

Managing Economic Crises in the Global Theatrical/"Towers and the Wind" by Thysser Renkhevo as a Case Study

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Abstract

Economic crises have emerged as significant and complex phenomena with far-reaching consequences, affecting diverse systems and societies across the globe. The aftermath of the two world wars in the 20th century witnessed the occurrence of such crises, capturing the attention of intellectuals, theorists, and artists, including playwrights. Within the realm of theater, these playwrights have embarked on a profound exploration of economic crises, delving into their multifaceted manifestations and implications. By scrutinizing the causes, critically analyzing various aspects, and evaluating the impacts, these playwrights have endeavored to illuminate the nature and consequences of economic crises. The primary objective of this research is to conduct an in-depth investigation into the prominent economic crises that have unfolded in different parts of the world and to examine how playwrights have portrayed and confronted these crises within their theatrical works. This research seeks to shed light on the strategies employed by playwrights in navigating the intricate terrain of economic crises, with a view to fostering social awareness and understanding. Through an exploration of theatrical texts on a global scale, this study aims to unravel the artistic approaches, creative techniques, and narrative devices employed by playwrights to bring economic crises to the forefront of public consciousness. By examining the plays' themes, characterizations, plot structures, and dramatic techniques, this research intends to unravel the nuanced perspectives and intricate layers of meaning embedded within the theatrical representations of economic crises. Furthermore, the study will analyze how playwrights address key questions, such as the ideological frameworks within which economic crises are explored, whether these crises are depicted as objective documentary accounts or subjective reflections of reality, and how the plays reflect the broader societal impacts and the coping mechanisms employed in response to economic crises. By employing a comprehensive methodological framework, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the intersection of theater and economic crises.

Keywords: management, crises, economic, theatre.

Introduction

In a rapidly changing world influenced by crises and sources of instability, these crises are often interrelated and interconnected. They tend to afflict economic activities, consequently exerting a dominant influence on all facets of life. Throughout economic history, several economic crises have unfolded, causing markets, countries, and systems to collapse. These economic crises have not only threatened and impacted political and social stability but have also influenced the behaviors of individuals and communities.

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Moreover, at times, these economic crises may stem from natural disasters such as droughts, floods, and other life-disrupting calamities. They can also result from the consequences of wars and conflicts created by humans themselves and the subsequent implications. Economic crises can be inherent in established and governing systems.

These crises pervaded all aspects of life and shaped the fabric of literature and culture. In the realm of theatrical art, many playwrights drew inspiration from the crises surrounding them or their societies. They incorporated these crises into their texts, working to represent them through the ideas embedded in their theatrical works. Whether these crises were contemporary to them or employed through invoking them for the purpose of drawing relevance to their contemporary reality, especially crises related to economic aspects that impact human life in general, and the writer's life in particular. Many playwrights adopted clear ideologies through their writings, expressing their affiliations, supporting certain orientations, or opposing particular systems. This is evident through the themes and values presented in the structure of their theatrical texts. This study is the first of its kind to examine the relationship between the economic aspect and theater. Based on all the aforementioned, the researcher formulates the research problem through the following questions: Did playwrights deal with economic crises within their ideological frameworks? Did they portray these crises merely as documentary descriptions and depictions of reality, or did they reveal the influences and risks of these economic crises on their societies and how societies coped with these crises?

The Significance of Research and Its Necessity:

1. The importance of this research lies in its investigation of the methods of managing economic crises in global theatrical texts.
2. It aims to provide a scholarly approach that elucidates the intimate relationship between various crises, especially economic ones, and the impact they have on theatrical culture during those circumstances and crises. It also aims to establish the connection between economic knowledge and theatrical art.

Research Objectives:

1. The research endeavors to unveil how economic crises are managed in global theatrical texts.

Materials and Methods:

The concept of "crisis" traces its earliest usage back to ancient Greek thought, where it denoted a turning point in severe and often fatal illnesses, typically leading either to certain death or complete recovery. Similarly, in the Chinese language, this concept is expressed by two words, "Wei - Ji." The first word signifies danger, while the second represents an opportunity that can be seized to avert the danger by transforming the crisis and its associated risks into opportunities for harnessing creative capabilities. This allows the crisis to be seen as a chance to redefine circumstances and find constructive solution(1) .

