we discover that he had fears, fears that kept him from fulfilling civic duties. This would be revealed in the next chapter, but out of fear of the unknown, Bukuru declared an exile on himself. He experienced the president of Madia personally before he became president. He knew that the now president of Madia was a human terrorist. He had a story to tell the people of Madia about their president, perhaps it would have saved Madia from his tyrannical rule, but he kept shut for fear of being shut down, until a particular death event occurred that brought Bukuru to the scene, tracing back to twenty-three years ago when a similar event took place by the presidents leading, with a group of soldiers under his command. President Isa Palat Bello who was then a military chief commander had a sexual affair with a prostitute who happened to be a friend of Bukuru's acquaintance. For some reason, Isa Palat and his group of errand soldiers brutally raped and murdered her. Twenty-three years down the lane, Isa Palat is president of Madia and still terrorizing the Medians. This gives us a glance at the typical human society, when its inhabitants fail to portray its society as it is, people continue to live in ignorance, and things continue to go wrong. On the other hand, it mirrors the relationship society has with literature, the relationship literature has with the peoples' history, and what a writer owes their readership. Lukacs posits that:

No sociology of the novel can exist without a historical consciousness. For like its readership, every literary text has a historical location. Aesthetic sensibility is inseparable from the experience of life over time. What is read finds its aesthetic validity in what has been lived. The novel especially has an enduring relationship to history and society, because, there is no literary critic who can understand the novel by turning his back on society and no social scientist who can understand modern society by turning his back on the novel (cited in Onwuka, 2010, p.61).

According to Orr (1977) above, literature and history or society, if you like, are inseparable. Onwuka further explains that

Society is the principal subject of the novel, that is, man's social life in its ceaseless interaction with surrounding nature which forms the basis of social activity and with the different social institutions of customs, which mediate the relations between individuals in social life. (Qtd. in Onwuka, 2010, p.61)

Several critics have discussed the role of the novel in the representation of society. Onwuka (2010) affirms that:

For literature to remain a veritable tool and agent of social change, it must continue to reflect the conflict and crises thrown up by society. By highlighting these views, it attempts to refocus the attention of contemporary writers, their readers and critics on the uncompleted task of arresting an African continent fast sinking in the rot of corruption, oppression and other social ills. One way to achieve this is through the production of vibrant literature that not only identifies the source of the problem but also sensitizes its consumers to change the course of social development positively. (p.60)

It is clear now what literature should be and why it seems like African literature is often historical. The historicalness of African literature is both significant. The following passage encapsulates Nwahunanya's (1997) opinion on the role and relevance of Nigerian war fiction, which is a typology of African historical literature:

Nigeria, like a few other African countries, is writhing under the throes of a myriad of ailments, all of which are collectively the chronic stage of national malaise that is both inherited from our past and cultivated in our present. In our search for solutions to our now proverbial national problems, in our quests for answers to questions concerning the seeming permanence of our predicament, we might need to go back to our creative literature. And one of the most relevant literature to which we should go for an accurate and reliable diagnosis of the causes of our national malaise is Nigerian war fiction. We must do this if we accept the answers to the present and the future lie in an understanding of the past. (p.176)

In the above extract, Nwahunanya (1997) emphasizes the role and relevance of literature inspired by society's history and experiences as a means of solving societal problems and avoiding possible crises. Likewise, according to Killam (1973):

Most African countries have left from the beginning, and especially since the early 1950s, a special obligation to the societies in which they function; they have determined that literature has a social function to interpret and educate society.... That is, African literature speaks primarily for and to the people of its own country, and expresses their hopes and fears and aspirations. (p.12)

The failure of any (African) literature to do the above, will no doubt deny the society the knowledge, awareness and consciousness it requires to tackle its challenges.

### 3. Research Methodology and Analysis of Data

The research paradigm adopted is the qualitative research design. The primary data for this study is drawn from the novel, *Arrows of Rain* by Okey Ndibe. The data will be analysed stylistically, showing the relationship between literature and society. Secondary data needed for this study will be from journals, related novels, articles and other scholarly projects, whether in text form or from the internet.

Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* is divided into three parts, namely, "mists", "memories" and "malaise". Each part captures a period in the life of the chief character, Bukuru, as well as in the history of Madia. In this chapter, we would analyze our text of study to create a foreknowledge for the following chapter, which would be our observation and, in other words, the interpretation of our research topic using the text *Arrows of Rain*.

#### 3.1 Mists

Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* opens with a death scene. The dead body of a young (prostitute) woman was discovered at the B. Beach in Langa on New Year's Day. People gather to hear the lifeguard's witness the deadly incident as he narrates it. According to him, he heard a scream at seven in the morning and followed the shout outside, only to discover a drowning woman and a mad man standing out of the water. He said the man, who turned out to be Bukuru the mad man hindered him from saving the drowning woman, and when he finally got a chance, it was too late; the woman had been dead. In the cause of his narration, Lanky stated that Bukuru knew of the woman's death. To the investigators, Lanky narrated that:

I came to work at seven sharp and heard a terrible sound of a drowning person.... The sound came again, sharper and louder..., I was about to dive into the water when I saw a ghost rising out of the waves.... But the ghost took a man shape and even spoke words I was too afraid to hear. Then I saw it was Bukuru the madman... I wanted to run away but my spirit voice reminded me of my duty as the drowning woman cried out again. I stepped into the water. By the time I found her, death had already entered her body and taken a seat.... The mad man turned and walked away, the woman became quiet, still smiling but dead. (pp.5-7)

As Lanky told his story to the detectives, he constantly pointed at Bukuru so that the detectives approached Bukuru. They had greeted him and said their names demanding his. Bukuru was not willing to give out any information about himself. He was only interested in telling them what he knew about the deadly incident. As Bukuru and the detectives conversed, Bukuru went beyond the incident that morning to revealing past incidents of like manner he had witnessed. It appeared the

mad man Bukuru had quite some information about the government of Madia and his Excellency president Isa Palat Bello. Bukuru disclosed that his Excellency has a hand in the brutal murder of a young woman named Iyese and countless other abuses and deaths of prostitutes. The police detectives seemed to have picked offence, Bukuru was "defaming" his Excellency. Those were their words. Bukuru was handcuffed and immediately labelled a suspect and taken to court to be tried.

On trial day, a psychiatrist was first brought in to confirm whether or not Bukuru was insane, as he was termed. It was after a series of questions and answers that Dr. Mara concluded that Bukuru was sane, sound, and intelligent. The last witness was Mr Lati, the detective that had Bukuru handcuffed as a suspect. Again, Mr. Lati blatantly accused Bukuru of the murder of the young woman at B. Beach. In defence, Bukuru began to dig deep, back into his history, throwing daring questions at Mr. Lati concerning the president Isa Palat Bello. It was apparent that Bukuru knew what he was saying and it made sense to Mr Lati, and that made the detective furious. Bukuru was not always a tattered and insane-looking man. He had a decent past which His Excellency Isa Palat Bello, then a military commander. One of the questions Bukuru posed to Mr. Lati was about the new policy that was against prostitutes. He said His Excellency declared war against prostitutes. Constitutionally, he was right, the president had declared the eradication of all prostitutes in Madia. What grievances he had against them and what terror he was to the people of Madia was one Bukuru had witnessed himself. To prove that in fact, the death of prostitutes everywhere was a military action and mere carrying out of His Excellency's order, Bukuru stated that during wars, people suffer, people are injured, and people die. By this, he implied that His Excellency was warring against his citizens.

Bukuru revealed that there are more offences done to prostitutes that are not accounted for. And very significant is the fact that during Bukuru's detention, there had been other deaths of prostitutes in the same manner. Mr. Lati defended this by saying that they were other rascals following Bukuru's leading.

