

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

The Role of the Literary Artist in Improving Good Governance and the Administration of Justice; Viewing Wole Soyinka's "From Zia, with Love" with a Ghanaian Lens

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Abstract:

The lack of good governance, effective administration of justice and leadership in general, have been the bane of most African countries. A lot of the socio-economic and political challenges can be traced to bad governance perpetuated by self-seeking leaders, be they civilian or military. A good number of literary critics have in diverse ways raised concerns on this issue, either overtly or covertly. One such literary critic is Wole Soyinka's presentation of "From Zia with Love". This paper provides an avenue that mirrors the situation in Ghana. The very concerns of Soyinka when he wrote his satiric play fourteen years ago are the concerns of many well meaning Ghanaians today. The study reveals that The play is virtually re-enacted in our present day Ghana. The issue of bribery and corruption, deplorable prison conditions, and drug trafficking are all issues that have engaged the minds of many in the country.. This paper begins with a look at the basis of Soyinka's criticism, and how he echoes the concerns of other literary artists. This is followed by an analysis of the play: its themes and techniques, with close reference to the text. Finally, it undertakes an assessment of the appropriateness of Soyinka's choice of title and the relevance of the play to our modern day Ghanaian society.

Key words: *Bribery and Corruption, Social injustice, Drug trafficking, physical brutalities*

1. Introduction

Wole Soyinka can be said to have dominated Nigerian drama, and is noted for being one of the sternest and most unrelenting critics of his country. He focuses his criticism on society. In this direction, Soyinka has been critical of the imbalance in the social structure and the direction in which his country is moving. This has moved him into writing a number of protest plays such as; A Dance of the Forests (1960), Madmen and Specialists (1970) Opera Wonyosi (1977) and the most recent of his protest plays From Zia, With Love. (1992) a political comedy. Wole Soyinka has unduly suffered for his political activities, for which he has to go through imprisonment and exile. The crux of his criticism stems from his deep concern for what happens to the common man in the face of mal administration. He sees the common Nigerian citizen as mercilessly exploited by self-aggrandising political tyrants. Thus, his deep-moving sensibility provokes in him, a desire for change. His criticism is bound up with his ideas about the nature of existence, truth and knowledge in the Nigerian society. In human nature, it is possible to have an ill intended smile, or laughter preceding a spontaneous overflow of outrage. It is therefore not surprising that Soyinka chooses this method manifesting in the form of a satirical comedy as a medium to make his protest.

Before I proceed to look at Soyinka's From Zia With Love, I will like to make a brief reference to one other, and in fact, less known Nigerian playwright; Segun Oyekunle's play, Katakata For Sufferhead, which was written many years before Soyinka's From Zia With Love. In Katakata For Sufferhead, Oyekunle presents to us a young school leaver, Lateef, who has no money, no food and nowhere to go. He also refuses to go back to the village an idea he perceives to be tantamount to admitting defeat. The Nigerian government asks such youth to go in for loans from the banks and go into farming. But here is the case where the banks give loans to only those who are rich enough to own luxury cars and exploit the poor in the society. Lateef comes face to face with starvation. As a 'JJC' town (Johnny Just Come) in the town, he moves into a restaurant and, out of ignorance, moves into the VIP section and eats a meal that he cannot afford to pay. He is arrested and sent to the Police Station. Because he cannot afford to bribe the police he is sent to court. Because he has no money to bribe the judge, he is sentenced to a prison term. The entire play involves Lateef telling the prison inmates his story.

The point I am interested in by this reference is the compelling circumstances that lead the common man into trouble and more importantly, the nature of offences that the common man is often convicted of. Let us have a cursory look at the nature of crimes for which the inmates in Segun's Katakata For Sufferhead are convicted. Jangidi, (the leader of the inmates) is serving thirteen

(13) years for taking twenty Naira out of public funds. Ndem has served eight (8) years of an indefinite term for using his position as a storekeeper to establish a small business at the roadside. Darudapo has served six (6) years for an unstated crime. Okolo has served five years detention without trial for having a quarrel with the daughter of a very influential man, and Buhari has served five years without trial for being seduced as a servant by the young wife of his master, an ageing and impotent Alhaji. The point here is that all the inmates are like Lateef, thrown into jail to rot over the years for trivial offences and for their inability to bribe their way out of the clutches of the police and the law.