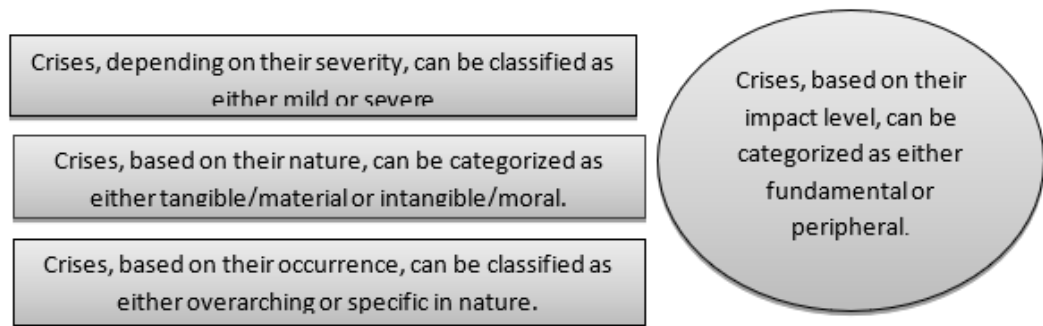
The term "crisis" was first used by Europeans in the seventeenth century in the political realm to signify the intensity of tension that prevailed in the relations between state authorities and the Church, which defended its remaining authorities. Afterward, in the nineteenth century, it was used to indicate serious problems or critical moments in the development of political, economic, and social relations. The term was borrowed again in the 1930s to describe the economic depression and devastation that plagued the world, leading to international political conflicts that reached their peak in World War II. In the 1950s, psychologists began using the term to describe a state of social and moral decay that affected industrial societies, particularly after World War II. In the 1970s, demographers used it to refer to population explosions, and in the 1980s, sociologists

borrowed it to describe social conflicts arising from the growth of capitalist society, leading to a sense of alienation within their communities. Additionally⁽²⁾. Western capitalist economies have been experiencing increasing crises since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

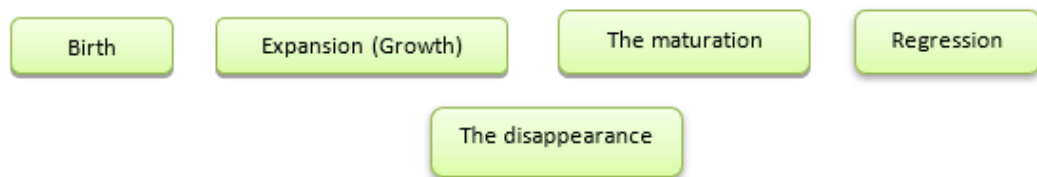
The shifts in the use of the term "crisis" lead to transformations in societal structures and individual thought processes. Although crises often stem from the nature of societies, as the world advances and evolves, crises tend to escalate in an exponential manner with this progress. More societal development translates to more crises on the path to this development, and the expansion of social strata brings forth additional crises in the management of these strata or other growing sectors. Not to mention the presence of the industrial revolution's impact, which resulted in the disappearance of some crises while concurrently creating new ones.

A crisis inherently contains a peculiar contradiction and clear opposition in the pursuit of gains, impacting the future of the relationship between the parties in conflict or crisis. This leads to evident confusion, escalation, and eventually a point of divergence or the decision-making point regarding conflicting perspectives. Indeed, a crisis, without interaction (of its parties), commonly referred to as decision-makers or crisis participants, is not truly a crisis. Without this interaction or sincere contribution to finding solutions⁽³⁾ or expressing viewpoints on the escalating crisis and its future repercussions, the situation becomes inflamed, causing the involved parties to lose their composure for either a brief period or longer durations. Sustaining and nurturing it only leads to more losses, contradictions, and a widening gap in opinions, with both sides holding onto prevailing ideas, failing to converge towards a resolution. One of the most significant factors that can exacerbate a crisis and unsettle its parties is the material and moral security that individuals and groups seek to maintain at a stable level in their daily lives. This is because humans have an inherent need for security, which has been present since their birth, beginning with personal needs that then evolve, change, and adapt to the shifting requirements of the environment⁽⁴⁾. Among contemporary human needs is undoubtedly the desire for stability and avoidance of perpetual crises. People strive to preserve their external surroundings without any crises that may disrupt the harmony of their internal environment. Consequently, a crisis, even if it originates from the external reality, will inevitably wrap itself around all the personal facets of an individual.

