The form and thematic content of #LoriIro as social media autobiographical novel

Onyekachi Peter Onuohac, Angela A Ajimaseb

aDepartment of English and Literary Studies, University of Calabar, Nigeria
bDepartment of Modern Languages and Translation Studies, University of Calabar, Nigeria

Abstract

The digital space expands our perception of the autobiographical Novel's form in the twenty-first century. Through the application of the concept of form and themes, this paper submits that #LoriIro is a social media autobiographical novel and exists in multimodal forms across multi social media platforms. This paper observes that social media autobiographical novel is the contribution of Nigerian netizens in the further development of The African Novel. This study observes that the social media autobiographical novel like #LoriIro is told by multiple narrators, which thrives on auto-fiction linking narratives through (#) hashtags which are fiction as plot development and pagination within the digital apps.

1. Introduction

Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa, Ihechkwu (1985) in Toward the Decolonization of African Literature provides the premise for making a case for the emergence of African social media autobiographical novel. They define the African Novel when they submit that: "... The African Novel is a hybrid of the African oral tradition and the imported literary forms of Europe, and it is precisely this hybrid origin that must be considered when determining what technical charges could legitimately be made against the novels. The African Novel's primary constituency is different from that of the Europeans or other regional novels... (p. 8). Like the African Novel, the social media autobiographical novel is a hybrid form of redomesticating memes, different genres and multimedia apps in creating African cognitive experience within the thematic frame of #LoriIro. The African Novel's response to changing social and political issues of its time and this social, political issues also affect the thematic content of the Novel and form, as is clearly illustrated in the social media autobiographical novels of #NotAllSars, #TheMatter, #LoriIro. Netizens on Twitter and other social media platforms are using #LoriIro to constantly address societal issues, like the novels of post-independence disillusionment.

The Novel of Nigerian post-independence disillusionment focuses on the failure of leadership and corruption and how the Africans who took over during independence mismanaged the commonwealth, which led to mass protest, and military intervention in politics as depicted in Achebe's The Man of the People and Ayi Kwei Armah's The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born. Social media autobiographical novel is interactive in nature (interactive fiction) and allows the reader who shares such experience to fictionalize his or her experiences within a trended hashtag. The modern African Novel is written on social media and is known as a "social media autobiographical novel." Daniel Defoe presented Robinson Crusoe from a defiant point of view imposing realism and personal experiences of characters in the narrative in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, Conrad did the same by portraying Africans from the premise of autobiographical imagination.

In contrast, in the twentieth century, Achebe invoked the orality and certain form of African historical reality and gave a definitive definition of Africa within the world of the Novel.
Things Fall Apart. Achebe uses history and his personal memories of the complex nature of men within the Igbo society in fashioning the world of Things Fall Apart and the portrayal of the constantly changing nature of Okonkwo, Obierika, Unoka Okoye, Nwakibie etc., unlike the static representation of men in Conrad's Heart of Darkness and Joyce Cary's Mister Johnson where the African characters were static and incapable of language, courage, and resilience.

Achebe (1981), affirming the teaching nature of his Novel as both a historical piece and autobiographical submission, notes that; "I would be quite satisfied if my earliest novel (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past-with all its imperfections—was not one long night of savagery which the first European acting on God's behalf came to deliver them" (p. 45). The foregoing indicates that the earliest African Novel is engaged in teaching Africans of what Oko (2005) in her book The West African Novel and Social Evolution refers to as "teachers of their people (p. 9). While Achebe is speaking as a teacher on behalf of his people using the European format and mixing the traditional Igbo method of storytelling in arriving at a complete whole of the Novel the social media autobiographical novel allows the participants the liberty as characters in the creation of cognitive experience within the titled narrative of #Lori Iro. Unlike Achebe's creation of his Novel within a limited page, social media Autobiographical novel is multimedia in nature. African netizens, at present, are redefining the form of the Novel through the domestication of social media apps in terms of its interactive nature and multimedia format. African netizens are redomesticating the social media space through the imposition of their narrative and reframing the form of the Novel within social media apps for the aesthetic realization of their literature within the virtual space. The autobiographical Novel is a blend of fact and fiction within the narrative framework.

