

SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND DEHUMANIZATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN *TWISTS OF FATE* BY GICHABA NYANTINO

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examines how Gichaba Nyantino, in Twists of Fate, captures dehumanizing effects of contemporary developments in Kenyan society. The paper explores how the author depicts the urban city socio-environment as a backdrop that offers individuals opportunities to navigate through the twists of life in the modern Kenyan society. The study engaged a theoretical framework that embraces psychoanalytic, formalism and cultural theories. The primary methodology of the study involved a close literary analysis of the text, Twists of Fate. An analysis of the thoughts of the characters as presented by the author was key to understanding the extent of dehumanization. Socio-environmental factors of humanization differ from one social set-up to another. In this case, there are different ways in which people get frustrated in varied social institutions. Nyantino's Twists of the Fate reflects the factors that affect the youths today in the contemporary society, especially in Africa, particularly within the Kenyan society. The youth are the most prone or vulnerable to the challenges of urban centres like drug abuse, robbery, peer pressure, poverty, mugging, crime and the like. The author focuses on issues that the youths grapple with. Lack of dialogue in the family set up has led to falling out among family members and the disintegration of the family and society at large. In this case, Yuna and Maria, due to misunderstanding, develop a conflict that draws them apart. Yuna's life later is ruined due to the demeaning situations or twists of fate that she encounters.*

KEYWORDS: Socio-Environmental Factors, Dehumanization, Individual, Twists of Fate, Gichaba Nyantino

INTRODUCTION

Tom Odhiambo, in his essay, *Alternative Moral Economies, Crime and Violence in Kenya* (2007), argues that dehumanization is a situation featuring in post-colonial Kenya. Odhiambo (ibid.) argues that Nairobi provides a natural backdrop for most Kenyan authors, because it is where most Kenyan youth emigrate to, in search of opportunities for self-employment. However, as discussed by Odhiambo, the youth are caught up in robbery and banditry both as victims and culprits. In this case, the youth get disgraced and see themselves as objects, vulnerable to death, as documented in *Kill Me Quick* by Meja Mwangi. It seems that contemporary writers like Kiriamiti, Meja Mwangi, Kigia and others are voicing issues of individual degradation as a result of the socio-environmental factors. It is evident from the African scholars, like Odhiambo (2007), that the African continent is characterised by violence, as an issue that Bayart and others are faced with as complex matters that are crippling the society, enhancing its decadence.

Nyantino, like other Kenyan writers of fiction, capture the dehumanizing factors in the contemporary Kenyan society. He depicts the urban socio-environment as a backdrop that offers twists that face Kenyan youths today. He draws the readers' attention to issues of tracing for one's identity, violence, kidnapping child-abandonment, the role of the mass

media, in exaggerated advertisement and prison system that represents the height of brutality. *Twists of Fate* reveals these demeaning factors that lead to societal break up.

As such, the study sought to interrogate the portrayal of the dehumanized individual in *Twists of Fate* considering the cultural background of the text's characters. The author presents the traditional African culture that is aging and dying as the advent of "modernity" sets in. This change with issues of modern technology has destabilized society. Therefore, the study intended to show how an individual loses moral values as one interacts within a given social environment. In the novel, the writer focuses on distinctive issues that lead to individual dehumanization through his writing strategies of characterization, plot, thematic concerns and the structure of the novel.

The fate that thwarts various characters authentically reflects the process of degradation. The work gives situations that characters grapple with as they pursue different goals like in the case of tracing one's identity. The character's aspirations are thwarted and individuals get brutalized, a deviation of behaviour that leads to societal collapse. The portrayal of the dehumanized individual is done within a social situation. Indeed, literature mirrors society in this way.

METHODOLOGY

The primary data for the study was obtained by a close reading of the main text under study, *Twists of Fate* by Gichaba Nyantino. The study focused on the psychological tendencies emanating from dehumanization by analysing the behaviours of individuals in relation to others, themselves and their environment. The characters are examined as portrayed by the writer showing these psychological tendencies at their workplaces, in families, public scenes among other environments. The psychological tendencies emanating from dehumanization were elaborated by the way characters interacted in the story as revealed by the writer.

