

DISENCHANTMENT AND THE ART OF RESISTANCE: THE OGAGA IFOWODO'S MODEL

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Abstract

This paper argues that disenchantment occasioned by dissatisfaction with the political, economic, social, and environmental conditions of a society leads to resistance. The paper relies on the postcolonial theory and makes illustrations from six poems taken from *Madiba* (2003) and seven from *A Good Mourning* (2016). The explication of the movement from disenchantment to resistance reveals that remembering is the most important asset that the resistance forces lean on to equate the better past with the agony of the present. Findings reveal that through the tropes of lack, deprivation, oppression, dislocation and regret, the seed of disenchantment is sown among a suppressed people. The art of resistance includes the ideas of preparation, self-imposed exile, formation of an ideological base for the resistance and resilience in the midst of loss and betrayal. Counter resistance, which is the reaction of the hegemonic forces, is developed through the themes of banishment, mass arrests and imprisonment. The paper concludes that the enduring spirit of resistance is rewarded with hope, victory and the remediation of the environment for a better life. Disenchantment and resistance are tools that any oppressed people will use to shape and rejuvenate the society for a better life for any oppressed people.

Keywords: remembering, disenchantment, resistance, counter resistance, remediation

Introduction

This paper argues that it is the disenchantment occasioned by dissatisfaction with the political, economic, social, and environmental conditions of a society that leads to resistance. Disenchantment is the disappointment or disillusionment felt by a person or group over the failed prospect of a system. Though Weber did not originate the word “disenchantment,” he is the scholar that popularized the usage of the word in English (Owen and Strong, 2004). Green (2005) observes that there is the sociological and the philosophical aspects of disenchantment. Green says that in its sociological meaning, disenchantment relates to the secularization of the world. Sociologically, Green says the word describes the external processes that a society uses to discard the magic and superstitious beliefs toward the move to rationalization. In its philosophical sense, Green (2005) says that Weber uses disenchantment as “an activity, a way of thinking, a style of ethical discourse ... it is a call to recognize that the moral and spiritual direction previously understood to be available is no longer available-or, that such direction was never available” (p.60). The discovery that all we have hoped in and believed are just illusions becomes the spur that leads to the search for alternatives. Green explains that “the recognition of disenchantment comes *after* a period of disbelief, ecstasy, ritual; - in which these are exposed as superstition ... disenchantment must occur *before* the complete forgetting of what is lost” (p.77).

Ogundipe (2014) explains that prior to independence, Nigeria and other African nations put up a strong resistance against colonialism. It is not surprising then that at the dawn of independence, “the sense of hope and cohesion was so strong that the coming years would promise prosperity, but something unexpected happened” (1). Ogundipe explains that division along ethnic lines and corruption created a rupture that displaces the sense of hope of unity and

prosperity. Thus, “hope vanished as quickly as it was conceived. Disillusionment replaced optimism, fear vanquished trust, betrayal displaced comradeship, and the promise of a glorious future suddenly turned to a nightmare” (1,2). Kufre and Okon (2021) agree that it is the issue of misgovernance that generates several social problems in the Nigerian society. According to the critics, these social problems coupled with the “leadership’s claim to messiahship; for it has not only become corrupt and inept, but also worsened the people’s sense of betrayal, thereby bringing disillusionment in its wake” (5).

In its inverted case, the role of the people as accomplice in the underdevelopment of the nation is neglected. Agunbiade (2023) observes that “literature of the last six decades has redefined the theme of disillusionment: where the coloniser was once the entire object of criticism, the African leaders, technocrats, and cadres are now represented as exploiting the masses they vowed to uplift” (p.4). But this view is opposed by Ademeso (2009) when he says that “the search for a good society does not necessarily mean that the common man is the most perfect man for the job. The poor man must be examined so that if he finds himself at the helm of affairs, he will not turn against the masses. (p.55). But the idea of “inverted disillusionment” as explicated by Agunbiade (2023) sets to discontinue the blame game which points only at the failed leadership for the downward spiral of the nation’s development. “Inverted disillusionment” describes the hopeless condition of the society because of the moral decadence of the people and not just the leaders.