A fearful stillness pervaded the room when Bukuru said that twenty-three years ago, Isa Palat Bello raped a woman named Iyese, who he eventually murdered a year later. Regardless of that, there are consistent incidents of rape that are never heard of because "women hardly report cases of rape because the police cover-up assaults on women" (pp.35-39). On this note, the courtroom erupted, the result of which was a fifteen minutes recession. Upon their return, the trial was discharged with rulings that:

the members of the press are barred from reporting any part of today's proceedings where the good name of His Excellency was maliciously smeared. Any reporter who flouts this order will be summarily dealt with. I shall appoint another psychiatrist to evaluate the defendant's mental state and report his findings to the court.... This case will be adjourned for two months... (p.40).

After the trial was moved, Bukuru was taken to "Bande Maximum Security", far away "from the bustles of life". It was through the help of the second psychiatrist by the name Dr. Mandi, that Bukuru was linked up with Femi Adero, a journalist who seemed to have flouted the courts' orders to stay away from implicative reports on the court proceedings. Femi Adero paid Bukuru visits in the guise of Dr. A.F Tijani, a psychiatrist attached to His Excellency's office. Mr. Adero would take Bukuru's story and hopefully publish it. This was because information leaked that "a

decision was made to poison Bukuru”. So in case, he didn’t make it out alive, he would leave behind information he has had for over twenty years. Information that was the force that drove him into exile, of how his excellency has ever been a terrorist in the lives of the Madians as merely a militant and now as president. It was fear of being harmed that restrained Bukuru from saying what he knew. Now he understands better; as a journalist, he owed Madia his story, but he chose silence, now after twenty years and more, Madia is no better than it was twenty-three years ago. He is as good as dead now and must say all he knows.

### 3.2 *Memories*

Bukuru sends a letter to Femi Adero from Bande Maximum Security. In that letter, he thanks Adero for visiting him and tells him that his visit with the psychiatrist Dr. Mandi lifted his spirit. From that point on, Bukuru began to expound to Femi, things concerning his past ordeal as a young journalist with His Excellency, Isa Palat Bello. It is in this letter that Bukuru spoke of his experiences from the time he became a journalist. He started by explaining how his team on the editorial board was incompetent and irrelevant in their discussions. He had written two letters to his father, breaking news of his new job and the disappointing news of his incompetent colleagues, but there was no response the first and second time, so he took permission to travel back home and discover if all was well. He came home to an almost dead body of his father, and as he finally saw him, he died indeed. After his father’s funeral service and a series of talks with his grandma, he returned to Langa. Upon his return, he became friends with his much-admired Ashiki, economics editor of The Daily Monitor’s Newspaper where he worked. They were brought together by a common experience of grief; Bukuru lost his grandma, and Ashiki grieved the death of his sister and her daughter.

Ashiki and Bukuru went from Bar to Night Club, where Bukuru got acquainted with a prostitute named Emilia. Ashiki said Emilia reminded him of his late sister and asked Bukuru to take care of her. Later, Bukuru realized he’d seen Emilia before, at a party by Rueben Ata, minister for social issues under the rule of prime minister Askia Amin.

At this party, Bukuru was introduced to the leisure life of the Madian ministers. Through Rueben Ata, he learnt that ministers gather in his house every night to clear their heads of the issues in Madia, refresh their minds, and prepare for their responsibilities. In reality, however, Maida’s government was wasting in the hands of its ministers. Reuben Ata, in a bid to impress Bukuru was merely celebrating folly. As it had to do with the women that thronged his gate, Rueben boasted that “every girl in town wants to gate-crash my party... This is the biggest party in town” (p.115). Bukuru had been invited to be made a friend because “he was a journalist with a record of making trouble for his government”. Ata knew this, but he was invited “as a friendly source”, probably to be bought over with being spoiled as Rueben pressed to make him comfortable by introducing him to everyone at the party and offering him costly wine, fun, and women. Reuben Ata had spilt that the party gets crazier, that His Excellency was often there, and that the foreign “ambassadors you see here will never send home a negative report about Madia. I will make sure of that by giving them the most beautiful girls” (p.117).

