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**Africa's Postcolonial Dystopia and the Role of Intellectuals in Paul B.
Vitta's *Fathers of Nations* 2013**

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Abstract

This paper examines dystopia in postcolonial African countries. Dystopia in this context refers to the dysfunctional state of affairs arising as a result of poor governance and external interference especially from the West. The paper also examines the role of the intellectual elite in awakening national consciousness among the oppressed citizens in African postcolonial countries as seen through Paul B. Vitta's satirical eye in *Fathers of Nations* (2013). In postcolonial Africa, 'Father of Nation' is a gendered term that refers to a head of state, mostly those men who rose to power after the struggle for independence. These so-called fathers assume the patriarch's role in the leadership of the nation. These patriarchs have given Africa's postcolonial leadership a reputation as autocrats who whimsically dictate the fate of their nations. In this paper, we examine the satirical presentation of the 'Fathers of Nations' in Vitta's *Fathers of Nations* (2013). Anchored on Antonio Gramsci's concept on hegemony, the paper highlights the critical role played by the intellectuals in countering the hegemony of Africa's political leadership and their capitalist allies in the West. The paper comes to the conclusion that external influence from the west and inefficiencies of the autocratic African leaders are the root cause of dystopia in Africa. The paper also concludes that even though the intellectual and professional elites are swayed by external forces from the west and ruling class, they play a crucial role in agitating for change.

Keywords: Dystopia, Hegemony, Elite, Intellectual professional, Postcolonial, Rulers, Satirical.

Introduction

The sovereignty of African states following the attainment of independence did not automatically disconnect them from their colonial masters and other interested states from the West. As soon it became apparent African nations might have acquired a new identity as independent states, they were still connected to their colonial masters who come back in the pretext of assisting the African

leaders in structuring the economies of their nations. Postcolonial African countries therefore, remain subservient to the West.

Before independence, Africa had a concrete vision for the people but this vision became blurred immediately after gaining independence. This was a result of western influence in their desire to control the African economy. Ngugi wa Thiongó (1993), feels that western influence in the affairs of African countries in collaboration with ruling regimes opened up the African countries to imperial interests. The blurred vision was also as a result of the leaders who were obsessed with power and followed the footsteps of the colonial masters and/or became worse than them. Lawal (2022) contends that African rulers before and during colonialism, and after independence in conjunction with their collaborators in and outside the African continent support and implement dystopian policies which oppress the citizens in their countries. This has advanced the culture of tyranny in the postcolonial African countries. This has further translated to hegemony exercised by the postcolonial African rulers on their subjects in order to serve the western interests.

Among the forces that shape the democracy of the Africa's postcolonial states include the use of professional elite who challenge the hegemonic leaders. The intellectuals aim at liberating the nation and the masses mostly through ideological and not through political intervention. The professional elite who includes teachers, engineers, journalists, among others, and the religious organizations play a critical role in enlightening the masses about their rights.

The leadership strategies employed by leaders in postcolonial African states are intertwined with those of their former colonial masters. The running of the affairs of the African states is remotely controlled from the West. Bhabha, in a foreword to Fanon's *Black Man White Mask* (1986) writes that it is only through an attempt to examine and redeem oneself and through challenging the existing 'freedom' that men will be able to create the perfect environment for their existence. Bhabha insinuates that the freedom the black man claims to have attained is just an illusion. Challenging this illusionary freedom is the force that drives the professional elite and intellectuals into questioning the hegemony exercised by the rulers in postcolonial Africa.

The Gramscian concept of hegemony describes a process of intellectual and moral leadership in resistance to oppression. It is a cultural process by which a dominating class exercise power and rule over another class, which is expected to obey the rules with no opposition. According to Gramsci, hegemony describes "a particular set of power relations that exist within a society with a refined and well-developed complex of ideological and repressive institutions" (Mayo, 2017, p 36). This is a situation where there exist social arrangements which are meant to support the interests of a particular class and in this case, the ruling class. These institutions include the judiciary, security apparatuses, learning and religious institutions among others. In these institutions, machinations of the ruling class to and through the professional elites are advanced to the subordinates within and without the precincts of the institutions. This suggests that hegemonic power is initiated, exercised and maintained by the ruling class.

