

**LITERARY FOREGROUNDING OF EMPLOYEES' DEVELOPMENT
TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE NATION-BUILDING IN ARMAH'S
THE BEAUTYFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN
AND DJOLETO'S *MONEY GALORE***

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Abstract: Beyond the aesthetic use of language, literary texts are manifest reflections of social realities. This can be said especially about African literary texts which are products of a mixed sociocultural and political history of oppression, exploitation, domination and subjugation spanning over more than a century. In mirroring such mixed realities, the African literary texts do not focus on the servitude of exotic linguistic aesthetic; they engage and provoke critical reflections on the social institutions and systems that shape the character and destiny of contemporary African societies and their relations with the rest of humanity. This paper examines the literary foregrounding of employees' development towards building sustainable societies within the framework of attaining the 4th Goal of SDGs, as articulated in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) and Djoletto's *Money Galore* (1975). This Goal hinges on ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Indeed, the paper identifies and examines issues of political exploitation and corruption of labour to the detriment of employees' rights and development in the two narrative texts. This is a direct result of lack of inclusive and equitable quality value-based education among the populace. The paper therefore underlines the centrality of education and lifelong learning opportunities in the professional and social development of employees, the surest way towards ensuring inclusiveness and curing marginalisation. The paper is a qualitative study grounded on textual data collected from the aforementioned narrative texts. It is posited within the theoretical framework of literary studies and socio-critique.

Keywords: education; foregrounding; employees; *Money Galore*; *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

MISE EN AVANT LITTÉRAIRE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DES EMPLOYÉS VERS L'ÉDIFICATION D'UNE NATION DURABLE DANS *THE BEAUTYFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN* DE ARMAH ET *MONEY GALORE* DE DJOLETO

Résumé : Au-delà de l'usage esthétique du langage, les textes littéraires sont des reflets manifestes des réalités sociales. Cela peut être dit en particulier des textes littéraires africains qui sont les produits d'une histoire socioculturelle et politique mixte d'oppression, d'exploitation, de domination et d'assujettissement s'étalant sur plus d'un siècle. En reflétant ces réalités mixtes, les textes littéraires africains ne se focalisent pas sur la servitude d'une esthétique linguistique exotique ; ils engagent et provoquent des réflexions critiques sur les institutions et les systèmes sociaux qui façonnent le

caractère et le destin des sociétés africaines contemporaines et leurs relations avec le reste de l'humanité. Cet article examine la mise en avant littéraire du développement des employés vers la construction de sociétés durables dans le cadre de la réalisation du 4^e objectif des ODD, comme indiqué dans *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* de Armah (1968) et *Money Galore* de Djoletto (1975). Cet objectif repose sur la garantie d'une éducation inclusive et équitable et la promotion des opportunités d'apprentissage tout au long de la vie pour tous. En effet, l'article identifie et examine les problèmes d'exploitation politique et de corruption du travail au détriment des droits des employés et du développement dans les deux textes narratifs. Ceci est le résultat direct d'une absence d'éducation inclusive et équitable de qualité basée sur les valeurs parmi la population. L'article souligne donc le rôle central des opportunités d'éducation et d'apprentissage tout au long de la vie dans le développement professionnel et social des employés, le moyen le plus sûr de garantir l'inclusion et de lutter contre la marginalisation. Cet article est une étude qualitative fondée sur des données textuelles collectées à partir des textes narratifs susmentionnés. Il est posé dans le cadre théorique des études littéraires et de la sociocritique.

Mots-clés éducation; employés; mise en avant; Money Galore; The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born

Introduction

Farther than the aesthetic use of language, literary texts are manifest reflections of social realities. This position finds expression in the following thoughts of Threadgold (1989, p. 107) that:

Texts are never ideology-free nor objective. Nor can they be separated from the social realities and processes they contribute to maintaining." Threadgold further postulates that "spoken and written genres are not just linguistic categories but 'among the very processes by which dominant ideologies are reproduced, transmitted and potentially changed.

