

**THE SOCIO-POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN POSTMODERN NIGERIA:
A STUDY OF LABO YARI'S A HOUSE IN THE DARK
AND OTHER STORIES**

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Abstract

This paper examines the matrix of postmodern realities in Nigeria. It explores the representative power of fiction as a means of engaging the realities of our time. With reference to Yari's *A House in the Dark and Other Stories*, this paper highlights contemporary issues within the Nigerian socio-political landscape. Issues explored in this light include global warming, rural-urban migration, marriage, individualism, religion, social injustice and the realities of postmodern perversions and materialism. These issues are exploring to show how man not only embody but also complicate these issues in his search for "happiness". The paper finds that the thematic interests of the stories in Yari's collection are a representation of the postmodern condition and contemporary Nigerian reality. Thus, it yet speaks to this generation and bears the enduring quality of a good literary work.

Keywords: Socio-Political, Landscape, Global Warming, Migration, Individualism, Postmodern.

Introduction

A safe place to begin will be to establish a distinction between modernism and postmodernism. The common precursor to both movements and/or eras is the decline of the age of positivism and the emergence of relativism; the questioning of the traditional sense of things. Modernism lunched humanity into an age of inversion, but also concerns itself with the chaos and crisis that followed. The "death of god" and the birth of man as the sources of his happiness is soon followed by the revelation of the capacity of man to be an agent of destruction in the face of capitalist, social, religious and scientific independence. What follows, therefore, is the lament over this new reality, a summary of the focus of the modern age. As a departure, the Postmodern

embraces this new man while also celebrating his evolved state and the expression of his true, innermost self. Here then lies the distinction; while modernism laments the chaos and crisis that have characterised the evolution of man, postmodernism celebrates it as an expression of man's innermost self. In literature therefore, narratives, poetry and dramatic forms explore these features in attempting to negotiate reality through literary representation. Labo Yari is one among the many writers who have explored postmodern issues in their works; especially in his collection of short stories titled *A House in the Dark and Other Stories* published as far back as 1985. The realities they capture are however still the relevant in our time.

This paper therefore explores the realities of the postmodern era in Yari's *A House in the Dark and Other Stories*. Selected stories, are explored for instances of the representation of postmodern reality and the network of effects triggered by the postmodern condition. Issues in focus range from global warming, rural-urban migration, marriage, individualism, religion, social injustice, to the realities of postmodern perversions and materialism. Characters are explored as catalysts that embody and complicate these issues in their search for "happiness". This article examines the representation of these issues as reflections of the postmodern condition and contemporary reality.

Global Warming and Rural-Urban Migration in "The Drought"

The story captures the reality of urban migration, particularly in the face of environmental degradation. The urban space becomes an alternative space, a safe haven, for the teaming young men begin displaced by hunger and famine to find a better life. The rural dwelling becomes a site of emotional and mental frustration for those committed to finding a better life and promoting their heritage. Ampah (2009:85) explains that the conditions of urban life affect individuality because they create a distinct urban personality which is anomic, materialistic, self-sufficient, impersonal, hurried, superficial, manipulative and inclined toward insecurity and personal disorganization. In the story, the urbanization processes create an alternative means of survival which ranges from manual related labour to mental labour. Musa who moves to town in search of a better life can be described as a realist, one who is responsive to the reality of modern and postmodern life. He relocates to the city with his family to find a better life. Migration and/or displacement in this sense is

inspired by hardship and the search for a better life as against the traditional sense of migration which is forced. Thus, the search for greener pastures creates mass movement into regions and areas that are promising in terms of job availability. In "The Drought", nature, by way of climate change, plays a major role in Musa's movement from rural to urban settlement. Being an agrarian society, the problem of drought left Musa with no choice than to leave the village to the city in search for a better life or suffer hunger and death.

