

DEMOCRACY AT CROSSROADS: POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE*

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Abstract

This paper examines some of the follies and vices prevalent in the African political systems as portrayed in Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People*. The novel mirrors the social inequalities, exploitation, corruption, materialism and oppression of the masses that have been the bane of African leaders since independence from the colonial masters. The novel portrays the hypocrisy of African political leaders who make to the masses empty promises they know that they will not fulfill once they get elected into office. Rather, selfishness, squander mania, misappropriation of scarce resources, suppression of dissent voices, rigging of elections, thuggery to win by all means becomes the order of the day. Thus, the masses are schemed out in the process of governance by the greedy and unpatriotic political class. Marxist theories form the framework for the study; while data emanated from both primary and secondary sources. The novel itself, which is the primary sources of data, is subjected to critical analysis; while journals, library texts and online extracts from the secondary sources of data. The researchers advocate that political leaders should be altruistic, honest and dedicated so that the society will be a better one.

Keywords: Democracy, Corruption, Politics, Oppression, Squander mania

Introduction

Political corruption is the abuse of political powers by government leaders to extract and accumulate for private gain. Corruption has eaten deep into the system and has destroyed lives and communities and undermined countries and institutions. Political corruption is the use of power by government officials for illegitimate private gain. Misuse of government power for other purposes such as repression of political opponents and general police brutality is considered political corruption. Most economic, political and social problems in under developed societies like Nigeria emanate from corruption. Some of these problems include lack of accountability, diversion of public resources to private

ownership, different types of discriminations, ethnicity, lack of competence, inefficiency etc. There are many causes of political corruption such as ineffective political processes, ineffective political financing, and poverty, ethnic and religious differences. The pervasive corrupt practices have been blamed on the colonial masters. According to this view, the nation's colonial history may have restricted any early influences in an ethical revolution.

Corruption has become a household name in Africa, it involves the dishonest or preferential use of power or position which has the result of one person or organization being disadvantaged over another. It is the solicitation, receiving or agreeing to receive, giving, promising or offering any gratification as an inducement or reward to person to do or forbear to do any act, with a corrupt intention. Corruption has become a social cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of African leaders. Rather than work towards their general good, the corrupt in the society result to whittling down the national economy for their selfish ends. Ray Payne's *The Corrupt Society* says that "Corruption exists where there are men yearning for an unfair advantage over fellow men, this may be acquired by force, threat or trickery" (8). According to David M. Jemibewon in *A Combatant in Government* "Corruption had reached such a degree that top public servants wallowing in it do not bother to take the trouble to conceal their acts of corruption from public gaze" (4). He further stated that "the incidence of corruption became so prevalent in Africa; that officials who did not co-operate in corruption that have become politically well established usually find themselves in serious trouble by being eliminated by their partners (5). Jemibewon gave an instance in Kenya when J. M. Kariuku was eliminated for criticizing Kenyatta's Government declaring "we do not want to create a Kenya of ten millionaires and ten million beggars" (6).

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) internet observer of May 2000, stated that "Corruption occurs when organizations or individuals profit improperly through their position and thereby cause damage in society" (s). It further stated that it includes giving and receiving bribes, extortion, favoritism and nepotism as well as embezzlement fraud, conflicts of interest and illegal monetary contributions to political parties. In simple terms, corruption occurs when an individual abuse his authority for personal gains at the expense of other people; corruption is talked about openly in most countries these days and few countries deny they suffer from it which is a good thing since it provides politicians, business and labour leaders, journalists, and civil society with a rare opportunity; that of agreeing on the urgency of stamping it out. It further stated that agreeing on what exactly is

meant by corruption is another matter. According to *The Source*, even the widely accepted definition which is "the abuse of public office for private gain" may err on the side of over-simplification. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) observer continued that understanding the multi-faceted dimensions of corruption is essential in order to identify workable ways of dealing with it. Corruption comes in many given ways: bribery, extortion, fraud, trafficking, embezzlement but also nepotism and cronyism are all different manifestations of it. Even the most straight-forward act of bribery need not always involve the exchange of money. Other aspect is taking advantages, such as membership of an exclusive club or promises of scholarships for children, have been used as sweeteners" to clinch in whatever form it takes, corruption is a two-way transaction, it requires a supply side (the briber) and demand side (the one who receives the bribe). That is why measures must be designed to hit both sides of the corruption equation.