One of the most significant crises that the world has faced and continues to face is (economic crises). These are material crises revolving around a tangible or economic core, meaning they are centered on something tangible that can be verified and dealt with financially. Additionally, there are moral crises that revolve around a subjective core, primarily linked to the personal identities of those involved in the crisis. These moral crises encompass issues of trust, credibility, loyalty, and belonging, all of which exist within an intangible realm and are managed through one's perception and understanding⁽⁵⁾. Furthermore, there are numerous other crises, but most of them fall under major categories, such as (humanitarian, economic, political, health-related, intellectual, or cultural crises. Additionally), there are further subdivisions and distinctions within these categories⁽⁶⁾.



The phases of a crisis: A crisis is divided into stages (7) :



The phase of birth signifies emerging signs on the horizon, laden with risks. Here, as the researcher mentioned, a serious endeavor is needed to handle the crisis at its inception. As for expansion, it represents another option. If the crisis is not halted and overcome, it will grow and evolve, entering a new phase, the phase of growth, possibly influenced by external factors that contribute to this growth and development. Maturity here implies a failure in dealing with the crisis, which escalates the situation, pushing the crisis to its peak and intensifying its impact. Contraction (retreat) occurs when the confrontation diminishes, solutions emerge, the crisis begins to unravel, and some of its strength dissipates, with opposing forces responding more favorably. Disappearance is the stage where the crisis fades away entirely, attempting to turn a new page or conclude a chapter and regain trust anew. At this point, a comprehensive review of everything that transpired takes place, evaluating the situations and the reasons that led to the crossroads, ultimately reaching the climax of this crisis and its involved parties. Analyzing these steps will undoubtedly bring about benefits for the parties involved in the crisis.

To address crises:

For every crisis, there must be tools to deal with it, as well as methods and strategies to either overcome it or attempt to resolve and eliminate it completely. Many crises often start small, and due to not being confronted and managed correctly, they can escalate and become destructive storms(8). Consequently, it becomes very difficult to control them once they have advanced through their stages and turned into a significant crisis due to mishandling in the early stages. Individuals often hesitate to deal with crises as they disrupt and stagnate their daily lives, leading to crises causing disturbances in individuals' lives, affecting their self-perception, self-worth, strength, and inner identity(9). Many individuals resort to incorrect justifications or denial due to their inability or unwillingness to confront the intense experience that erodes a person's inner stability. Escaping is not an effective solution; instead, it postpones the crisis explosion, leaving the individual or group in a situation without solutions or treatments. Therefore, crisis management has emerged as a set of practical skills and techniques for addressing any crisis, especially contemporary ones, which have taken on different, complex, and challenging forms (10) . These crises can push individuals to a marginal and negative point where they can no longer continue their journey in any field or within society. Hence, crisis management is considered a human practice, one of the aspects of human interaction with unexpected or critical situations, whether human-made or natural. These practices are the real test of a person's ability to cope with crises and deal with challenging situations, where their creative abilities are unleashed, motivating them to

innovate (11). Through creativity and innovation, individuals can manage and escape from their crises and occasional difficulties. Conversely, adopting rigid thinking and traditional methods of dealing with crises will only lead to more worsening and complex crises. In the context of the prevalence and presence of crises in all aspects of life, individuals must embrace various approaches and multiple methods to deal with their crises. This is what can be represented by the intellectual (cultural-theatrical) discourse producer because it contributes to drawing creative solutions through dramatic writing that intertwines with reality, making it a source of solutions in writing. This requires the experience of dealing with reality and its manifestations, which the intellectual discourse producer must possess. One of the most important ways to avoid crises is diagnosing them before they occur through crisis prediction operations. After a crisis occurs, it is essential to diagnose it accurately and swiftly, separate the crisis, and finally manage it promptly. Among the crisis prediction operations is posing "what if" questions and anticipating the worst possible scenarios that could occur, including measuring the degree of damage and chaos caused by the crisis unless there is intervention to resolve it (12).

Economic Crises in Theater:

Writing represents a stance towards events and crises addressed by the writer, especially in theatrical writing. Throughout epochs and eras, it has often represented a state of intellectual, enlightening, and opposing positioning regarding ongoing crises. The motivations of writers mostly stem from the concerns and crises of society. Writers are those who either experience these crises or incorporate their intellectual positions into the structures of their creative texts. Literature and writing in every nation serve as a reflective mirror of that nation, portraying all the details of life's manifestations and the political and social changes it undergoes, sometimes conveying them directly or by reflecting these aspects or their changes onto the writer, personally or the society and its members as a whole (13). Dealing with these crises within creative structures requires the playwright to understand the crises and the culture that produced these works and ways to deal with them. The playwright is the voice of the current situation, and most writers do not shy away from the crises of their time; they address them in different ways or through diverse writing techniques. Writing is the refuge that writers turn to when they possess only the weapon of writing to confront others and face various crises. Playwriting is a confrontation and stance in the face of the calamities that primarily affect individuals and subsequently society. Through it, the playwright acts as a mediator between society and the responsible party, often serving as a bridge between society and the historical memory documented in the playwright's creations and positions conveyed through their creative texts. An author "does not write in isolation from the prevailing intellectual and cultural currents of their time(14)," but instead derives their ideas from this reality and its daily changes. This perspective is echoed by many theorists; for instance, Marx considers literature as "a social-historical phenomenon." He argues that writers express the viewpoint of the class to which they belong, whether consciously or unconsciously (15). Words and ideas (writing) are tools for building and solving problems. Thought is not merely a descriptor of reality or its reflection; it is the best element for construction and crisis resolution. This is because "the theater, as an educational and directing tool, tops the list of all similar tools in terms of direct impact." It is an art with conscious and influential power, capable of profoundly affecting people's minds, surpassing many other methods(16).

Crises have always been present in every era, especially in theater. Theater has addressed numerous crises and sought to provide solutions within itself. Therefore, the role of theater in times of crisis is highlighted, whether these crises result from armed conflicts or intellectual differences on various cultural, artistic, political, religious, ethical, social, health, media, or other issues. Since theater is the art of confrontation, characterized by the constant dynamism of human thought, it serves as a message. It is the art of dissent from conventional norms, making change its essence. However, in times of crisis,

confrontation becomes a sharp and shocking action. The theater aims to confront crises and devise solutions for them according to the vision of theater culture producers. This makes theater an aesthetic and intellectual tool for managing and resolving crises. The theatrical discourse often incorporates the playwright's perspectives on these crises and effective solutions from their point of view. Sometimes, confrontation becomes one of the solutions used by the playwright in a critical, satirical, or vengeful manner against the crisis and its creators. Economic aspects and their crises can be observed in the writings of the German playwright Gerhart Hauptmann, who particularly focused on some economic and human crises in 18th-century German society. In his play "The Weavers," he addressed a specific event where weavers in a Silesian village rebelled in 1844. These oppressed people realized that their skins were being torn apart, their labor was undervalued, and their lives were wasted between the toil of weaving and their deteriorating health. They could hardly find a livelihood, as they were at the mercy of the factory owner (18). This is a clear and explicit manifestation of an economic crisis, portrayed through the factory owner's ruthless exploitation of these workers. The crises of the working class have not been far from the thoughts of many playwrights. For instance, the Irish playwright Sean O'Casey's play "The Plough and the Stars," symbolizes the Irish nationalist movement, focusing on the suffering of the struggling class, the workers. He depicted the social fabric of revolutionary Ireland against British colonialism, strongly emphasizing the working class and their humanitarian resistance (19). These workers were the noble and pure class, united and adhering to the nationalist concept against the forces of oppression and economic exploitation. They became the icon that writers and intellectuals rallied behind in the revolution against all forms of exclusion and economic exploitation. Not only that, but one can also count corruption, bureaucracy, and the abuse of power as important aspects of economic crises during those periods. This economic aspect is evident in the play "The Government Inspector" by the Russian playwright Nikolai Gogol, a satirical play that criticizes corruption, bureaucracy, and human greed prevailing in the Russian Empire at that time (20). Corruption was rampant as people sought to control economic resources and manipulate economic affairs across the country. In contrast, Gogol also criticized the phenomenon of bribery, which controlled people's lives back then. Tolstoy wrote an important play in defense of the rights of the oppressed classes, including "The Power of Darkness" or "The Power of Darkness" or "The Power of Darkness." This play, written in 1886, was a clear manifestation of the economic crisis in the way the factory owner mistreated the workers (21). The play was initially performed in Moscow and St. Petersburg but was banned in 1888 due to its harsh criticism of the officials and exploiters. Tolstoy's other play, "The Fruits of Enlightenment" or "The Fruits of Enlightenment" or "The Fruits of Knowledge," written in 1889, addressed the lives of wealthy, decadent landowners and the suffering of the peasants. The working class was the real focus of Russian writers during that time, as they were in a significant struggle with the landowning class that controlled all economic opportunities and sources of wealth. In return, they exercised various forms of tyranny over these workers, prompting writers to incite these workers, expose, and criticize the oppressive authority of the time.