Unlike Musa, Bello decides to stay back in the village because he believed the drought would not be severe and long. Thus, he ignores the signs and the advice of everyone including his mother-in-law to relocate to the city. Bello's experience and eventual tragedy represents the lot of those who live in denial of the changes of the reality of changes brought by Modernization and the shift in modes of survival. Bello had argued that food was important because even those in the city who earn money still come back to buy food, so he would rather stay in the farming business (p.2) but refused to see that beyond the force of modernization is the climate change, according to Musa the desert is already encroaching. The climate change is one of the most disturbing features of the Postmodern Condition. This is often attributed to the activities of man all in the quest for civilization and development. Notwithstanding, the cheapest reaction to the climate change or drought is often migration. Within the context of postmodern reality, one of the causes of displacement is climate change and environmental degradation. The situation in the village was devastating for Bello and his wife yet they refuse to relocate like most people did. The consequences of Bello's adamant behaviour was first a total mental breakdown and eventually his death.

The story is a metaphor of the global scourge of migration, dislocation and displacement, especially in relation to natural disasters and developmental imbalances across societies. The metaphoric implication of the story extends to define also the movement from third world or underdeveloped countries to developed ones. However, unlike in the actual sense Bello's refusal to migrate or relocate is not born out of the limitations in migration laws but on the basis of personal conviction and his stiff attitude to embracing the Modern world and change. What he passes through arguably represents the frustration and hardship that characterises life in underdeveloped nations. The enormity of frustration in question translates into a psychological breakdown for both Bello and his wife. The drought in the context of postmodern reality could be economic or even political, catalyst of the unbearable life in the postmodern space.

Re-thinking Marriage in "Hard to be Soft"

"Hard to be Soft" is a story of triumph of love over hatred. The plot sustains on events surrounding Amadu's attempt to reject Fatahu's proposal to marry Huzai because of a grievance he has against Fatahu's father and the monetary benefits that the alternative suitor has to offer. The story projects the tendency of organised marriage in traditional societies, often against the will and choice of the girl to be married off. Huzai in this case is the almost a victim of such organised marriage until her uncle; Rilwanu who by tradition has a say in who she marries intervenes in collaboration with his sister; Marwa. They exercise their right by tradition and rescinded Amadu's singular decision to marry off Huzai to Nuridini; a man rumoured to have whipped his wife to death, a miser and a man whose marriage

proposal have been rejected by prostitutes. Love eventually prevails. The story portrays a rejection of that which is traditional. The perspective of Amadu about marriage is traditional. He believes that "happiness is not the purpose of marriage" (p. 30). And is willing to trade the happiness of his daughter for money and to also appease his grievance against Fatahu's father by denying Fatahu his daughter's hand in marriage.

Amadu's attitude towards his daughter's marriage reflects the misplaced priority in determining the essence of marriage in postmodern times. The emphasis on money as a major motivation for consenting to marriage proposals is seen at play in the story, particularly in the resolve of Amadu who is willing to give out his daughter to a wife beater and killer, because of the financial benefits that follows. He

seems more concern with the benefit that will come to him than the opinion or feelings of his daughter. The conversation between Amadu and Rilwanu gives an idea of the drive behind Amadu's decision and his world view about marriage:

"...why are you going to marry her off to Nuridini"?

"He loves her".

"But she doesn't love him".

"That is not necessary. He will look after her well since he loves her".

"No, I tell you why you are marrying her off to him. He gave you money, but your daughter is not a slave. You cannot sell her to a man who may kill her". (Pp. 29-30)

The exchange indicates that Amadu's notion of marriage and its purpose is benefit

inclined. The postmodern condition is defined by materialist tendencies. A shift in the human sense of value, thus what constitutes happiness is not necessarily defined by love but by material benefit. Love becomes an emotional state that is best validated by material or financial gestures. Huzaifor example justifies her collecting money from Fatahu as a norm because according to her every girl does it (p. 20). This is a reflection of the materialist tendency of postmodern relationships. The implication of such "norm" is that a man who does not have money to offer to a lady he is interested in is deemed unfit to be taken seriously. Though Huzai is more interested in Fatahu than whatever money he offers, she still considers the taking of money offered by a man as a norm which every girl lives by. This perspective challenges the traditional idea of what constitute value in assessing an individual as fit for marriage. Huzai's mother is not carried away by the financial or material value of Fatahu. She explains thus: "I am not interested in whether he is a famous builder or not, what interests me is whether he is a good boy or not" (p. 20). Her interest contrasts that of Amadu who is more interested in the money Nuridini has to offer despite his negative reputation.