Like disenchantment, the trope of resistance in literature has enchanted critics over the years. Mahmoud (2019) traces the development of resistance literature over the years among colonized peoples. Mahmoud draws on the work of critics like Harlow (1987) to explain that: “like the resistance and the national liberation movements which it reflects and which it can be said to participate, not only demands recognition of its independent status and existence as a literary production, but also explains a challenge to the

codes and canons of both the theory and practice of literature and its criticism as these have been developed in the west” (p.75). The essence of this explanation is to situate resistance literature among the corpus of postcolonial oeuvre. Mahmoud also points to Frantz Fanon belief in violent resistance to colonial rule when he says, “colonized people have no other choice but to meet colonists’ physical and emotional acts of violence with the same violence, until “the last become first” (p.76). It is therefore inherent that there are the non-violent and the violent resistance.

Mahmoud uses these theoretical perspectives to analyse the literature of Palestinians. His analysis of a Palestinian novel reveals so many perspectives on the issue of resistance as conceived in a postcolonial literature. According to Mahmoud (2019), the analysis “reveals the secret of violent resistance from the point of view of the Palestinians. Moreover, it sheds light on the violence from the occupier side against the people under occupation” (p.85). The depiction of the double edge side of resistance is necessary for this study. Though, Mahmoud does not link resistance to disenchantment, his thoughts on the issue of resistance are utilized in this study. This paper relies on the postcolonial ecocritical theory and illustrations are taken from Ifowodo’s *Madiba* (2003) and *A Good Mourning* (2016) to argue that the poetry of Ogaga Ifowodo is a documentation of the processes that lead to disenchantment by a people and the eventual resistance by the aggrieved group or people against the hegemonic forces.

Perspectives on the Niger Delta and the Tradition of Disenchantment and Resistance

Ushie (2011) describes “the Niger Delta protest literature as one of the landmark literary genres which has sprung up from Africa” (p.531). The critic traces the origin of the Niger Delta crisis from the era of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade giving a background of the capitalist exploitation and environmental degradation of the region which has culminated in the present-day agitation of resource control by the oil producing states. This has, however, fostered the relatively new genre of literature which he describes as “combative in tone” and

"presents a vivid picture of the Niger Delta situation" (p.532). Onyema (2015) sees Ifowodo's poetry as an alternative press highlighting the environmental and ecological devastation of the Niger Delta. According to Onyema (2015), alternative press aims to "provide counter-hegemonic informational content and structural aesthetics that challenge mainstream media. They provide and project information that represents interest of the marginalized groups ..." (p.136).

Babatunde and Ogbulogo (2020) tackle the issues of disenchantment and resistance from the angle of the inability of humans to listen to the cry of nature. They argue that there should be no "division among categories such as nature, culture, human, matter and meaning as they are all "intra-acting agencies"" (p.1269). Balogun (2011) introduces the issue of the Niger Delta region by chronicling the vicissitudes the Niger Delta region has suffered in the hands of successive military and civilian governments despite its being naturally endowed. According to Balogun, "without exaggeration, the degree of marginalization of social providence and its allies is unprecedented" (p.561). Montesano (2021) observes that in portraying the unwholesome activities of the government and the oil producing companies, the poet cannot express his feelings fully due to the limitation placed on him as a writer by the same hegemonic forces he is trying to expose through their obnoxious laws and policies. On his part, Ekemini (2016) explains that the vision of Ifowodo as a poet is to liberate his people from the dark shackles of bondage imposed on them by the obnoxious laws of the federal government and the oil producing companies. He emphasizes that "like Chinua Achebe", Ifowodo "believes that for a people to have a future they must remember and embrace the past, however dark and gruesome it may be, and that history and those who helped to shape it positively must always have a place in our hearts" (p.7).

Transitioning from Abundance to Disenchantment

As poetry remains a condensed literary means of portraying the condition of man, there are motifs in Ifowodo's poetry that highlights man's insensitivity to man and the eventual reaction of the oppressed. The depiction of the present struggle is not without the reminiscences of the past. Therefore, in the poem "Hazel Nuts" in *Madiba*, the persona relates to the past to enable the reader to grasp the difference in the lives of the people of the Niger Delta at the present with what was obtainable in the past. According to the persona, the image of the Hazel Nut is picture of abundance or the lack of it. This is because,

A nut blooms with fruity flavour, its shell
hard against proboscis or human hand
Till a kindness ripens it, makes it swirl.
In the mouth and grow a seed in the heart.