Although Rueben tried his best to appease Bukuru, he never subscribed to the apparent folly and ignorance that characterized the ministers as they made merry with drinks and women at the expense of Madia's wellbeing. He couldn't be a part of what he was against, but he became good friends with Ata, and he attended his parties again from time to time. Ata introduced him to his father, and during a talk, they discussed the state of things in Madia; ranging from the government's corruption to the peoples' blind admiration of the government's pleasures at the expense of the same peoples' fortune. While Ata's father blamed the white men, Bukuru thought it was unwise blaming the white men still after many years of their departure.

Bukuru went to Goodlife bar often to see Emilia. She had disclosed that her real name was Iyese. Over time they got closer, even flirted, and Bukuru grew fond of her, even to the point of jealousy. One night, he had a dream in which "a much younger Iyese..., it was raining, and she was out under the downpour, and she was crying, like the orphan in the fable, and I was recording the symphony of her sadness" (p.130). This dream would later be remembered as a premonition. Bukuru had asked Iyese's permission to publish her story after she had told him all about her, to which she agreed. Bukuru learnt that Iyese had been married before to one Dr. Maximus Jaja who was a doctor at a very *primaeval* village named Utonki, where according to his will, he ministered to the villagers until he was stubbornly moved to Bini, a city this time, where he gradually changed from the "honorable" man Iyese knew to the materialistic and selfish kind of men that were in Madia, who believed that satisfaction was in materialism (p.148). But even beyond that, after she couldn't bear a child, Dr. Jaja went behind her and was sleeping with one Nnenne he had known from Utonki. Iyese signed up for a divorce.

One of the days while Bukuru listened to and recorded Iyese's story, they were interrupted by a hard, persistent knock. It was Isa Palat Bello; he made trouble before leaving because Iyese didn't want him around, at least not in her house. He threatened to kill her and deal with her. He said he'd show her she was "nothing but a common filthy prostitute" (pp.158-159). Iyese told Bukuru how she met him. After she divorced Dr. Jaja, which was when she left Bini for Langa, she attended a party with the woman she lived with. She met Isa there and followed him home. At his house, she discovered he was married with kids and meant to leave, but Isa didn't let her. First, he said his tradition permitted many wives and concubines as any man pleased, and then he raped her twice that night (p.160). She had reported to the police, but they made light of it. Subsequently, he *had* her. He said he had daughters but needed a son. Iyese tried to break off the relationship once, but she only ended up being hit and raped. But after Iyese told him she was incapable of bearing any child, he stopped coming, until he showed up again that day Iyese was with Bukuru.

Iyese said a friend of Isa's had told her that Isa was not always like that. According to that friend, Isa had seen a photo of his father with Colonel Mark Brady, once the British Commander of the Royal West African Frontier Force. Bello was charmed by Brady's looks, especially his uniform. The British officer had encouraged the emir to send his first son to England for military training. The emir was impressed by the colonel's talk about the powerful role the military stood to play in Madia's post-independence history. This friend of Isa's also revealed to Iyese that:

...Isa began to understand the contraption's awful power and the source of Brady's confidence... the unfriendly coldness of England had made him lonely, low-spirited and open to temptation. He began to drink, first in small quantities, relishing the wave of calmness... then



less moderately. The liquor did things to him, made him prone to mood swings and bouts of excesses, of both niceness and nastiness. ...in good spirits, he shared fellowship with the other trainees. When surly, he withdrew to his private quarters or visited a brothel and worked off his fury on some poor English prostitute. ...he had begun to exploit his mood swings to display his power to others. He had fallen in love with himself as a man from whom people skulked away in dread. (p.162)

This suggested that his problem began in England. He grew worse, and his father banished him from the palace.