It is the same situation that we see in Soyinka's *From Zia With Love*. The crimes of the inmates are petty when compared with the corruption and criminal behaviour of the great and famous people in the society and who still enjoy all the freedom that one can perceive in the society. Soyinka's play functions at two levels, a naturalist level and the symbolic level. The prisons in Nigeria and other African countries are probably like the prisons in which the play is set.

2. His Technique

Though he presents to us a serious play, he is able to infuse a remarkable level of humour and irony in the play, in a manner that makes us weep and laugh at the same time. As one watches *From Zia, With Love* performed, one laughs at the folly of the military officers and ministers and, at the same time weeps for the prisoners who go through unimaginable ill treatment by the military and 'senior' prison inmates; thus we have the tragic in the comic. The main character, a political detainee called Miguel, representing Soyinka himself, goes through a lot of pain and suffering in the cells. Finally, he is released without trial. What he has experienced, what he has seen, and what he has heard constitute the subject of this comedy. It is important to add that much of the play borders on what happens to other prisoners who are in detention with Miguel. One striking feature of Soyinka's play is the fact that he is able to reduce an entire state machinery comprising the various ministries, into a cell, with all the evils in the Nigerian state machinery operating within the four walls of a cell. The cell thus becomes a microcosm of the entire Nigerian society. By this metaphor, Soyinka is telling his audience of how the entire country has been reduced to a cell in terms of human rights violations and lack of freedom. In fact, these concerns are raised in such a pathetic and at the same time humorous manner that the less critical audience may skip noticing some of them. Soyinka makes use of burlesque and irony in his satiric work. His line of criticism of the follies of his society at the time is very much invective.

It is important to add that Soyinka's life as a poet has had a remarkable influence on this work of his. He occasionally lapses into poetry, particularly where songs come in, with some of the lines in the songs rhyming in alternation. For instance, in the song by the chorus as they lead the Commander to his death, we have the following end rhymes:

- trap a
- machine b
- rap a
- preen c
- clean c
- mean d
- been d

Furthermore, the play is not divided into Acts and Scenes as we often see in a drama. One has to resort to quoting page numbers in some places. What one can make of this style of Soyinka in this work is that, it symbolises his spontaneous outburst of anger at the military rulers, upon reflecting over the ordeals he went through during his life in prison. He thus becomes invective in his approach. He is also covertly advocating for the release of all political prisoners all over Africa.

3. Themes

Operating just within the four walls of a cell, Soyinka is able to present vividly his concerns about:

- Unlawful arrest of citizens followed by unfair trials;
- Laws that take retrospective effect and are aimed at victimising political opponents;
- Bribery and corruption among public officials, including the judiciary;
- Brutalities and murder in the prisons;
- Trafficking of hard drugs (Cocaine) by government (security) personnel
- Security agents as collaborators in crime;
- And finally the struggle against injustice;

Among the inmates, we have the Commandant, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Agriculture, the Director of Security, Minister of Housing, Minister of Education.

4. The Play

From Zia With Love opens with the commandant requesting the various ministers to present situational reports. Through the use of humour and verbal irony, Soyinka is able to present to us, in brief, the general conditions in the Nigerian cells. The Minister of Health's report is alarming to us, the audience, but not the least to the cell Commandant.

Minister of Health: Seven dead

Commander: Seven dead? You mean between yesterday and today?

Health: In the last 24 hours, your Excellency

Commander: Which local Government?

Health: Katanga Local Government two, Aburi one, Soweto, two. And another

two in your constituency, Amorako (*pointing in the direction of the tossing figure on the mat*). At my recommendation, the minister of Housing has relocated him to maximum Fresh –Air Security by the door, but I think it is too late, unless they take him to hospital. (p. 2).