Schwarzmantel (2015) posits that power is not only exercised through coercion but also through intellectual leadership. A supreme social group, which represents the ruling class in Marxist sense coerces and dominates the subordinate group by taking over their leaders and intellectuals to the ruling group (Schwarzmantel, p 100). When this happens, the intellectuals become part of the hegemonic forces dominating those in the lower social group. Hillert (2017) states that as per the Gramscian concept, when there is a conflict between the socio-economic power class and the political class, a rift occurs and the interests of the elite professionals differ with those of the ruling class. Rebellion against the ruling class starts from the disgruntled intellectual professionals and gradually spreads to the rest of the subordinate group leading to a revolution.

Gramsci feels that rebellion against hegemony is triggered by an intelligent reflection on the reasons why certain situations exist the way they do and on the best way of transforming these situations (Holst and Pizzolato, 2017). This starts from a small group, which comprises intellectuals, then gradually moves through to the whole society. Gramsci defines intellectuals as 'The dominant group's "deputies" exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government' (Schwarzmantel, 2015, p 73). As deputies of the superstructures, they are seen as agents of legitimation of the existing order, and also as potential critics of that existing order. According to Schwarzmantel, Gramsci sees the discontented intellectuals' struggle as a part of sustained opposition to the social order (p 93). Being the functionaries of the superstructures, intellectuals are directly affected by the hegemonic forces of the dominating group within the superstructure and are thus the driving force of the rebellion against this domination.

In analysing Antonio Gramsci's idea on cultural hegemony, Holst and Pizzolato (2017) argue that Gramsci felt that the elite, who are just a small group of a given population would initiate and nurture a new awareness which would gradually spread to the entire population through educational activities and other forms of dissemination. The elite professionals therefore, play a pivotal role in enlightening the masses and championing for change in leadership.

In analysing the inefficiencies of the hegemonic African postcolonial leaders and dystopia in their respective country, the paper examines the use of satire as a literary device. Bailey and Thomas (2023) define satire as an artistic genre that uses various types of humour such as parody, sarcasm or irony to ridicule a person's behaviour or a situation with the aim of initiating a change. Mugubi (2017) points out that satire ridicules with the ultimate aim of bringing about change and preventing other characters from engaging in the same folly or vice (p 135). This paper therefore interrogates the use of satire in Vitta's *Fathers of Nations* (2013). The paper further seeks to demonstrate how satire is used to expose and undermine the hegemony exercised by the African postcolonial rulers and their Western allies on African nations.

The West and Africa's Postcolonial Dystopia

Paul B. Vitta is a writer from Tanzania who came to writing after retiring from the United Nations where, among other postings, he served as Director of UNESCO's Regional Office for Science and Technology in Africa. His novels include, *Dry Water* (2003), *Fathers of Nations* (2013), and *Confessions by President Kikumba* (2016). The central focus of his writings is Africa – ranging in scope from the nostalgic yearning for the simple African village life in his first novel which quickly gives way to the acerbic focus on the failure of leadership in Africa in *Confessions of President Kikumba* and *Fathers of Nations*. In the latter novel which is the focus of this paper, the story centres on a summit of African leaders held in Banjul, Gambia. The leaders have gathered to discuss the way out of Africa's developmental crisis. The failure by the leaders to set aside their self-interests brings to the fore the problems of corruption and impunity that are at the core of Africa's postcolonial dystopia.

