

**THEME OF CORRUPTION IN THE POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN
NOVEL: A STUDY OF ABUBAKAR GIMBA'S *WITNESSES TO
TEARS* AND CHINUA ACHEBE'S *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE***

BY

DANJUMA MARYAM

1011108014

**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
MODERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS,
FACULTY OF ART AND ISLAMIC STUDIES, USMANU
DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY, SOKOTO. IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) IN LITERATURE IN
ENGLISH**

OCTOBER, 2015.

APPROVAL PAGE

This research project has been read and approved in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree in Literature in English of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

Dr. Muhammad Aminu Mode
Supervisor

Date

Dr. Muhammad Aminu Mode
Head of Department

Date

External Examiner

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my parents Alhaji Danjuma Tukura Ibrahim and Hajiya Asabe Muhammad Danjuma.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise be to Almighty Allah (SWT), the One Who has made the achievement of this academic feat a reality.

My profound gratitude goes to my supervisor Dr. Muhammad Aminu Mode, whose attention, despite his tight schedule gave shape to this research work. Also my lecturers in the Department deserve my appreciation for having imparted in me knowledge that will be sufficient for a meaningful survival. Your contribution towards my liberation out of bondage of ignorance is indeed worthwhile.

I owe great debt of appreciation to my lovely parents Alhaji Danjuma Tukura Ibrahim and Hajiya Asabe Muhammad Danjuma for their contributions both morally and financially towards my educational pursuit since my tender age and also for their prayers that have kept me going, God bless you abundantly. Not forgetting my sisters – Amina Ibrahim, Jamila Danjuma, Liya Ibrahim and also Nabila Danjuma and brothers- Ibrahim

Danjuma and Abubakar Sadiq Danjuma, my uncles, uncle Alala, Uncle Nuree and uncle Natty for their supports and prayers.

I will also like to acknowledge my humble friends- Rabi Bobi Ibrahim, Sa'adatu Musa Yewale, Aisha Baddegi, Aliyu Musa Wushishi, Hauwa Danlami, Zainab Suleiman and Nuraddeen Abdulkadir, May Almighty Allah guide and protect you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i
Certification-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Acknowledgement s-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Table of Contents	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	vi
Abstract	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION											
1.1	Background of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1.2	Statement of the Problem-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
1.3	Aim and Objectives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
1.4	Justification of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
1.5	Scope of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
CHAPTER TWO											
2.0	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
2.1	Post-colonialism and Post-colonial Literature	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
2.2	Colonial Legacy and Impact	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
2.3	Neo-Colonialism: European Patrons and Local Elite Clients	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17

2.4 African Novel - - - - - 20

2.5 Corruption - - - - - 22

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 A REVIEW OF THE NOVELS - - - - - 24

3.1 *A Man of The People* By Chinua Achebe - - - - - 24

3.2 *Witnesses to Tears* By Abubakar Gimba - - - - - 29

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THEME OF CORRUPTION IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN NOVEL - 46

4.1 Corruption in *A Man of The People* By Chinua Achebe - - 46

4.2 Corruption in *Witnesses to Tears* By Abubakar Gimba - - 58

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION - 75

5.1 Summary - - - - - 75

5.2 Conclusion - - - - - 76

5.3 Recommendation - - - - - 80

References - - - - - 84

ABSTRACT

Chinua Achebe (born Nov. 16, 1930) is a Nigerian novelist, critic and poet; he is one of the most-read African authors. The primary concern of Chinua Achebe, the recipient of the *Man Booker International Prize, 2007*, was his society, more precisely, the destiny of his people. Achebe, perhaps the most authentic literary voice from Africa, wrote not only to record the African, especially Nigerian, life but to analyse the reality experienced by the native people in different times and situations. In his view, the writer must be accountable to his society. To him it was absurd to think of art as a pure and autonomous entity coming into existence by itself in an aesthetic void. Accordingly, his aim was to make his fiction an instrument of awareness seeking to elevate the social reality to a higher level. In this regard, the paper is an attempt to show Achebe's endeavour to expose the rampant corruption and evil in Nigeria to exert a decisive and positive influence on his people. For *Gimba*, the intrigues and contestation over power, especially within the civil service, assume a metaphoric significance in unraveling social contradictions in society. *Gimba* thus, evaluates the various dimensions of power and how it is used to subjugate or oppress people. In most of his works, *Gimba* pillories the repressive nature of power and the conflicts it engenders are graphically illustrated. In his articulation of this disabling environment, *Gimba* evokes a consciousness, concerned with Manichaenism and alienation. *Gimba* is sensitive to his characters as they adjust to the uncertainties of a postcolonial society with all the indices of underdevelopment, greed, corruption, bureaucratic tardiness, indiscipline, political instability etc. These characteristics of modern Nigeria form the background from which *Gimba*'s characters are drawn. However, drawing from their Islamic background, the characters in *Gimba*'s works express their morality, conviction and thought through the ideals of the religion. This leads to a remarkable blending of social and moral concerns with the supervening influence of Islam without sermonization. The outcome of this fusion is a balance between aesthetics and spiritual interests in a way that captures the essence of Northern Nigeria with vividness and freshness. *Gimba*, like Tahir, therefore relates the traditional and cultural values of the people to their response to the dilemma of new experiences and their interpretations of them.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Chinua Achebe has proven his worth among English-speaking African novelists by representing the African social and political environment in a thoroughly realistic way. His novels depict life within a particular historical background, and convey a sense of growing disgust and unrest within Nigerian society, a society that has started to emerge from the ‘colonial complex’ caused by years of denigration and self-abasement. *A Man of the People*

(1967) is Achebe’s fourth novel. It describes Nigeria in its post-independence phase, during which time the country became a ‘cesspool of corruption and misrule’ in the context of colonial-style social and economic development, a situation that resulted in conflict between the emergent elitist middle class and the general populace. Achebe’s reputation as a novelist rests on his impartial understanding of, and ability to represent the Nigerian environment.

His realistic characterization and diagnosis of his country’s malaise has the power to inspire a revolution informed by African ideologies.

His works have primarily focused on “African politics, the depiction of Africa and Africans in the West, and the intricacies of pre-colonial African culture and civilization, as well as the effects of colonization of African societies” (Achebe, 1988b). His well-known literary critique *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s “Heart of Darkness”* (Achebe, 1988a) is considered by many to be the most assertive, debated, and seminal treatise of its type. Achebe rejected Joseph Conrad as “a thorough going racist” who projected Africa as “a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril” (*Ibid*: 38). This said, the present paper investigates themes of corruption that appear in Achebe’s novel *A Man of the People*, and describes various political and social corruptible act that have taken place in Nigeria since its publication in 1967.

Born on March 10, 1952 in Niger State, Abubakar Gimba attended Government College, Keffi (1965-1969), School of Basic Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, (1970-1971), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, for his B.Sc. Economics (1971-1974) and University of Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A. (1976-1977), where he obtained a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Economics. He has been a civil servant for most of his life, rising to become a Permanent Secretary in the Economics Planning Department of the Niger State Ministry of Economic Development between 1981 - 1983. Between 1988 and 1993, he

was Executive Director of Union Bank of Nigeria plc and United Bank for Africa plc. In 1997, he assumed leadership of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) becoming its National President. Gimba's formative experiences and his maturation in the 1980s and 90s expose him to the complex realities of state formation, national integration, politics and other issues related to modernization in Nigeria. This experience highly influence the subject-matter of his novels.

As a prolific and proficient writer, Gimba had within the span of a decade taken the Nigerian Literary scene by surprise with the following titles: *Trail of Sacrifice* (1985), *Witnesses To Tears* (1986), *Innocent Victims* (1988), *Sunset for a Mandarin* (1991), *Sacred Apples* (1997), *Footprints* (1998), a collection of essays *Once Upon A Reed* (1999), a collection of poetry, *Inner Rumbings* (2000). He is a writer who is interested in the world and the people around him, particularly in the intrigues and intricacies of the civil service and the bureaucracy. His works revolve around morality, encoding sympathy for the innocent characters who are usually persecuted and unfairly treated by the system. Gimba's works are intensely concerned with decency, proper use and control of power and the creation of an egalitarian society. The emergence of Abubakar Gimba in the mid-eighties was to further expand the scope of the novel in English in Northern Nigeria beyond the point of Tahir's *The Last Imam*. Beyond the concern with the people's contact

with Islam and their ensuing attempts at adjustments, Gimba explores the many vagaries of human experience. The significance of Gimba's works lies in the way that he locates his motifs strictly within the bureaucratic structures of post-colonial Nigeria from where he takes a panoramic view of the entire society.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems facing African societies are multi-dimensional and in phases. Slavery is the worst and darkest experience in the history of African people. Colonialism immediately followed and now neo-colonialism through African dependent on the Western World for its economic and political stability. To sustain and promote their interests at the expense of Africa, the international hegemonic forces have ensured that their African collaborators remain in power to do their biddings. These agents consider and pursue policies that satisfy their interest and those of their imperialist masters even at the brink of economic collapse occasioned by the "fictitious debts" ostensibly owed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other Western banks and financial institutions, like the London and Paris clubs.