Amid the post-World War II trends of anti-imperialism and unfulfilled promises made by the government to the working class, the playwright John Jordan emerged. His theatrical works were characterized by addressing social and political issues, such as government corruption, bureaucratic machinations, power struggles, colonial war crimes, and social conflicts between the poor and the rich(22). Consequently, the themes of corruption and unfulfilled promises of economic prosperity became the prominent subjects of that era, fostering class conflict between the labor movement and the wealthy elite, who governed and engaged in various forms of financial, administrative, and economic corruption

The economic aspect and its crises are clearly evident in the plays of the Italian playwright Dario Fo. The Italian author wrote an important text in this regard, "We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!" which discusses class struggle, capitalist domination, and the

ruthlessness of capitalism, which widens the circle of deprivation and increases poverty, as the text, published in 1974, tells how "economic inflation reaches a record high, anger and tension prevail when Antonia leads a revolt in the neighborhood supermarket, and the building is looted. Then she and her friend Rita, desperate, try to hide the 'liberated goods' before their husbands and the police discover what happened." He also wrote a play titled "Trumpets and Raspberries," inspired by a real event in Italy in the late 1970s, involving the kidnapping of the Prime Minister, who was a wealthy industrialist and the owner and president of Fiat, a company with significant economic power over the state. In a satirical manner, the author writes about the power and dominance of money over governments(23). Fo is one of the contemporary writers who focused on economic crises in his theatrical texts, sometimes addressing them in a critical and satirical manner. However, he also emphasizes the economic conditions that lead individuals to various situations in daily life.

In line with the above, the researcher agrees with the view that "analyzing crises, breaking down their elements, understanding their reasons, and tracking various difficulties are necessary to understand the problems societies face and identify different obstacles and understand their negative impact on society(24)." This is because the world is currently experiencing "multiple and diverse crises on various political, economic, social, and environmental fronts... a natural extension of the control mentality that attempts to seize the world's resources for the benefit of controlling groups. The current economic crises are nothing more than a natural extension of the behavior and policies of the globalized world in all its aspects(25)." Many playwrights are compelled to deal with these sustained economic crises due to entrenched circumstances and bureaucracy that allow certain classes to control the economic nerve center that represents the most vital aspect of life and its sustenance. If there is a pressing factor on the oppressed working classes, it will undoubtedly result in various crises that surround societies and individuals in different countries. This obliges the playwright to address the forms of these economic crises, express the intellectual and historical stance toward these crises and their causes, and the mechanisms for dealing with them and breaking them down, according to their perspectives derived from the crises themselves, their causes, and their parties.

Results:

1. Class struggle is one of the key significant features that constitute an economic crisis in dealing with the majority of societies.
2. Financial corruption represents a prominent ignition point for economic crises in societies, especially in developing ones.
3. Economic crises tend to intensify in the periods following wars, particularly post-World War eras.
4. The playwright works on exposing and criticizing all behaviors characterized by economic corruption, presenting scenarios and forms of this corruption to his society to become part of the awareness of this society in its dealings and reactions.

Discussion:

The play "Towers and Wind" by the Venezuelan writer Thysser Renkhevo represents one of the most important stages that changed the face of the world and developing countries on various levels and dimensions after the discovery of oil. There is a division into levels of social, political, and economic transformations in oil-producing countries, "pre-oil" and "post-oil," due to the real impact of this wealth on the global economy and the formation of new relations for these countries. This has made oil a prominent presence in economic, political, and even cultural aspects of life. Countries that have witnessed the