The dynamism of individual and collective disconnect in "Cavalier of the Plain"

The story explores the life of a traveller, some sort of gypsy who for some reason is unable to give in to marital commitment and love. He rather derives pleasures in horse riding as a way of getting off his ordeal (p. 39). In modern terms, he seems to be in search of happiness and peace. His encounter with Safiya provided some sort of escape from his wanderings. Their relationship is a complicated one because he desires a relationship with Safiya but is unwilling to register commitment through

marriage. More so, he expresses jealousy despite his claim of her unattractiveness. He only loves her when he is drunk, thus, he only desires to have her as a sex partner. He rejects her proposal for marriage and rides off as he usually does. Safiya commits suicide leaving the narrator traumatised and filled with regret. The story summarily reflects subject matters such as homelessness, divorce, fear of commitment to marriage, reckless living and jealousy. These however are tendencies that are akin to the postmodern condition.

The narrator is given to a life of travels, he derives comfort and peace in "roaming in the plain of Hausa Land" (p. 32). One of the salient features of the modern man is his search for happiness. This search gives rise to different reactions largely captured in the tendency of voluntary migration. The narrator rides from hamlets to villages, from villages to towns over a period of one year. He is also homeless. Homelessness is a postmodern condition but unlike the most homeless people who are forced to live in the streets or paper cities due to poverty, the homeless state of the narrator is a wilful venture in search of comfort. He recounts thus; "I am content now with roaming the plain of Hausa Land, although I was once the favourite groom of the chief of my village" (p. 32) this indicates that his homelessness is a willing venture, to find some sort of comfort from his restlessness and particularly "the stabs of regrets" (p. 32) over Safiya's death.

Childlessness is projected as a condition for divorce. The idea that the essence of marriage is for procreation is a worldview prevalent within the postmodern society. Thus, a state of childlessness constitutes a threat to staying married like in the case of Safiya who is divorced because she couldn't give her husband a child. The story not only

reveals that pressures of childlessness is challenge in marriages, it also reveals that the woman is often blamed in such situations. The narrator recounts that:

The husband was a well-known hunter in the hamlet and getting wives was not a problem for him. In fact, he had already married two more wives after Safiya had left his house. But with all his numerous marriages, he never had a child. (Pp. 34-35)

Despite the fact that simple logic, points to the husband as possibly responsible for the childlessness of his wives, the privilege that patriarch affords him absorbs him from been blamed. Thus, being in the position to divorce his wives on account of childlessness and/or recall them is ironical. These issues are some challenges that characterise the failures of marriages within the postmodern space.

The cavalier attitude of the narrator portrays the spirit of individualism that largely defines the postmodern man. The tendency of individuals to define their essence by fulfilling their selfish desires at the expense of the feelings and desires of others. The narrator initiates a relationship by his generous gesture of kola nuts and some coins to Safiya. This gesture aroused a passionate feeling in Safiya which the narrator returned only to satisfy his sexual needs because he only loved her when he was drunk (p. 35). Such relationships are prevalent in the postmodern world, relationships defined by the exchange of sexual pleasure. There is a negligence of the burden of responsibility that comes with marital commitment. In this sense, the individual becomes more powerful and important than the collective good. The

narrator recounts that he was once the favourite groom of the chief of his village but he abandons the privilege and pursued his desire to roam the plain of Hausa land (p. 32). This is expressive of the postmodern condition, the tendency to ignore values that are central to the communal heritage is particularly expressive of the incredulity of Postmodernity.