The Socio-Environment and Individual Dehumanization

According to Foucault (1996), there are three ways or modes of objectification as regards dehumanization through dividing practices, individuals are objectified through isolation or physically. This involves people like the lepers and prisoners. Foucault (ibid.) further reveals that scientific classification categorizes people according to particular characteristics like madness. Lastly, Foucault talks of objectification, which is a way one turns himself or herself into an object. As such, dehumanization is a process of stripping away human qualities from a person and treating the person as an object.

Socio-environmental factors of dehumanization affect an individual's behaviour within any given society. *Twists of Fate* portrays characters that have been demoralized due to various environmental conditions that they are subjected to. The challenges that the characters encounter are the twists of fate that Nyantino focuses on in this text.

The family is seen as a socio-environment factor to dehumanization. The characters in the text grapple with problems of family rivalry, competition and personal differences. The prison is also focused on as an environment that debases people. The food and living conditions within the prison are devastating and horrible as revealed through the characters. Homelessness is a socio-environmental factor to dehumanization as well. Homelessness also

greatly defines the life of the protagonist in *Twists of Fate*. Poverty is also a factor that causes dehumanization and affects the characters in the story. They end up living in slums, engaging in uncouth behaviour like alcoholism. Yuna, after leaving the street funnel, decides to seek shelter in the slums. The woman she meets has no name as she reveals:

Welcome, she said as she handed her the glass of water. “Thanks”, Yuna said before drowning the glass dry in a noisy gulp. Her teeth cluttered against the edge of the glass – so eager did she gulp at the cold stuff... Another one? The woman asked “No thanks” she intoned. “I’ve no name, this is where I live and I’m an alcoholic” she said. A person without a name? It was inconceivable that a person can be without a name (p. 140).

The woman Yuna meets as revealed ends up living in the slum, engaging in unhealthy alcoholism. The writer points out how slum environment is a factor of dehumanization that affects the lives of people, as most become alcoholics.

The writer depicts the ‘work place’ as an environment that is a factor of dehumanization as well, a place that debases a person. Unhealthy competition arises among the characters, Nelly and Kate, who become jealous of Yuna at work. In fact, the two women plan to kill Yuna to avoid the competition they get due to Yuna’s immense beauty. Failure to trace one’s identity is also presented by the writer as dehumanising most of the characters like Yuna, Jimo, Tony, Riana, Nelly and Kate who are crippled in their identity crisis. The Media that publicly exposes Yuna’s beauty destroys her individuality. Yuna becomes a laughing stock in the community. As shown in the text, the media only focuses on her beauty and movements forgetting that there is more underlying the beauty. The media is a socio-environmental factor of dehumanization. Through its advertisement, the protagonist in the text gets publicly humiliated. The corrupt court system unjustly passes judgment on the innocent victims like Yuna. She is falsely accused and imprisoned. In so doing, the writer shows, such a judgment is also a brutalizing factor.

The socio-environmental factors of dehumanization are shown by the writer of *Twists of Fate* through the depiction of various storylines in the novel. The *twists of the fate* that thwart the characters as presented in the text shape their behaviour and life. The characters are dehumanized both at individual and society level. As such, the demeaned individual deviates from norms of society, which they are expected to embrace.

The Family

It is within the family that rivalry between characters emerges. The writer identifies jealousy, hatred and envy that create animosity among the family members. Yuna and Maria in the text get estranged from one another for the rest of their lives. Maria abuses Yuna and a quarrel ensues between them. The characters suffer both physical and psychological conflict. Their hatred for one another escalates and the family bond between them disintegrates. Maria’s abuses show that she is already dehumanized by the bitterness she projects towards life. She suffers from a fractured personality as it is seen in what she says:

Correction once again! I’m not your mother! Silly! How many times am I going to drum this fact into your thick skull? And if you continue (p. 1).