Postcolonial African leadership fails because those who take over leadership after colonialism are obsessed with power just like their colonial masters. Yongo (2021) posits that the rulers will do anything including altering the national constitution in their bid to remain president for life. Postcolonial rulers have also remained beggars of their colonial masters. The colonial masters have taken advantage of the rulers' inability to achieve financial independence. These kind of leaders therefore, become puppets of the colonial masters, consequently subjecting the African countries to abject poverty.

Gebreen (2020) points out that dystopia arises as a result of fear subjected to the society members by an oppressive leadership. The authoritarian government creates real fear and intimidates the citizens that they cannot express themselves or question the regime. This results in a weakened society and a totalitarian dysfunctional government.

The title of the novel – Fathers of Nations – is a sarcastic reference to the leaders, all of them men at the summit in Banjul, Gambia. The leaders are depicted as characters whose domineering ego and stature places them above their subjects in their respective nations. The term ‘father’ connotes a patriarchal figure who possesses absolute power over their citizens. They are presented as escapists who are happily safe in Banjul after running away from the troublemakers in their home countries (p 10). They are self-centered characters who attend the summit to enjoy and have as much rest as possible. This portrays them as failures, who instead of providing solutions, they are escaping to Banjul where they will make presentations during the summit, not to correct any wrong in their countries but to please their fans back at home. Their portrayal as failures point directly to their inefficiency and poor governance.

The fathers are depicted as rulers with no sense of direction, whose autocratic force trickles down to the lowest level of the social strata. The wide gap between them and the intellectuals is symbolically presented even in the hotel rooms they occupy at the time they are in Banjul for the summit. The juxtaposition of the Seamount Hotel, where Professor Kimani, Comrade Melusi, Dr Afolabi, Engineer Tahir and Pastor Chiamaka are staying, and Pinnacle Hotel where the fathers are staying highlights the class gap between the intellectuals and the fathers. The names of the hotels seamount; a mountain that rises on the floor of the sea and never gets to the surface of the water and pinnacle; the highest point, symbolically represents the inequalities between those in leadership and their subjects.

The ‘fathers of nations’ are described as failures who have remained in authority and power has become a habit, rather than a responsibility. Their autocracy is exemplified by the longevity of years they have been in power and the hegemonic powers they wield as heads of state. For example, Simba Ibarosa is depicted as a dictatorial and harsh president who always took the floor to make war or cause trouble and that is why he is feared even by his fellow heads of state (p 160). He had been voted out of office five times and each time he flatly refused to step down (p 161). Further, President Bibo Dibonso is portrayed as a permanent bully who had stuck in power for forty years, a fact that had “turned power into a habit then into a toy” (p 164). His advanced age coupled with lack of self-control leads to humiliation when he wets himself (p 164). This satirizes the rulers who refuse to surrender power to strong young characters who have the ability to withstand strenuous responsibilities that come with leadership. The rulers’ refusal to surrender power to a younger crop of leaders sinks the African countries into miseries.

King Jemba-Jemba, a royalty and a king for life is viewed with disgust by the chair of the summit. The chair states that King Jemba-Jemba does not have to assassinate his opponents to remain in power (p 163). The chair’s argument points to the fact that the rulers are not legitimately in power and do not entertain opposition and those who oppose them are eliminated. The chair sarcastically portrays Jemba-Jemba as a “callow youth with a mother’s milk on his breath” (p 164). The chair sees the king as unqualified to lead owing to his young age. The King is however, satirized in the fact that he is gaining nothing from the summit and offering no help to the other summitters. As a leader in one of the African countries, he is bound by the summit rules that not even a king can walk out of the summit and he has to remain in the summit and listen to the presidents shouting over non-existent proposals. The disgust portrayed by the chair of the summit towards King Jemba-Jemba is indicative of disunity among the African leaders which immensely contributes to failure of Africa as a continent.