Day in and day out, the African continent is racked by afflictions, disasters, macro-economic crises and dysfunctions, debt over-hang, corruption, high level

illiteracy, squalor, disease, hunger and other negative and destabilizing conditions thrown up by imperialism in cahoots with greedy and unpatriotic ruling class.

According to Ali Mazrui (2000), these problems are brought about as a result of Africa being at the bottom of the global heap, with the Western world at the top. Africa has the largest percentage of poor people, the largest number of low- income countries, the least developed economies, the lowest life expectancy, the most fragile political systems. Moreover, it is most vulnerable continent with high incident of HIV/AIDS (whatever relationship there might be between HIV and the collapse of immune systems in Africa).

Moussa Issifou (2012), opined that after the independences, faced with a growing corruption and political violence in his native Nigeria, Chinua Achebe published *A Man of the People* to expose the mischievous behaviour of the political elite, thereby warning them about the consequences of such behaviour.

Chinua Achebe has been particularly successful in creating a realistic representation of an African environment. He is one of the major writers from the African subcontinent who have given a new direction to English-language African literature by representing, realistically, an African environment and giving expression to a sense of increasing disgust and unrest within its population. Carroll wrote that Achebe appears to

be continually haunted by nostalgia for the “rediscovery of Africa’s past” (Carroll, 1975: 11). His novels appear to be an attempt to come to terms with a struggle, or, “as it were, to sensitively register his encounter with history, his people’s history” Ngugi (1975: 39) as well as to help his “society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement” (Achebe, 1975: 43). Such realism is explicit in Achebe’s novels; he has written about the subjugated, exploited majority of the African population, and their vision of the future after gaining independence from colonial rule and emerging from the “colonial complex” (Duerden & Pieterse, 1972: 8). Explaining that this history dominates their lives, Achebe says, “I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past with all its imperfection was not one long night of savagery from which the first

European acting on God’s behalf delivered them” (Achebe, 1975: 44). Novels such as *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *Arrow of God* (1964), *No Longer At Ease* (1960), *A Man of the People* (1967), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) exemplify his goal of social realism and his attempts to restore the lost dignity of his people by allowing his readers to examine their past and to resolve what he terms a ‘crisis in the soul.’

African country named Kanga, which clearly represents Nigeria. The novel dramatizes political struggles between Africans, illustrates the continuing influence of

Britain and other Western countries on African economics and culture, and ends with a government being overthrown by a coup. The society depicted in *A Man of the People* is polarized into rich and corrupt politicians represented by Nanga and the poor and idealists represented by Odili. Nanga's rise to power has nothing to do with education; rather, he owes this to his zeal and devotion to the ruler who prefers the status quo to the development of his country. So Nanga goes from a minor parliamentarian who used to be a back-bencher to a very important minister. Together with the ruling party, they continue to keep their own people in poverty through oppression, torture, humiliation, violence, corruption, and fraudulent elections.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to investigate the theme of corruption in Post-Colonial African Novel. To fulfil the aim of this study the objectives are to:

1. Assess the realism in *Witnesses to Tears* by Gimba Abubakar?
2. Assess the realism in *A Man of the People* by Chinua Achebe?
3. Investigate how *Witnesses to Tears* portrays corruption in Post-Colonial Africa?

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The colonial experiences of most African countries have refused to go after many decades since the colonial masters left. This is as a result of the myriad of social, political

and economic problems still facing the continent. Independence promised a lot of good things for the masses and this brought about their active participation in the struggle for independence alongside the nationalist fighters in some African countries. It is pertinent to note also that some countries got their independence with fewer struggles though with equal promise of good life for the masses. Many factors have contributed to the plaguing of African development, with the major factor being bad leadership which Ngugi wa Thiong'o has rightly termed "the blacknisation of colonialism." Why has the leadership styles of most African countries refused to change for the better in spite of the rapid developmental trends all over the world today? This we believe is largely due to selfish nature of most African leaders. It has more or less become a form of relay race, which Chinua Achebe aptly refers to as "eat-and-let-eat" regimes. What has been responsible for this situation in most African countries that have been ravaged by abject poverty, corruption, war, political and economic instability, serious underdevelopment, etc.? Literature in Africa, which has been described as functional and committed, has been used by various writers to reflect this ugly situation which most African countries have found themselves. This study therefore, makes serious attempt at investigating both external and internal intricacies of corruption in the post-colonial African Novel.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Many writers have written extensively in this regard and have used their writings to document the corruption in the post-colonial corruption conditions of African countries. This study will focus on *Witness to Tears* by Abubakar Gimba and *A Man of The People* by Chinua Achebe.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 POSTCOLONIALISM AND POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

Post-colonialism is born at the very first moment of colonial contact. It is the speech of oppositionality which colonialism brings into being. The postcolonial literature shows the upshot of Colonialism. It reveals the nostalgic *self* of the colonized. A colonized is bound to put up with the different disconcerting situations. He has to have high resistance and fortitude against lots of uncalled-for and inevitable conflicts. The postcolonial writers bring into light the suppression of a vast wealth of indigenous cultures beneath the weight of imperial control. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2003, p.2) pertinently assert, All post-colonial societies are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination, and independence has not solved this problem. The development of new élites within independent societies, often buttressed by neo-colonial institutions; the development of internal divisions based on racial, linguistic or religious discriminations; the continuing unequal treatment of indigenous peoples in settler/invader societies—all these testify to the fact that post-colonialism is a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction.

In the context of a heterogeneous society, where the colonized often live with their former colonizers, postcolonial writers try to reassign new ethnic and cultural meanings to marginalized groups. Its literature attempts to construct new identities against these outwardly imposed borders. Postcolonial literature knocks on the door of the colonized intending to commune with them. It aims at entering their inner sanctum and bringing into picture their cries of loss and their proclamations of birth. It is not a literature to show the colonized as the victims, but it shows their confused sense of belonging. They find themselves in cultural, racial and historical hybridity, which make them oscillate between present and past. This oscillation can lead to poor meaningful communication.

Through the colonial discourse colonial violence is understood as including as ‘epistemic’ aspect, i.e. an attack on the culture, ideas and value systems of the colonial peoples. Colonial discourse indicates a new way of thinking in which cultural, intellectual, economic or political processes are seen to work together in the formation, perpetuation and dismantling colonialism. Since Africa has also been the focal point of the colonizing super powers under different pretexts, it has, with the passage of time, created a sense of disintegration and fragmentation within the African community and consequently given birth to a number of rebellious critical writers.

Among the African writers Chinua Achebe's novels and essays have played crucial roles in the growth of postcolonial theory and indigenous knowledge systems. But these essays are primarily by-products of his creative practice which expressed itself in the novel form. It is a tribute to Achebe's art that the studies of his novels, as well as his own essays, are among the landmarks of the scholarship on African literature. As Irele (2010, p.33) asserts: perhaps Achebe's most important influence given his goal as a writer, is his contribution to the advancement of a new postcolonial consciousness, particularly as his fictions date from the eve of African independence, thus giving emphatic voice to the pan-African impulse that found political expression in African independence. It is in the novel form that Achebe has made his most enduring contribution as a postcolonial writer. The significance of his choice of this form has deep historical roots. For the novel form is both the product and medium of the historical process. It marks a historic stage in the evolution of human communication when the interaction of technology and social relations brought about a new consciousness and the need for a new form of literary expression, as has been argued in studies by historians of the effect of technology and changing social relations on human consciousness, literary production (such as Georg Lukács, Ian Watt, Arnold Kettle), and the communication media (Marshall McLuhan).

2.2 COLONIAL LEGACY AND IMPACT

Colonial legacy is the sum total of the political structure, culture and general polity handed over to the elite nationalist rulers or that which was left behind by the colonial administrators, “neocolonial” nationalist leadership, which affected post-independent Africa and still has an impact on contemporary African states and politics. The colonial ruling style of oppression of the colonial administration that was imposed on African states by the new African nationalist rulers was not based on the choice, consent, will and purpose of the African people. In other words, and considering the fact that some post-independent rulers run their states as if it were their personal property, colonial legacy is the inheritance of the state that belonged to the colonial administration from this administration by the post-colonial rulers in Africa. The DRC for instance was King Leopold’s personal property (Shillington, 1989: 312; Meredith, 2005: 95). In like manner after the DRC gained independence in 1960, President Mobutu S. Seko ruled the state as if it were his personal property (see Young 1986). The selfish and exploitative character of the master-colony relationship that reigned in the colonialism time continued in different forms even after colonialism was long gone, and continues to impact contemporary African politics. The colonial impacts on post-colonial states in Africa are categorized in this section as colonial legacies. Some of these legacies include: neo-

patrimonialism and clientelism, neo-colonialism (continuity in continuation of western control and dominance), authoritarianism, ethnic division and rivalry to name a few.