The Health Minister's report is indeed worrying. It is important to note that some of the names mentioned symbolise places that human torture ever took place. Examples are Soweto in South Africa, where racism brought a lot of suffering to blacks, the wars in Congo that led to several deaths as a result of torture, and the military coups in Ghana that claimed many lives. We are not surprised that the Minister describes the situation as "critical but stable". From these two key words the commandant selects the one that he can misinterpret to serve his ulterior motive. He, therefore, ironically considers the stability to be a positive ingredient for national development and declares; "Without stability, there can be no development."

In the same way, Soyinka presents us with yet another situational irony when the Director of Security, in his report, complains about water hyacinths invading the harbours.

Director: The hyacinths are still a hazard to navigation: The fishermen can't get at the fish:

Commander: With the water hyacinths spreading through the harbours, the nation cannot be invaded by sea. You can't have any secret landings on unguarded beaches. Those sea-born mercenary and guerrilla incursions have ceased; that is security for you. There has been no escape from there in the past year and a half-that is security for you. Cheap natural security barrier. Gentlemen, I propose three hearty cheers for the water hyacinths. Hip: hip: Hip!

Inmates: Hurray! (2:2).

This tells us much about how quack politicians are bent on avoiding the reality when it does not serve their interest. The leaders are callous and have misplaced priorities. Nevertheless, Soyinka makes us feel so much moved by the Health minister's report when we hear of the number of deaths, he at the same time makes it quite difficult for us to resist laughing, when the Health Minister adds, "At my recommendation, the Minister of Housing has relocated him to maximum Fresh-Air security by the door." To narrate a serious scene in such a jovial manner, indeed, leaves the audience confused as to whether they should shed tears or laugh: but that is the tragic in the comic. It is worth noting that the report covers other cities in Africa, not only in Nigeria: that is Katanga in Congo, Aburi (Ghana) Soweto (South Africa) among others. By this extension, Soyinka is describing how pervasive the problem is in most African counties, not just Nigeria alone. Nevertheless, he uses the cell as a microcosm of the Nigerian society.

Soyinka uses this dialogue to portray how attention of political leaders is often diverted from the development of the state to the provision of security for the leaders, to the extent that even natural threats to the economy are seen as wholesome and welcome development for the government. Promoting agriculture (fishing) and commerce at the harbours is out of the question. What matters is whether the political leaders are adequately protected. The main theme of the play "Unlawful detentions" is carried in the argument between the Director of Security and the Commander, during the former's report.

Director: With all due respect Sir, my assessment of the situation is that we should begin to consider the cases of those presently in detention. The intelligence report I have received is that most of them need not be there a day longer.

Commander: (*Increasingly violent, Half-way through, he has risen from his seat*). Or the radicals? Those extremists, who open their stinking mouths to demand of us a date for restoration of civil rule? Democracy! We have hardly begun our mission of redemption. Where were the bleeding hearts when the nation was being plundered with such unprecedented abandon? Where was their patriotism? Their human rights conscience? Did the very people on whose behalf they now claim to speak- did not those very masses pour out into the streets to celebrate our take over of government? Who are they to open their mouths now to demand a swift return to civil rule? Just tell us major, do such people speak for this nation? Or is it the army, which has the moral right to speak and act on behalf of the masses? What do they want anyway? Eunuchs! Impotents: Incompetents! Agitators: what the hell do they want.

The Commander tries here to point out the justifications for their intervention and takeover. The authorial comments that precede the Commodore's reaction further depict the violent nature of the military as rulers of civil society. Soyinka in this dialogue juxtaposes sound judgement with absurdity and dictatorship. One would have expected that the expert advice of the Director of Security would have been given attention (as it is his field). However, the Commander exercises his discretion on all matters concerning the state. He ends up branding the Director a traitor, who has been planted in their midst by their enemies. The disturbing fact Soyinka points out here is that the truth is often ineffective when it is seen by those who are not in a position to set things right. This is where I agree with a famous Reggae musician Lucky Dube when he says in one of his albums "The terrible

truth about the truth is that when you stand by the truth you stand alone.” The argument by the Commander-in-chief renders the situation of those detained for no wrong doing hopeless. Yet, in our feeling of hopelessness, as we sympathise with the detained, Soyinka makes us laugh at the follies of the Commander when he threatens to explode out of anger:

Commander: I think I am just about ready to explode!
Chorus: Explode
Commander: Shall I explode?
Chorus: Explode!
Commander: Am I or am I not overdue for explosion?