The autobiographical Novel, through a recreation of facts, fictionalizes places, characters, and facts within the narrative structure, as is vividly illustrated in Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Ezeigbo's The Last of the Strong Ones. The autobiographical Novel straddles the line between bio-fact and fiction to create an extensive realistic narrative within the Novel world. Historical records indicate the role of disruption as a functional catalyst for the development of the Novel, which over time needs certain prefixes as an element of classification within regions that have come to embrace the genre as a narrative framework, such as the concept of the English Novel, The African Novel, The Digital Novel and most recently the social media autobiographical novel. This artistic defiance, which is the premise of the concept of realism as demonstrated by Daniel Defoe in his Novel Robinson Crusoe, inaugurates the English Novel as a genre in eighteen-century England. Although other social realities facilitate the demand of the Novel, a realism that is depicted by the liberty that Defoe takes within the frame of his narrative becomes a marked difference from other process narratives of before it and entrenches the Novel as a literary genre. Watt (1957) in The Rise of the Novel clearly depicts this artistic defiance that facilitates the development of the Novel thus:

...began to write fiction he took little notice of the dominant critical theory of the day, which still inclined towards the use of traditional plots; instead, he merely allowed his narrative order to flow spontaneously from his own sense of what his protagonists might plausibly do next. In so doing, Defoe initiated an important new tendency in fiction: his total subordination of the plot to the autobiographical memoir is as defiant an assertion of the primacy of individual experience in the Novel... (p. 10).

The entrenching of the individual experience within the narrative structure disrupted the type of character practice and imposed the realism framework on the Novel. This autobiographical experience after Daniel Defoe motivated Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness of the nineteenth century to depict African with the work of the Novel from the autobiographical perception of the writer and imagination of Africa as a dark continent. Achebe (1977), in his essay "An Image of Africa," seems to suggest that Heart of Darkness, in certain ways, is an "autobiographical novel" thus; "...in Western psychology to set up Africa as a foil to Europe, as a place of negations at once remote and vaguely familiar, in comparison with which Europe's state of spiritual grace will be manifest" (p. 2). Achebe, through Things Fall Apart in the twentieth century, inaugurated the authentic African Novel through a cultural blend of language and indigenous experience that is unique to Africans but in a hybrid form of English and different from the English spoken in England.

Things Fall Apart, from the position of knowledge, disrupts a certain western perception of Africa as a dark continent as it is reminiscent of Conrad's Heart of Darkness. Through re-characterization and setting from the premise of a personal knowledge and collective knowledge about a people, Things Fall Apart disrupts western literary imagination of their collective imaging of Africans through Conrad's autobiographical Novel. The twenty-first century inaugurates its perception of what the form called Novel is through the continuation of the prefixes that condition the form and content of the Novel as a result of cultural specifics and generational practices which seems to be implicated in technology and social media. The social media autobiographical Novel is digital born, composed of electronic devices and loses its aesthetic when moved from its digital environment. The social media autobiographical Novel uses certain elements of multimodalities in its presentation of the world of the Novel.

Social media autobiographical Novel is an extended narrative that uses auto-fiction, non-linear pagination of numbers and appears in multiple media platforms. The social media autobiographical novel is a collaborative text that has multiple narrators within a trended (#) hashtag which is the title of the autobiographical Novel as it is clearly illustrated in #Notallsars, #LoriIro, #Thematter etc. The social media autobiographical novel is an auto-fictional narrative of multiple narrators fashioned under a trended (#) hashtag in multimedia appearance and exists in multiple social media apps through various hyperlinks.
2. Twitter and Autobiographical Novel

#Lori Iro as an extended form of autobiographical novel narrative from the African Novel. Uniquely, #Lori Iro is the second biggest autobiographical Novel in twitter aside of #Notallsars, #Endsars. Twitter is the most used social media app in Nigeria with 27.78% of the users, just after Facebook and this informs the characteristic of the participatory nature of the autobiographical Novel. The participatory nature of "what is on your mind" allows the netizens to be part of happenings in their society and to fictionalize such facts for their own entertainment. Autobiographical Novel imitates Eze Igbo’s The Last of the Strong Ones where there are multiple narrators telling their different stories while the author weaves it together within a thematic concern of The Last of the Strong Ones. The tweet app becomes medium that archives the plot flow of the autobiographical Novel a trended hashtag (#) and under a single thematic preoccupation.