Isa became even more furious when Iyese mentioned she had a boyfriend to him, Iyese said to Bukuru one night. Bukuru thought she shouldn't have mentioned it. She said, "being in love made her daring". She confessed she was in love with Bukuru, and that night they made love for the first time. Two days later, Bukuru came to see her but discovered her in a terrible situation. The previous day, Isa had come along with three other soldiers and made a horrible state of Iyese. In her own words;

He came with three men. They had daggers. They pinned me to the bed while Isa stabbed my vagina with a dagger. I started bleeding, and that's when he entered me with his penis. It was like the stab a knife but more painful. I heard their knock and thought it was you. As soon as I opened the door one of them grabbed me and covered my mouth. They pushed me down on the bed and forced my legs apart. Isa brought out his dagger and said he wanted to teach my vagina a lesson. (pp.166-67)

Violet, Iyese's friend from Goodlifebar, walked in on Bukuru trying to help Iyese up. The first pillow was already soaked with blood, and the other one was absorbing more blood from in-between Iyese's legs. She had been like that since yesterday. They cleaned her up and took her to the hospital, even though she begged to be let alone die. From the point where Bukuru left Violet and Iyese, he boarded a taxi back to his office. In the cab, he couldn't get his mind off the horrible scene at Iyese's house and the state in which Iyese was from the brutality of Isa's visit. Iyese had said it was a good thing he didn't walk in on them. Isa had threatened he was going to cut off his penis. Bukuru thought about all that had happened. At first he was angry, but as the pictures kept on flashing in his mind, "he began to see the situation in the light of his interest and safety, he said, my anger at Isa Palat Bello and his minions was becoming mixed with fear for myself, lest I too fall victim to their butchery. Slowly, fear encircled the anger, nibbling away at it. In the end, the outrage was in the belly of the fear, the anger was eclipsed". He entered the office and said he was not interested in publishing the prostitute's story, more out of fear than will. He thought, "with what tools could I stand up to her violators" he asked himself, "a pen? Against men who had daggers? Moral indignations? Against men with guns?" He told his director the story was flat, but his heart pricked him still. He knew he had just told a lie to cover his cowardice.

Many months had passed since the terrible incident with Isa. Bukuru never went to visit Iyese, he was consumed with fear that it drove him nuts. He slept each night in fear of the unknown and imagined there were demons everywhere haunting him. He stayed away for fear he was not safe around Iyese. Every month Iyese wrote to him, she asked if he would ever visit again, said she missed him, asked whether this was the real man he was, in one letter she voiced her anger at him for leaving and never coming back, for knowing she had fallen in love with him and still treated her

like that. Finally, she revealed she was pregnant with his child and asked for some of his pictures at least to show the child even if the child never got to meet him. Bukuru never went back. It was after the child was born that he picked up some things and the pictures she requested and made for her house. It rained that day. Bukuru came in and discovered Iyese sprawled on the floor naked and lifeless, the baby boy beside her, with a gash on his right leg. A thought quickly flashed through his mind, "what if somebody came in and found me at the scene of this horrible crime?" (p.179). He had been standing before Iyese's dead body, transfixed, dazed. He had been awakened by the thought of fear that now quickly gripped him, wiped his fingerprint off the doorknob, and tiptoed out of the house, still shocked and afraid, a car almost ran him over.

Violet came looking for him. She told him about Iyese's death, he had responded as if he was hearing about it for the first time, and he was cold to the news. Violet called him an evil man and said she thought he was a good man. Bukuru meant to go to the orphanage to confirm that the child was his but was still overwhelmed by fear. He dreaded the night and was often frightened. He went out to visit friends when he heard the news that some soldiers went to Pakistan for artillery, Isa Palat being one of them. He was relieved to know that his torture was away from town. He could at least lead an everyday life, void of fear for as long as Isa was away.