Social injustice and the Postmodern space in "The Tenacious Lady"

"The Tenacious Lady" captures the sufferings and social injustices of life. The tendency of man's inhumanity to man and the displacement of values that ought to define friendship and human relationships. The fact that virtue is not always immediately rewarded neither is vice always instantly punished. The story embodies the implications of a single action, in this case, a sequence of sufferings and temptations which came because of Garuba's simple and innocent gesture towards a perceived familiar face, a gesture which landed him in prison, exposed his wife and children to over two years of hardship and the loss of a land. All these point to the unfriendliness and wickedness of/in the postmodern world and the harsh reality that sometimes accompany good intentions. The more reason why it becomes more and more difficult for humans to trust one another, the postmodern condition creates an environment of deception which complicates reality, thus even a gesture of friendship can be received with suspicion. Garuba's ordeal for example, reveals the true nature of David his supposed friend who in Garuba's absence is willing to exploit the helplessness of his family and lure his wife to bed. The reality or value of friendship in the postmodern space is portrayed as a façade that is only exposed in the face of adversity and trials. Garuba's ordeal reveals David as a betrayer and bad

friend whose intention to help his friend's wife is dubious. He wanted to use her desperation for money and help as a means of sleeping with her. He tried to overwhelm and frighten her with the reality of her predicament as a jobless single parent while emphasising her need for a man. Even Garuba's office was quick to dissociating from him, even before he was tried or proven guilty. Lucy on the other hand strengthened her resolve and measured up to the challenges as they confronted her. She upheld her virtue by giving in to hardwork even though it drained her youth and exposed her to untold hardship. The narrative voice explained that:

From that day, the life of Lucy Idahaso was one of hard work. Apart from her normal petty trade of selling fruits, she sorts all types of jobs in the houses of rich people she washed for their wives. Ground pepper, tomatoes and onions. Cooked and pounded yam for herself. Her hands became rough and began to crack. Some wrinkles appeared on her face and her eyes puffed out because of lack of sleep (p.56)

These attributes are what account for the description of her tenacity as captured in the title. Against all odds, Lucy unlike many individuals who give in to vices when confronted with the hardship of life, is able to display a tenacity that singles her out as exceptional.

Also evident in the story is the inefficiency of the police and judicial system and their tendency to make mistakes. The reality of prison in the postmodern world is that innocent people are sometimes unlawfully

jailed or detained in prison due to improper investigations and/or lapses in the delivery of judgement. Garuba suffered over two years in prison with hard labour on account of a crime he did not commit. It took over two years for him to be exonerated and released without compensation. Thus, for two years he is punished for a crime he did not commit. The later discovery is only because the criminal confessed to the crime and not because the police intensified investigation.

Religion, Freewill and the Postmodern Condition in "Moonstruck"

"Moonstruck" highlights the age long rivalry between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. The crisis is premised on religious and generational differences. Jaku the antagonist in the story constantly attempts to establish dominance over Saratu her daughter-in-law by demonizing her and intimidating her into repentance and submission especially to her. Jaku, by her action, is described as a tyrant to both Umaru and Saratu. She particularly never sees anything good in whatever Saratu does, thus, she criticises not just her actions but also her inactions. Saratu is soon frustrated into reuniting with her old lover, Hamza and in the frenzy of been moonstruck gladly confesses to her sanctimonious mother-in-law and baby husband. She pleads with her husband to give her a divorce but he declines and pleads with her not to leave him. Saratu leaves him eventually without receiving the letter of divorce.