In that summer that grief aplenty
The hazel groove freely bore its nuts as gifts. (p31)

The image of the hazel nut enables the reader to delve into the intricacies of the present situation of the society. In the past, the hazel nut was not noticeable because of its abundance; the gift of the juicy fruit in the summer or the dry season was really taken for granted. But in "that summer that gave grief aplenty", the hazel nut becomes scarce and the "the unravelling of the ribbon's bright knot/is the nutcrackers's search for the nut" (p.31). As Unuajohwofia (2024) foregrounds in the case of the palm fruit, in some months of the year, "fruit is readily available, and consumers have choice of which colour and edible palm fruit to use ..." (p.22).

In *A Good Mourning* the picture the poet paints is that of a pristine and idealic environment that was at the beginning of time in the oil producing areas. In the words of the poet,

And there it was: on the dewdrop.
 glimmer of new skin, the morning
 light of you coming to delight
 us into silence, an image to outlast.
 devotion or dream. And the will manner
 of it-making out of one many
 as if on errand to the first dawn,
 homage to the seed that grew the human.

tree. Every birth names the beginning
 of the world, but mostly we yolk
 into solitary selves. (p.15)

In relating the contrast between a time of abundance and the present condition of scarcity, the persona also deploy other aquatic resources that were taken for granted in the time of abundance but become relevant in the time of scarcity. In the past when the environment of the coastal areas was in a pristine state, the “seashell, antique brooch or red mushroom” were commonly found in abundance around the seashore. People picked them and made use of them without noticing the importance of these resources in their lives. But in the present, the persona in the poem “Hazel Nuts” in *Madiba* observes that,

You can't ever know how a worthless gift -
 Like a seashell, antique brooch or red mushroom'
 Given with a quivering hand grimmed with silt -
 Becomes the only joy in the crying room ... (p.31)

As the land of the oil producing area transforms from the pristine and ideal place to a degraded and dystopic environment, so also, the people's lives transform from one of abundance to that of deprivation. The theme of deprivation is the subject of the poem, “Where is the Earth's Most Infamous Plot?” in *A Good Mourning*. In this poem, the

persona laments the lack of the simple things the people of the oil producing areas used to do with resources from the environment. According to the poet,

They are empty now,
 their contents discharged
 five decades ago
 procured abundant
 fodder for the mill.
 They are empty now. (p.49)

They are empty now; these are the words of the people of the oil producing area as they go on memory lane to link the past with the present and understand where the havoc started and when they start losing their land and their environment.

Another hallmark of the pains and suffering of the people is manifested in the high level of oppression meted out daily by the bad government. In the poem “My Prison Bed” in *Madiba*, the impunity associated with the oppressive regimes in the society is described. The suffering people are often arrested at the slightest excuse for being rebellious. This is what happened to the persona in the poem. He is arrested on framed-up charges and taken to a prison. The oppression does not stop there. According to the persona,

... Elbow for pillow, I smuggled
 a dream of liberty into the small
 fraction of the night for which a trained army
 of mosquitoes was ready to spill blood

At dawn, five fingers pressed on the right cheek
 branded me with ill-presumed tribal marks,
 leaving me wondering why, seeing that Akin
 with the right to the marks had a clean cheek. (p.82)

The complications in the lives of the oil producing people is worsened by the violence and brutality that follow the heels of the seizure of the land and environment of the oil producing area. To extract the oil from location where people are dwelling, the forces of exploitation embarked on a massive relocation of the people from their ancestral roots. This is where the issue of the theft of land arises. The government must first seize the land through obnoxious land tenure laws. This, in turn paved the way for the displacement of the population. The displacement of the people is followed by the wanton destruction of their properties. This gory scene of displacement and destruction is the subject of the poem “Book Burning in Darfur” in *Madiba* where the poet says that,

loads of grief for the trek to Go Amer.
 The dust of despair carried
 by the wind of their horses reached
 me first and I became a pillar. (p.65)

Goz Amer is symbolic as a refugee camp in eastern Chad Republic where many of the displaced people of Southern Sudan ran to during the crippling war of attrition in Sudan. It is a testimony of the havoc that befell the people of the oil producing area after their displacement. The implication is that no matter what the oppressed people do, the joy of freedom is taken away from them. In this scenario, there is no other choice than to be disillusioned or disenchanted.