Later on, Madia was listed as one of the thirteen countries that were a disaster in progress. When called to answer for the decline in food production and subsequently increased poverty, the Minister of National Planning and Economic Development, Dr. Titus Bato, maintained that there was no such thing as poverty in Madia so long as a report had not been gotten that people now pick food from trash cans. He also referred the questions thrown at him to the institute responsible for bringing up such questions. He was rude in his response and made inconsiderate statements. He said if it was confirmed that the death rate would be more than the birth rate because of poverty, it would be a good thing. When asked to explain what he meant, he said, "the hunger institute claims that there has been an explosion in the birth rate in recent years. The total picture is, therefore, that the death rate will cancel out the birth rate, thus preserving the standard of living." University students had rioted against Bato, the result of which was the death of about thirty students. Although the government lied and "insisted that only four hooligans posing as students were killed." It was January 1, 1968, barely nine days after the Prime Minister Askia Amin defended his ministers against the Madians' protest and cried that the government was doing nothing about the state of things in Madia and retreated with his ministers to the Presidential lodge that the news of Askia Amin's removal from office was all over Madia. The military had interfered. They had planned a coup and executed it. A reporter who spoke to one of the soldiers who arrested Askia Amin had this to say about the coup:

When they stormed the presidential lodge, the ministers and political aides lay in the expansive congress hall where cabinet meetings were held, some still awake but all hopelessly drunk. Somewhere naked, drained by the exhaustion of love.... The officials and their women were quickly arrested and marched outside and into a truck... soldiers paced the corridors of the lodge looking for the Prime Minister... the officer in charge then ordered them to follow him to the underground level... they heard ardent voices coming from the room beyond. Pausing to listen, they heard a man breathlessly saying, "Tell me when to come." Then there was a woman's voice: "Now, Your Excellency. Come Tiger! Come Champion! Come Emperor! Now!" the prime minister halted his thrusts, but the girl under him still wriggled her hips, still far consumed by love's heady thrill... (pp.196-197)

Their entrance attracted the prime minister's notice. For a moment, the prime minister struggled with incomprehension. "Who in this country issued such instructions?" He asked. "Armed Forces Revolutionary and Redemptive Council, Sir." The soldiers gave their reply insistently. "Impossible! There's no such council." Amin was fierce and impatient. "Yes, there has been a coup. Your government has been removed." They concluded and asked him not to resist arrest.

The next day after the coup, the new prime minister was announced; it was Isa Palat Bello. Bukuru wondered why. The fear that had disappeared for over a year now came back and clouded him. He had nightmares again. He lied about his health and was permitted to take two weeks off work. He got a call that two strangers came by the office to see him. They didn't say their names and they had never been seen before. Bukuru was fearful, he left to visit a friend, and from there, he left for B. Beach where his exile began. Bukuru wrote this story from his cell at Bande Maximum Security. The rest of his story was about his exile in B. Beach of how he endured the first few weeks; after three days of hunger, he began to feed on discarded food.

He read newspapers and magazines and discovered how wrong he had been for being quiet about Iyese's story. He realized it would've made a difference. With the headlines the newspapers bore, Iyese's story would've been an asset. He thought the headlines were a reproach,

Madian Writer Hanged – he was a critic of the dictatorship.

Madian Minister's Death Suspicious- Dictator said to be having an affair with deceased's wife.

120 Student Protesters were Reported Killed.

Despot Canes Vice-Chancellor IN Public.

Diplomats Say African Dictator behind disappearance Of Opponents- Victims may have been fed to lions.

Bukuru knew these to be in the character of Isa, and Iyese's story would've proven him right. Subsequently, there were rapes and deaths of prostitutes in B. Beach and other beaches before the death on New Year's Day that led to Bukuru's arrest. Bukuru witnessed all the rapes, assaults and subsequent deaths of prostitutes in B. Beach and read about others on other beaches. It was over twenty years now, and nothing got better, only worse. He had lived in fear and cowardice, and now he lived in shame for his failures. Fear, weakness, anger, guilt, all together were the mixture that at last forced Bukuru to dare speak up irrespective of what he knew opening up would cost him. He had waited so long for no good reason. Now was the time to tell his story, to let it all out, before he could no longer live to see another day or hear about it. His life was threatened, but he could leave this one thing behind. Though it is late perhaps it would still make a difference.