While The Last of the Strong Ones has a single author, #Lori Iro has multiple authors that contribute to the development of the plot. Although some characters in The Last of the Strong Ones can claim authorship if they ever were given the opportunity, Twitter autobiographical novel like #Lori Iro plays function of documenting plot narratives from different narrators under a single thematic preoccupation and is a collaborative text. Although #Lori Iro draws many of the memes from different cultures and environment as a result of the global nature of social media apps, what autobiographical writers of #Lori Iro did is to redomesticate the memes to fit into the thematic depict of lies and emphasize the concept of hybridity in terms of form functioning within a new environment. It is in the light of documentation that the unnamed characters that were to be the historical reservoir of information is described as also seen in Ezeigbo's The Last of the Strong Ones thus:

So we became witnesses, custodians and critics of the unfolding events. The success of our new task rested squarely on our maintaining an accurate sense of our people’s history by looking into both the past and the future and recording the present with an unfailing skill” (p. 3).

As old as the narrative The Last of the Strong Ones, it becomes a futurist representation of what the 21st century netizens explore as the “watchers” and “observers” who, silently but diligently document and create auto-fiction like the autobiographical of #Notallsars, #Endsars, #Thematter etc. Through the multimodal features that exist on the Twitter app, it allows for a more expansive exploration of what the netizen narrations could employ in the dissemination of their autobiographical narrative. It is fact that literature is a product of its social and economic realities, and this is in line with the social media autobiographical Novel (#Lori Iro) which makes use of new ways of digital technological communication of mixed medium and multimodality as affirmed by Jones, Chik, & Hafner, (2015). The autobiographical novel #Lori Iro, like its host platforms Twitter and the Internet, functions in a mixed medium in which speech, writing, and visual mediums are used simultaneously in the text. #Lori Iro exists in a multimodality as its defining characteristic of social media autobiographical Novel different from the print African Novel. Multimodality describes communication practices in terms of textual, aural, linguistic, spatial and visual resources – or modes - used to compose messages and #Lori Iro’s structure adopts the above stated principles of multimodalities as highlighted by Murray and Lutkewitte (2013).

Just as Achebe’s Things Fall Apart is influenced by the nuances of the oral environment, the same is the fate of #Lori Iro in the digital space. Obar & Whitman submissions in respect to Multimodal communication highlights the form of #Lori Iro autobiographical novel. They are of the opinion that multimodal communication is computer-mediated communication commonly performed through social media platforms. They went further in providing insight about social media as technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks, and this vividly implicates the form of #Lori Iro within the space as it adopts the characteristics of the platform as part of its internal structure. #Lori Iro goes beyond the measurement that print literature would give in terms of restrictions of multimodalities that may exist therein. The existence of #Lori Iro in multimodalities is an evolution of the African Novel in action in the sense #Lori Iro allows for the enactment of text that was not possible in written novels that one could experience the light, visual and audio-visual components as it exists in #Lori Iro simultaneously. #Lori Iro reengages the features of the African oral environment within the form of the Novel while also using the principles of print novel. #Lori Iro, unlike Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Ezeigbo's The Last of the Strong Ones, readers of #Lori Iro can read, hear, see some part of the narrative (#Lori Iro) engaged within as part of the form. #Lori Iro employs hypertext which allows the readers and writers to explore the text. #Lori Iro utilizes hypertext in primarily in the development of the plot and in linking written text and combines written texts with video clips, music sounds.

The establishment of this new way of reading literary texts can replace the conventional linearity of literary texts. #Lori Iro cannot be read in a conventional way like Achebe’s Things Fall Apart and Ezeigbo's The Last of the Strong Ones as a result of its multimodal nature. Reading-watching #Lori Iro requires an additional effort to traverse the text.

3. Apology for #Lori Iro

#LoriIro is unique. #LoriIro breaks away from the direction that the organic narrative such as Achebe’s Things Fall Apart and Ezeigbo's The Last of the Strong Ones portrays while maintaining the uniqueness that the organic narrative highlights in terms of plot development. Some “unwritten” critics have argued, however, that it would not be appropriate to refer #Lori Iro as autobiographical African Novel. They state in their argument that the number of words in the organic African Novel is about 50,000 – 100,000 words and that this should be the benchmark behind whatever form would stand for the Novel. However, it is necessary to note that the development of the Novel has been constantly cultured based on the historical and socio-political lifestyle.
of the period. And there is defilement between certain forms of writing that exist during certain periods of the development of the Novel. For example, Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe set apart a new benchmark towards what stands as the Novel in sharp contrast to what existed in his time. Also, Achebe used literary works like Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God as a counter-narrative towards the western writers such as Joyce Cary and Joseph Conrad, to dispel their narrative of the perception of the African society devoid of language, culture and lifestyle.