A loud explosion follows, (p.10). Thus Soyinka punctuates his serious scenes with what I will describe as some kind of comic relief to the audience.

5. The Brutalities

The brutalities that Soyinka presents to us are of two folds; the physical attack by fellow inmates and attacks by a mirage of diseases. We are introduced to the Welcoming Committee of the cell to set the pace for the physical brutalities meted out by the old ones to new detainees. The new inmates are welcomed and introduced to the rest by severe beatings “A barrage of slaps descends on the men, right and left. They are eventually beaten to their knees.” The new detainees are Miguel Emuke and Detiba. Even in describing the diseased conditions of the inmates, Soyinka does it in a way that is humorous. A prison warder visits the cells and the cell commander and his Health minister draw his attention to the plight of the inmates;

Health Minister: Everybody skin here get craw -craw. De one way no get craw-craw
 get beri-beri de one no get beriberi, e get Kwashi-okor. De one wey
 no get Kwashi-okor e get jedi-jedi De one way not get jedi-jedi ...

Commander: (*Leaps up and presses his face against the bars*)
 Oga, I hope you dey listen, o Dat na my Minister of Health.
 This man wey dey here dey vomit all in belle night and day.
 Make you come take am for emergency now now or’ e no go last
 till morning;

Warder: Oh shut up Hyacinth and get back to sleep!

One would think that as a human institution the prison authorities would at least, attend to the one that is in dire need of medical attention, as reported by the cell commandant and his health minister. Unfortunately a rather callous response from the warder sends cold shivers down the spines of the audience.

This, again, is one of Soyinka’s cryptic ways of projecting the military rulers and their allies as a barbaric crop of leaders who are insensitive to human suffering. We are, therefore, not surprised that the inmates react spontaneously to the callous attitude of the prison authorities. As usual, after presenting us with an obnoxious spectacle, Soyinka reduces our anguish with some kind of humour in the reaction of the inmates: They together lambaste the warder, amidst banging cups, sticks, plates etc.

Prisoners: Oga warder Oga warder!
 Craw-craw warder Oga warder
 Sobia warder, Oga warder
 Gonorrhoea warder Oga warder
 Apollo warder, Oga warder
 Syphilis warder, Oga warder
 Leprosy warder, Oga warder
 Asinwin warder, Oga warder
 Kowshi-okor warder, Oga warder
 Epilepsy warder, Oga warder etc. (p.22)

The prisoners chant and dance in the cell long after the warders have left. The attack on the warder is understandable. It is the warder who is keeping them in the cell, which can best be described as an incubator of diseases. One significant thing about this chant is the endless list of diseases that we are presented with. Though the inmates seem to be attributing the diseases to the warder who shouts them down, it is clear that Soyinka is using this chant to highlight the various kinds of diseases that have plagued the Nigerian prison cells; both communicable and non-communicable diseases. Yet, the entire spectacle, with inmates dancing all over the cell, can easily divert the audience’s attention from the point Soyinka is making. His sympathy for the inmates lies in the way he describes the passing away of the inmate who is being reported sick to the warder. In a stage direction Soyinka tells us:

..... the sick man remains visible. He makes a violent effort to sit up, propping himself on the elbow, a ghost of a grin appearing on his face. As the gyration (dance) reach a crescendo, he collapses suddenly. Sergeant Major is the first to notice that something is amiss. He pulls out of the circle, kneels by the mattress and quickly raises the head. He closes the staring eyes, lays down the

head gentlyOne by one, the others notice, and the dancing comes to a ragged stop. There is total silence as they stare in the direction of the still figure. (p.22-23).