The heads of state are satirically presented in the way they deal with issues affecting their countries. In the summit, the leaders are expected to discuss a document they are supposed to adopt in order to solve the problems bedeviling their countries. Instead of discussing issues, they dwell on non-issues, others like president Ibarosa injecting subjective views that are not captured in the document (p 161). The speakers are given a chance depending on their personality but not how valid their points are. For instance, President Bangoura on the basis of his seniority, since he fathered his country before the others and had ruled the country ever since (p 157) but not because he had a wealth of ideas above

the others. This seniority status makes him appointed the chair of a committee that is to come up with the strategy to use in order to choose between Way Omega and Path Alpha (p 166). This is despite his earlier revelation that he has not read and will not read any of the documents claiming he has no energy to read them (p 159). This indicates that the heads lack commitment and that the discussions are meant to push the rulers into fulfilling their selfish interests. This consequently leads to dysfunctional countries, led by inefficient rulers.

Through the inefficiency of the heads of states, Path Alpha, a document that was not on the agenda finds its way into the summit and is finally adopted instead of Way Omega. This satirizes the 'fathers' further. The method they use to choose between the two documents is also satirized. The method is named 'Choice Matrix' which is achieved through tossing a coin. Even as president Bangoura is explaining his method, the other presidents are satirically presented as exchanging funny notes instead of paying attention to either agree or disagree with it. This indicates their lack of commitment in coming up with a solution to the poor state of affairs in their countries and that their presence in the summit is just a formality.

Africa is described as a failed continent wallowing in confusion owing to the autocratic state of leadership. Dr Afolabi, the author of the book *Failure of States* and who is ironically expected to advise the 'fathers of nations' during the summit, says "Africa is Africa...It comes at you from both directions: from back and from left; from right and from wrong. As if to confuse you, it always confronts you with both opposites on every issue: good and evil, wealth and poverty, peace and war" (p 59). He also advises Nick to attend the heads of state summit and "learn a thing or two about African trickery" (p 172). Africa is in this context brought out as a continent that is unpredictable and with no sense of direction. Like Africa, Dr Afolabi is satirically presented as a hypocritical character because his book expounds on failures of states, yet he is expected to advise the heads of state on how to succeed in their governance and at the same time he helps introduce a rival document, Path Alpha in the summit that is supposed to adopt Way Omega.

Dysfunctional governments in postcolonial Africa are responsible for the miserable lives Africans are subjected to. For instance, poor leadership has led to the death of Tuni and the subsequent divorce between Asiya and Professor Kimani. Professor Kimani blames the poor state of roads for the death of his only daughter. Asiya feels that if Professor Kimani had gone for greener pastures like Walomu, he would have had a road worthy vehicle and Tuni would not have used public transport and this would have prevented the accident that claims Tuni's life. The death of Ziliza, Comrade Melusi's wife, also arises as a result of poor governance. She is murdered through the ruler's operatives in order to hurt Comrade Melusi. Therefore, in dystopic country, the vulnerable are the major recipients of the atrocities committed by the hegemonic leaders.

In a dysfunctional country, the security of her citizens is not assured. Professor Kimani tells Tuni that security is a necessity that the state should provide to the citizens (p 26). Since this security is not provided, Tuni has to learn how to protect herself from male violence. She even advises her mother how to behave to avoid preying predators in supermarkets and how to react in case she finds herself carjacked (p 28-29). This brings out the inefficiency and failures of the government.

The failure of Africa's postcolonial countries is partly a creation of the West and partly as a result of the inefficiency of the autocratic African postcolonial leaders. The West come in in the name of donors with the pretext of assisting them get a financial standing. These donors set unreasonable targets to be met by the leader before the donors can advance any financial assistance to them. Professor Kimani tells his daughter that at a time when there was a global economic recession, the donors forced the African countries to make drastic changes if they wanted to receive aid from the donors (p 23). This is the beginning of the financial crisis in Kenya and widening of the gap between the political class, who are the law makers and the intellectual elite professionals like Professor Kimani.