Threadgold (1989, p. 107)

This can be said especially about African literary texts which are products of a mixed sociocultural and political History of oppression, exploitation, domination and subjugation spanning over centuries of Transatlantic Slave Trade, Western Colonialism, and Neo-colonialism. Mirroring such mixed realities, African literary texts do not focus on the servitude of exotic linguistic aesthetic; they engage readers and provoke critical reflections on the social institutions, processes and systems that shape the character and destiny of contemporary African societies and their relations with the rest of World. This argument agrees with Oji's (2021) position that literature is never written in a vacuum but serves to highlight societal realities which ought to be examined with a view to making human societies better. This paper examines the literary foregrounding of employees' development towards building sustainable societies within the framework of attaining the 4th Goal of SDGs, as articulated in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) and Djoletto's *Money Galore* (1975). This Goal hinges on ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Indeed,

the paper identifies and examines issues of political exploitation and corruption of labour to the detriment of employees' rights and development in the two narrative texts. This is a direct result of lack of inclusive and equitable value-based quality education among the populace.

The paper therefore underlines the centrality of value-based quality education and lifelong learning opportunities in the professional and social development of employees as the surest way towards ensuring inclusiveness, equity, and curing the marginalisation the greater percentage of the populace for the attainment of sustainable human development and the creation of a conflict-free World for all. The paper is a qualitative study grounded on textual data collected from the aforementioned narrative texts. It is posited within the theoretical framework of literary studies and socio-critique (sociocriticism). The study seeks to explore, examine and interpret themes, characterization, setting and style in the two narrative texts through which Armah and Djoletto highlight predicaments to employees' development, so as to call for measures to address such challenges in the spirit of SDG 4. Going forward, it is important to present an overview of *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Money Galore* which provide the primary source of data for the study.

0.1 *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) and *Money Galore* (1975)

Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, published in 1968, recounts events akin to the disillusionment and cynicism that characterized sociopolitical and economic life in Ghana in the last two years of Kwame Nkrumah, first President of Independent Ghana from 1957 – 1966. Corruption coupled with the deplorable working conditions of the citizens is bought to the fore in the narrative to underscore the futility of self-rule in independent Ghana. On its part, Djoletto's *Money Galore* published in 1975 is equally preoccupied with similar concerns Armah articulated in 1968. Corruption related to degrading working conditions of ordinary workers and socio-political degeneration is what is decried in the narrative. The height of corruption is seen at all levels of society in the text and becomes a significant barrier to professional development for hardworking and honest civil and public servants. The dehumanizing impact of endemic corruption is literary foregrounded through the fundamental element of narrative discourse to raise eyebrow on the phenomenon for special attention towards addressing it.

0.2 *Literary foregrounding*

Literary foregrounding refers to aesthetic approaches to highlighting a phenomenon for special consideration in a literary work. Foregrounding results from the use of personification, metaphor, hyperbole, repetition and any other rhetorical devices akin to placing special emphasis on a discursive segment or phenomenon in literary genres. (Dubey, 2017). It is a stylistic approach by which thematic focalization is achieved through literary devices. Dubey further intimates

that literary foregrounding acts as a profound context that makes the background of a literary genre clearer in more vivid way, but it still makes you ponder the possibilities of the existing and non-existing phenomenon and materials. Much as Armah and Djoletto have written their respective narratives several years before the conception of The United Nations' hitherto Millennium Development Goals, MDGs (2000) which commit world leaders to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination by 2015, subsequently replaced with the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs in September 2015 appear informed by the thorny socioeconomic and political issues articulated in their narrative texts. One is tempted to state that these goals are The United Nations' direct responses to the foregrounded issues in the narratives. In a more specific term, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) which is the fulcrum of this paper linked to the themes, characterization, setting and diction in the two narrative texts in attempt demonstrate how preoccupied the Armah and Djoletto are with the protection of the rights and development needs of employees. What is the focus of SDG 4? And what is its relevant to the subject-matter of the paper?

03. SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunity for all

To ensure the rights and development of workers, value-based quality education is an indispensable catalyst. This results from the fact that education is a fundamental human right and it is essential for the achievement of sustainable employee-development in all sectors of human endeavours. The surest way to empower citizens in view to achieve sustainable socio-economic, political and human development, to combat climate change, fight inequality and end extreme poverty is through commitment to value-based quality education for all. A critical reading of Armah (1968) and Djoletto (1975) reveals three issues which instigate the present study. First and foremost, it is observable that employees' development issues are strongly brought to the fore through the intrinsic link between corruption and unfair labour practices and poor working conditions of employees in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Djoletto's *Money Galore*. Secondly, value-based quality education stands out as key to addressing employees' development issues relating to the fight against corruption and unfair labour practices and poor conditions of work. Thirdly, the reading points to the fact that sustainable human development through the realization of the SDGs cannot be attained in a corruption-ridden public service and private sector-driven labour market, with poverty-stricken public employees.

The above three significant issues provide backgrounds for the following questions which serve as roadmap for the study: How are employees' development issues brought to the fore through the intrinsic link between corruption and unfair labour practices and poor working conditions of employees in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Djoletto's *Money Galore*? What

is the significance of value-based quality education in addressing employees' development issues? How can sustainable human development through the realisation of the SDGs be attained in a corruption-ridden public service and private sector-driven labour market?

The study seeks to attain the following three principal objectives: to unearth and bring to the fore employees' development issues foregrounded through the intrinsic link between corruption and unfair labour practices and poor working conditions of employees in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Djoletto's *Money Galore*; to reflect on the significance of quality education in addressing employees' development issues related to the fight against corruption and unfair labour practices and poor conditions of work; and to affirm possible ways of attaining sustainable human development through the realisation of the SDGs in a corruption-ridden public and private sector-driven labour market, with poverty-stricken public servants.

0.4 Socio-critique (Sociocriticism) as conceptual framework

The study is situated within the conceptual framework of socio-critique also referred to a sociocriticism. Coined from "social" and "critique", Socio-critique (Sociocriticism) as a conceptual framework for literary studies is conceived as a critical assessment of the interface between literary genres and social realities or phenomena. It reflects the relations between fiction and History, and serves as an apologetic discourse on the significant role of literary genres, and Literature for that matter, as a critical sociocultural, economic and political discourse for social engineering and sustainable development. This makes of Literature a critical social discourse beyond mere fiction. Socio-critique interprets and explains literary works within the frameworks of literary devices and Historicism in reference to societies that provide raw materials for literary genres. The finality of the adoption of socio-critique to literary studies is the validity of Literature as a critical social discourse clothed in linguistic embellishment for aesthetic impact and critical reactions. In tune with the spirit and the letter of socio-critique, the study employs qualitative approach to the interpretation and explanation of textual data gathered from both Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Djoletto's *Money Galore*. These primary textual data reflect the foregrounded employees' development issues which are the subject-matter of the paper. The foregrounded employees' development will be examined in relation to corruption, job insecurity, low remuneration, lack of professionalism, desecration of labour, political cronyism, nepotism, and discrimination woven through the aesthetic deployment of rhetorical devices. This will be done under three main subheadings, namely: Employees' development threatened by corruption and unfair labour practices; Employees' development through value-based quality education; and Attaining sustainable human development through the SDGs in a corruption-ridden public service and private sector-driven labour market.

1. Employees' development threatened by lack of conducive work environment

Employees in Armah's text are pictured as having little or no working tools in good condition, tools that are crucial to the fulfillment of their roles as employees. For instance, on page 17, the night officer signs off his duty by noting:

- "Control telephones:
 - Faulty at Kojokrom
 - Benso
 - Esuaso
 - Carrier faulty."

Djoletto's Mr Benjy Baisi, headmaster of National School, Cape Coast, is confronted with challenges of having to feed students in his school without adequate resources, following continuous cut in government feeding grants:

Mr Baisi happened to be doing additions and subtractions. This was caused by a letter which he had received from the Department of Welfare Services and Pedagogy. The last few sentences of the letter read: 'And I am directed to convey to you that no extra fees should be charged from pupils to offset any temporary deficit that may occur in the school budget as a result of this cut.