The Theoretical Framework for this study is Marxism. Marxism is a political and economic theory propounded by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels that interprets history as a continuing economic class struggle and belief that eventual result would be the establishment of a classless society and communal ownership of wealth of the nation. Marxism is summed up in Enearta Reference Library as a theory in which class struggle is a central element in the analysis of social change in western societies. According to Swingewood Allen in his book *The Novel and the Revolution*, Marxism maintains that a Marxist writer is one who is conscious and fully aware of his own responsibility in the society. No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distanced from the oppressed (23). The Marxist committed to human liberation does not become the prisoner of a circle of certainty within which he also imprisons reality. It is of paramount importance to note that since the modern society is a highly stratified one, any committed writer who is oriented towards Marxism automatically sets himself against the political elite. The political elite who is bent on maintaining the status quo cannot imagine a likely push in the great changes' tendency towards modern literature. Marxist theory holds that conflict which leads to radical ideas for a change are borne out of the displacement of the strata in the society. According to Ngara Emmanuel in his book *Art and Ideology in the African Novel*:

Social stratification and inequality are a historical part of our society and these are what Marxist writers are continually fighting against in our society. Through the change significant attention of social structures will be made. This will come in form of a revolution which is the displacement of one class by another (31).

Ngara says that every Marxist literary work is a protest against the deplorable human conditions, against the unbridgeable gulf between what man professes of man when in the firm grip of fate. Man in all ramifications of life hardly gets optimal satisfaction and so protests against those situations and recommends most probable alternatives. The result of this line of thought is a Marxist literature, a proletariat literature that would eventually lead to a classless order. In quoting P.J. Brown's *The Proletariat Episode in Russian Literature*. Allen Swingewood states:

In a class society, literature serves the interest of a particular class and only through that class does it serve all humanity. Therefore, proletarian literature is such a literature organized by the psyche and the consciousness of the working class in the direction of the final talk of the proletariat as the creation of communist (classless) society (84).

The Marxist art, therefore, serves as a mirror with which the proletariats or the masses can see themselves and through which the social consciousness is developed. Ngara Emmanuel in his book *Art and Ideology in African Novel* posits the term Marxist art to refer to "works which depict reality from a Marxist point of view. Works which reflect the social structure of society and which present social struggle from the point of view of a class and promote the ideals of socialism (17). This kind of art is geared towards a change in basic mode of production and this change in the mode of production will result in a change in the structure of social classes: the eventual overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of proletarian dictatorship. It is pertinent to note that during the years of proletarian dictatorship, this working class-based literature took shape and evolved ideologically into a prominent position in world literature. Some have ascribed this form of literature to Marxist aesthetics and hereafter become popularly known as Marxist literature. As a result of the endowment of the Marxist art, it has become unique and possesses some defining features. First, it must be faithful to life, that is, realistic to true life experiences and its simplicity is highly commendable. This simplicity of a Marxist literature is not just a question of coincidence but a deliberate one aimed at making it a commonplace interest of great effectiveness. Hence, it is devoid of experiments, individual, religious, mystic, sexual themes and most importantly every sort of formation. Swingewood in his book also says that "Marxist writers pay less attention to form unlike realistic literature where much emphasis is laid not on what is said but, on the way, it is said" (17). Another

feature of Marxist art is the positive hero. They must represent the so-called typical. This does not mean what is characteristic of the real state of reality but what would be desired for emulation, in all cases, these heroes are usually a manifestation of the ideal Marxist sense.