Ironically, the West also impose radical changes that negatively influence the affairs and running of African countries. They thus destabilize an organized government to create a weakness which they can exploit to tap the economy of the destabilized country. For instance, Tad Longway, the Director of Special Projects at AGDA (Agency for Governance and Development in Africa), makes a reference to Sir Mark Thatcher, son of former British Prime Minister Margret Thatcher. Longway explains how Sir Mark hired missionaries, not mercenaries as Professor Kimani calls them, to stage a coup in Equatorial Guinea. Longway argues that they were missionaries because they were on a mission. Boffey, (2013) opines that Sir Thatcher provided finance for helicopters to be used in overthrowing the president of Equatorial Guinea. In case the coup would succeed, president Teodoro Obiang was to be replaced with an exiled opposition politician, Severo Moto. The missionaries' mission was to antagonize the government with the opposition and this would subsequently, destabilize Equatorial Guinea. This is the same mission that Longway has as he recruits Professor Kimani, Engineer Tahir, Pastor Chiamaka and Comrade Melusi to challenge the poor governance in their countries. With a destabilized or a completely failed African country therefore, the power behind the failure becomes the sole beneficiary.

The West seem to influence even the social-cultural setup of the hegemonic leaders. Professor Kimani's former colleague turned politician, Newborn Walomu, for instance, uses British, Americans and Greeks as his reference points to justify his innocence in stealing Professor Kimani's wife. Walomu claims a professor in Texas told him thirty percent of British, seventeen percent of Americans and forty percent of Greeks steal married partners from their spouses. Incidentally, characters like Walomu are the political leaders expected to steer the country's economy. By imitating these imperialist who are ostensibly his role models in spouse stealing, he does worse than them; he steals his former colleague's only wife, Asiya. This satirizes the political class who blindly imitate the imperialists destabilizing the citizens emotionally and socially and consequently their countries.

Ties between postcolonial Africa and the imperialists are encouraged by the 'fathers of nations' who remain dependent on them. The Libyan president's desire to please the imperialists is to blame for the dismantling of 'Fist of Allah'. 'The Fist of Allah' is Tahir's brain child and the main attachment between him and his mother country. In fear of retaliation from the West after Al-Qaeda attacks America, the Libyan president, dismantles the 'Fist of Allah' killing engineer Tahir's dream. Engineer Tahir, an expert in weapon development, had hoped that Libya would have nuclear bombs that would not only defeat but also deter offence (p 117). Engineer Tahir says that the president who had once refused to give in to the demands of the West, had now "sold out to the West and become its servant... he was happiest when seated on the West's lap" (p 104). Influence from the West is behind the strong opposition in Libya since they supplied advanced military weapons to the opposition leader, Haftar. He was supported by Russia, France, the United States, Egypt United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia (Robinson, 2020). They view him as a trusted partner capable of curbing the spread of Islam (Aljazeera, 2020). The supporters either supplied him with advanced military weapons, gave him advanced military training or supported by sending military troops, to aid in attacking Tripoli. Libya's 'father of nation' is thus satirized because he ignores the fact that the west that include United States have a role to play in strengthening his political nemesis in the opposition.

International organizations do very little to get African countries out of the economic quagmire. When Minister Zinto says that African Union is behind the change in African countries, the narrator feels that Zinto is not being truthful since African Union is an organization that is more incompetent than the individual nations it claims to unify (p 151). The western community do the same to Zimbabwe. The international community feels that if they suppress the leadership, then the president will fail and give in to their demands. This translates to economic sabotage. They thus introduce a programme 'Structural Adjustment Programme' intended to revive the economy, but they also fail (p 94) sinking Zimbabwe deeper into inflation. International influence therefore, has negatively impacted the growth of African postcolonial nations.