The hurtful words that Maria hurls at Yuna have a negative impact on Yuna. Her gentle disposition gets frustrated and she begins to see Maria as an enemy. The protracted conflict

between the two characters worsens. Yuna's frustration and distress abound as revealed by the strange dream she has. The dream reveals what she is undergoing psychologically:

She now held the sword having snatched it. She had taken it high up aiming at the centre of Maria's head when a fiercely barking dog rudely interrupted the terrifying spectacle. It was a dream! An awful dream! Her eyes were flung open as though this dream of death was real. She literally woke up from sleep startled that her breath was final and registered fear more akin to surprise (p. 17).

The writer demonstrates that family rivalry culminates in family break up, which paves way for societal disintegration. Eventually, Yuna disowns Maria and wanders away to Nairobi, an urban centre full of challenges. She develops the 'enemy image' (Maise, 2003, June 1) that draws them apart until the time Maria dies.

Work Place

The work place, as revealed by the writer, is an environment that is dehumanizing for the individuals in this society. The Nairobi Modelling and Fashions College where Yuna, Nelly and Kate work is portrayed as a social environment that has destroyed the relationships amongst these colleagues. Yuna's workmates, Kate and Nelly, are jealous of her. Yuna's personality and beauty threatens them. They too, like Maria, indirectly use abusive words like 'bitch', 'some Johnny-come-lately' and so on. The growing positive influence of Yuna's personality challenges them. As the writer shows through Jimo's revelations to Yuna, the ladies claim that everything revolves around her and that she influences decision-making at the college. Jimo further reveals what Kate and Nelly feel about Yuna:

Those ladies feel threatened by your growing stature and the influence you wield at the college. Everything, they say, revolves around you and that you even influence decision-making sometimes you even lord it over them with impunity... They want you off the face of the universe and very fast!... in just a second he pulled out some fifty thousand shillings in notes "that was the price on your head" (p. 77-78).

The writer further draws attention to the malice that has replaced all feelings of humanity at the work place. Kate and Nelly have allowed themselves to be galled to murderous heights. They are portrayed as objectified individuals whose brutality is propelled by their hostile behaviour towards Jimo:

Shut up! Silly boy... we want our money n-now... Tell it to the birds. I just won't buy it! Honestly, I won't! That was shocking Jimo! It was shocking to see a bitch we thought long dead strut proudly in front of us (p. 81).

The writer paints the work place as an environment that leads to dehumanization of employees. Therefore, dehumanization is rampant in social institutions like colleges, schools, hospitals, business premises, offices and so on.

Kate is so brutal that she is preoccupied by the motive of killing Yuna. Dr. Valentine comes to know Kate and Nelly's evil scheme. Kate's abuse of Jimo reveals her brutality:

Thief! Robber! You'd rather I left you the bloody fool you are than come home for your neck. You must pay up! If you do not I will flush your whole fortune

down proverbial toilet! Have I made myself perfectly clear? We will not let a beast like you have a field day with our hard earned cash! Never! That was absurd and you know it and I swear I will get even with you for this! She conducted with a bang and no amount of mitigation from Jimo could dislodge her from her uncompromising position on the mater (p. 82).

Dr. Valentino, who is in charge of Nairobi's Modelling and Fashion College, cannot tolerate the brutalizing behaviour of Kate and Nelly. She summons the duo, gives them a thorough dressing down, and subsequently sends them on compulsory leave pending comprehensive investigation. This shows that workers' hostile relationships towards one another can threaten their institution of work as well.

Failure in Tracing One's Identity

Failure in tracing their identity leads the characters to engage in crime. It is for this reason that Jimo became an underworld criminal, as he narrates in his letter to his fellow criminal, Mike:

He had stormed out of the interview room, tore the form in fury, went straight to his mother, and demanded to know who his father was. His mother wailed and cursed him. He missed the job and he was cursed, so he plunged into underworld where individuals lead shadow lives. He had rather operate in the underworld where nobody bothered with one's identity (p. 114).