The build-up in the pains and suffering of the people leading to disenchantment with those in power the lack of benefit from the crude oil taken from their land and the loss of the environmental resources that have sustained their lives can only mean one thing: the regret of belonging to this nation that takes from them but does not return any benefits. The rhetorical question that, “what can cure the error of this death?”, is exacerbated by the feeling of regret by the people. The regret

that the oil producing communities have so many resources within their land to make them live a good life and at the same time enjoy peace and development, but this is not the case due to the greed of a few is heartrending. Amid this regret, the people begin to see “a rock rolling down his road”. This means that trouble is coming to the oil producing communities which will utterly wipe them off the land of their ancestors. At this stage, the disenchantment and disillusionment they have endured begin to dissipate to be replaced with resistance.

Resistance, Counter Resistance, and the Hope for the Future

The troupe of resistance is a reoccurring theme in the literature of the oppressed. In his work on resistance to the dictatorship that sought to destroy the homeland, Okunoye (2011) argues that resistance “represents the people in their resilience and resolve to invent a new nation out the rot and immortalizes those who dared to confront the dictators, those represented as martyrs of the struggle” (p.83). Okunoye’s argument presents two inspirations for resistance among the people. One of them is that the people resisted the oppressor to defeat the obnoxious policies that have kept them in penury amid abundance. Another inspiration comes from the need to preserve the memories of those who have died in their struggle to establish a tradition of resistance among the oppressed. In these two ways, the poems in these collections have portrayed resistance as not an act of treachery or treason but as an art resorted to attain a society whose roots are founded in democratic values and respect for the people, their claim to the land and the environment. As the paper has shown, the issues that confront the people are enormous and the pains that they are suffering amid plenty compels them rise up in protest. The inspiration for the resistance comes from the disenchanted soul of the oppressed and not really from the outside world. Once the people cannot bear the pain and anguish of suffering amid their abundance and seeing the despoliation of the environment, the source of their livelihood before

the discovery of oil, then they summoned courage and resisted (Babogha & Unuajohwofia, 2022, p.50).

The first stage in the art of resistance is the preparation for the resistance and this entails that there should a rebirth that will enable the resisters to be forged in hot furnaces in order to withstand the vagaries and treacheries of the oppressor. Therefore, the resisters must be imbued with courage and fortitude so that no matter what the oppressors throw at them, the people will continue the resistance till there is a change in their fortunes. This is what they really need to prepare for. In part III of the poem “Fela: In Memoriam” in *Madiba*, the poet documents this boiling pain that pushes the resistance to fruition that,

He dipped into the boiling pot of suffering
and found the common factor of our sorrow.
He drank to the bottom the ancestral well
of healing water. His speech emboldened
the expelled air of discontent to salute
hope fluttering on a tattered flag. A song,
his long drums had told him, can make a world,
can plant a dream and grow the tree of life.
The loud wail, the cry muted in a heart
dangling from frail threads threatened by fire,
the wound sharp as knife – he turned them all
into the sound and fury of his songs.
He blew his horn, and regimes heard the rumble
of thundering feet. (p.21)

The transition from preparing for the launch of the resistance is captured in the excerpt above. Once the horn is blown, the people of the resource producing areas harkens to the call to rise and protest the wanton exploitation of their resources without a reprieve for them. The people must stand and fight for their rights because, as the poet puts it in part 5 of the poem “Madiba”, “an honest man must take the

gleaming spear/to fence off a foe or draw blood to wear/ the mail coat of courage ... (p.42).

The resistance becomes active and at times violent. The idea of freedom and emancipation and the need to drive out the forces of invasion and occupation becomes the driving force of the resistance force. This idea of fighting for one's land and resources are the theme of the poem "History Lesson" in *A Good Mourning*. In the poem, using allusion, the poet compares the activities of the resistance forces to those of the Ethiopian people when they were invaded by the Italians under the dictator, Mussolini, on October 3, 1935. The Italians occupied the capital city, Addis Ababa on May 5, 1936. After a lengthy period of resistance by the Ethiopians, the occupation forces were driven out in 1941. Thus, Ethiopia becomes the symbol of resistance and a shining light for all resistance forces in Africa, the oil producing areas included. It is the inspiration from the Ethiopia resistance that moved the poet to exclaim in the poem that,