Voice of America VOA, has poached MS McKenzie from the Gambian News which she is expected to report the proceedings of the summit for. She accepts the offer to report for VOA on loan leave since VOA is paying her better than what she gets from the Gambian News. She tells Dr Afolabi that once the loan ends, she will get back to the Gambian News and start eating “boiled dirt for breakfast, lunch and supper again” (p 65). As a reporter for the Gambian News and now working for VOA, she has to work under a foreigner in her own country, Gambia. Gambian News ends up unrepresented and thus not reporting about the proceedings of the summit despite the fact that the summit takes place in Gambia. While working for the VOA, she becomes Dr Afolabi’s informant. Dr Afolabi is in the summit as an advisor to the African heads of state and at the same time is entrusted by Longway with the responsibility of sneaking into the summit a rival document, Path Alpha. Poaching MS McKenzie from Gambian News and having VOA as the sole reporter of the summit proceedings means that the imperialist’s media has taken control locking out other news channels and thus, leaving no space for divergent news. This therefore means that what gets to the masses is determined by the VOA and is thus bound to be biased.

International media houses represented by VOA gets personnel who are charged with the responsibility of snooping, reporting and probably sabotaging the development agenda of the African countries. For instance, Nick Sentinel has a gadget he calls the Silent Listener that is meant to tap and analyze communication allegedly to deal with security breaches during the summit. The device also monitors private dialogue and aired messages (p 53). He also records suspect broadcasts (p 54). Through this, Nick is able to unravel the mystery behind the four strangers whom he refers to as nodes, that is Professor Kimani, Comrade Melusi, Engineer Tahir and Pastor Chiamaka and their relationship with another stranger who refers to himself as their guide, whom Nick refers to as the hub node (p 131). The device is also able to locate them at the Seamount hotel. This revelation makes her revere him and thus he dominates everything. This satirizes the local media specifically, and the African leadership in general since they entrust foreign media houses who end up sabotaging the summit by revealing crucial details about the summit prior to the discussions thus helping the rival group to strategize and finally emerge winners in the summit.

The Intellectual and Professional Elite, and Dystopia

According to Gramsci, there are two classes of intellectuals (Krause, 2022). The first class is that of traditional intellectuals who are inheritors and sustainers of the established superstructure. The second class are those who advance new consciousness of the oppressed social strata. Gramsci’s true intellectuals are those who advocate for change on behalf of the oppressed class. These according to Gramsci, must engage with the media and academia since these are the medium through which consciousness is raised. These intellectuals initiate change within the social systems leading to a stable society.

The elite have a central role to play in ensuring the prosperity of a country because they have the power and influence over the leadership and the policies that they make. The elite include the civil society leaders, politicians, professionals like teachers and religious leaders among others. Diop (2021) feels that political change can be achieved in African countries when the elite succeeds in the processes of political reforms. He however, points out that ideological differences among intellectual elites are the root cause of the failure of development discourse in most African countries. Bohórquez (2023) has the same view as Diop. He argues that the elite have the force to prevent change from happening by allowing corruption, civil conflict or blocking any country’s development. This happens if they are beneficiaries of the leadership and the government policies. However, Bohórquez contends that when the elite are committed, structural changes can happen and this is a step towards progress as a country. Gebreen (2020) in his exploration of what constitutes a dystopian novel argues that dystopian fiction “centers on a dissenting person or group in a supposedly perfect society, awakened to the wrongness of inhumanity and willing to affect and make a change” (p 218). The elite therefore, have the power to

challenge dystopia when they feel betrayed by the same government they have been supporting and working for.

The feeling of betrayal felt by the intellectuals and elite professionals leads them to question and challenge the leadership in their nations. Professor Kimani; representing the teaching fraternity; Pastor Chiamaka representing the religious group, Comrade Melusi representing the dissenting political voices, and Engineer Tahir are intellectuals who suffer in the hands of the autocratic leaders in their respective countries. They are at first contented with what they have achieved so far, their place and relationship with the current leadership, and what they are doing for a living until the tables turn against them and they become disillusioned. Longway takes advantage of their disillusionment by introducing Path Alpha to them. He lures them into believing that this is all they need to move out of the mess created by the rulers.