One of the major difficulties African states have had to deal with, which has repeatedly been mentioned by many African and non-African experts (Amoo, 1997; Rodney, 1972; Dumont, 1966; Nugent, 2004; Meredith, 2005), is the problem of ethnic divisions and the state conflicts resulting from ethnic rivalry (Blanton et al. 2001). Ethnic division is one of the leading legacies of colonialism which one always comes across when assessing the colonial impacts on the continent. African authors as well as non-African scholars concerned with African politics blame the ethnic divisions and rivalry amongst the nations in Africa on the arbitrary boundaries and cultural differences created and imposed upon these peoples by the colonial masters (Mahoso, 27 April 2010). When scrutinizing problems and causes of ethnic conflicts in Africa for example, the conventional explanation relating to external factors contributing to the ethnic conflicts, is that, the polarization of ethnic communities and the outbreak of ethnic violence are a legacy of colonialism which ignored cultural differences during the creation of artificial state borders (see for example Taras and Ganguly 2002: 3; Clapham, 1985: 57-58). According to Shillington (1989: 356), the colonial masters emphasized the distinctions between the different ethnic groups, thereby strengthening tribal differences and rivalries

between these groups and preventing them from forming a united opposition against the colonizers. Shillington continues, by expostulating that, these groups had always lived in the past as a people despite some customary differences that might have existed between them like their dressing, housing and religious practices. Furthermore, even when these groups experienced competition and conflicts, it was for political power or economic advantage and not “because they were of different ‘tribes’”: thus, Shillington (1989: 356) accentuation that the “colonial authorities invented ‘tribalism’”.

As if the “creation” and insistence of the differences between the African peoples (separatist feelings) by the colonizers who compounded these different ethnic groups in one nation together was not enough, successive colonial constitutions in Nigeria for example, “entrenched political power on regional lines” (Ogunbadejo, 1979: 86). Ethnic divisions thus, contributed to the formation of parties along ethnic lines, which later contributed to the marginalization of parties which refused to be co-opted into the ruling party: consequently, ethnic division and rivalry can be seen as a major trigger and cause of conflicts on the continent.

Colonial rule wiped out the dependency of the chief on his councilors, as was the case in precolonial rule, replacing this with autocracy and replacing the rulers dependence on the people to elite rulership which depended upon colonial superiors and

later foreign powers (Nugent, 2004: 107-108). Colonial rule was thus a rulership by force and oppression, that is, autocracy in its extreme. Ndirangu Mwaura (2005: 6) maintains that nothing in Africa changed after the colonizers left. According to Mwaura, the only change that occurred was the replacement of colonial governors with colonial ambassadors. The administrative structures were maintained as well as the economic structures to preserve the flow of wealth from the continent to the West which began in the colonial time (Mwaura, 2005: 6). National leaders who took over after the colonizers left, Mwaura concludes, “were traitors, with a pretend and false patriotism”, who upheld a political network that exploited the African people to the benefit of the ruling elites and their western patrons. In the words of William Easterly (2006: 273), “colonial administration re-enforced autocracy in Africa” and neo-colonialism continued to sustain and consolidate tyrant autocratic rule, the result of which are bad governance and extremely selfish and cruel governors in the likes of Mobutu in Zaire, Idi Amin in Uganda and Bokassa in CAR (Meredith, 2005).

Another major problem in Africa which can be seen as a legacy of colonialism is the failure of the rule of law institutions; that is: application and practice. The rule of law has gained increasing meaning in the last decades and has become one of the major indicators for measuring governance matters by various institutions concerned with issues

of governance around the world (World Bank Governance Indicators, Bertelsmann Transformation Index, and Freedom House). The International Commission of Jurists in 1959 in New Delhi, drew up the “declaration of Delhi” which stated that rule of law “should be employed to safeguard and advance the civil and political rights of the individual” and create “conditions under which his legitimate aspirations and dignity may be realized” (The Economist, 13/03/2008). The rule of law from this point of view is inextricably linked to liberty and democracy: the thick definition. An extended definition of rule of law does not focus on liberty and democracy but instead stresses property rights and efficiency in the administration of justice.

2.3 NEO-COLONIALISM: EUROPEAN PATRONS AND LOCAL ELITE CLIENTS

After Africans finally “won” the fight for their liberation from the alien dictatorship of colonialism, many nationalists were later upset to find that the economic, political and cultural exploitation of the continent actually continued in what became known as neo-colonialism (Mwaura, 2005:5). Nkwame Nkrumah, a leading author and opponent of neo-colonialism was amongst the first Africans to decry the control of the colonizers in the newly independent states. Nkrumah (1975: 415) observed that even though these states were independent, their economic system and eventually their

political policy were indirectly formulated by the colonizers. Neo-colonialism operated in varying ways in post-colonial Africa: control over government in the neo-colonial state through foreign financial support for this state or through the presence of foreign consortium serving and upholding foreign financial interest. Whichever way one analyzes it; neo colonialism resulted in the exploitation of the African states such that the foreign capital entering the state to foster development instead “promoted” underdevelopment (Nkrumah, 1975: 415). In some cases, neo-colonialism has gone as far as using troops of the colonizing nations to control or support the government of the neo-colonial state.

According to Odetoyinbo, brainwashing forces up the understanding of “cleaning or make pure” in one’s mind which is far from being the case with neo-colonialism. In opposition to this understanding, the minds of Africans “have been deeply and thoroughly sullied by our contact with Europeans”, Odetoyinbo continues, including all “contacts, past and present, willful and enforced, intimate and casual, malicious and well intentioned”.

This idea brings back the thought of the kind of political culture that has resulted from colonialism and its successor: neo-colonialism: that is, a political culture of rulership for the good of the ruler to preserve power, enrich himself including his supports and followers at the detriment of the people and the nation-state. Finally

Odetoyinbo (1994) draws the conclusion that, the “brain-dirtying” process which continues even today strips Africans of: “the vision which they need to perceive the absurdity of our economic situations; the mental clarity to forge more lasting solutions that would be more beneficial; and, the self-regard and determination Africans need in order to move their minds and actions to the hard and painful places where these solutions could be found.”

The consequence of neo-colonialism is the resultant permanent client-patron relationship that existed and still exists in some cases between ex-colonial powers and the ruling elitist governments. The external dependence, propagated and supported by neo-colonialism, renders African states permanently dependent as resource-based economies, unable or unwilling to assert their independence and develop their nations. The patron-client relationship between ex-colonizers and the neo-colonial elite rulers serves as a foundation, that is, structural bases for the enforcement of neo-patrimonial rule for in the neo-colonial states. Leaders like Ghana’s Nkrumah and Guinea’s Sekou Toure openly opposed neo-colonialism because of the nefarious economic and political outcome it had on African states. Peter Schwab (2004) thus classifies these two men as belonging to the radical group of African post-independent leaders but describes assimilated “French-

Citizens” like Houphuet-Boigny as the “French client in Ivory Coast” and Sedar Sengor’s Senegal as the Francophile nation.

2.4 AFRICAN NOVEL

As a part of its cultural heritage, Africa has rich literary traditions, although the other genres with touches of literariness had existed in an oral form till the spread of literacy, but not the novel. As Dathrone (1975, p.21) has pointed out “the novel is the only literary kind that has been totally imported and imposed over the indigenous tradition”. This is because African literature has its origins in performance and poetic verse, which are parts of community life and associated with ceremonial, festive and social occasions. Hence, such narrative art is strange to Africa, it is found in traditional oral story telling and epic sagas to honor the memory of dead heroes, leaders, kings, gods, good harvest, hunters and ancestors, and victory over the enemies (Clarke, 2004). Hence, the modern African fiction written in English has been hybridized of the interaction between indigenous forms of oral story telling and the European literary culture whose locus was framed by the European novel; however, a dehybridization occurred through the genre novel, and its result was a focus on the birth of a sense of postcolonial Negritude among the colonized Africa. Most of the prominent African novelists have found in the art of novel writing a fit and useful medium to portray their

world-view, life and culture to bring their oral and rustic tradition to a point of culmination and fruition in a universally accessible form. One of the highly outstanding and forerunner of this holistic tradition was Chinua Achebe. He stepped into this literary scene of Africa, when the African society was on the vertex of a crucial phase of history, the unflinching colonial influence on all the phases of life; shattering of traditional customs, social values, conventions, culture, liturgical beliefs and historical identity of the natives. They were treated as semi-literate marginalized blacks. The colonizers had only imperialistic purposes, and just tried to flourish their own culture, history, ideas, and beliefs in order to have an invincible domination over their economy and as well as their national resources.