Menelik, more than a match for Mussolini,
denying haughty Italy, the glory of empire
in Africa. By mid-period we no longer
sat at desks, black faces to the blackboard:
we had fled to the hills of Tigre,
invincible tigers prowling for Mussolinis (p.3)

In the poem, one art the resistance forces deploy is to relocate to safe zones where they can launch the resistance against the occupation forces just like the Ethiopians mobilised to the hills of Tigre during the resistance against the Italian occupational forces. Initially, the resistance was non-violent as "none was armed among them." However, as time went on, the tactics changed and as the poet puts it, "I annulled their will and turned my back to the world" ("*A Good Mourning*", p.41). In this vein, what started as a non-violent struggle gradually become violent

as the oppressive forces are adamant on the continued exploitation of the resources of the oil producing area to the detriment of the people and the environment.

The role of ideology in sustaining the struggle should not be discountenanced. All resistance struggles are shaped by ideology. This is what helps the people to transmit the tradition of resistance to future generations. This is what the poet captures in the 19th part of the poem “Madiba” in *Madiba* when he says that “Yes, for children who turned their back on/schools of poisoned language, stopping with their/cold adult bullets of hate” (p.56). As the resistance engulfs all the perimeters of the oil producing areas, the effect is calamitous. This is what the poet describes in part 20 of the poem “Madiba” that:

Tomorrow, before the dust of the dancing
returns to earth, a mother of seven
will demand her promised house, the grounding

of what remains a dream till she opens
the door and calls her children from the rain.
The starving will ask for the new ovens

where they make bake the bread of life. The jobless
will picket the labour office, denounce
me in the same street where now I'm only less

than a god. The young men will cry “we should
have settled matters once and for all, matching
gun with gun, hate with hate till victory would

be complete from the first day.” Tomorrow!
Oh Moses! Was this your rage, your smoking brow? (p.57)

At this stage, the resistance is full blown, and the impacts are to be felt everywhere. In the poem “In the Awakening of Fires”, the poet says that,

Against the awakening of fires
 blood and flesh can only fuel,
 against onslaughts of desires
 grown-ups know and the growing can tell,
 there's no armour for the heart
 bound to the trail of a sleeping mat:
 the inferno comes with the scratching
 of polished nails on tinders of longing. (p.29)

In the wake of the resistance, there is a feeling of loss and longing that characterizes the dual and ambivalent make-up of humans. While the resistance is good to make the oppressor revert the policies that has kept the oil producing areas in perpetual penury, the loss of both lives and materials in the struggle makes the people to long for the peace that once was and is hoped for.

Nevertheless, the resistance is boiled by the zeal to free the homeland from the paws of the occupational forces thereby restoring the pride of the people. As the poet puts it in the poem “Robert Mugabe”, which is a poem sung in praise of Robert Mugabe, the famed Zimbabwean freedom fighter, “when he was messiah, /and his tears salted the earth/he fought to the death/and to reclaim from evil settlers (p.70). The reference to Robert Mugabe becomes part of the role of the elite of the society to recount heroic deeds of the heroes of Africa past to motivate and ginger the inhabitants of the oil producing areas on the need to resist the occupation of their land and environment. Once the resistance is in full swing, the activities and zeal of the resistance forces are reported on so that they will not be discouraged. A part of the report is narrated in the VIII part of the poem “A Good Mourning”. The poet says that,

They swore: to bind
their bruised feet
and keep walking

towards: the sound
of the distant drum,
the song of the thrush

before it was muffled
by the joy of the jackal
towards: the clear river

to quench their decade-old thirst
towards: the light flickering
in the cave beyond the forest

they swore: to keep walking
even if the road led nowhere
but to the edge of the deep well

where for three years they fought
and smashed their pots
into a million fragments

that could never be gathered again
they swore: to remember
the broken images of their broken selves

and march until they drove out
of their sky the green sun
scorching the hope of a new dawn. (pp.42,43)