Dr. Afolabi, a lecturer at the university of Ibadan, Nigeria, is portrayed as an elite with a wealth of knowledge in governance and is thus entrusted with imparting the same in Africa. He is expected to advise the African heads of state as they debate Way Omega, a document published by twenty Nobel laureates. Nobel prizes are awarded in five disciplines namely Chemistry, Physics, Literature, medicine, and peace and are considered the most prestigious accolade awarded to intellectuals all over the world (Britannica, 2024). In his opening speech, the host president contends that Way Omega was “invented by the cleverest twenty of the world’s best and brightest” (p 150). Way Omega is therefore, a brainchild of the elite with the aim of reversing the poor governance in the postcolonial African countries.

The intellectuals play a crucial role in agitating for change in their countries. The men recruited by Longway to champion the will to change are professional elites. These include Professor Kimani; a graduate from Oxford University, currently a lecturer in the Institute of Developmental Studies at the University of Nairobi, Engineer Seif Tahir who studied weapons development at the University of Paris, Pastor Chiamaka; a businessman turned pastor and Comrade Melusi, a politician who had also participated in the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. These are to champion Path Alpha under the guidance of Dr Afolabi; a lecturer at the University of Ibadan Nigeria. Others who are incorporated by Dr Afolabi to work towards the implementation of Path Alpha include the VOA crew represented by Mr Manley, Ms McKenzie and Nick Sentinel, the youth.

The VOA crew is incorporated due to the exemplary revelation through technology, which the summiteers refer to as ‘The Trick’ (p 140) and which Dr Afolabi utilizes to sneak Path Alpha as an agenda in the summit. Lenin points out that the desire for the Russian working class to gain political knowledge and demand for illegal literature gives rise to a political newspaper through which political education gets to the bourgeoisie, rural handicraftsmen, and the peasants (Lenin, 1901, p 22). Media therefore, acts as an avenue for dissemination of political information to the masses.

Gramsci’s conception of institutions of higher learning is that they should be agents of intellectual and moral reform which should ignite radical changes rather than only producing students and graduates for the job markets (Schwarzmantel, 2015, p 94). This is what Professor Kimani advocates for, less than a month after he first lands at the University of Nairobi as a senior lecturer. He demanded that the university should strive for relevance to the society instead of only excellence. He succeeds and the university motto becomes “Relevance to the Society” (p 21). He later wants the university to be an agent of change, not a mere spectator. Being an agent of change himself, the institution would consequently produce intellectuals who can initiate radical changes to a dysfunctional country with an aim of changing it.

Gramsci sees intellectuals as deputies of the superstructures, who act as agents of legitimation of the existing order. In this way they are hegemonic forces acting on behalf of the dominating class to oppress the subaltern. For instance, Engineer Tahir’s first greetings to MS Mahmoud makes him feel as

if he is begging a junior colleague. When she says no to his advances, he slaps her. While in court, he claims he slapped her for defying the cultural dictates of always putting on a head veil. He considers her a million miles his junior. This portrays him as no better than his autocratic president. In retaliation she hits his left eye with a letter opener leading to its removal. This to him was an accident. Mahmoud's immediate reaction against Engineer Tahir's hegemony is a case of the subaltern resisting domination from the intellectual functionaries. Religion and the court are portrayed as state controlled institutions advancing the interests of the elite professional to oppress those in the lower social class.