It is significant that African novel came into its own at a time when the social, cultural and political situation demanded a reassessment of the African History. Majority of the African novelists and more specially Achebe tried to inject into their works the pivotal aspects of African history to counter the paramount question that the

Africans had no history. At the same time, writers in the French colonized Africa led a movement of 'Negritude', and formed a black aesthetics. That involved a heightened awareness of the greatness of the African past and African traditional culture. Chinua Achebe is not only a conscious voice but something more than that, who understands the

duty of a writer in African society, a society which was going under a natural decline, affected by various influences of colonial past, a society which tries to stick to its religious beliefs and rituals in order not to fall apart.

2.5 CORRUPTION

One of the most striking features of the corruption boom in the social science is the absence of anthropology. A World Bank review (2006) notices that anthropological studies dealing with corruption cover about 2% of the relevant scientific literature. The loneliness of this drop in an ocean has its own justification, as I will argue below, and more importantly, ethnographical accounts of corruption are badly needed, as not only scientists, but policy makers and think-tank organizations denounce it (Andvig 2001). For one thing, corruption is a social practice, other than a narrative (Kerby 1991), and, especially considering the recent critiques to the efficacy of large-scale, quantitative analyses, and the need to complement them with qualitative research, ethnography can play an important role in filling this gap. Having said this, there are a number of problems with which anthropologists confront in the study of corruption. First, there are basic ethical concerns that fieldworkers raise when dealing with the study of such practices, stemming out of issues such as the anonymity of informants, the use of gathered data and the role of the anthropologists as “intruder” in the social reality he is observing (see

Atkinson and Hammersley 1983; Clifford and Marcus 1986). Second, although most of social scientists agree on the damages of corruption, it is not always clear what corruption is about. Anthropologists have been at unease with western-centred ideas of corruption, and this is immediately reflected by their reluctance to use the notion or even to engage with it. Third, corruption is not a genuinely endemic phenomenon, as much of the modernist literature seemed to point out some decades ago. Today there is increased awareness, both on the side of specialists and of policy makers, that corruption is fostered and generated by foreign aid, development projects, international relations and global capitalism. In increasingly blurred political arena ethnographic fieldwork is not an easy undertaking. The very nature of fine-grain ethnography develops in the constant interaction of the researcher with local inhabitants, the construction of reference points and mutual trust with groups and personal networks with whom he share a significant part of their daily lives. The ethnography of trans-local places is a much thorny effort, in spite of the several (and also partly successful) attempts in recent times (Melhuus et al. 2010). Again, not only is the focus of investigation enlarged and difficult to grasp, but access to information becomes a delicate matter of difficult resolution.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 CONTEXTUAL APPRAISAL OF THE NOVELS

3.1 *WITNESSES TO TEARS*

Witnesses to Tears: ‘Tears’ is the most important in the novel. “Tears” are the drops of salty liquid that come out of one’s eyes usually because one is unhappy, hurt or in pains. The novel deals with the pervading unquenchable drive of the modern man to acquire wealth by perversion as well as the wanton destruction of both self and others by the perpetrator. Man’s inordinate ambition is portrayed as leading to a total disregard for the value of life and humanity in general. It pushes out the bestial nature of human beings, even when they struggle to cover up with open kindness.

The fictionalized situation of the novel deals with a beautiful, loving and innocent victim of blind love, Hussaina, whose husband’s inordinate desire to amass wealth, even through perverse means resulted in, although by a twist of fate, an impenetrable horror that became the ironical reward of Hussaina’s innate kindness, love, respect and good manners.

The concern of the novel is the plight of the innocent ones, especially women and children, who suffer over crimes committed by people close to them as they share in the retributions for those crimes.

The message of the text is that acquisition of wealth through dubious means results in the destruction of both the perpetrators and their family members who might be innocent; and that good name is far greater and more enduring than wealth acquired through dubious means. This message is projected at the primitive level using lexis and structure. “Tears” in the title of the novel refers to the fictionalized situation in general and to the major characters in particular. “Tears” come out of one’s eyes when one is crying.

In the text’s semiotic universe, they are mostly shed due to loss of loved ones. “Tears” are a result of melancholy caused by either pains or grief. When adults cry, it is often a result of death of loved ones. “Tears” in this novel refers to death and wanton destruction of human beings caused by Lahab’s burning desire to amass wealth and to fight for positions through abnormal means, which involve the use of human blood that resulted in multiple deaths. They are both a result and a sequence of the disregard for the value of life. There are multiple killings of souls, which violate the sanctity of human life as preached by all religions of the world. “Tears” serve as a node for the following list of expressions and lexical items that mean or connote death, murder, mourning and other death related terms. The following is a list of some of these lexical items for illustration:

(P.7) A safe *coma*

(P.10) extremely *critical* but safe

(P.11) ...was as awesome as *death*

(P.14)...dead Zarah was very much alive

(P.15) ...khartoum Hospital was filled with about a

score of men from the police *homicide* squad.

(P.16) But we are not saying that we have got the *killers*

of Sarah and Sani Tanko.

(P.24) But standing there at the bus stop in the windy

Torrents, seemed an even greater *danger*,

I thought I just chose the Lesser of the *evils*.

(P.27) I appreciate what he did...at least he did prove that

even in times like these when abnormality has gained

such ...to a state of everyday acceptance, not all

men are *wolves* except that my little girl, most are in

sheep's attire.

(P.37) A perversion that killed her fountain of love

(P.36) Could it be professional incompetence or simply

ineptitude In hospital management that killed her
mother.

(P.41) ...increased smugglings, attacks on young

girls, *murderers, Kidnappings...*

(P.68) ...that a person should die without trace, unknown

to the family.

(P. 71) Lahab had Lahab had always wished his wife's

father *dead*. *Anas*' shadow had always tormented

his moral conscience. The man was too upright.

(P.78) He had secretly despised him for that very

trait. when he lived, and actually nursed

an inner satisfaction when he died ... he was
no longer around to see and question his
propriety or his bottled impropriety, so ...away
from the sight of other men.

The list provides evidence that there is the projection of the message of human destruction resulting from the illicit acquisition of wealth in this novel based on the lexical items and expressions underscored in the list. These items refer to human killers directly and through what Adejare(1992) refers to as predatory metaphors .Instances of these lexical features include:

Death (human extermination)
Coma (near human extermination)
Police homicide squad (squad against human killers)
Killer(s) (unlawful human destructors)
Wolves (metaphor derived from carnivorous animal)
Murder (the killing of human being without...)
Danger (may involve loss of life)
Evil (leads to harm of souls)
Wished dead (to take delight in the loss of life of another)

3.2 *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE*

For a critic or researcher to do literary justice to Achebe's fourth novel – *A man of the People*, it is important that one cast cursory look at the author's works that preceded it. In this instance, I refer to *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God*. Although, these three novels along with *A Man of the People* has been categorized by many critics as Achebe's tetralogy, I agree with this on the basis of chronology of its publication in the sequence of time, rather than sequence of events and thematic import inherent in the four novels.

I would like to argue from the point of departure from popular and earlier views that generalize and categorize the first four novels of Achebe as being interrelated in content and context. It is my opinion that *A Man of the People* (AMOP) holds entirely different contextual and thematic significance from the first three novels that preceded it.

I will therefore attempt an analytical separation of *A Man of the People* from Achebe's first three books, since it has a distinct identity and thematic focus far from Achebe's first three works. Although *No Longer at Ease* published after *Things Fall Apart*, comes close to *A Man of the People*, it is my opinion that it does not directly deal with the central theme addressed in *A Man of the People*.

In the beginning of his writing career, Achebe started out with *Things Fall Apart*, as the custodian of his people- (Igbo, by extension Nigeria and Africa) – culture, the historian who understands their past and could now situate the past in the present.

Challenged, by his perceived misconceptions of Africa and Africans by the European-centric writers like Conrad *Heart of Darkness* and Joyce Cary *Mister Johnson*, Achebe started out as a reactionary and cultural activist who needed to tell the story of his people from an insider's point of view against the outsider's perspectives. Achebe felt thrust on him the responsibility to represent and re-present Africa to the rest of the world. It has been globally acknowledged that Achebe got the job done in *Things Fall Apart*. He continued the streak in *Arrow of God* though with different verve and fervor.