Djoletto (1975, p.1)

According to the last segment of the letter, headmasters are further entreated to refrain from taking bank loans to meet the financial obligations of their schools to suppliers "as this in the past has led to infringement of the Financial Rules and the Department has had to take disciplinary action against a few financial malefactors reported by the Auditor-General." (p. 1). The lack of financial resources is foregrounded in the ironic contradiction reflected through the incongruous role of the Department of Welfare Services and Pedagogy, whose head authored the said letter. Armah also depicts an uncomfortable working environment which is largely demotivating to the employees, save for there being no other way out. For sustainable nation building, employers ought to provide the right environment that enables employees long to fulfill their roles. However, this is quite the contrary as shown in the following depiction:

After eight the office began filling up rapidly as the day clerk came in with their little jokes and the talk of brief pay days and perennial Passion Weeks. Then the work of the day ended the task and even those who had little to do were reduced to silence because *the rising heat was itself a very tiring thing.*

Djoletto (1975, p.19)

The description of a non-friendly and conducive employee working environment continues in Chapter Three. The first paragraph aptly describes the vain situation in which workers find themselves:

After twelve even those within could tell the sun had risen very high. The rusty painted fan above was turned on, but it travelled with such tired slowness that it made more noise than air and made the Traffic Control Office uncomfortable in a strange indeterminate way. It was not the useless sounds of the fan mixing with the usual rattle of the little Morse machines. It was the combination that created the sense of confusion which it would be impossible to fix and against which it would be foolish merely to protest... Everybody seemed to sweat a lot... So the sweat together and the fan above made this stewy atmosphere in which the suffering sleepers came and worked and went dumbly back afterward to homes they had earlier fled.

Djoleto (1975, p. 20)

If working conditions are fair enough, why would workers have to fail in their 'efforts to break the mean monthly cycle of debt and borrowing, borrowing, and debt'? (p. 22). And what else would explain that a worker becomes 'suddenly aware of the exceedingly sharp clarity of vision and the clean taste that comes with the successful defiance of hunger' (p. 23) if they are well remunerated and equipped to take care of oneself let alone a family?

2. Employees' development through value-based quality education and corruption-free practices

Employees' development issues are intrinsically linked to both moral and legal consideration. It is from this perspective that it becomes significant to take some inspirations from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention (1998) on the Fundamental Rights of Employees or Workers across the World. These rights are summarized into four fundamental rights as captured in the Conventions, namely:

- a) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
 - b) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;
 - c) the effective abolishing of child labour; and
 - d) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
- (p. 7)

These rights are essential to the holistic development of employees as far as their career development and progression are concerned. The knowledge of rights and the full enjoyment of such rights as a secure path to career development and progression require education beyond mere literacy and numeracy.

A Chinese proverb goes that "Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere". More so, in the words of Abdul Kalam, "Learning gives creativity, creativity leads to thinking, thinking provides knowledge, knowledge makes you great." The significance of learning is strongly articulated in these quotes. The significance of education as an effective framework for the realization of learning therefore becomes manifest. This all-important nature of education is captured in these words of Nelson Mandela that "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the World." To paraphrase these thoughts of Mandela, "Quality Education is the most powerful weapon one can use to change the world qualitatively in a sustainable manner. Workers' development can only be guaranteed through quality education which is not the preserve of employers.

The quest for decent work and working conditions, decent salaries and the dignity of labour and professional integrity is strictly linked to qualitative knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of each actor in the labour market. Quality education for those willing to get it must be readily available as a means of empowering employees, and for that matter, citizens, for sustainable development. As Christine Gregoire puts it as "One of the most powerful tools for empowering individuals and communities is making certain that any individual who wants to receive a quality education can do so."

The kind of education required is not only qualitative, but must also be value-based. A value-based quality education is conceived as an all-encompassing kind of education which is human-centered and geared towards raising transformational leaders, critical and strategic thinkers whose prime interest is to ensure the sustainability of the collective good at the expense of self or individual interest. A contrasting scenario is however painted in the texts under consideration. A lack of employee welfare gives rise to lack of self-development even if the staff wishes to have it. In Djoletto's text, lunch time is spent strolling the town and quietly returning to the office, given that there is no financial ability to purchase food. Family heads have to sometimes work overtime, but it does not even get anywhere near providing financial succor for the family.

Frustrating work conditions are highlighted with no purpose or fulfillment of self, nothing to aspire to, no challenge; hence, "*with a hurry* that was still instinctive after so many years of disappointment and so much knowledge of futility, *the clerks put away the things they called work and make to the door....* All they knew was that they were fleeing' (p. 26).