Freedom is never gotten on a platter of gold and so also, resistance is reactionary; resistance always breeds counter-resistance. As

the people resist the policies of the government and the multinational oil companies, so also, the government and the multinational oil companies are bent on continuing the profitable exploitation of the resources of the area. This pushes the discussion to the motif of counter-resistance. The poet, and indeed the people of the oil producing area, knows that their resistance will be met with force by the oppressors. This is because, as the poet explains in the poem “Vivien’s Jailer” in *A Good Mourning*, “all is not sleight-of-hand – the master-/torturer knows the bone to break/and the fleshly cast of plaster/to cover the damage in a freak” (p.74). The poet as the conscience of the society does not hesitate to narrate the story of the attempt by the counter-resistance forces to stop the struggle for the reclamation of the land of the oil producing area by the people of the Niger Delta. In the poem “The Slave Master Forbids Song” in *A Good Mourning* which is a part of the longer poem “Where is the Earth Most Infamous Plot”, the poet says that,

Stop! Stop! Stop singing! Damn your black souls!
 What evil do you seek to rouse with the song?
 The sea breaks into gorges, sends sickness
 above to swallow my goods. And yet you sing,
 a low hum of sorrow that rocks the boat.
 Stop! Stop! Stop singing! Damn your black souls!

The slave-trader forbade his singing cargo
 to sing, who sang when sad and danced to be glad,
 the slave-trader, Maxim Gun by his side, despaired
 over song. But they would sing with locked mouths who had
 song alone as mantle for their long journey. (p.51)

The activities of the counter-resistance forces are part of the strategy of the government and oil multinationals to extend their stay in the land

of the oil producing people and at the same time continued the unabated drilling for oil and the degradation of the environment.

The path of the counter-resistance forces is not easy. The fact that they know they are the oppressors does not make their work easier. To stop the resistance forces, they have to destroy the foundation of the resistance and eliminate the key members of the group. The strategies and tactics they deploy to do this are the subject of the IV part of the poem “A Good Mourning” in *A Good Mourning*. According to the poet,

They had decreed her body-without mind,
but feared she would not leave her fate to men
maddened by a woman’s bared mind or hair.

They had chained her husband to a rock,
and chained her to a bedpost, they’d cook
two hearts in their boiling pot and pans.

They knew she’d break bounds, take her cry
to the street, and the echo of her song
would charm stones but burn their aching ears.

They sent soldiers to shoot her dead at noon
to still her voice and break her husband,
she’d slipped the chains of braided chador and her hair
she’d not be content merely minding her pots and pans.
(p.40)

The strategies deployed by the counter-resistance forces are both soft and hard in nature. At times they persuade through threats, arrests and bribing some of the resistance forces to betray their ranks like the allusion to “weighing thirty pieces of silver and a crown” (“A Good Mourning”, p.39).

The strategies employed by the counter-resistance are varied. One of them is banishment of the resistance figures. This motif of exile is related by the poet in the poem “Unmarked Hours Beat Their Hands Against the Wall” in *Madiba* when he says that “As the minister swears of his pious-ness/birds blessed with greater freedom flee our skies/abandoning us to death and the muted cries” (p.81). The strategies to counter the resistance also include arrests and imprisonment. Both the leaders and the followers of the resistance who are caught are all hoarded into prison. These gory events of arrest, imprisonment and the suffering of the resistance groups is the hallmark of the counter-resistance forces. In the part 10 of the poem “Madiba”, the poet emphasizes that in the prison, the resistance forces “... mended rags in the prison with the same care as a healer of hearts, blessing what hands dare touch in free or forced toil”. But for the counter-resistance forces, they “denied” the prisoners “open air” (p.47).

The counter-resistance forces are so thorough in their strategies to stamp out the activities of the resistance forces to the extent that “nothing would delay their glory” or victory over the resistance forces. The clash of the resistance and counter-resistance forces leads to violence. In the oil producing areas, the violence that engulfs the land is all consuming. Both sides of the divide are “holding loaded guns and shooting blind,/dead to death, I see the victims’ fight,/All dressed the throne, blood hurled up the sky” (p.5). The continuing violence spreads throughout the land as the resistance and the counter-resistance forces launch attacks on each other. The situation is described by the poet in part 9 of the poem “Madiba” when he says that “... the old voice of peace/silenced with a naked fist found its lease:/Gun would answer gun, sabotage would stalk/the breeding ponds of prejudice ... (p.46).

Amid this violence, the counter-resistance forces are so formidable. This poses a challenge to the resistance forces. In part 24 of the poem “Madiba” in *Madiba*, the poet describes the challenges

faced by the oppressed people as they struggle to free themselves from the stranglehold and chokehold of the oppressors.