The writer shows that clear and candid information needs to be given to the youth as to who their parents are. Knowing one's identity solves the problems of alienation and lack of direction in life. Jimo and Yuna are portrayed as victims who have failed to trace their identities. Jimo is portrayed as a dehumanized person who becomes an 'underworld robber' and murderer. Yuna loses emotional attachment to her twin children whom she abandons at Hotel Savannah. Yuna's children later find it hard to accept her as their mother.

Papa, the son of Fiona, gets to discover later in life that Angelina is not his real mother and this reality sows bitterness in him. Papa had been abandoned by his mother Fiona, the daughter of Angelina. During the family revelation, he gets to know that Fiona is his real mother:

Anyway papa to cut the long story short, this is the mama I'd told you about several years ago, she fumbled longer than usual as if the explanation she had at the end of her tongue was too preposterous to throw out into an open discussion. You mean this stranger here? Oh no! For God's sake, stop this comedy! (p. 231).

From Papa's outburst, the writer shows how identity crisis demeans an individual. Papa turns hostile and he publicly denies his mother. The long duration of desertion by his mother has erased his emotional attachment to her. That is why Papa does not relent from the abusive language to Fiona:

Shut up!! He exploded as he moved towards Fiona in a wild charge. His voice sounded terrifyingly firm. His voice registered many things, anger, rage, brooding, intense irritation and restlessness... where have you been all this time? Yours is a heart of stone not curved with any symbols of love... (p. 232).

From Papa's utterances, the reader realizes the extent to which lack of knowledge of one's identity is dehumanising to the characters. Tony and Riana, Yuna's abandoned children, grow lacking the knowledge of who their real mother is. When revelations are made, the reactions of these characters show change in their behaviour. It takes a long time and psychological understanding in order to accept Yuna as their mother (Freud, 1994). It is after counselling that Tony and Riana embrace the reality that they are siblings. What these characters undergo dehumanizes them. This dehumanising effect is projected through their aggressive language (Freud, 1994).

The convicted criminals in *Twists of Fate* are caught up in difficult situations, through which the writer reveals that they are victims of identity crises. Yuna, Jimo, Kate, Nelly, Mike and Fiona, while in prison, through their dialogue, reveal that it is out of frustration due to failure in tracing their identity that they ended up engaging in brutalizing acts like violent robbery. Yuna testifies to other characters in prison what happened to her:

My real name is Yuna... I did not renounce my name, I merely dropped it, and I did that not by choice but by necessity... that time I was undergoing extremely difficult moments. A lady I had known from my childhood as my mother suddenly went berserk and told me she was not my mother (p. 201).

Yuna reveals her identity to the rest of the prisoners, a thing she finds unpleasant to unravel. The writer to show how telling the truth of one's life to others in society is rarely done candidly uses her revelation. One tries to sieve out the nasty past experiences in the narration. Yuna's failure to trace who her real parents are thrusts her into a series of traumatizing experiences. The writer demonstrates how the 'identity crisis' in the contemporary society is a dehumanizing factor.

Homelessness and Marginalization

Homelessness, as Bauer (2001) says, leads to dehumanization. Bauer cites this dehumanization as a socio-environmental factor by giving an example of Las Vegas as a place of such homelessness. This observation helps illustrate how homelessness is a situation that can frustrate individuals in a social set up. Nyantino tries to show how Yuna, the protagonist departs from home and wanders in the streets of Nairobi. Fortunately, Rita her former schoolmate shelters her in her apartment. However, this is short-lived. After eloping with Jimo she discovers that he is a robber. He is a wanted criminal. Her love for him diminishes. Unfortunately, she is expectant. She decides to move from Jimo's house and live in a street tunnel:

She would spend hours at one point of the street thinking and letting the time flow with the wind. Hers was a body bereft of laughter, sleep, love, purpose. It was a restrictive lifestyle and a painful experience of isolation, humiliation and rejection (p. 135).