The novel *No Longer at Ease* like *A Man of the People* help in understanding Achebe's literary engagement with the emerging society and its unfolding socio-political realities. However, it does not poignantly capture the political perspectives and realities of the Nigerian society as does *A Man of the People*. Rosemary Colmer affirms this point when she notes that (Quis Custodies Custodiet? The Development of Moral Values in *A Man of the People*) Achebe is able to present a much more subtly analyzed picture of Nigerian society in *A Man of the People* than in *No Longer at Ease*.

Largely, themes and language of colonialization as well as the philosophy of decolonialization loom large in Achebe's first three novels. It is as if one can still smell the white-men and that the colonial experience is still fresh and so its impact in the emerging new African States, particularly in Nigeria, the setting of the three novels. However, in *A Man of the People* the story is changed.

A POINT OF DEPARTURE TO DISILLUSIONMENT AND THEMATIC SHIFT

According to a Nigerian proverb, it is only proper to rebuke and see off thief, before apportioning blame to the careless farmer. Achebe, like many other African writers, at a point in their literary career saw the need to look inwardly. Having vigorously teamed with the nationalist movements and freedom fighters to pursue the usurping Europeans, it was now time to confront demons within- their 'brothers' who have replaced the Whiteman symbolically. The African writers were confronted with second colonialism, not neo-colonialism per se, but internal and familiar colonialism occasioned and orchestrated by their fellow Africans.

The novel *A Man of the People*, then is marks a shift from African romanticism and vituperative writings of decolonialization to a more sardonic and ironical satirization and problematization of re-shaped societies of Africa. Away from the fading hue of traditional and cultural setting, Achebe in *A Man of the People* cast a deep reflection on

the emerging modern Africa with its multi-faceted challenges and experiences of growth and degeneration. It was his baptism of fire and awakening into disillusionment and socio-political consciousness.

In *A Man of the People*, the Novelist cast off his teacher's cassock and donned the garb of a social commentator and political activist. The Novelist's successfully attempted to look at the problems with Africa, what was wrong with us. He began to grasp and come to grieve over social problems prevalent in new African society. Then satire comes to play and the Novelist became a prophet to expose unabashedly the ills of his society and poignantly predict and point to its future. The Novelist as a Teacher is rounding its full circle; a new circle of political activism whirls. It is a departure from the traditional role of the artist/novelist as teacher of history, custodian of culture and heritages to a dogged fighter for the survival of societal soul; political activist who must liberate society from itself on its path to self-destruct.

Emmanuel Ngara holds same view in essay- Achebe as Artist: The Place and Significance of Anthills of the Savannah, while he recognizes the cultural and development of Africa and the attendant awakening of nationalist consciousness presented by the publication of *Things Fall Apart*, he is also of the opinion that the publication of *A Man of the People* was another turning point. Ngara affirms that *A Man*

of the People was the first novel of disillusionment published in Anglophone Africa.

Nguigi Wa Thiongo is also of same view as he noted of the Achebe's intent:

..What Achebe has done in *A Man of the People* is to make it impossible or inexcusable for other African writer to do other than address themselves directly to contemporary social realities of their audience in Africa and to tell them that such problems are their concern... (The Writer in a Changing Society, Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics, London ,Heinemann 1972, p54)

Since I am a staunch disciple of 'art is not for art sake', that works of art must have a philosophical, didactic and dialectical base and significance, and must identify with a cause or serve a purpose, therefore my major focus in studying *A Man of the People* will be against the backdrop of its thematic imports and representations.

I will also use the thematic compass to navigate the field of language and characterization as employed by the author in establishing themes or getting conceived message across.

THE TITLE AS A WINDOW INTO HEART OF THE NOVEL: “A MAN OF THE PEOPLE?”

Were a book to be interpreted only by its title, one would have at first glance of *A Man of the People* have a clear understanding of what the novel is about or what Achebe set out to achieve with it. Yet, the title *A Man of the People* tells a lot about the context and content of the novel. A pure satirical work with sardonic and laconic irony, *A Man of the People* satirically presents a man of Africa (a unique and different man) and the people of Africa.

In understanding the novel through its title, I will focus my analysis on the indefinite article ‘a’ – this word determines or qualifies Man in the title. A curious look at the word ‘Man’ and its usage is also important, as well as the people. In essence, one seeks to know why ‘A Man’ not ‘The Man’ of the Man of the people?

INDEFINITE ARTICLE – ‘A’ IN THE NOVEL TITLE ‘A MAN OF THE PEOPLE’

Particular attention ought to be paid to the indefinite article ‘a’ man of the people, not ‘the’ man of the people. The reference indicates the writer’s particular interest and reference to the ‘Man’ in *A Man of the People*. Obviously, it does not point to nobility or

a man of character. It rather smacks off as some unknown or unfamiliar man. It begs the question what manner of man of the people. It comes across as some man with questionable characters, disagreeable man. But in this kind of ‘A’ man, the Novelist situates the ‘People’. Here lies the paradoxical irony of the novel title. A Man of questionable and disagreeable character, being linked with a people, who are generally or fundamentally supposed and/or expected to be good masses, the majority of human populace – a great number of law-abiding citizens who are usually at the lower rungs of societal ladder.

With the indefinite article ‘a’, one sees the alienation of a people from the man, whom they supposed to be his people and he; their man. With this title, and right from the colorful cover page of the novel, Achebe unfolds an agenda that takes his audience into the pulsating journey of curiosity, exposure, exposition and discovery of who is *A Man of the People*? Who are the people? What relationship exists between the two of them? Why is he a, and not, the, man of the people?

‘A’ rather than ‘the’ man of the people opens up from the very beginning the dominant theme in *A Man of the People*. It tells of the relationship between the people and ‘the’ man. It indicates wide gulf of distance between ‘the’ man who is of the people and the people that is identified with him.

A Man?

Who is the man in *A Man of the People*? Why 'a' not 'the' Man of the People?

It is clear from the tone of the title through the novelist's use of 'a' that the author did not use 'a' in a numerical sense of singularity, but as a satirized coloration of a 'man' which, on a closer study of the novel, is representative of 'some men' or a particular group of individuals with homogeneous identity and behavioral patterns.

First, it can be argued that 'a' man of the people in the novel title refers to the villain of the story and one can be at liberty to accept the sincere use of indefinite article 'a' by the author to simply mean a numerical reference to singularity of the person, i.e. one man. In this instance, the villain in the character of Chief Nanga fits the mode and description of 'a' man who is the man, but who is to be seen, known and accepted religiously as 'a' man of the people. Achebe puts the man – 'a man' in the mix, and thereby notifies his audience, from the onset, the conflict between him and the people.

From another angle, the use of 'a' represents masking of the 'man' in context of the novel and the story that plays out. In this regard, a man becomes generic of other men with similar characters in and out of the novel. Therefore, it is not just all about the villain Chief Nanga- for he is just a tool or human perspectives from which the story of

‘the man figure’ is told and represented. Thus, ‘a man’ in *A Man of the People* becomes a symbol representing many things as shall soon be discovered.

The People – Who are the People in *A Man of the People*?

There is something unusual about the people in *A Man of the People*. It is the fact that they have been purposely linked with ‘a man’. Traditionally, the concept of one man being for a people indicates the parallelism between a liberating hero and an adulating people. It is ominous therefore, that the people were linked with ‘a’ man. It suggests a rather unfortunate people, a people at the mercy of unknown, unfriendly, uncommon man; a man the people do not want or need. They do not have ‘the’ man, but ‘a’ man. Again, here lies the conflict and paradoxical play of irony between the people rightly and clearly identified and introduced, and ‘a’ man inconspicuously and incongruously identified and introduced.

However, since the novel was set in a fictional African country with closest resemblance to Nigeria, one can unmask the people in *A Man of the People* as the Nigerian people and by direct association and relation, the people of Africa. With ‘a’ man – unknown, unfriendly, disagreeable, of questionable characters on one hand, and

unfortunate, helpless and hapless people on the other, tells the story of a nation or society at war against itself like the mother hen that drinks up its eggs and eats its chicks.

The novel provides deep insight into plights of a hapless people who are defenseless against the onslaught of their supposed hero, leader or 'man', while at the same time analyzing and exploring the degenerative impacts of the supposed leaders of the people. *A Man of the People* is a classic case study of leadership in Africa.

A Man of the People who is not for the People:

Once again, it is helpful to return to the novel title, like a compass, for direction to navigate the story. Since the novel has rich political elements of an independent African State struggling with its new democratic dispensation and experience, it can be argued that Achebe satirizes the democratic practices on display in Africa society.