Gnarled by a human force of will, the world
is a twisted hill, the hurricane's strewn
path. The road from the shop is the boulder hauled

at your feet ... A force
of will, of greed, of fear, of power
broke your house, broke your bones and barred the course

of the river. Hurry then, before the flood
bursts and swallows you, your house and all your blood!
(p.61)

A great challenge facing the resistance forces is the superior men, arms and materials of the oppressors. Amid the destruction of their homes and means of livelihood, the resistance forces continue to thrive. But there is another serious challenge the resistance forces must deal with if the "flood" will not "burst and swallows you, your house and all your blood" (Madiba, p.61). This is the challenge of betrayal. In part 23 of the poem "Madiba", the challenge of betrayal by those who are from within the oppressed people is the worst of all the fears entertained by the oppressed people because, in the words of the poet, "and hardest to lay are the ghost of treachery" (p.60). In this excerpt, the poet cautions the resistance forces to be wary of the treachery of their own people who are ready to sell the resistance secrets to the oppressors "for a palace of sand" that will not last long nor have any impact on the lives of the people. In this vein, the poet and indeed the resistance forces consider any victory of the oppressor now to be pyrrhic. This is because there is this optimistic feeling that eventually the ultimate victory will be for the resistance as they are fighting for their land and their people.

The motif of hope in the activities of the resistance is the sole fire that keeps the dream of the resistance forces and indeed the people of the oil producing areas alive. The idea of hope is further developed in the poem “For Mahalia and Cannon” in *A Good Mourning*. In the poem, the poet motivates the resistance forces “to remember why the earth/turning silently since the first light/never rolls away from the sun. (p.16). The voice of hope is the anchor that keeps the struggle afloat. The resistance forces know very well that they are close to the goal of the struggle. For, as the poet proclaims in the poem “Dream: Hope”: freedom is coming like a bride to her nuptial chambers and she says to all the resistance forces to prepare for a “kiss to fill the furrows on his face” as “she stretches her hands across/the threshold of his fears he hears/the words of answer to prayer: “You are back-come inside!”” (p.34). At that time, the resistance forces and the people of the oil producing area will sing a victory song.

The resistance forces are hopeful of victory because as the poet states in part 14 of the poem “Madiba”, “there are no dead ends, only the birthplace/of awaited dreams. Plumbed with the bold mace/the hidden road opens to the dance hall, /the river washes brighter the flower’s shawl” (p.51). The hope for a new day in the oil producing areas where the people will benefit from the resources in their land and when the environment will be restored to its pristine state is both sure and obtainable for the people. Once the dust of war and violence settles after the victory of the resistance forces, then a period of peace and rejuvenation will set in. This period of environmental remediation and purposeful use of the resources of the land will usher in what the poet visions in part 15 of the poem “Madiba” in *Madiba*. According to the poet,

Men shall spend evenings with their daughters.
Laughter, at the outskirts of town, taunts scared lips
with a returning song. The orchard sips

the dew and stoops with fruit. And children pluck
apples with their stones. The hour has struck! (p.52)

The victory of the resistance forces will lead to change where “the entombed man sees/the stars as brass trinkets in the hidden sky/when the April sun rolls its fireballs away” (p.89). The hope that the land will be free, and the environment will be remediated is the joy that keeps the resistance forces in the struggle against all odds. This is the future the resistance will bring after the disenchantment and disillusionment of the past.

Conclusion

The paper has established the steps required for a society to attain the state of disenchantment and resistance. There must be a transformation of that society from the state they consider utopic and free to a dystopic environment where oppression and deprivation rules supreme. In this situation, remembering the past life of bliss and a pristine environment will become the state of regret that pushes the society's make-up to a state of disenchantment. Once the people of such society are disenchanted with the status-quo, the disillusionment will lead to a state of resistance where the motif of freedom and victory becomes the lifeline of the resistance. Even when the hegemonic forces engage in a fierce and vicious level of counter resistance, the resistance forces do not budge because history is on their side; resistance forces are always victorious when they are patient and resilient. The movement from disenchantment to resistance and the eventual victory of the resistance forces as documented in the poetry of Ifowodo is enlightening and engaging. As far as there are oppressed people in the world, disenchantment and resistance will continue to be the tools that oppressed people will deploy to shape and change their world.

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