Marxist art calls for representation period which were in consonant with the communist theory. The implication of this is that it seems the results of deliberate limitation of the choice of subject matter in the part of the writer. According to Ngara Emmanuel, Marxism, therefore, is a means of consolidating their existing ideology in the socialist world (31). Charles E. Nnolim in his book *The Critics of African Literature* talks about "art that contemplates society we expect, art that is propagandist, art that tends towards proletarian concerns and art that has Marxist undertones" (33). Consequently, Achebe's *A Man of The People*, Ngozi Chuma-Udeh's *Teachers on Strike*, *The Presidential Handshake*, and many others stand as examples of this form of art. They could be classified as Marxist arts. Throughout the colonial period most Nigerians were struck in Ignorance and poverty. The level of corruption raised serious alarm that attracted the concern of both Nigerians and international community which rated Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries. Although, the government embarked upon anti-corruption measures but were not sincerely and properly implemented such that the expected objective and goal were not achieved. The problem was rather aggravated. Since then, corruption has continued to militate against national development.

In Nigeria corruption is a problem that has to be rooted out. Owusi however in his book, *The Root Causes of Corruption in West Africa*, was of the view that; "Corruption is made up of opportunist manipulation or branches of existing laws and regulation for advantages" (31). He emphasized that; "Our inordinate desire for wealth, power prestige and high status and its desirous consumption of scarce, expensive and prestigious import commodities is no doubt one of the roads to corruption in the society" (33). Over the years, the country has seen its wealth withered with little to show in living conditions of the average people. As with many other African nations, Nigeria was an artificial structure initiated by former colonial powers which had neglected to consider religious linguistic and ethnic differences. The causes of Nigeria Civil War were diverse although, in his memoir, journalist Alex Mitchell blames involvement of the British, Dutch, French and Italian oil companies whose battles for the rich Nigerian oil fields started the Civil War and kept it going. Nigerian's political problems also started from the manner in which the British took over power, administered and abandoned government and people of

Nigeria. The British administrators did not make effort to weld the country together and unite the heterogenous group of people. Though many technologies we have today are due to their enlightenment.

By the late 1960s the literature of disillusionment was taking form as a reflection of the widespread violent conflict and political corruption which had began to take hold throughout African societies. Such conflicts inevitably threw the nationalist project into turmoil: how can one speak of a nation or even Pan-African identity when a nation is at war with itself? In terms of the novel as genre, Gikandi states that in the mid-1960s the form and function of the novel changed almost overnight, moving the reader away from the sometimes celebratory and utopian tone of earlier novels to a grim critique of the narrative of cultural nationalism. This was a generation of writers who are consciously distancing themselves from the project of cultural nationalism. This interventionist reading of the contemporary problems regarding ethnic conflict in Africa is one that is shared by writers as diverse as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Ngugi Wa Thiong. Discussing Nigeria Adichie takes the view that the idea of the tribe has, its roots in colonialism as people did not consciously identify themselves as Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa until the involvement of the British.

The British governed Nigeria indirectly through their traditional rulers, as a result the true leader of the masses were hamstrung and held down. Just because Africans were given authority to rule over her own people. They saw it as means to maltreat those that have more than them and sell his or her brother and sister, mother to gain favour from the superior leaders. The British (Adewale Ademoyeya: *why we Struck*). These actions by the local and foreign leaders made the people to seek for independence. Many of them were not thinking straight anymore. The present leadership blame the colonial masters and fore runners of independence for their actions for not doing what is expected of them and also for the embezzlement and stealing of public fund. The political elicits in other to become rich and influential in the society, steal and blame it on the economy and leaders. No one takes responsibility for his own crime and actions. The politicians and military rulers blame one another for a bad government no one agrees that the other is better than himself. Several opinions hold that Nigerian political and economic underdevelopment since independence has been as a result of pervasive corrupt practices in both private and public fields: **Nepotism** which means favouritism granted in politics or business to relatives regardless of merit. **Bribery** which is an act of giving money or gift giving that alters the behaviour of the recipient.

Political Corruption in Achebe's *A Man of the People*

Achebe is regarded by most scholars as the father of the African novel in English. His influence both as a creative writer, satirist and a critic has been considerable not only on his fellow novelists such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Nuruddin Farah, who follow him in choosing for their setting traditionally or changing rural communities, exploring the theme of the conflict between old and new values. He is the most widely read African novelist and the first to be taken seriously by both African and European readers. His novels and satiric pronouncements have profoundly influenced his readers' understanding of Africans and their lives and have formed the basis for many a discussion of "the African novel." They have also provided a model for succeeding African novelists and satirists to follow and contend with. Achebe as a satirist and the mirror of his society, succeeds in depicting the fact that African people did not hear of culture for the first time from the Europeans.