When no provisions are made for sustainable development and growth of employees, workers get exposed to bribery antics of desperate clients seeking quick, unrecorded services. Even though 'the man' (the main character in the text) seeks to remain upright in his role as an employee, he does not earn beyond a meager sum while those who cooperate with the bribe givers smile home.

The bribing visitor asks the man: "But you also know that everybody prospers from the work he does, no?" (p. 32), showing how naturalized it has

become for people to try sorting themselves out. In *Money Galore*, the Department of Welfare Services and Pedagogy, expected to protect the welfare and development of teachers, is rather seen as their number one enemy. This is as a result of bad policies and directives usually made by this Department, which are at variance with its name. In the words of the narrator:

[...] teachers, above all, deeply resented the Department of Welfare Services and Pedagogy. Their resentment was such that they would grumble against any directive at all that came from the Department even before they considered its merit.... The Department had no interest in the welfare of teachers, and teachers quietly refuse as quietly as possible to cooperate with it.

Djoleto (1975, p. 11)

In a related development, Kafu wants to be promoted on the goodwill of Mr. Baisi, rather than on merit and competence within the laid down rules and regulations of the Service. This he considers as an issue of welfare, contrary to the principled position of Mr. Baisi who believes in meritocracy, equity and fairness in such matters. Such position is seen as an impediment to the realisation of Kafu's inordinate ambition as captured in the issuing dialogue between both characters:

"But can't you persuade the Department to take my MA into account and upgrade me right now? My market value is increased. I can move into any University right now."

"I know. But your degree is not in school administration. Even if it were, you still need the experience. A year is not much time."

"...You mean you aren't interested in my future?"

"My interest and loyalty are given to the work, not to individuals."

It is an irony that the department that is focused on welfare should be resented in such a manner by employees expected to benefit from its services. This resentment, as expressed in these lines, is a clear example of foregrounding of employees' welfare situation in the society, which should be discouraged. Indeed, this situation fits into nepotism and corruption of all kinds in the relationship portrayed between employer and employee in both narratives. The man's economic situation is unpleasant and a reflection of no-good treatment at work. This only fuels the tension at home. His wife feels greatly uncomfortable with his refusal to accept a bribe that could have helped to ease things financially at home. The man notes that 'failure would not let him rest in peace' (p. 46), not even a good night's rest, especially because of quarrels with loved ones occasioned by lack of provision of necessities, all due to unbalanced working conditions. The man has missed the opportunity of returning to school after his girlfriend Oyo gets pregnant and her family ropes him into performing marriage rites. Unfortunately, his work environment provides no further opportunities for growth or a possible return to school and so remains he. Page 33 describes him as follows:

a new man just out of secondary, very young. No doubt, being only new, he was calculating in his undisappointed mind that **he would stay here only a short while and like a free man fly off to something closer to his soul**. What in his breeziness he had yet to know was this: that **his dream was not his alone, that everyone before him had crawled with hope along the same unending path**, dreaming of future days when they would crawl no longer but run if they wanted to run, and fly if the spirit moved them ...

Djoleto (1975, p. 33)

If there were consciously laid down initiatives to develop employees, the new young man, unlike those before him, would really have nothing to worry about. To show how unhelping the situation at work is, the narrator in the text relates an incident of the new boy resuming work earlier than the time with hopes of watching and learning. But that is described as 'the eagerness of the innocent' (p. 111). It is further noted that 'he will one day wish he had never seen the Block...' Armah also exposes the ridicule of the exercise called work and the uncertainties and insecurities bedeviling employees rather than opportunities for career growth and progression, using the character Koffi Billy who is described as one that did his work well.

At the end of the day, he was always tired, but he had found some sort of happiness in all of this, and that was something very valuable indeed" (p. 65 – 66). However, when an accident occurred that "cut Koffi Billy's right leg away beneath the knee, the employer said he deserved it: he had been playing at his work.