Thus, the African Novel in the digital space is an evolutionary response to the period of production, namely the period of technological advancement, and as such, the narrative created during this said period becomes a reflection of it. It is as Plato describes in Republic (2002) when he opines that an object immersed in liquid becomes concave or convex, changing form or shape as long as it is no longer in solid form:

*And the same object appears straight when looked at out of the water, and crooked when in the water; and the concave becomes convex, owing to the illusion about colors to which the sight is liable. Thus, every sort of confusion is revealed within us; and this is that weakness of the human mind on which the art of conjuring and of deceiving by light and shadow and other ingenious devices imposes, having an effect upon us like magic.*

(p. 466)

It is under this guise that #Lori Iro appears. In spite of the brevity in terms of the composition it achieves through the plot structure of extended threads, #Lori Iro achieves length of narrative in terms of the continued composition of various narrators within the trended hashtag following the benchmark on which the organic print literature is composed. #Lori Iro follows the tenets of the digital links that exist in the multimodalities such as text, sound, images etc. Another unique feature that the critic should look at in #Lori Iro is the hashtag (#). A hashtag is a metadata tag that is prefaced by the hash symbol, #. Hashtags are widely used on microblogging and photo-sharing services such as Twitter and Instagram as a form of user-generated tagging that enables cross-referencing of content sharing a subject or theme. The forgoing is used in the plot development of #Lori Iro and this allows for multiple narrators under the hashtag (#). #Lori Iro is a thematic preoccupation as well as the title upon which the narrative is based.

#Lori Iro autobiographical novel is born from the organic environment as trends from the organic environment, which allows the netizens share #Lori Iro as may be precisely accurate or a little bit exaggerated in order to fit into the title of the trending narrative. Through the social media app Twitter, #Lori Iro functions on the premise of real events and situations that happens in the organic society. Thus like the women who serve as the “watchers” and “observers” in the Umuga society. Twitter as a social media app function in a restricted sense. #Lori Iro, like characters in The Last of the Strong Ones, help to accurately document narratives of the Onyeokozurus, Ejimmakas, Chiemes and Chibukas that function as netizens in the digital space. The digital narrators, using the multimodalities that the app allows, make it easy to tell stories from their point of view such that there are multiple plots in a single thematic preoccupation, unlimited characters defined from the perspective of the narrators as well as a multiplicity of settings that allows for the diversity in the narrative as vividly illustrated in #Lori Iro.

Narrators on #Lori Iro share a form of interconnectivity of narrative via the hashtag (#). The hashtag serves as the identifier of the current socio-cultural discuss as highlighted within #Lori Iro. And since the Novel is a cross-representation of the society’s standpoint from which the artist tells his tale, the hashtag (#) becomes the symbol through which the digital narrative is born (#Lori Iro). While jumping on the bandwagon of the hashtag (#), it is not impossible to notice that some netizen narrators may choose to exploit the current trend narrative with unrelated plot development as seen in some narrative within #Lori Iro. However, this does not side-track the fact that the narrative could be explored in multiple ways than the linear structure reflected in the print narrative. The nature of #Lori Iro autobiographical narrative takes away from the focus, what Achebe in Things Fall Apart and Ezeigbo in The Last of the Strong Ones will conventionally employ, through the use of simple and straightforward narratives, accompanied with somewhat unrelated humorous images to which the reader, in mentally examining the text defined, cross-examines it with the visual, audio or audio-visual accompaniments and the thematic preoccupation in the narrative becomes clear and understandable to the reader.