### ***3.3 Malaise***

Femi Adero read the letter Bukuru sent to him containing his story. He found a link in it. Femi went to visit Bukuru later with a letter which read about his own story. Femi had been searching for his true identity by discovering who his birth parents are or were. He had been involved in a fight with his "sister" when it was made clear that he wasn't a biological son of the family. She had called him a "bastard" and assured him "her" parents would deal with him for

injuring her. After reading Bukuru's story, Femi came to the obvious conclusion that Iyese was his mother and that Bukuru could be his father. He bore an Igbo name upon adoption and Iyese's son was named Ogugua, after Bukuru. He was adopted from Langa orphanage, little Ogugua was taken there. He had a gash scar on his right leg. Little Ogugua was also described to have such a wound on his right leg. Bukuru was shocked. He tried to fight it, to admit that Femi was right. He was ashamed of himself, and to every question, Femi asked, he was either silent or dodgy in answering.

A few days later, Dr. Mandi called Femi to his office for a letter from Bukuru, which bore the title, "THE FINAL SILENCE." In it, Bukuru admitted his fear, weakness, and failure. He would die soon, he knew it. Isa wouldn't let him go just like that, and he would not rather wait for that death. He admitted he could've been that father Femi asked if he was or not, but one thing is sure, he failed people, he betrayed trusts, he let fear get the worst of him, and he didn't live the life he should have. He admitted having no good excuse for what he had and hadn't done, and it was too late to make amends. In the end, he killed himself, having written his last letter addressed to Femi.

#### ***4. Themes in OkeyNdibe's Arrows of Rain***

##### ***4.1 Power and Politics***

Within this particular context lies many of the issues discussed in the text. Power simply means the ability of someone or something to control another. It implies influence over another. Politics, on the other hand, implies the responsibilities of a group of persons who are a part of the government.

First, we see a country named Madia, being ruled by a bunch of wasteful and selfish leaders, either throwing parties or throwing parties. With Rueben Ata as the minister for social affairs, he hosts parties every night for ministers. He says, "It's not easy being a minister. You carry a lot on your shoulder. Members of the cabinet must have a way to cool off. That's why the cabinet gave me the mandate to throw parties" (p.117). Because the cabinet had power, they went about their selfish interests. While Madians complained about bad governance and suffering, Askia Amin assured them they had things under control. Meanwhile, he and his cabinet did nothing but party around and gave false and unattended hope. It was during one of their cool-off parties that a girl died trying to get into the party. Ata spoke of the death proudly, as if it were some kind of achievement. The politics that was supposed to be for the good of Madia cared less and played more with parties, women, and materialism.

Because of the failure of Askia Amin and his team of ministers to govern Madia, there was a coup that overthrew Amin's regime and assumed governance. In the military government, with Isa Palat Bello as prime minister, things went from bad to worse. Isa was a dictator; whoever said or did anything contrary to his views, was severely punished and most likely killed. As a major, Isa committed offences, but as soon as he obtained absolute power, he went mad. He gave his soldiers right after his doing, to abuse, rape, and murder innocent prostitutes. Madia witnessed the horror, and deaths with Isa as their political leader. It was a politics of power.

Power and politics have been the two primary means of maintaining a nation. But the abuse of them brings about a disorder. People would suffer for whom both power and politics are meant to minister to rightly. Madia's government or strictly power and politics directly reflect Nigeria's government. Apart from the fact that it is fictitious, it completely captures Nigeria from the point of its independence as it was characterised by disillusionment, the reign of the military over civilians, and the result of their regime. It portrays politics as it is, being a game of power.