The crisis between Jaku and Saratu is mostly inspired by the difference in religious views. Saratu comes from a society that explores religion as a flexible practice that allows for socialisation, the luxury of music and dance. Jaku on the other hand is largely a puritan who perceives social actions like dancing and singing as a sacrilegious action that can

open up an individual to possession by evil spirits. She accuses Saratu of being possessed with jinn because she saw her dancing at night under the moonlight. Also, Jaku verbally abuses Saratu and calls her names and yet demands absolute respect from her. Her tyranny reached its peak when she attempted to hit Saratu. Saratu's revolt against Jaku is born out of the frustration of being oppressed and the inability of her husband to rise up to his mother.

Saratu's philosophy is a blend of religion and tradition. She advocates a free play and believes that each individual is entitled to a right of practice. In her home town, dancing wasn't regarded as revolting and her people were more tolerant and religious but do not criticise anyone for praying late. Jaku on the other hand, is intolerant and judgemental and is constantly critical of Saratu's action. To her, singing is as sinful as drinking alcohol and sees those who sing as followers of Satan (p. 65). This difference and tension between them illustrate the dogma between fanatics and those who see religion as a space that allows for free play. Similar tensions exist within the postmodern space, the rejection of absolute truth as an expression of free play is a central tenet of Postmodernism and the postmodern condition. Saratu's revolt against the fanaticism and superstition expresses this free play.

Family Obligation and Secretes in "A House in the Dark"

"A House in the Dark" portrays the absurd reality of forced marriage between Maigoro a fifty-five-year-old man and Fatima an 18-year-old girl who solves the problem by running away from her husband's house. The issue of forced marriage is a contemporary reality especially in Northern Nigeria. The story illustrates the condition

surrounding such unions and the effect on the victim of such arrangements. Fatima who is the victim in this case is given as a gift to Maigoro despite her suicide threat to escape her father's decision. The extent of her disgust for Maigoro who according to her smells like "donkey shit" is expressed in her willingness to settle for a life of prostitution rather than give in as the wife of Maigoro. This illustrates the trauma that confronts young girls who are forced into such organised marriage and disillusioned to settle to a life of regrets and sadness. Fatima however, revolts against this arrangement by refusing to sleep with her husband and subsequently running away from her husband. Within the postmodern society and with the activities of feminist struggles and the clamour for social justice, ladies are becoming more and more aware of their right to happiness and are revolting against such arrangements by running away or eloping with their preferred lover. Thus, Fatima's action can be seen as an expression of the incredulity that defines the postmodern approach to such oppressive practises.

Another absurd reality captured in the story is the practise of incest and as an isolated reality that confront families who do everything possible to keep it a secret to save the family from stigmatization and rejection. Kasimu's isolated residence is a deliberate attempt to stay away from the city because he also practised incest with his younger sister and had to stay away from the stigmatization and rejection of such an action. The desperation to keep such an act secret is what led to the death of Rakiya who way accidentally killed by Tanimu when she attempted to runaway and free herself from the guilt of being involved with her brother. Their reference to Fatima as Rakiya is the effect of their attempt to live in denial of the death of Rakiya. Thus, Rakiya's death

becomes yet another family secret which only came to light with the inquisitiveness of Rakiya.

The aesthetic depth of the story is expressed in the suspense which sustains through the story. The single action of Fatima's escape uncovers the secrets in the house in the dark and exposes her to the reality cruelty in the world. She had run into the house to hide from an impending storm but she finds herself in yet another storm (p. 84). The story deploys dialogue extensively as a means of unfolding the plot of the story. The narrative space comprises of two locales within which the events unfold, the transition from one to another advances the plot and climaxes in the dystopian reality of postmodern perversions. Thus, the protagonist is exposed to a sequence of disillusionments that shape her naïve expectations about the harsh reality of life.