As a satirist in social criticism, the author concerns himself with the environment of political and social corruption in which both the Nigerian leaders and the masses are concerned. Really, the past and present of the Nigerian society have provided writers with satirical intention with writing materials. This is because, for many years, Nigeria was subjected to colonial rule and foreign religion. During this era, the traditional society underwent transformation. Some of the people became Christians while the political and economic system of the society is European-oriented. As a result, European values gradually replaced the indigenous ones. The independence which was won after intense nationalist activities in 1960 by Nigerians initiated a new phase of change in the society. These changes were also visible when one takes a look at the changed socio-political outlook of the society in relation to its moral base. So, with the basic knowledge in mind, it is not surprising that the works of Chinua Achebe cannot be divorced from the pre and post colonial history of Nigeria.

In *A Man of the People*, Achebe becomes a satirist of post-independence Nigeria. In the book *African Writers on African Writing*, Achebe observes that: "A Man of the People wasn't a flash in the pan. This is the beginning of a phase for me in which I intend to take a hard look at what we in Africa are making of the independence" (8). Achebe's change to a social satirist is quite justified because the people expected that the independence conceded to Nigeria by Britain would put the society on the path of prosperity. But this hope, however, was shattered when Nigerian leaders having tasted power and opulence threw away their lucrative offices. From then on, leadership ceased to be a game of hard

work but something that comes through scheming. Then, Achebe explores the Nigerian political society and satirises it for the numerous evils and corruption attendant on it. The satiric attack is very prominent and direct. The work shows the disillusionment of the masses after political independence. This arises from post-independence politics and reflected political malpractices. Nigerians looked forward to independence with hope and confidence. She gained her independence in 1960 and the masses believed that all would be well. But their hopes gradually collapsed by subsequent events. This disappointment of the masses can be exemplified by Max's poem in the novel, *A Man of the People*, as follows:

I will return home to her, many centuries have I wondered. And I will make my offering at the foot of my lovely mother, I will rebuild her house, the only places they raped and plundered and I will make it fine with black wood, bronze and terracotta (81).

Although this poem was written during the intoxicating months of high hopes at the dawn of independence but after seven years, Max sings his poem again. Now, it is no longer a poem of hope but a dirge for the tender hopes shattered into bits and expectations run into conflict with full realizations. The poem now laments the shame of Africans as they realise the exploitations done to them by the white colonial masters, though Africa has hopes that one day, her own children would come to the peak of affairs and bring her comfort. But it then sounds ironical that things do not fare better for the people despite the fact that Africans rule them now. Perhaps, it is this same disillusionment that made Max rather to comment that "we should never have asked the white man to go ... (81).

Achebe's *A Man of the People* is a clear satirical work where the novelist ridicules the leaders and the masses engaging in corruption that affects the well being of our beloved country. This new leadership is represented with a minister, in the person of Chief Nanga who in order to enjoy a life of opulence and power, resorts to corrupt practices. The story revolves around him as an epitome of corruption in the post-independent Nigeria. Starting right from the title of the book, the novelist presents this ridiculous situation clearly in the character of Chief Nanga. This is seen in his comment at the beginning of the novel, as:

No one can deny that Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga MP, was the most approachable politician in the country, whether you asked in the city or in his home village, Anata, they would tell you

he was a man of the people. I have to admit this from the onset or else the story I am going to tell will make no sense (1).