In *A Man of the People*, one sees the unfolding of Achebe's socio-political consciousness and the launch of his political activism. Achebe began a new journey into the world of Africa politics through a masterly wrought, pure, satirical work that captures and projects the sardonic irony of Africa democratic experience at the post-independence period.

A Man of the People ironically mimics the time-honored definitions of democracy by Abraham Lincoln -as – a government of the people, by the people, for the people. Unfortunately, *A Man of the People* exposes how the practice of European democratic system by African political elite is turned on its head, upside down, to ..a government of the people not by the people and not for the people, but for ‘a’ man (men) of the people...

In this analysis, one finds a deeper and clearer answer to the question who is the ‘a’ *man of the people*- the one behind mask? It is the government! But in this case, the government is different and separated from the people- it lacks the constituent part of it which is the people, because, it is a government of ‘a’ man, some unknown men, or known men who do not know the people, who do not care about the people. It is the height of democratic irony!

Umelo Ojimah (Chinua Achebe *New Perspectives*, 1991) remarks that the people in *A Man of the People* are separated by two systems of government –the traditional; in which people are inclusively involved in decision-making, and morality is at the heart of social ethics, and the colonial; in which only a distanced few wield absolute powers without any

recourse to the people. In this system legitimacy of power of government does not lie with the people.

In this instance, the people do not exist, whereas in traditional society, all authority derives its legitimacy and relevance from the people. There is respect for the sanctity of the human life and the integrity and contributive importance of every member of society.

POWER AND RELATED THEMES

A Portrait of African Leaders

Achebe's strongest subject of disillusionment in *A Man of the People* is the political class, ably symbolized by 'a man' of the people, Chief, the Honorable, M. A. Nanga, MP.

In Chief Nanga, Achebe gives his audience a vivid portrait of a typical modern African leader. Again, the image of name comes to play here. *A Man of the People* is a Chief; he is the or a Honorable. Here is the confused mixture of the traditional African society with its modern incarnation. It is height of grand illusion of the African political leaders; their uncontrollable hunger of for titles, positions, power, recognition and ultimately personal aggrandizement.

The imagery of hounds, dogs, yelp, straining their leash, yapped and snarled hyenas is a strong portrait of political leaders in *A Man of the People*. Chief Nanga, the Prime Minister and other cabinet ministers were portrayed as hounds of dogs and hyenas that yelp, yap and snarl at themselves and at the people they ought to be accountable to. With this kind of leadership, the nation and its people could only be at the mercy of their leaders whose leash is straining and loosening, and the people shivered and cowered by fear into slavish submission.

Achebe problematizes the issue of administrative incompetence as a bane of development of African State. He indicts the emergent black administrative and their political class counterparts of social and technical incompetence in the art of state management because of their lack of political vision and will, their poor or inadequate socialization to have full grasp of social dialectics that are required and involved in nation-building.

Therefore, lack of competence could only lead to failure of government and governance which eventually give way to the only alternative; the institutionalization of corruption in the corridor of power. In *A Man of the People* one is confronted with the likes of Chief Nanga with half-education incompetently managing ministerial position in a most unscrupulous ways.

Bribery became the order of the day with political leaders negotiating, compromising and selling off their country's resources and potentials in return for kickbacks from contracts awarded through their ministries and political favors, to foreign experts and nations.

Politics, then becomes, a shortcut to riches and personal fortune. Odili said of Chief Nanga's switch to politic from teaching profession as a move with cash price. In corruption, the people and the political class find a common ground. Urua people decided to vote Odili in place of Chief Nanga not because of any political ideology or better option, but because they believed Odili would bring them their piece of the national cake. Political power at the top, then becomes, the symbolical cake, of which everyone scramble to have a share. The national interest is lost to personal and group selfish interests.

Central to these extremes of the distant and unknown man-leader and alienated and forgotten, as well as politically apathetic people is the factor of power. This power belongs to the people and ought to be held in trust for the people by the leader(s) for common good of all. Ironically, what we see in *A Man of the People* is acquisition, management and retention of power for personal political ends. A sheer abuse and misappropriation of power, not for common good of the people, not for social justice and

development, but for social oppression, political suppression and patronage by political class of Chief Nanga and his ilks.

The power of the people exercised through electoral franchise is turned against them by those who they have handed it in trust. In one sentence, *A Man of the People* is an indictment of post-colonial Africa political system. Chief Nanga and his fellow ministers exemplified this in their political activities as the government of the day and also in the build-up activities to the next general elections where the violence and ruthlessness became political order.

In *A Man of the People*, one is confronted with the unpopular political philosophy of African politics and politicians that is opposed to beneficial use of power for the good of the people, save random, selective and manipulative use of power to earn political points and patronage.

It is a case of who gets what, by any and all means, a case of winner takes all, winning at all cost –a do or die affair – that has defined African political terrain in the last five decades.

At the brink of destruction, political leaders in *A Man of the People* practice politics of bitterness. The ruling party has zero tolerance for opposition. The politicians in

A Man of the People are anti-intellectuals. They plot and scheme against the intellectuals in government. They rubbish members of the parliament who are educated, honest and upstanding.

Violence became expressed in thuggery and all sorts of intimidation to undermine opposition's efforts. Campaign grounds became battle field and polling booths became slaughter house where politicians and political thugs wielded dangerous arms.

Political Apathy and Cynicism of 'the people'

In *A Man of the People*, we see a people in the lull; who have lost their will and power to fight and resist any form of oppression, having been distanced and cut off from the center of power geographically and systemically. They have become like the proverbial lamb being led into the slaughter house. The apathy of the people emboldened the politicians and fuelled the fire of corruption among the political class)

Also evident in the political landscape is the failure of the middle class – the educated and those are not involved in politics, but have been called to duty to rescue their nation from unscrupulous leaders; to offer a viable option and alternative to politics of corruption. Achebe also points to disillusionment among this group of hopefuls, the Odilis and the Maxes of Africa who could not live up to the expectations of the people,

rather they let the opportunity of redemption slip off their hands by corrupting power of material wealth and opportunity of personal fortune. Ideological positioning and their high moral ground collapsed at the contact with political corruption of Chief Nanga and its likes. CPC, the party formed by Max and Odili became stillbirth and could not live up to its billing. Not even the enlightened; the educated could be the man of the people.

Max and Odili's actions beggars the question- where is the political party that we do will of the people and be "*the man of the people*"? CPC lacks firm ideological base and it is founded on foundation of straw and rooted in fiscal indiscipline as typified by Odili using party funds, Max colluding with ruling party, collecting money from Cabinet Minister and compromising his ideological stance and standard, setting up double standard and himself and eventually loosing his life. These political characteristics features are theorized by Achebe in *A Man of the People* a bane of African politics till date.

Eustace Palmer argues that Odili would eventually become like Chief Nanga if has same opportunity. He argues that the novel is not all about political corruption, but the corrupting power of privilege and position and money as exemplified by Max. This underscores the idealistic and grandstanding philosophy of African intellectuals—whose stances no matter how strong will soon give way in the face of material temptations.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THEME OF CORRUPTION IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN NOVEL

4.1 ANALYSIS OF THEME OF CORRUPTION IN *WITNESSES TO TEARS*

The conspicuous nature of the fact of the projection of illegal extermination of human beings in this novel is alarming. Where the list does not portray illegal killings directly, it does through predatory metaphors. The predators cause other people's death through direct killing as well as through professional ineptitude leading to their death. Other death and murder related lexical items are found in the following excerpts:

She cried herself out and succumbed to grief (P.73)

That he would love from you. Not your daily mourning of him

KHARTOUM HOSPITAL IN DEATH RIDDLE:

TWO NURSES MURDERED... one *strangled* and found at the Nkrumah Freedom Park...the other was found in the gutter along Songhai Street Near Africa square, *shot in the head and chest*. (P.14)

The hospital provided both at once security and insecurity (P.15)

“Oh sorry it is record department ...I mean the result of the *autopsy*

...Sarah's ...Sarah Bello, the girl who left with the doctor that came in with your patient (P.12).

Saahir needed a *human head*, Preferably of a boy aged between six and ten, as part of his scheme to defend, protect and fortify Lahab's wealth and empire- HB Ltd. (P.132).

The items emphasized in the excerpt above serve as a further reflection of the wanton destruction of human beings and the predatory nature of man. Looking at the excerpts, the most innocent persons were killed for no just cause. The nurses were murdered in order to conceal the identity of the killer of Sagir, Hussaina's son. The killing of women and children is the height of evil in the novel. When you kill a child you have killed generation. When you kill a woman, you have also killed a mother of a home and a generation. All this is a device of the author to show the indiscriminate killing of souls by other humans, owing to the perverse race for wealth. All these items and expressions are used to show the extent of human bestiality which can be propelled by a being device for the accumulation of obscene wealth. The author proves the point that the cause of all the deaths and the tears and the other evils what the author calls "perverse pervasive pursuits" of money by fellow human beings (P.76). The following excerpt corroborates this assertion:

Her husband's growing love for money worried her. That element alone was evil enough. She feared he might infest little Sagir with his...passion. She was prepared to turn Sagir away from avaricious tendency.(P.116).