Postmodern Absurdity in "Confession of an Armed Robber"

"Confession of an Armed Robber" captures the psychotic display by Obi Chukwu who clearly has a death wish and is obsessed with being arrested and sentenced to death through public execution. He keeps fantasizing about proving his strength and surprising the nation with an exceptional execution. His involvement in robbery is not for the material benefit but according to him, to punish society for failing to live up to its responsibility. The height of postmodern absurdity is often manifested in suicidal tendencies, serial killing, terrorism, etc. In his obsession, Obi's shack is described as filled with newspaper cuttings on public execution. The story portrays the absurd reality of how individuals respond to the challenges that confront them and the society. Obi, for example rather than address the source of the problem, focuses on tackling the outcome of the problem as a

way of punishing society for creating it in the first place.

Obi Chukwu's complex and desire to prove he is a god and not a mere mortal illustrates the excesses of man, the same mortal glorification that informed the Nietzschean declaration of the death of god. The tendency for man to create his own destiny and solve the problems of humanity. Jaji (2014:101) attributes the total disappearance of faith in God to the modernist trends which has eroded the all-powerful, all-encompassing spiritual, ethical and moral power of the transcendent being. Thus, the emergence of atheistic, existentialist and nihilist tendencies. These tendencies are exhibited by Obi. At the prison where he was awaiting his execution, when asked by the warder if he believes in God, he tells the warder that he has been striving to be a god for a long time (p. 102). This is reflexive of the world view of the postmodern man, who often displays scepticism about the existence of God. Obi displays disinterestedness in the talk about life after death and refuses to see the chaplain for any talk of redemption. He considers others lesser men and can't wait for the opportunity to prove to the world that he is far more than a superhuman. Obi's obsession is perhaps influenced by his readings or perhaps the postmodern glorification of the mortal frame especially through science fictional representation that constantly highlights the possibility of superhumans, genetically enhance bodies and bionic humans. These representations often manipulate reality, thus distinguishing between what is real and what is not becomes blur. Obi for example admires "Mighty Sam" an armed robber who according to him is brave because he "refused to die after they shot many bullets into him" (p. 99). Obi's actions illustrates the attributes of a "copycat" but in this case Obi

is more interested in Mighty Sam's "bravery" during his execution than his actual style of robbery. Thus, he aspires to outdo Sam's bravery.

The postmodern condition often creates a feeling of disconnect and/or alienation on account of several challenges and constructs that characterise the postmodern space. Obi in "Confession of an Armed Robber" expresses this feeling of disconnection and promptly responds to this disconnect by turning against society. He explains thus:

I am no longer a member of the society. I reject its membership. My feeling for it is that of contempt and outrageousness for its values. In my eyes society is guilty and have to punish it. You may not now that I am striving to be a god (p. 100).

Obi's comment illustrates the mind-set of individual who feel disconnected from society and resorts to punish society by unleashing some sort of vice against society. This is often the foundational basis of the proliferation of vices in society.

Death and Scepticism in "Emergency"

The story "Emergency" reveals the crisis that accompanies the news of a terminal disease. Dandam's experience at the emergency ward opens up the reality of death and the fear that accompanies the Knowledge or consciousness of its imminence. There is also the issue of miscegenation and clinical error. The tension that's builds from the beginning to the end is based entirely on a clinical error made by the x-ray technician. Dandam was diagnosed based on test results of patients who had died two weeks before from metastatic tumour in the lungs. The story

reveals the falsehood that characterise assurances by medical personnel to boost the confidence of their patients especially in the face of death. On the surgical table, Dandam expresses confidence and faith in God and his Africanity, he states thus, "No, it's impossible. I'm not dying. God allowed me to survive malaria, yellow fever, smallpox and all types of tropical disease in Nigeria. And now to die in this surrounding." Dandam seems to be suggesting that being a Nigerian or living in Nigeria exposes one to tropical diseases that makes one's immunity stronger. The event in the story is set in motion by human error and the climax of the tension is anti-climaxed by the realisation that the entire fuss had been based on a mix up by the x-ray technician.