Hegemony does not bring contentment to the intellectual who is himself under the hegemony of the autocratic ruler. Rebelling against autocracy is the first step towards revolution. Engineer Tahir's rebellion is seen even in his walking and the narrator wonders if it was a gesture of protest against someone or something (p 2). When the 'Fist of Allah' is dismantled, the president he had adored had become a villain. Dismantling of the 'Fist of Allah' and the emotional pain arising from 'the accident' coupled with the friends' pestering, he leaves Tripoli, and moves to live alone in Benghazi. While Tripoli was the capital city of Libya and thus the center of power and administration, Benghazi served as the headquarters of the opposition leader Khalifa Haftar, and was at the forefront in the revolution against the Libyan leader Muamar al-Gaddafi which ousted him out of power. This was as a result of widespread dissatisfaction with growing economic inequalities among others (Serafimov, 2012). Mr Longway meets Engineer Tahir in Benghazi where he sells the idea of the will to change, to him. Economic inequalities arise as a result of a dysfunctional regime which Engineer Tahir challenges by joining Path Alpha.

The failure of the Libyan government arises as a result of autocratic leadership that does not support the intellectual functionary's ideas and opinions. For instance, elite professionals represented by Engineer Tahir, dreams of having a country with her own weapons that would weaken the opposition. The nuclear bombs Engineer Tahir hopes to develop would be effective in deterring and defeating the attacks from the opposition. Countering the attacks from the opposition would thus ensure there is a functional government free from western influence from without and the opposition from within.

Good governance and democratic leadership in postcolonial African countries is thwarted by massive corruption and mismanagement of public resources by the authoritarian regimes. Longway tells Professor Kimani that at the time African countries were gaining independence they had poverty, diseases and ignorance as the only problems to deal with. They have later added corruption and impunity. The hegemonic rulers are satirized in that they are the main beneficiaries of corruption, everyone is emulating them and then they keep telling the police to stop taking the bribe. They have the instruments of power but are reluctant to punish the offenders. Since the rulers have no will to change this menace, Mr Longway feels there should be an agency to enlighten the masses on the will to change (p 41). A professional like Professor Kimani is thus, charged with the responsibility of championing the struggle against this corruption that has led to economic regression, high inflation and inequalities between the political class and the rest of the masses in the lower class of the social strata.

The elite, through the intervention of Dr Afolabi, are given a chance to air their views on governance despite the fact that they are in the summit as observers. This is made possible since the president chairing the summit does not listen to Minister Zinto when he objects arguing that Path Alpha is not on the agenda and should thus not be introduced. The chair in this case acts subjectively and autocratically. Dr Afolabi takes advantage of this to introduce Path Alpha to the heads of state and to invite his fellow elite professionals to address their respective leaders. Professor Kimani becomes a voice for his fellow Kenyan teachers. Engineer Tahir explains to his president the need for modern weapons that would not only be used in defense but also to deter crime. Pastor Chiamaka intervenes through his prayer for the adoption of Path Alpha in place of Way Omega. He even succeeds in making

the heads of state submissive when he coerces them to shout "Amen" to his "Praise the Lord" (p 155). Comrade Melusi, representing the political class, has his plans to avenge his wife's death thwarted and he is arrested. This is the same way that the government in power eliminates the opposing political group. The coming together of the elite which comprises of the media, the political class, the religious group and other professionals like teachers and engineers will challenge autocracy of the African rulers. The elite professionals therefore, play a crucial role in voicing muted voices of the masses suffering under the autocracy in their countries.

Conclusion

The arguments in this paper lead to the conclusion that dystopia in postcolonial African countries is as a result of the inefficiencies of the autocratic leadership of the 'fathers of nations' who have remained glued into power and seem not sure of the direction their countries should take towards development. They do this by intimidating the upcoming leaders, rigging elections and gruesomely eliminating those who attempt to oppose their leadership style.

The paper shows that although the intellectual and professional elite are potentially agents of change, they have been compromised. They are portrayed as undependable as agents of change as it is only when their interests are threatened or betrayed that they agitate for change. Even worse, the elite are shown as people who are prone to be swayed by any force that promises a better life. Thus, while external interests particularly from the west contribute significantly to Africa's postcolonial dystopia, Paul B. Vitta makes it clear in *Fathers of Nations* (2013) that African leaders and the elite cannot escape blame for this state of affairs.

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