This piecemeal description of the death of the prisoner is deliberate. It symbolises Soyinka's protest. The last energy of the sick inmate is spent struggling to sit up, apparently struggling against death. It is a protest, not just against his present condition, but also against the entire justice system in the country. Soyinka, therefore, is symbolically castigating the military rulers for the lack of justice in the system. His protest is also contained in the loud voices of the inmates in the cells after the death of their colleague. The stage direction alone is enough to evoke the sensibility of the audience to question the justice system of the military regime.

Ironically, this worrying scene is immediately followed by a military voice over loud speakers decrying corruption and other antisocial activities in the society:

Military voice: A corrupt nation is a nation without a future.
Smuggling is economic sabotage – it is an act of treason?
Protect the soul of your fatherland. Support the Battle
Against indiscipline (p.24).

Soyinka brings this scene close to the death of the inmate, to enable the audience to see the irony inherent in a situation in which perpetrators of indiscipline, (the military) are busily looking for people who are perceived to be indiscipline in the society. In effect they, the military, are simply searching for innocent citizens to arrest and maltreat. The hypocrites that they are, they preach virtue and practise vice.

6. Manner of Conviction

The manner in which punishment is prescribed for victims is another source of concern for Soyinka and his audience. Segun Oyekunle in his Katakata For Sufferhead has already mentioned some of the weird manner innocent people are convicted. Soyinka adds to the list making of laws that take retrospective effect. Emuka, in a conversation with his two other inmates, Detiba and Miguel tells us:

Miguel: In other countries, every crime has its punishment. But if you wait until man commits crime, then you come change the punishment dat one na foul. (p.29)

Detiba, on his part, humorously likens the situation to a football game as follows:

No one changes rules in the middle of a football game. Just imagine, half-way through a football game, one side scores a goal, but after half-time, the referee says the net was one inch too wide. Or he says a corner kick, which took place ten minutes ago, should now be a penalty kick, can you imagine that! In a mere game it is bad enough, how much more in a matter of life and death. (p.29)

Sebe hits the nail on the head when he observes; "You throw a stone today and it kills a bird last week." What is more worrying is the fact that it is difficult to escape the atrocities of the military. The picture that Soyinka paints in this scene is that of hopelessness. It is suggestive of the difficulty in avoiding the traps set by the military. The comedy is contained in the dilemma that the ordinary man finds himself. Pleasing one person offends the other and, trying to please both at the same time incurs the displeasure of both, which is more disastrous. The atrocities do not end even at the death of the inmate. One's relations will have to go seeking one's body, bribing from one office to the other. A woman in the play goes in search of her younger sister who has disappeared. In her search, she has to bribe Sebe just to direct her to the appropriate office for enquiry in her efforts to retrieve the body of her sister. She ends up spending a lot of money without getting the body.

7. Administration of Justice

In sharp contrast to the scenes we witness in Nigeria, Soyinka takes us to another country: Pakistan, where military rule also exists. Sebe tells us of how the head of state of Pakistan, Mr. Zia, sentences his own Prime Minister to death by hanging. The Prime Minister, who was his country's representative to the United Nations, is found guilty of murdering his political opponent. We are told of how president Zia ignores everybody's protest against the sentence and goes ahead to "Hang him like a common murderer" The irony that Soyinka brings to bear is the attitude of the society towards the judge's verdict. The question is, why should people, and in fact, the general public, protest against the sentence. It suggests that the selective justice that exists in the Nigerian system and other African countries has come to be accepted as the normal / right thing in the society. Indeed, when society gets used to the wrong situation, they see the right thing as wrong. They have a distorted scale of value. In fact, the people protest against the sentence, not because the punishment is too harsh, but because of the high social standing of the culprit. The comment "He is hanged like a common murderer" emphasises the class of the convict. Soyinka is, therefore, criticising a society that has not only grown used to selective justice, but also accepted it as normal. Soyinka's admiration for the distinguished administrative system of justice by the Pakistani president, Mr. Zia, may have attracted him to pay him a visit, after which he returns From Zia, With Love.