Here, the novelist portrays Chief Nanga's affability and the way the society extols this virtue, but in the actual sense, the novelist carefully undercuts this benign exterior with a critique of the political mess which Chief Nanga and his colleagues have made of self-government and this point took on increasing significance as the story progresses. The novelist carefully unfolds this ridiculous character and a corrupt leader. He embezzles money, receives kickbacks, uses risks and deceits on the people and at the same time, engages in electoral thuggery. So, we realise that this presentation of Chief Nanga as "a man of the people" is ironic and satiric. This is even clarified in Bernth Lindfor's comment on the character and presentation of Nanga in the article, "The Palm Oil With Which Achebe's Words are Written" in the work *African Literature Today*, thus:

In Nanga, Achebe has created one of the first vogues in Nigerian fiction claiming to be a "man of the people," Nanga is actually a self-seeking grossly corrupt politician who lives a flamboyant opulent life on his ill-gotten gains. He is fond of platitudes . . . But his ruthless drive for money and power is far from pious (21).

To achieve the almost clarity in this revelation, Achebe tells the reader that Chief Nanga as well as other ministers of opulence live in seven bedroom and seven-bathroom homes. Nanga wears an expensive damask and gold chains to match and also rides a large cardillac. Still, he is not yet satisfied. In his bid to dupe the country, Nanga buys ten buses with sixty thousand pounds on a cloudy "Never, never" agreement with the British Amalgamated which may hold the country responsible for the debts. For the sake of this business venture, Nanga initiates a road project from the government's purse. Through these unpatriotic activities, Nanga builds three blocks of seven story buildings which he leases to the British Amalgamated. This relationship with the British Amalgamated suggests that though we are independent now, but the foreigners still have hands in the decadence and corruption of our rulers. Thus, Achebe as a social critic, ridicules a situation where we asked the white man to go and still liaise with them to corrupt our nation. Deceit and nepotism are not left out in Achebe's ridiculing of Nigerian politicians. Nanga tells his people at the rally that he will like to equal the "high-land tribes" in the "eating of the national cake" by employing his own people in high positions as in the

case of an engineer he employed because he is kin. The dramatization of the extensive political victimization in the 1960s is not left out in Achebe's review. According to Umelo Ojinmah in the book *Chinua Achebe New Perspectives*, he states that: "Achebe indicates that the Nangas and the Kokos would stop at nothing; from bribery, through intimidation of the village people at large, to physical assault and battery, to get what they want" (62).

In the early part of the novel, the leadership under the Prime Minister opposes intellectual truth. Dr Makinde, the finance minister, is blackmailed and manhandled for rejecting the Prime Minister's planned economic sabotage to print fifteen million pounds illegally. Achebe satirizes the prevailing atmosphere of hatred in the educated which helps to silence intellectual opposition thus, giving corrupt leaders a free hand. The first vivid example of such victimization is the ignorable role of the media house, in the post-independent Nigeria. The politicians have unalloyed support of the press. For instance, the editor of the *Daily Chronicle* is the mouthpiece of the politicians. The reporters who accompany these politicians are human parrots. They do not give a truthful account of political events but record the wishes of the politicians. This could be seen in a case where the *Daily Machete's* editor takes five pounds bribe in order to withhold information, he got about Chief Nanga. Here, the novelist is confused over a situation whereby a paper called "Machete," so that it could dissect and expose the truth, lives short of its duty to the nation. Rather, the mouth foaming editor as portrayed, serves the politicians instead of the people. Thus, Ojinmah comments on this, thus:

Achebe sees this lack of political morality as compounded by a lack of any meaningful objective criticism, the press, having already abdicated their responsibility. It is for this reason that Achebe along with other writers believe that they, the writers now, have to perform this function as social critics" (64).

The novelist therefore, criticizing the role of the press in the post-independent Nigeria which he sees as below expectations. The press shares in the blame for the corruption and chaos that befall the country. A newspaper is the mouthpiece for the silent majority of the country and not for the politicians. For the fact that the press has failed in their duties for the citizens, Nigerian writers like Achebe as social critics have to fulfil it for them in the form of criticism because they are the moral conscience of their society. This justification is imbedded in Wole Soyinka's speech in *The Writer in Modern African*, where he declared: "When a writer in his own society can no longer function as

conscience, he must recognize that his choice lies between denying himself totally or withdrawing to the position of chronicler and post-mortem surgeon" (21). This is precisely what Achebe is doing here, speaking to the oppressed masses. In his annoyance, Achebe satirically diminishes the stature of the editor by drawing attention to his greasy looks and foaming mouth. Odili and other political opponents with their supporters also suffer the same political victimization in the hands of these corrupt politicians. The Governing People's Organization Party (GPOP) or Chief Nanga and Koko's party tries to monopolize power. They use lies, assassination, intimidation as political tools while the opposing side represented by Odili is seen as traitors to be annihilated. The novelist shows that such concepts as moral principles, tolerance for opposition, and most importantly the use of power for the benefits of the people do not have much meaning to the politicians as they scramble for the most lucrative offices and appointments. Thus, Ojinmah comments that:

Achebe believes that another contributory factor to the post-colonial tensions of the society in the new nations is the tendency among those who find themselves in positions of power, to see those positions as their birth right. They, therefore, utilize any and every means to perpetuate themselves in such positions (64).

The novelist uses Odili to voice his annoyance that intellectuals have left politics to illiterates like Chief Nanga, a mediocre politician. Intellectuals are better equipped to pilot the ship of the state. The citizens look up to them to show the way but they pretend to be unaffected.

Consequently, the masses, due to disillusionment decided to partake in the prevailing decadence. The society degenerated into a phase where "power" and "national wealth" were up for grabs. And only the violent and the clever won the day to the detriment of the socio-political well-being of the country. Also, to the masses, the national politics is seen as the "white man's" system, an innovation that came with colonialism. The novelist sees this non-identification with the political system by the society and the concept of seeing it as no concern of theirs as having resulted in a general apathy to whatever goes on. This is what the novelist intends to satirize on the masses. He sees them as corrupt and gullible. They are portrayed as people who praise-sing, receives bribes from the leaders especially during elections. Achebe sees them as people who liaise with the leaders to do evil, just like the masses in the French

neo-classical era and adopting the Machiavellian philosophy which states that "the end justifies the means." They believe that wealth, no matter how gained, is a providential endowment. For instance, Odili's father sees the two political parties as "the eagle and the hawk." He sees the game of politics as the survival of the fittest. Also, Edna's father believes that it is the wise one steals party fund so he said to Odili:

I hear that they have given you much money to use in fighting my in-law ... If you have sense in your belly, you will carry the money into your bed chamber and stow it away and do something useful with it (chpt. 12).

The novelist again looks at the masses as people who could be dubious if given the opportunity, and they worship personalities. Odili remarks as he talks of the probable reaction of the masses towards his criticism of Chief Nanga. Thus, they grumble:

Where was he when Chief Nanga fought and drove the white man away? Why is he now envious that the warrior is eating the reward of his courage? If he was Chief Nanga, would he not do much worse? (chpt 13).

This implies that the masses and everybody in the society is motivated by a selfish instinct. The masses in *A Man of the People* see the credibility of their leaders by the number of loots from the public funds they bring back to their clans and in which the leaders use a little portion of it to bribe them. The novelist strongly believes that it is the selfishness of the masses which makes them part of the decadence and according to Odili, unless they stop being governed by their stomach, they cannot be chaste. Bernth Lindsfor continues this idea with this statement: "In these elections, the people are quite willing to support a corrupt politician like Nanga in the belief that if he remained well fed, he may let the few crumbs fall to his constituents" (17). The novelist used his sense of expertise in the art of satire in a unique way to bring to the knowledge of the people the extent of crime, corruption and social injustice existing in their society.

Conclusion

Corruption overwhelms the philosophy of socio-economic development, however corruption can be subdued and reduced if any government resolves firmly to be sincere, focused and committed. In other words, honest and

committed leadership is the anti-dote to corruption which is the prelude to underdevelopment. To control administration, the society should not grant too many powers to officers, such as customs and immigration and the poorly paid police officers that issues business licenses, good clearance documents and international passports. Lack of adequate rewards for good still and honest efforts are among the reasons for the upsurge of corruption in the society. Thus, adequately rewarding workers for their services could go a long way to minimizing corruption in the society. Nigeria needs all necessary weapons to combat corruption, the society should demand that politics, which is now less a matter of issues, should be issue based. A fearless judiciary is sine-quo-non to the checking of corruption in the society. The press must be proactive and play an advocacy role, for a journalism of moderation, responsibility thoroughness in investigation and other crucial indices and ideas of journalism.