4. #Lori Iro Extends the Boundaries of the African Novel

Some Netizens in the social media space of twitter are redomesticating the space in such a way that sometimes (auto) biographical novel is composed and consumed within the space. This domestication of the social media app, Twitter, has gradually evolved to accommodate a digital diversion of the print novel as active and creative modified by netizens in the space. While most netizens may not be fully aware of the potentials that exist in the social media app called Twitter, they may unintentionally be creating digital narratives that extend the boundaries of the African Novel. Using multimodalities and digital texts that exist within the spectrum and forum of the Twitter app, there is an exploration, through the unintentional use of humor and wit to weave digital narratives that gives new life to the digital narrative and makes it function within the autobiographical genre. Onuoha (2020), in his work African Digital Prose, discusses the tenets on which the digital platform as an extended yardstick to which the African Novel is built thus:

*...the dawn of technology has challenged our perception of what literature is and we cannot continue to pretend that there have not been vital changes that technology and the digital space have imposed on the production and consumption of African Literature to the extent that a review becomes necessary.* *(p. 37)*

This infers that it is impossible to suggest that the digital space has taken over the idea of what print literature is and has unknowingly expanded the netizen narrators of the digital Novel. Twitter is a unique community of netizens who, through the features available in the platform, “hosts threads with various random type of subjects, such as daily events
news, citizen journalism, restaurant reviews, regional political discussions, barbershop reviews, academic writing clinics, photographer enthusiast corner, fish club... (38). The digital community becomes a reflection of the organic space as all the features of the organic space such as buying and selling as well as politics, lifestyle, sports and entertainment is freely interwoven in the comfort of the individual confines. One of the unique features of the digital space is the communal interaction. Onuoha (2020) further states about interaction in the digital space:

Interaction is a function of community building in the digital space. Through their chats, they create their personality and build history and memory to sustain their existence on the cyberspace. There are various forms of living conditions within this space and there are also various forms of digital economy that sustains netizens in the virtual community (p. 39).

The emergence of what is the Twitter community has birthed different communities ( factions) such as the razz "Shepeteri" Twitter, "Feminist" Twitter, "Patriarchial" Twitter, even as far as "Nigerian" Twitter. With their pseudo identities and interaction, the "community becomes archives of accommodated interactions within the digital space.

5. The #LoriIro Trend and the Digital Narrative

The early part of the year 2021 saw Nigerians explore the digital multimodalities in exploring twitter trends. Netizens referred to some of these trends as "challenge" where they get to use individual narratives to exploit thematic preoccupation. Trends like "#BussitChallenge", "#SilhouetteChallenge" etc helped to engage netizens on twitter explore different narratives especially in a pandemic ridden January. It was during this period that the "#LoriIroChallenge" was born. Since digital narratives on twitter are most times a reflection of the societal realities, netizens try to keep the narrative buzzing by examining the thematic preoccupation in different perspectives, which sometimes are representation of the autobiographical Novel. The narrators of "#LoriIro", like the protagonist characters in Eziego’s The Last of the Strong Ones, see one incident but tell their own, more often than none, unrelated narratives that ends up being interwoven under one thematic preoccupation. They also explore the use of videos, sounds, memes and narratives that brings out humored effects on the thematic preoccupation yet addressing the societal ills in question.

The #LoriIro was born when a short video which emerged on the Internet wherein Gbadamosi Ismail, a street preacher, was seen spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. The evangelist had cautioned people, especially lovers, to be wary of their partners who say things they don't mean, ending each sentence with ‘Lori Iro’ — a phrase in the Yoruba language which means "On Top of a Lie". The video showed Gbadamosi pacing the streets of Sango, Ogun State and using a sing-song pattern to warn his listeners against the dangers of relationship built on lies. The words could be heard thus:

"You are my Honey, Lori Iro
You are my Chocolate, Lori Iro
You are my Sugarcane, Lori Iro
You are my Onions, Lori Iro
You are my Biscuit, Lori Iro
You are my puff puff, Lori Iro
You are my Rodo
You are my Tomatoes
Iro Kpo (Lies are becoming plenty)
Oti kpo repete (They're plenty lies)
Lie Lie Lover
Iro Kpo (Lies are becoming plenty)

The timing of this video was very sensitive, considering that it came few days to the celebration of Valentine’s Day. This is a period usually characterised by deceits of various kinds. It is not uncommon during such season to see some guys feigning to be romantic and borrowing words from King Solomon or William Shakespeare just to win the hearts of their lovers.