The writer highlights the dehumanizing situation that Yuna is grappling with. She has missed Maria's and Jimo's houses. Instead, she chooses to stay homeless. The narrator says, "Unpredictable that is the one word that aptly described Yuna's stint in the street ... a cruel twist of fate... it dehumanized her and divested her of all dignity."

The writer draws attention to an episode where Yuna is staying in a street tunnel with two street girls. Her character has changed. She denounces the comfort of Jimo's and Marias's

homes and hopelessly stays on the streets. She is already dehumanized and she has deviated from her normal life. However, her experience still haunts her. In a letter to Maria, she confesses:

... I have looked at myself, at my present, at my future I cannot place myself properly. My personality is paranoid because you impaired it. My identity is not clear because you distorted it... (p. 147).

Yuna's life in the streets places her in a state of homelessness. She has been deprived of her dignity. The security and comfort she experienced in her home is lost. Her humanity has been stripped off (Maise, 2003) and she sees Maria and Jimo as enemies. The writer, in this case, draws attention to the issues of insecurity and distrust, suggesting that the society no longer respects/practices the African communal virtues that privileged kinship and friendship over all other forms of relationships.

Poverty

Shamita Naidoo (2008), in an interview, says that slums offer surprising hope for tomorrow's urban world. These shanty places are where people are seen as if they are invisible. Naidoo (ibid.) further depicts slums as urban places characterized with poverty that dehumanize. Life can be threatening and hopeless to the victims. Tom Odhiambo (2007), in his essay, *Juvenile Delinquency and Violence in Postcolonial Societies*, similarly argues that 'majority of the Kenyan population continues to be poor and destitute living in slums and eking out a living in conditions which had not existed even during colonialism' (p. 248).

Nyantino focuses on slum life in his fiction. The writer refers to the slum 'miserable district of the city', where poverty manifests itself in every ill-clothed slum dweller. One of the women Yuna lives within the slum house confesses that she is an alcoholic and has no name. One of the them staggers into the house where Yuna lives and says:

Uuuh! We got a visitor! Hey babe you look stunningly cute! Waa aao! Did the men here see you babe? Uh! Hu! May be you're too smart for them guys! Haa! She yapped amid a shriek of laughter and the familiar but awful smell of ghetto liquor and tobacco (p. 142).

The writer's focus on this episode shows the lives of these women. They are already objectified by poverty that distorts their lives as women in the society. They are expected to be sober mothers that play their role of motherhood. Unfortunately, the drunken behaviour has become rampant in slums that are being encouraged by the contemporary set up of society. This, according to the writer, reveals societal disintegration.

Prison Conditions

Prison conditions contribute to dehumanization. The prison is a place that brutalizes individuals. The prison conditions affect the prisoners physically, psychologically and emotionally. Nyantino reveals prison conditions through what happens to Yuna:

When she arrived in prison, she was given a long white dress and white head scarf as prison uniform. Her abode was a poorly ventilated dingy room where the light of day had never shone past the heavy doors... prison contains an atmosphere so dense that it compacted the soul, almost crushing it...prison diet

was of course terrible. Inmates were served a single meal per day usually an unpalatable mix of maize and beans often rotten. They had to use buckets for makeshift fougere at night fuelling frequent outbreaks of diseases like diarrhoea, cholera and dysentery (p. 198).

The writer reveals that the prisoners are deprived of personal freedom and basic bodily needs. This portrays prison as a disgracing environment to the inmates. The solitary confinement is inhumane. Prisoners are subjected to harsh punishment. The violent and abusive administration of the prison systems is seen as a way of treating the prisoners as objects (Foucault, 1996). Jimo looks extra-ordinarily old and in poor health due to the impact of prison life, as the writer says:

... ashamed and frail in his fading suit, his now lanky frame folded in the chair, he could only duck his head and mumble an apology and plead for mercy. His words were slurred and slow as if he had something in the mouth (p. 226).