Finally, the key to effectively managing corruption in Nigeria and African society are honesty and integrity, effective leadership and governance, transparency and accountability, because corrupt leaders cannot wage effective war against corruption. Nevertheless, given all this baggage, is it possible for Nigeria and African society to ameliorate the effects of corruption? Currently, the remedies for corruption in the society are not working and the inability of the leaders to report on the effectiveness, or otherwise of the Nation's anti-corruption strategies make apparent the war on corruption a joke. However, any society faced with the challenges of corruption would argue elsewhere that Nigeria cannot effectively control corruption by merely instituting probe panels like: ICPC (Independent Corrupt Practices Commission) and EFCC (Economic and Financial Crime Commission) and could not (and would not) solve the corruption puzzle in the society towards socio economic development. Therefore, the society is still searching for effective ways to control the menace beyond the mere rhetoric. In its apparent effort to tackle corruption in the society, the nation has tried the Judicial Commission, The Code of Conduct Bureau and Public Complaints Commission without success. If one may ask who is to blame for the prevalence of corrupt activities in the society? No matter who the culprits are, convention dictates that to effectively take a problem one should first and foremost determine and understand the cause(s). Why it happens before one could effectively manage the effects. What happens as a result? Similarly, or effectively control corruption in Nigeria. It is therefore, pertinent to understand the cause(s) before looking for ways to manage it.

So, African nations have been struggling to survive because of corruption. The social norms and the unsound economic base coupled with

tribal and sectional struggle both in Nigeria and African states have made it prone to corruption. Though, various governments have attempted to wipe out corruption by establishing anti-corruption bodies. It was equally stated that corruption which ranges from political instability is a hindrance to establishing a stable democratic system, huge internal and external debts which are either misappropriated or misapplied due to the politician's vested interest and total breakdown of law and order in the African society with regard to strikes and social values have really caused moral decadence. The novelists plead the cause of the common man who is both a victim and a partaker in the pandemic corruption. Although they indicted the leaders but on the other hand did not exonerate the common man (masses) who in one way or the other strive to outwit their fellow men. Corruption in a general sense has passed the alarming, and entered the fatal stage in Nigeria, and the Nigerian nation will continue to depreciate if we keep pretending that she is only indisposed. In *The Trouble With Nigeria*, Achebe examines that "Keeping an average Nigerian from being corrupt is like keeping a goat from eating yams" (48). Axiomatically, Nigerians are corrupt not because they want to but the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and profitable. Thus, Nigerians will only cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient. Following the study on corruption in Nigeria novels, it is so prevalent that ordinary citizens experience and express some degree of resignation. This resignation is perhaps the reason for so many Nigerian narratives of complaint. The post-independent Nigerians were left with disillusionment after being disappointed by the leaders who they had entrusted to deliver them after independence. All the expectations from the leaders were chattered and that is why frustration rears its head and grasps the entire citizenry.

The writers of post-independent literature were so angered by the level of corruption that characterized the government of those days. Perhaps, the novelists still portray the fact that even as Nigerians feel compelled, enticed, trapped and resigned to participate in Nigerian's ubiquitous corruption, they also feel angry, frustrated, dismayed, disenchanting and betrayed. At every day level there is scarcely a conversation without hostile or disgusted references to corruption and in fact dominant discourse of complaint by novelists symbolizing people's disappointments with democracy and development. Social inequity is mostly generated by the amount of money or position one must have acquired through fraud otherwise corruption. This is also prevalent in military dictatorship since the leaders through their corrupt practices stratify the society into upper, middle and lower or down trodden classes. Nigerians have been

deformed by this orgy but the only way to cleanse us or revive our image is by purging ourselves of this menace. This would probably be achieved if our leaders will be truthful to themselves and to the entire citizens of this nation. But if they fail to admonish and sacrifice themselves out of this ugly malaise, they may head nowhere in tackling the cases of corruption in Nigeria.

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