8. The Big Cocaine Deal

Then comes the big drug deal between Sebe and the Wing Commander. Soyinka exposes the hypocrisy of the political leaders, using dramatic irony. Earlier in the play, (p.24) we hear a military voice over loud speakers, warning civil society of the deadly consequences of corruption and drug trafficking: Ironically, the same military are engaged, in big time drug trafficking. The security personnel headed by the Wing Commander plans with the ambassador of Pakistan to import fifty (50) kg of prime grade cocaine into the country (Nigeria). The drug is to be disguised as fertilisers to be delivered at the armoury with a special letter purported to be from the president of Pakistan. The wing Commander will then take delivery of the goods. Unfortunately, the plan does not succeed. The Wing Commander engages Sebe in a prolonged argument over the hiccup that leads to the disappearance of the consignment in the high seas. It has been alleged that pirates have hijacked the drug. He tells Sebe:

Wing Commander: Fifty kilograms of prime grade cocaine is not chicken feed. Countries have gone to war for less. (p.72). Pushing his argument further, he discloses to Sebe and to the audience:

Wing Commander: My arrangements were thorough. I never leave anything to chance – never I assigned a top officer to clear the consignment and transfer it to the armoury. The formal presentation by the Pakistani ambassador was to await my arrival – I made sure of that. The letter of friendship from president Zia is right here, in my briefcase. Here, take a look at it. (p.73).

This revelation by the Wing Commander throws light on the hypocrisy of the state security as people seeking the welfare of their nation. When we see them engage in the very nefarious acts that they so much condemn earlier, then we see their “Battle Against Indiscipline” as a war against themselves. This makes the search for nation wreckers a humorous venture; a chase of the most wild goose. However, as a way of registering his disgust at this high level of hypocrisy, Soyinka makes the Wing Commander run out of luck. The humour continues when Sebe, an ordinary inmate is able to convince a Wing Commander that consulting an Esu (Shrine) can help them recover the lost consignment. He tells the Wing Commander:

Sebe: All it requires is libation. A little mid-night libation, just to be on the good side of the little man. (p. 81).

In preparation for the ritual encounter with the fetish priest, Sebe asks the Commander to wear a white cloth and a black cap. Little does the Commander know that he is walking into a trap set for him. The chant by the Chorus, ironically joined in by the commander, reveals yet, another dramatic irony by Soyinka.

Chorus: I got you in a trap on the time machine
If you don't take the rap
I cannot preen
Myself as Mr. clean
Now that makes me mean
Too long you've been
On the money scene
While the fact of my being
Is - my pockets lean..
Time you went roaming
In a change of scene...

Soyinka's irony here is contained in the fact that, while the inmates (the chorus) are attributing their plight to the Commander, and planning to murder him, as suggested in the last two lines of the above quotation, the Commander ignorantly response as follows:

Commander: Every offender shall be guilty as charged. Acquittal shall mean conditionally discharged. Surrender of passport, report every morning to the nearest police or else keep running.

The audience cannot help laughing at a crooked man in the society who is singing his own dirge.

9. Liberation

The audience heave a sigh of relief when the law of natural justice prevails at the end of the play. The Wing Commander is murdered under mysterious circumstances.

“He is found dead on a crossroad, wearing a white cloth and a black cap. His throat is cut, and his vital organs missing. (p.99)

Just then the innocent men who are detained are set free. These include Miguel Detiba and Emuke. The death of the Wing Commander symbolises the downfall of the corrupt military regime, and subsequent end of unlawful detentions and inhuman treatment of civilians by the military rulers. Though Soyinka creates a lot of disturbing scenes in his comedy, it ends happily, at least, for us the audience, who have been eager, right from the onset, to see the suffering of the prisoners and for that matter the people of Nigeria come to an end. We also join Soyinka to laugh at the climax of his satiric comedy in which the hunted finally

overcomes the hunter. Soyinka's satiric journey to Pakistan to visit, and probably congratulate the president of Pakistan, Mr. Zia, for his distinctive principle in the enforcement of the rule of law, by hanging his own high-ranking minister for murder.