Hassaina's innocence and morality as shown in the excerpt above did not prevent her tears and grief. Sagir was not infested with avaricious tendencies; rather, he became a tool for his father's wealth. Her worry eventually became grief and tears. This shows that, living with an avaricious person is itself equal to living with the devil. When the law of retribution came, every member of the family was affected. It is a further proof that certain persons are victims of the retribution of other people's sins. This proves that a friend of the thief is equally a thief because he may share in the proceeds of the stealing wittingly or unwittingly and will as well share in the retribution directly or indirectly. The instances of lexis so far used are by no means exhausting. They are selected from the many lexical items spread round the novel by the author to aid him project his sermonic message.

The author deliberately structures the novel in a manner that foregrounds "tears", which in the novel is synonymous with killing and murder. As said earlier, the word "tears", which is part of the title, is most prominent in the novel. The novel opens with the comatose Hussaina, Lahab's wife who was bedridden at the traumatology department of Khartoum Hospital. It is the search for her identity and the cause of her tears that led to the unraveling of the mystery surrounding her comatose status. The first chapter is used to show Hussaina's comatose condition and the double murder that co-occurred shortly

after she was brought to the hospital. The two nurses that received her were murdered by unknown persons, as was in later chapters revealed to be Saahir, who had to kill them in order to prevent the trace of their identity as the conveyor of Hussaina.

The shocking news of Sarah Bello and Sani Tanko's murder sent fears into Remi who was watching over Hussaina and was struggling to get information about her identity. The hospital's gate man was smart enough to take note of the plate number of Saahir's car, leading to the unraveling of the identity of Hussaina's conveyor to the hospital in the penultimate chapter. The comatose lady's identity as established through police investigation, given the clue they got from the gateman leading to the revelation of the cause of her comatose condition found in subsequent chapters. Chapter one ended with the mention of the identity of Hussana and her conveyor to the hospital. All these pieces of information form part of the results of the actions that are found in the last chapters of the novel.

Chapter two shows Hussaina as a spinster who was a reticent figure in her school, as well as her coming into contact with Sarah Bello who was completely an opposite of Hussaina, while at the nursing school. Their friendship in school was revealed using flashback technique to show why Sarah had to die. It is because Saahir knew her relationship with Hussaina that he had to kill Sarah in order to prevent his identity from

being discovered as having conveyed Hussaina to the hospital. The chapter also shows how Hussaina met Lahab and how easily impressed by Lahab she was, even against her father's expression of the need for caution. Lahab merely gave Hussaina a lift in her private car from Khartoum hospital to Songhai's street at night occasioned by a heavy down pour, owing to the gross insecurity that was the hallmark of a North Western city.

The fear of being kidnapped filled Hussana's thoughts while in Lahab's car. When Lahab eventually took her to her destination, without taking any undue advantage of her, she became overwhelmingly impressed. The events that unfolded along the line were connected to her meeting Lahab and the subsequent death of Lahab's wife.

Chapter three reveals further, Hussaina's impression of Lahab as he was weeping over the death of his wife. This triggered a reminiscence of the death of Hussana's mother, and how she died. Her death was made inevitable by the ineptitude of medical practitioners at the same Khartoum hospital where Lahab's wife died; as a result, Hussaina decided that she would have nothing doing with Khartoum hospital which denied her fountain of love and vowed that she was going to be a nurse herself, to show other practitioners good example for the sake of humanity. Hence, her admission into Albert Luthuli Memorial Nursing School began the realization of her dream. Her posting

to Khartoum hospital for her practical attachment in her final year, conversely isolated her resolve not to have anything in life to do with Khartoum hospital.

The chapter also shows how like Hussaina's father, Lahab had to continue the life of solitude, and the sympathy that followed from Hussaina and their subsequent family friendship. The chapter ended with Anas', Hussaina's father, discomfiture over Lahab's corrupt tendency, not minding that he gave the bribe to set Anas free when a drunken police officer framed him up for daring to insist on his right. Hussiana's father is veritably a man who led a life symbolized by morality. Lahab, as a result, often had his morality questioned by Hussaina's father in a manner that Hussaina felt that her father was too hard on Lahab. Her feeling for Lahab continued to grow as she continued to visit him, after having sought her father's permission to assist Lahab in cooking his soups on weekends.

Chapter four is an expose of Haussana's working life as she left Albert Luthuli Memorial Nursing School and took an appointment as a staff nurse in Lusaka Hospital along Libya Street. This appointment made it possible for her to see Lahab on a daily basis. Before long, some kind of intimacy was noticed between them by Anas, Hussaina's father. Anas did not want to hurt his daughter, even when he felt he should have cautioned, that the romantic journey she had started was an unpredictable one.

Although Anas did not feel bad that his daughter got into an intimate relationship with Lahab, he was only afraid of the immoral traits he had noticed in Lahab. He consoles himself with a fact that Lahab was a known devil. At any point he cautioned his daughter over the fast lane their relationship was taking and emphasized the need for a long period of courtship, so that they would get to know more about each other. All this, he tried to advance in order to protect his daughter and guarantee her a happy matrimony, but his daughter fell too fast in Lahabs wolfish hands. Immediately she mentioned to her father that she was in love, she added that they had agreed to get married. She remained unyielding in spite of her father's warning, because she believed that Lahab was a perfect gentleman and would do her no harm.

The chapter as well presents the realization by Hussaina that her absence from her father's house was going to create a vacuum which no one could fill, only when she was married and was already getting out of her father's house for her matrimonial one. In trying to mitigate the effect of this vacuum, Anas, her father took a leave and embarked on tours of major cities within the North East and North Central Nigeria. It was on his return that he met his untimely death in a deadly inferno caused by a mindless tanker driver. The death of Anas gave Lahab an inner joy, because he had always wished that

the man disappeared so he would not continue to torment him by questioning his morality continuously.

Anas, was too upright to the point of weakness, as far as Lahab was concerned. His death would give him the freedom he needed to operate as his natural self. Hussaina's continual grief over her father's death was also portrayed in the chapter leading to a threatened abortion over the pregnancy that she announced joyously to her husband. Hussaina managed to recover from this shock long afterwards, physically, but continued to live with the emotional trauma caused by the untimely exit of her father.

Chapter five is devoted to extolling the virtues of Anas Al-Amin, Hussana's father even in death. The amount of condolences received by the Lahab's family put Lahab on his toes. However, the acknowledgement that his father-in-law had built a reputation for himself based on his uprightness and moral rectitude as well as hard work did not in anyway make Lahab feel like emulating him. He was only interested in seeing how he could use the reputation of his late father-in-law to his selfish and criminal advantage.

In trying to honour Anas, Lahab was appointed Vice-principal of Cabral High School, even when he was the most junior of the three persons recommended to the ministry of education. Anas was a classmate of the director's uncle. Unfortunately, Lahab

did not use the position positively. He used it to implicate his poor messenger to be able to steal without a trace. His desire to amass, as much wealth as possible, through collection of percentage from contractors-suppliers to overlook their excesses and other forms of stealing, using his position, enabled him to amass so much wealth than his legitimate income normally should give him. The chapter ends with the news Hussaina gave to her husband over her testing positive to pregnancy and the joyous reactions that followed.

Chapter six begins with the unfortunate incident of stillbirth experienced by Hussaina in the eighth month of her pregnancy. She tries to piece her thoughts together and concluded that her life is full of worries. This is because, that was her third pregnancy and all amounted to no child. “An only child they used to tell her is a parent of a chain of many children”, but it seems as if hers was going to be different. She continued to ponder over this. At last, she consoled herself with the fact that God is the giver of children.

The chapter also shows Lahab’s gradual degeneration into savagery as he was using all means at his disposal to prevent the substantive Vice-principal from returning to his office. This led him to know Saahir who was combining his contacts with spiritual powers to deceive those who were patronizing him for spiritual assistance. His visit to

Saahir fetched him his appointment as substantive Vice-principal, since Saahir's father was the director's spiritual consultant. He went diabolical because of position. The chapter as well shows Lahab's illicit dealings with contractors who were supplying food to Cabral High School, as he had to close his eyes to their atrocities in order to get his own cut. Shortly afterwards, Lahab started changing cars, electronics and other domestic valuables; all these things he concealed from his wife, because, he knew she would not like the idea or the source of the income. Lahab is revealed to be so carried away by riches, and his zeal to continuously amass more led him to ask his wife to be registered as a supplier of food to Cabral High, so he could use her to syphon money, but Hussaina would not yield. The killing of the contractor that petitioned Lahab by Saahir, marks the height of devilment in Lahab's quest for wealth. It was the psychological trauma he suffered from that led to his resignation and the subsequent establishment of his construction company. The chapter ends with the birth of Anas Al-Amin Sagir, Lahab's only son, who was named after his maternal grandfather, Anas Al-Amin, who sacrificed almost everything for his daughter, Hussaina.