The social media autobiographical novel is a community narrative under a single trending title. While the emergence of the trend #LoriIro focused initially on the deceit and lies people tell in relationships, netizens began to expand the plot of the narrative by focusing on other aspects where there was the possibility that people would stray from the truth to get their way. This extension implicates the nature of the author biographical Novel in the sense that this work progressively acquires the extendedness of prose using realism in a fictionalised form to portray human condition. This expansion on different aspects of human lies within the narrative under a major theme which is deceit and developing the plot to accommodate other aspects of deceit as it is reflected in the narrative of Eziego’s The Last of the Strong Oneschronicling women’s role in confronting colonialism. The interweaving of two forms of literature interchangeably can noticeably be seen in the #LoriIro. While it is not the direct focus of this paper, it is pertinent to address the issue of the interconnectivity of orality as an art form and the digital orality. Thus, while the speaker performs his art in the organic space, the digital space allows for a transcendence of the art form so that the audience in the digital space contribute to the narrative, by adding their own version of the art form, which serves as an intermission to the original narrative. And like the "watchers" and "observers" in The Last of the Strong Ones, some netizens intricately document these narratives for future reference as an analysis on the societal outlook.

#LoriIro, to which the thematic preoccupation is the focus on deception in all ramifications, becomes an expansion of the African Novel in that netizens create different narratives in an attempt to show how deception is a part of the human existence. Just as Chieme, Onyekozuru, Chibuka and Ejimnaka, as a representation of the larger part of the Umuga society, use the narrative of those who survive the threat that Kosiri posed on the people of Umuga, to tell individual tales, with all the elements of the African Novel embedded therein, interwoven in one thematic preoccupation, netizens use the elements of the Digital narratives such as brevity in narrative, use of multimodalities as well as unrelated contents to examine the concept of deceit a trended title #LoriIro and under multiple a single thread with multiple tweets and that acts as pagination using hyperlinks and multimodalities in portraying and examining the concerns of deceit in Nigerian society. It is this light that Nigerians began to tell their tales, born from the hashtag (#) as constituting title and a digital
Onuoha & Ajimase (2022)

link between multiple narratives under one thematic preoccupation. Some of these narratives include:

"Let me just sleep small. I will wake up later to read
#LoriIro
(S.i.s.t.a @Sohuruchi)

Notice that the simple narrative above does not share the initial expressive content that the original artist portrays in examining the lies that exists in relationship. Also, the narrator of the digital story related above does not spend so much time in relating the elements that exists in the analysis of the African Novel. However, the narrator creates in the mind of the reader, a mental picture of a student who promises to burn the midnight oil but the harsh reality is the fact that the midnight reading may never happen. As stated earlier, the narrator does not introduce the reader to any characters or settings but because the plot is something that the reader can relate with, the reader is allowed to create characters, and a setting to which the narrative can occupy and the foregoing represents the participatory nature of social media autobiographical Novel. Also, the netizen, in a bid towards painting an unrelated mental picture, uses a multimodality feature known as a meme to stretch the boundaries of humor in the narrative. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines the Meme as "an amusing or interesting item (such as a captioned picture or video) or genre of items that is spread widely online especially through social media". It is in this light that while the narrative is straightforward and does not in any way elicit some form of humor, the netizen uses a picture of a lady laughing to draw out the humor in the narrative. There is a mental pact in print novels between the author and the readers that whatever the author accounts for as a work of fiction, the reader believes everything hook link and sinker without any form of bias. The choice of the netizen narrator to use a meme as a means of expounding the narrative, even though there is no much connection between the narrative and the image presented, allows the reader to mentally draw a link between the narrative and the multimodalities, thus expunging humour as the catharsis to the narrative.

The ability for characters in a novel to think individually and still function as a collective unit in the realization of the thematic preoccupation of the Novel can still be seen as a feature of the social media autobiographical novel as illustrated in #LoriIro. The historical narrators in Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones* sometimes bring side narratives that do not necessarily co-exist with the general thematic preoccupation that Akachi attempts to explore in the narrative. For example, when the Onyekozuru reminds Ejinnaka that her brother, Dim, is one of the traitor warrant chiefs ousted by the people of Umuga, the reader is taken on a psychological journey to the minds of the observers who seem to see something outside the narrative:

"Did we sense an undercurrent of rivalry between Ejinnaka and Onyekozuru? (p. 11)

The "watchers" and "observers" of Umuga were to properly observe events in the community to be able to narrate them. Ezeigbo, through the voice of the women, relates.

"We, the watchers, were alive to our task. We were all eyes and all ears. The memory of the storyteller and the guardian of tradition ran deep. Every son and daughter of Umuga knew that those who were truly committed to the task they were called upon to perform would not rest until the task is done" (p. 23).