From this episode, the writer shows how prison life has crippled and disgraced Jimo who earlier on is seen vibrant and daring. Much of his time and that of other characters in the fiction have been wasted in the prison confinement. The torture the convicts are faced with has some repercussions on them. For instance, Girard (2011) brings to focus what the convicted in *The Outsider* by Camus (1989), lacks while in prison. Meursault, the convict in Camus fiction confesses that he misses sexual fulfilment, freedom even to look at nature, the sky and a chance to smoke.

Lack of these basic needs desensitises a person as one becomes demoralized. These are the dehumanizing conditions that characters like Yuna, Kate, Nelly Mike, Fiona and Jimo experience. The imprisonment period lasts for fifteen years for each prisoner among these characters. In this case, Nyantino draws the readers' attention to the objectifying prison system in the world, particularly in Kenya.

The Mass Media

The mass media is a source of information. The media reach and influence large numbers of people. As revealed in *Twists of Fate*, the writer focuses on journalists and camera operators who collect a lot of information about Yuna, 'Miss African Beauty Pageant' (89). Their exaggeration of Yuna's beauty and public behaviour contributes to her failure. The mass media is seen as a dehumanizing factor. The trial and imprisonment of Yuna got worse due to information given as evidence from one of the old newspapers:

I often saw the accused in the company of a well-known suspect; later, I heard she died in a road accident but of course the true version was that she faked her death in order to escape arrest. I am going to show you a famous newspaper picture showing the accused and the attempted robbery's main suspect (p. 192).

The In this writer portrays the state counsel as a dehumanized person as he gives false evidence so as convince the judges that Yuna is not innocent. The state counsel is used to represent brutal people in society who terrorise others through unfair means. The writer shows how newspaper adverts can be used to dehumanize individuals in a society. The glamour and fame they accord her later lead to her public disgrace. Yuna becomes a conspicuous figure in the urban centre. All of her movements get exposed. She walked into ballrooms and out of cinema halls and theatres. This movement was captured by photo-

journalists. She is not aware of how she is being focused on as a commodity leading to her loss of individuality.

She is portrayed as being wasteful because the writer focuses on how she squanders the money made with utter abandon. The questions that are asked through the authorial voice like: “when does one’s life turn upside down?” help the reader understand that one’s life deteriorates when one loses focus in life and avoids constructive criticism from others in society. The rejection of advice contributes to the deviated societal behaviour.

The writer shows us that the youth are easily exploited and manipulated due to their innocence. In this case, Yuna has succumbed to a situation that has projected her as a public symbol without her awareness. The media benefits as she fails to perpetuate her dream of life, being a successful person in society. Yuna’s frailty is revealed when she engages in a relationship with Jimo, a criminal.

The Court System

The diabolical judiciary system is a socio-environmental factor of dehumanization. The writer to show the injustices uses the trial at Nairobi’s hall of justice on Parliament Street, an episode in the text. False accusations are hurled at Yuna. The writer draws attention to this situation of false accusation to show how the injustices the judges deliver belittle innocent people.

From what the fiction focuses on, it is clear that Yuna is not involved in violence or robbery and yet she is falsely accused of these. It is further proclaimed that she is a murderer. The writer to capture a helpless situation of overwhelming false accusation that many prison victims undergo uses this episode. In this case, some prisoners are rendered voiceless. This is a revelation by Nyantino that the society is faced with awful circumstances of dehumanization that leave many people disgruntled and mentally tortured.

The judges do not have candid and authentic proof of the accusations, they have. This is a demeaning condition. Most people are in prison innocently like Yuna because they undergo the injustice of the judiciary system. By failing to seek the correct information concerning the accused, the judges treat the victims as objects (Foucault, 1996). As such, the writer shows how the court system is an environmental factor of degradation. This reveals that innocent people are tortured and denied the right to defend themselves. Therefore, in this episode, the writer projects Yuna as a representation of the innocent convicted criminals who undergo unjustified trials.