10. Aptness of the Title

The action of president Zia fills Soyinka with joy. It makes him feel that there is still love for the common people elsewhere outside Nigeria. This is the piece of good news and love that Soyinka tries to share with us his audience. This may have motivated his choice of title "From Zia, With Love" for his satiric comedy. Why then does Soyinka not say From Pakistan With Love, but rather from Zia, an individual. The answer is simple. It is not the entire Pakistani society that condemns selective justice or sees the need for natural justice. President Zia is condemned for sentencing his prime minister to death by hanging by the society; a society that has become so used to the wrong, that the right becomes wrong and the wrong, right.

11. Relevance to the Ghanaian Situation

Soyinka's *From Zia, With Love*; a play that was written twenty-two years ago (1992) is here with us in Ghana today. Ghana is one country that was plagued with military coups in the 60s to the early 80s. Each coup maker came with the hope of cleaning a mess. To fight against bribery and corruption and to promote social justice and accountability. The relevant questions that need to be asked and indeed remain unanswered are; has the mess been cleared after the several coup d'états? What has been the attitude of the military during the coups in Ghana? What has been the nature of arrests and detentions in those days? What was the reaction of the masses in Ghana to the coup makers? The answers to these and many more questions are those we find in Soyinka's *From Zia with love*. All African leaders have hailed Former South African President Nelson Mandela, but how many are willing and indeed had the political will power to act like him?

What of our prison conditions? Can we boast of better cell conditions better than those we find in *From Zia With Love*? Healthy people get convicted of one crime or the other, eg. causing financial loss to the state. They get into the "incubator of diseases", and contract "Craw-craw, Sobia, Gonorrhoea, Apollo, Syphilis, Leprosy, Asinwin, Kowshikor, Epilepsy, or tuberculosis and die upon release or admission at the hospital. Since in Africa, the prison can be a home to any person both criminals and the innocent we look forward to seeing the day the prison conditions would improve. The circumstances that lead some inmates into the cells are no different from those we see in *From Zia with Love*. Right here in Ghana, A driver was sentenced to twenty years in prison for stealing his master's eight-hundred Ghana Cedis, and equivalence of four hundred US dollars. Again in Ghana a young man served five years in Prison custody for stealing a fowl. Also and more recent a man, believed to be prominent in society was fined two thousand Ghana Cedis equivalent to 900 US dollars for defiling and paralyzing a nine year old girl from a poor background. A case that the Gender and Children Minister has appealed against. The cases are endless.

On the issue of drug trafficking, several top political and security personnel have been linked to cocaine deals. There was a case in which confiscated parcels of cocaine allegedly turned to cassava powder, with top police officers being interdicted as a result. Seventy-seven (77) parcels of cocaine on board a ship by name "FB Benjamin" got missing in the high seas just as we hear in *From Zia, With Love*. High-ranking security personnel are reportedly involved, Bribery and corruption in the judiciary have been a topical issue in Ghana for some time now, to the extent that even when programmes are designed to create jobs for the youth of Ghana, corruption undermines the survival of such programmes, leading to abysmal failure and loss of state resources. A case in point is the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Authority (GYEEDA). Ranked 1st in Africa and third in the world on the corruption index, Ghana cannot but accept the fact that it has serious cases of corruption to deal with whether its political administration is democratic or military regime. The situation of Ghana points to the fact that mere regime change to democratic rule does not change a corrupt people. It takes the individual's conscience and tenacity of purpose in the face of overwhelming number of corrupt citizens, to change a bad system for the better. The literary artist is, therefore, a source of information, as to the way forward in dealing with corruption. This is what Soyinka's *From Zia with Love* teaches us Ghanaians. African countries, and for that matter, Ghana only needs political leaders like President Zia to overcome the war against corruption.

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