Watchers who exist as netizens in the social media app, Twitter, observe that the #LoriIro Challenge is a means towards birthing other narratives that may be different but slightly related to the trend. Some narratives born under the #LoriIro focused on family, political deception, educational deception etc as sub themes within the autobiographical Novel. For example, the twitter account Quantum @mide_kiki recounts the same narrative under the guise of the devaluation of education in Nigeria. @mide_kiki relates;

"I will enter school at 16 and at least graduate at 21
Assu: Lori Iro!"

@mide-kiki, in giving another angle to the #LoriIro narrative sees it from the educational perspective. Like other narratives that exist on the Twitter app, @mide_kiki maintains brevity yet tells so much. She relates the plan of every youth who have their lives planned at 16, with the target of a university education and assume that at 21, they would have been done. Assu, which is a representation of the regulatory body of Academicians in Nigerian Universities, is seen in this narrative as an individual whose simple Lori Iro infers that the youth can dream for all they care, and that this regulatory body could mar the plans of wrapping up the university program within the said period of time. While there is no direct mention to the student who faces this delay in futuristic plans, the autobiographical nature of the digital narrative comes to play in that it becomes the personal experience that every Nigerian student whose plan is to experience the university education in a government run institution may likely experience. As such, it becomes the real challenge of every Nigerian in the Federal institution.

The #LoriIro narrative continually evolves itself in terms of the forms that netizen narrators attempt to present it to the readers. It takes a swipe at the existing rulership of the day and their failure in bringing good governance to the people. @AyanfeOfGod challenges the government for failed promises and a system based on lies by spilling a narrative of the promises they have failed to comply to. This particular narrative does not sound humorous as the netizen accompanies the tweet with a picture of the president's exact words in his manifesto. @AyanfeOfGod challenges the government for the lies on which the political system is built, which was the yardstick behind their emergence as leaders.

"I will end Boko Haram in 6 months" Lori Iro
"I will reduce fuel price to N45/litre" Lori Iro
"Build one new Refinery every year" Lori Iro
"Wipe out Corruption". Lori Iro
"Create 3 million jobs per year” Lori Iro
"Ban Govt officials from seeking medical care abroad” Lori Iro
https://twitter.com/AyanfeOfGod

This tweet sees a different narrative to the #LoriIro challenge. The narrator fearlessly calls out the political system for lying consistently to the people and failing on the promises they made to the people who elected them.

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@AyanfeOfGod does not desire to mock the government but sees the hashtag #LoriIro as a means of addressing the serious issues that threaten the democracy of the day just as Festus Iyaya's Violence portrays corruption and failure of leadership.

The #LoriIro which is a title of a social media autobiographical novel and it is also a community narrative that is presented in form of a challenge known as "#LoriIro challenge" which is explored by thousands of netizens in writing the autobiographical Novel on the twitter space to the extent that indicates that the modern Novel is written on social media. That it becomes nearly impossible to document them all, just as the stories of the female protagonist characters from The Last of the Strong Ones vary from one to another, netizen narrators use the #LoriIro challenge as a way of dispersing different narratives, ranging from family life, social and individual development, religious and political deception etc. These netizen narrators use multimodalities such as the original Lori Iro video, memes as well as audio recordings of sounds to elicit humour or to seriously address pertinent issues. And these narratives cut across different individuals such that the reader is able to sentimentally share in the realities of the narrative, which may release some form of purgation, whether in laughter or serious thoughts.

6. Conclusion

African netizens are using trended hashtags as title of social media autobiographical novel and as a process of pagination and plot development as indicate in #LoriIro through the connecting powers of hyperlinks and multimedia to tell stories unique to their time through focused thematic preoccupation of trended (#) hashtag. Netizens on Twitter are currently using #LoriIro as a means of constantly addressing issues that keeps on affecting society like the novels of post independent disillusionment. Whether through the songs that are released under the thematic preoccupation, narratives or videos that tell the stories of netizens who share similar real-life experiences, it suffices to say that a wonderful exploration of the digital elements in creating narratives is a step away from the organic narrative. While it maintains the fusion of the elements in the African Novel, it creates a new path towards what can pass as the African Novel in the coming years and the expansion of this narratives such that it will not take so much rigors in creating digital narratives for the consumption of netizens and the approach towards the creation of narrative contents will not be limited to that which is presented above.

References

Merriam Webster Dictionary. Definition of Meme.