She is innocent! This is a travesty of justice! “Lop sided justice!” multitude chanted in wild annoyance and tears rolled down several fierce faces. They have scarred us! They have scarred the countryside! Grabbers. They have stolen our heritage! She is not a criminal (p. 194).

The writer shows how injustice and corruption pave the way for personal objectification. Yuna undergoes a traumatizing experience that shapes her life into a debased individual. She no longer cares about what state of life she is in, and this is what is presently happening to the youth in the contemporary society. For example, the youth are victims of violent robbery and some engage in child-abandonment. A society that does not practice justice and fairness overlooks the ‘Ubuntu’ (brotherly love and concern) spirit that has existed from the past (Bob & Lundin, 2010). This is an indication that the society is getting disintegrated. Those who

witness the injustice done to Yuna, express their bitterness and protest due to the unjust and corrupt judges who insist on limited evidence for her imprisonment. The writer draws our attention to the feelings of one of the witnesses through a poem recited:

That is not true
Did I hear you well?
It has never been
It never will
It is the opposite
Talk of lop side justice
Blind justice
Distorted justice
It is not
That chain snatcher
On the streets
That nondescript pick pocket
In the bus
That flesh peddler
In the red light district
That hunger stricken bribe taker
In dilapidated offices
That minnow drug pusher
Down town
That poverty stricken cop
By the roadside
That haggard looking teacher
In a holiday tuition class
It is the chauffeur driven mega thieves
The civil service fat cats
The parastatal top dogs
The multi-billion kick back takers
The captain of snore accounts
The mega land grabbers
The multi billionaire drug traffickers
They have transformed the youth

Into dragged zombies
Driven the former icon of East Africa
Into pariah status
The city in the sun
Into a gigantic formless sprawl
With mountains of garbage
Who should top the list?
Tell me who the most wanted criminal is!!
In all fairness
And justice
And truth
Tell me! (p. 195-196)

The poetic expression in the fiction by the author shows the numerous issues of injustices and corruption that grip people in society. The poem is used by the writer to depict a deteriorating societal set up that is characterized by high social vices and few moral values. Issues of bribery, insecurity, poverty and distorted justice are raised in the poem. In this case, the society is shown as being contaminated with unfair and unhealthy malpractices that dehumanize members or individuals, in this case, represented by Yuna.

The poem embodies a lot about what the society is undergoing. Instances of poverty, corruption, exploitation, oppression and so on affect people, especially the youth, exposing them to a society's stratification into classes, an indication of a fragmented society. The witness is the writer's representation of people in the society experiencing the injustice but is not able to express their frustration. In this case, the poem is used by the writer to reveal the demeaning situation the people are subjected to.

CONCLUSION

Socio-environmental factors of dehumanization differ from one social set-up to another. In this case, there are different in which people get frustrated in varied social institutions. Nyantino's *Twists of the Fate* reflects the factors that affect the youth today in the contemporary society especially in Africa. The youth are the most prone or vulnerable to the challenges of urban centres like drug abuse, robbery, peer pressure, poverty and so on. The writer in his fiction has focused on issues that the youth grapple with. Lack of dialogue among family members has led to misunderstanding and disintegration of the family unit. In this case, Yuna and Maria, due to misunderstanding, develop a conflict that draws them apart. Yuna's life later is ruined due to the demeaning situations or twists of fate that she encounters.

The writer reveals that Yuna is a representation of the youth who grapple with challenges in the contemporary society that end up dehumanizing them. As it is revealed the youth innocently succumb to the misfortunes that life involves. The other characters, Jimo, Nelly,

Mike Fiona and Kate commit crimes of robbery, murder and kidnapping that lead to their ruin. The decades of years they spend in prison become a turning point in their lives. So far, the crimes they commit caused by socio-environmental factors estrange them from society and this creates societal disintegration.

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