#### *4.2 Decadence*

For all the trouble the Madians found themselves in, their leaders were a bunch of corrupt men. With Askia, it was that the needs of the Madian populace were ignored; the cabinet gave their time over to too much partying and drinking and women while appeasing foreign ministers to keep them from revealing any negative information about the actual state of Madia. People went hungry, and would soon begin to drop dead because of poverty. With Isa, terrible things were done to innocent individuals. Soldiers raped and murdered prostitutes every day and there were updates of writers being hanged for criticizing the government, protester students dying in their numbers, ministers being publicly whipped and humiliated by the soldiers, and gossip of Isa sleeping with another minister's wife and killing him.

On several occasions, Bukuru witnessed soldiers raping and abusing prostitutes. Sometimes they survived and at other times they were read dead. One of such animalistic acts was the one that led Bukuru into exile. He knew a prostitute named Iyese. Isa murdered her after dangerously stabbing her vagina with a dagger and raping her countless times. Isa had seen Bukuru with Iyese and threatened to kill him. Bukuru had been so afraid he turned his back on his life. Yet, in exile, he saw worse. Countless times he saw them with his eyes at B. Beach. At other times he read from newspapers about the horror Isa and his men continued to inflict upon the people they were meant to protect.

In every society, there seems to be a form of decadence. It could be the terrible issue of wars, political crises and rivalry, victimization, or any form of social ills like the manipulation of the poor and weak masses. This novel directly portrays a society led by selfish politicians with selfish interests and the misuse of power. This is obtainable in societies today, neglecting the suffering mass living in poverty and deprivation. The issue of rape as seen in the context of our text *Arrows of Rain* is against prostitutes, but in typical societies, such as Nigeria and any other, anyone is raped. In Nigeria, for instance, there is presently a recurrent report of child sexual abuse, not that it's the first time in history, but that people have begun to speak up now. There have been records of war and persistent killings by known and unknown terrorists, kidnapping, and other such acts. All of these are seen in realistic societies of every day, and so this text minister to everyone, especially Nigeria, which seems to be most typified by this text, the chronology of events, the characters portrayed, and the setting.

### 4.3 Fear

Madia was disillusioned, the little that could be done is the voices of people crying out for help, giving hope; Bukuru was such a voice. He had stories to tell, stories that would jerk Madia up, keep them vigilant, alert and ready. Stories that would prevent anymore horror, but he withheld them for fear of losing his life. Before Madia walked into the total darkness it found itself, Bukuru knew this darkness, he saw it, and he experienced it. But fear made him keep his warning, and while he never spoke up about the corruption he saw at the ministers' party, and the human brutalization he saw Isa and his men commit, Madia suffered in the hands of its monstrous government. The fate of Madia was in the hands of Bukuru, but he let his fears overcome him. Madia didn't get to hear about their leaders and, as such, what to expect and perhaps how to be led. When finally he spoke up, it was late. His fear earned him a tragic end within the walls of Bande Maximum Security prison, where he killed himself, having realized how he wasted his time and his life, and for all the people his fears betrayed and failed.

The government of Madia was a corrupt lot, but many offences went unheard of, and many wrongs persisted because Bukuru kept quiet when it was his voice the clouds needed to clear.

This mirrors the progression of things in a natural human society. When the power controlling the affairs of things is such that its subjects have no say whatsoever in how they are treated, no matter the nature of things. It mirrors a society in which the people do not have a voice despite their suffering. Like Madia, a society that is subject to a dictatorial leader who emphasizes power as he wills upon a people who live in fear of what could be their fate if ever they protest.

## 5. Conclusion

Literature is one of the voices of society. Therefore, it is pivotal for it to reflect the state of society. Other than entertainment, morals, and delight, another important function and relevance of literature are that it captures and addresses the issues that bother the society, especially those that seem to be ignored, fearfully abandoned, unheard of, or unseen. As it has to do with history, in order not to make mistakes, literature collaborates with the past, which is history to point out the errors and failures, as well as the successes of the past. By these, it tends to create an awakening and draw attention to the lessons that can be gotten from the past. In the novel used as a case study in this work, the researchers find the actions of the government of Madia as reflective of the events happening in Nigeria. To a large extent, the happenings in the story which are fictitious are inspired by true events.

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