The theme of death is dominant in the story, Dandam philosophy of death is somewhat tied to the idea of life after death, he describes death as akin to "delivering a child in another way" (p. 113). For him death was an inevitable end. The ultimate consolation in death as Dandam points out is having faith and contentment. This is besides having a happy childhood, reading widely, having many friends and travelling far and wide. In contrast to Dandam's view, those of the doctors and his 27-year-old wife; Susan is quite different, they were quite remorseful and tried to conceal the truth. Unlike Dandam, they could not confront death. Susan was not ready to lose her husband, she thought more of the loneliness and helplessness that will follow. These contrasts in views raise questions about meaning and fulfilment in life, the inevitability of death and the most appropriate time to die. These are complex questions that still confront the postmodern man. It is partly the trigger behind the scepticism that characterise human existence across all ages.

Materialism and the Postmodern Condition in "A Stormy Night"

The story is an attempt to reflect the reality of postmodern life especially in the city. Wiklund a foreigner on transfer to Nigeria engages in extramarital affairs with Bimbo, a prostitute he picked from a nightclub. The relationship between Wiklund a Swede and Bimbo a Nigerian is strictly portrayed as pleasure seeking but business driven. Bimbo a city girl who prostitutes for survival is taken home by Wiklund to satisfy his sexual urge in the absence of his wife who is yet to arrive in the country. The relationship between Bimbo and Wiklund is more like a transaction, their encounter portrays the city life, particularly in a club at night where everything is commercialised. Bimbo is straight forward and wastes no time in asking Wiklund if he wants to sleep with her (p. 122). She gives a breakdown of her expenses and charges and yet insists that she is not selling herself.

According to Ampah (2009:83) cities have strongly suggested unique imagery and themes as well as shaped the attitudes and feelings revealed in many short stories, novels, plays and poem, to the extent that the very existence of these works of literature depends on the existence of the city itself. "A Stormy Night" portrays city life where everything has a price, including friendship and sex. Within this context even the taxi driver; Araba who claims to like Wiklund, like Bimbo, simply does because of his money. Bimbo confesses that she is not capable of loving and is well aware that she didn't come to be loved but to be screwed. She is not interested in working because in Lagos men work for women (p. 128). Cities like Lagos is a postmodern creation that has no regard for values held dearly in traditional communities, thus, the need for survival supersedes the need to uphold values that are traditional. Bimbo represents city ladies who believe that the

end justifies the means. She is therefore willing to sell her body, cheat and offer her body to a taxi driver as payment for his services. She believes that Marriage is not for Lagos, neither is it a married couple's city (p. 128). The implication of this statement is that the city of Lagos like most modern cities is a place where people come and live a lie. The movement from the village to Lagos opens up the possibilities of wayward living, besides there is need to be alert not to fall victim of the desperation of others. For example, the likes of the young company director who is a Nigerian cannot be trusted to honour their agreement, thus, Bimbo plays a fast one on him but eventually fall victim to the antics of Araba who ceased the moment to extort Bimbo.

The Stormy Night, besides literally referring to an actual stormy night is also a metaphor for challenges that confront individuals and the rough or down moments in the life of an individual. Bimbo's experience at Wiklund's residence and particularly with the driver, is one of the stormy days in her outings where she becomes the victim, just like the young company director was her victim. The postmodern space creates room for unforeseen circumstances which are largely inspired by man's greed and lack of care or concern for humanity. A major feature of city life is an individualistic approach to survival, one man is willing to survive at the detriment of another. This becomes the stormy reality of city life.

This paper has examined selected stories in LaboYari's *A House in the Dark and Other Stories* representations of the postmodern condition. Each story is explored in relation to the postmodern realities they embody. Identifiable subject matters in the stories range from environmental challenges and its effects on man, the issues of physical and psychological displacement, the crisis of

infidelity in marriage, materialism, bisexuality to issues of divorce, religious fanaticism, the reality and trauma of death, sickness, love, hatred and individualism. These issues are examined within the context of the postmodern world and the deliberate attempt of man's search for identity and happiness. By and large, the stories embody postmodern and short story aesthetics both in terms of content and form.

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