That experience of a lack of support at that dire time of need leaves Koffi Billy pulverized and in shock. And he eventually dies of neglect, leading to a possible suicide. This sort of lack of interest in employees is to be discouraged. Other employees who note how Koffi Billy is treated can choose to resign from the employment, save for the lack of jobs in the country. People are forced to remain in a condition that is unappealing and unhelpful to them. There is nothing to look forward to at work; hence, even peace of mind is an illusion. No amount of hard work brings one closer to the 'gleam', the desired outcome. "How much hard work before a month's pay would last till the end of the month? Rent going up and up." (p. 95) The nature of work in the Civil Service does not lend itself to productivity as there is little to do at work. For example:

The filing clerk had a meticulous system for stretching out his work, and he had done it so often and gotten so used to it that he had probably forgotten that most of it was merely a way to waste time...periodic visits to the lavatory, from habit, not necessity...most jobs were like that... People spent whole days behind desks, and like any Civil Servant, if some woman came from a village wanting to know such

things and asked them straight what exactly it was they spent their time doing, they would never be able to give a real answer. *A job was a job. It did not matter at all that nothing was done on most jobs'*

Armah (1968, p. 156)

How can a nation be built upon such work practices? The civil service is thus portrayed as a place for people with minimal qualifications, with no hope for acquiring additional qualifications, and as such who can be treated scornfully with impunity. Armah therefore foregrounds the need for an upward review of employees' potentials in order to help them develop into individuals that would contribute to sustainable nation building, while maintaining qualitative social status and respectability which reaffirms their dignity as human-beings in sustainable manner. How then can sustainable human development through the SDGs be attained in a corruption-ridden public service and private sector-driven labour market? This is the question that informs the subsequent segment of the study.

3. Attaining sustainable human development through the SDGs in a corruption-ridden public service and private sector-driven labour market.

The attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals requires a completely new mindset across the entire globe, more especially across the global South plagued with a myriad of socioeconomic and political challenges mainly linked to corruption in all its forms. The pervasive nature of corruption across all sectors of human endeavour in the two texts compromises every effort to achieve an equitable and fair distribution of resources. It also makes it difficult, if not impossible to create opportunities for all as a way to ensuring the growth of just societies in a sustainable manner. Attaining sustainable human development through the SDGs in a corruption-ridden public service and private sector-driven labour market place requires a kind of holistic education which is value-centred and geared towards helping human beings to be humane. The two novelists, through plot development and characterization, coupled with appropriate diction and aesthetic syntactic structures in the two narrative texts, present cogent argumentations to denunciation the failure of individuals and State actors both in public and private sector to work with value-based characters toward the realization of SDG 4. This aesthetic denunciation is a call for an end to all forms of social exclusion through quality and sustainable jobs and quality education for all.

Conclusion

The reading of Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Djoletto's *Money Galore* brings out the deplorable state of labour and conditions of work owing to pervasive corruption. This situation is a significant impediment to employees' development and career prospects. Poor infrastructure, inadequate tools and working material, ill-informed public policies, politically motivated

interferences and manipulations kill professionalism and entrench mediocrity to the detriment of the collective good for which institutions are established. Such a situation is a fertile ground for exploitation and manipulation of employees. This can invariably lead to social deconstruction. Through foregrounding in the two narratives, Armah and Djoletto highlight the fact that employees' development is strictly linked to value-based quality education, qualitative working environment and healthy human relations. These conditions help to create a healthy condition and a conducive environment required to promote employees' development, and to incentivize and stimulate high productivity. A corruption-ridden society has everything to do with deficient educational systems and public policies. This leads to poor work culture and quality of life inimical to employees' development. Such a situation is a fertile ground for exploitation and manipulation of employees. This can invariably lead to social deconstruction and compromise sustainable human development. Premium should be put on value-based quality education which goes beyond mere literacy and numeracy. The holistic nature of value-based quality education makes of it a human-centered social engineering that will invariably produce transformational leaders, critical and strategic thinkers required to successfully drive the laudable agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals. The two authors through characterization, setting, and diction veiled in rhetorical devices such as personification, metaphor, hyperbole, simile, etc., foreground employees' development through quality, equitable and inclusive education which is indispensable to the attainment of SDG 4 in particular and all the others as a whole. Foregrounding employees' development through these narrative texts brings to the fore the centrality of literary genre in the social transformation of Humanity.

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