

Obioma's 'The Fishermen' and the Redefinition of African Postcolonial Narrative Tragedy

Authors : Ezechi Onyerionwu

Abstract : If there is a modern world literary culture that has so tremendously patronized the tragic mode, it has to be that of Africa, and this has been largely true to the extent that the African socio-historical process has been given strong projection by its literature and other art forms. From the three-century-long transatlantic slave trade which brutally translocated millions of Africans to the 'outermost parts of the earth', to the vicious partitioning of Africa among European powers and the subsequent imposition of colonial authority on a pulverized people, Africa has really been at the receiving end of the big negatives of global transactions. The African tale has largely been one long tragic narrative. However, the postcolonial African tragic saga has presented an interesting variety of forms and approaches, which have seen to the production of some of the most thought-provoking and acclaimed African novels of the late 20th and early 21st century. Some of the defining characteristics of the African tragic prose has been: the exploration of the many neocolonial implications of the African contemporary existence; the significance of the robust interplay between the essentially foreign, and the originally indigenous elements of the modern African society; and the implosive aftermaths of the individual modern African's attempt to rationalize his position at the centre of a very complex society. Obioma's incredible novel, *The Fishermen*, is in many ways, a classic of the African postcolonial narrative tragedy. The reasons for this bold categorization would occupy the present paper.

Keywords : African narrative tragedy, neocolonialism, postcolonial literature, twenty first century African literature

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