emergence of oil have become vulnerable to interventions and globalization by major nations and multinational corporations. Environmental pollution has occurred due to the excessive extraction of oil, tarnishing the purity of deserts and human life, leading to societies becoming more consumer-oriented. Globalization has imposed significant challenges on developing countries that lack the economic and technological resources necessary to compete with multinational corporations. Many oil-rich nations find themselves unable to export their industries and products, including their oil wealth. They become dependent on large multinational corporations. Among the countries affected by this crisis is Venezuela. Its economy was once based on agriculture and livestock, but since the discovery of oil, these sectors were neglected, and their exports declined. This transformation turned Venezuela from a society rich in pure traditions into an oil-based society mimicking Western behaviors, driven by investments from multinational oil companies. The discovery of oil caused a significant disruption in Venezuelan society, leading to the rapid accumulation of wealth, which in turn had a profound impact on social relationships and structures. What remained were the towers of the devil and the winds of death. The entry of oil turned the balance upside down, transforming the forest into a city. The Venezuelan society began to dream of searching for the "black gold," which the author symbolically refers to as "the devil's excrement." It's the devil that demolished the agricultural land's purity and replaced it with towers of crows (oil drilling and extraction equipment) that resemble crows in motion. The playwright depicts death creeping into the city by seizing the purity of the Venezuelan people (symbolizing the death of agricultural lands) and seizing those lands, killing indigenous people and assassinating national forces to install towers of the devil or giant drills. One of the characters, Maria, describes this transformation, "Yes, since then, we hear about the appearance of oil. These explosions began. Didn't you see by the slope the abandoned towers and the intersecting girders that are still burning? They appear at night like torches of hell... There are hidden shots under the iron columns of the towers in the skulls." This play vividly portrays the profound impact of the oil industry on a society's economic, social, and cultural fabric, as well as its relationship with the outside world. It highlights the consequences of rapid industrialization driven by oil wealth, as well as the environmental and social costs associated with it(26). In it, the author criticizes the ruling powers, who are concerned only with wealth and black gold, even if it means selling their homeland. He satirizes them, portraying them as puppets driven by greed and avarice. He believes that the emergence of oil has created a new crisis for Venezuelan society, bringing death to its citizens due to the greed of foreign oil companies and the collaboration of those in power at that time, represented by Puppet 1 and Puppet 2, implying that they are mere puppets in the hands of major corporations that control oil investments in their countries: (Puppet 2: We must enter his mind and exploit these things. Build towers, place drills, cut down forests, cut down crops... The wealth that will come to us later is beyond our grasp and treasuries.(27) The greed that drove the government and foreign oil companies did not only kill the trees and the beautiful rural life in Venezuela but also corrupted the innocence of the Venezuelan people and altered the society's behavior. Human relationships shifted towards purely materialistic pursuits, even if it meant the removal of certain segments of Venezuelan society and their displacement from the city to the forest: (Puppet 3: It's amusing to overcome obstacles, Mr. Civilian President. You, along with the Indians, represent some of these obstacles. (To a member of parliament) But they are very small obstacles, Mr. President, very small, (To the stranger) But look closely at our towers; they are like wild steeds. They know how to overcome obstacles and leap over them (takes a jump). They will leap over you and your Indians with ease (28). Through machines and oil towers, everything in the nature of Venezuela disappears, transforming into centers for oil extraction. Consequently, their lives turn into a hellish existence filled with confusion and chaos due to the injustice felt by society from not benefiting from this wealth, as it goes into the pockets of the powerful and large corporations. On the flip side, its pollutants and negatives harm Venezuelan society. As expressed by one of its characters: (Luthiana): Antonio and

Maria, can you hear? The towers crawl, trees fall, and rivers are crossed. "Hear the sound of metal machines." Villages, cities, and roads are crushed. Listen, and people will be crushed soon. (29) Foreign multinational corporations, along with beneficiaries from members of the Venezuelan government, began bribing people to prevent them from rebelling against their rule and to reduce resistance due to their extensive corruption and exploitation of oil for their own profits, without benefiting the people from this oil wealth that had turned into a curse for Venezuelan society: ((Antonio: Tell him to leave, for there is no use in what he does. They are distributing money to the people and providing them with everything. The towers are too powerful, woman, and they keep advancing. You must also leave from here because you are not qualified for the new way of life that will spread here!(30) The new system, after the discovery of oil, created an environment vastly different from the agricultural setting that Venezuelan society once lived in, marked by spontaneity, purity, and camaraderie. This purity and simplicity disappeared in the era of materialism dominating the new relationships in oil societies.

Results and Impacts :

Impacts:

1. The oil wealth has turned into a central crisis in Venezuelan society, instead of being a source of economic prosperity.
2. Oil wealth overshadowed other resources like agriculture and animal husbandry in Venezuelan society and symbolically represented the dominance of material aspects over purity and the nature of human relationships before the discovery of oil wealth.
3. Political corruption, unemployment, authoritarianism, human rights violations, poor economic management, and heavy reliance on oil have also contributed to the worsening of the economic crisis.

Results :

1. Over-reliance on a single economic resource, as seen in Venezuelan society's dependency on oil without economic diversification, can lead to crises.
2. Developing possible scenarios or recalling past crises is an important method for crisis management and resolution.
3. Class conflicts and the concepts of capitalism and socialism represent key facets of economic crises that emerged in Western societies, particularly during the 20th century.

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