Chapter seven is the penultimate chapter of the novel, which opens with the admiration of Sagir, and Hussaina's resolve to bring Sagir up in line with her father's principles – honesty, humility and uprightness. It shows, as well, how Hussaina continued

to worry over her husband's growing love for wealth acquisition and his association with Saahir who was believed by all and sundry to be a wizard or witches' patron. Because Hussaina was living with doubts over the sacredness of her husband's source of income, she refused to have any direct dealing with the company – Husala Business Limited, even when her husband asked her to be the company's Managing Director.

This chapter as well reveals the company's continued record of success in the early years of its establishment. It was the fear of fall that led Lahab to use diabolical means to sustain the company's track of record of success, when he noticed that the company's performance started waning. He asked his spiritual consultant Saahir to use all means possible to fortify the company, even when Saahir mentioned the involvement of human head for the sacrifice that was required. At an appointed time, Lahab had to embark on pilgrimage, at the period within which the expected human sacrifice was to be carried out. The recommendation of the headmaster at Fodio Nursery School that Sagir should go straight to a primary school led to a twist of fate that led to the eventual killing of the beloved Sagir through his father's conspiracy as seen in the last chapter.

Chapter eight which is the ultimate, opens with the news of Lahab's return from his ill-motivated pilgrimage. The anxiety that filled Hussaina, on receiving the telegram that her husband was booked for the first flight back to the country that day, made her

decide to pick up Sagir from school earlier than she should, so they could both wait for their bread winner to arrive from his unholy pilgrimage. Unfortunately, Saahir's men had kidnapped Sagir and one other pupil for the ritual before Hussaina got to the school.

Hussaina's seeing her son's head in a refrigerator in one of her husband's rooms, as perpetrated by Saahir and his allies led to the shock that resulted in the comatose state that Saahir found her, which eventually resulted in her being conveyed to Khartoum Hospital, a place she vowed never to go for any medical assistance, owing to her mother's experience.

When Saahir got the news that Sagir was one of the children kidnapped, he had to quickly rush to remove Sagir's remains for disposal, where he found Hussaina lying unconsciously in the secret room. Saahir and his men had mistakenly left the key to the secret room hanging due to the anxiety and fear of being discovered by Hussaina, should she get back to meet them, because she came home unannounced and found out that Saahir and two other men were in that room she never entered.

Saahir conveyed Hussaina to Khartoum Hospital and met Sarah Bello, Hussaina's friend with Sani Tanko. They were the two staff nurses on duty that night. In order to conceal his identity, he opted to kill Sarah Bello and Sani Tanko, before they could hand over to Remi. When Remi came to take over, there was no record left to show the identity

of the comatose lady; therefore, her identity was not known, until police investigation revealed that Saahir brought Hussaina and left with Sarah. The man at the gate of the hospital instinctively took note of the plate number of Saahir's vehicle, unknown to Saahir, and this eventually led to Saahir's exposure. On Lahab's return from his unholy pilgrimage, he was arrested right at the airport in connection with the murder of his son (Sagir), Sarah Bello, Sani Tanko and the second pupil that was kidnapped with Sagir.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF THEME OF CORRUPTION IN A MAN OF THE PEOPLE

A Man of the People (1967) is Achebe's fourth novel. He referred to it as "a rather serious indictment of post independent Africa" (*Ibid*: 13), in particular Nigeria, which turned into "a cesspool of corruption and misrule" (Heywood, 1975: 82) after independence. Achebe's sincerity in writing about the African social and political landscape is evident to the reader. Along with his other novels, *A Man of the People* is a novel that reveals the corrupt practices in the post-colonial Nigeria. The characters are constructed within a particular environment and in a particular historical phase; they recreate their own history, whether living in a traditional community or resisting European colonialism. To achieve a realistic effect, Achebe created the protagonist, Odili Samalu, as an ordinary, sensitive young man who teaches at Anata Grammar School. Most of the other characters are middleclass and tend to have a rather dull and frequently

unhappy existence with only occasional glimpses of beauty and joy. The novel is set in a post-independence environment, after a period of colonial-style social and economic development has resulted in a conflicted situation between the emergent elitist middle class and the general population. The Europeans had been replaced by a ruling class of politicians, most of whom were corrupt and controlled everything. According to Ngugi (1975: 47), “the disillusionment with the ruling elite is to be found in the recent works of most African writers”. Achebe’s *A Man of the People* reflects his distaste for post-independence Nigeria as a place where leaders who had fought for independence became traitors after attaining power, and sacrificed their country in exchange for middle-class comfort. Odili Samalu, the protagonist, mediates Achebe’s vision that individuals must not “give up because ... this is a necessary stage in our growth” (Duerden & Pieterse, 1972: 13).

In contrast to Achebe’s earlier novels *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *A Man of the People* delineates the conflict between morality and corruption by contrasting the protagonist Odili Samalu with his opposite, the Minister of Culture, Chief Nanga. These characters are worlds apart, with radically different ideologies. Odili is an idealist who has experienced the pain and suffering of his fellow citizens and has observed how the entire system supports corrupt politicians and the wealthy. Despite the

fact that his country is now free from colonial rule, he has witnessed the continued exploitation of the general population in a new form. The imperialists have been replaced by new rulers, and the general population has no choice but to suffer and wait for a new government. Throughout the novel, Odili condemns this state of affairs; his disillusionment comes through by means of a detached first person perspective.

Nanga, the villain, acts as a foil to Odili. Nanga is a politician who is a realist with an instinctive grasp of what the electorate wants; he has a genuine rapport with the people whom he represents. Not only does he claim their ‘primitive loyalties’, he also exploits them to a great extent. During the election campaign, Odili realizes that, ironically, in some ways, Nanga represents government ‘of the people, by the people, for the people.’ The relationship between Odili and Nanga mediates the ethos of public and private morality in a society that has forgotten its past and seeks only material rewards in its future. The story begins in 1964 when Nanga makes an official visit to Anata Grammar School, where he taught during his early career. Odili, a teacher at the school, views the ensuing celebration by the illiterate masses and the arrival of Nanga skeptically: As I stood in one corner of that vast tumult waiting for the arrival of the Minister I felt intense bitterness welling up in my mouth. Here were silly, ignorant villagers dancing themselves lame and waiting to blow off their gun powder in honor of one of those who had started

the country off down the slopes of inflation. I wished for a miracle, for a voice of thunder, to hush this ridiculous festival and tell the poor contemptible people one or two truths. But of course it would be quite useless. They were not only ignorant but cynical (Achebe, 1967: 2).

The local song played on the old “Grammar-phone” (p. 1), women dancing to celebrate the occasion, and the gunfire by Nanga’s hooligans all realistically portray this kind of situation and reflect how Nigerians can sacrifice national interest for personal interests. In the novel, Odili remembers his childhood when he praised Nanga as a model, honest politician. This image of Nanga was shattered during Odili’s last visit to Parliament, when he watched the political assassination of the Minister of Finance, who was “a first rate economist with a PhD” (p. 3) in Public Finance. The Minister of Finance presented a complete plan to avert the financial crisis to Cabinet, but the government rejected it because it would result in its defeat during the upcoming election. Any politicians supporting the Minister of Finance were fired and the corrupt politicians accused the honest Minister of being a traitor, being un-African, and of “aping the white man’s mannerisms and way of speaking” (p. 4). Odili was shocked to see these lies being used as political propaganda in local newspapers, one of which printed the following: We are proud to be Africans. Our true leaders are not those intoxicated with their Oxford,

Cambridge or Harvard degrees but those who speak the language of the people. Away with the damnable and expensive university education that only alienates an African from his rich and ancient culture and puts him above his people ... (p. 4). In his book, Achebe incorporates not only national issues but also the clan and village loyalties that are an integral part of Africa; the incident of Josiah and the blind man's stick is a good example. Nanga frequently exploits these minor loyalties, while Odili examines them in relation to a national consciousness. He concludes that, under current conditions, European political concepts may be meaningless to the national structure, which is divided into numerous tribes and clans. He also fears being labeled as one of the snobbish intellectuals, with ambition, and a desire for post-graduate diploma from London. However, Odili never submits to 'lick any big man's boots,' explaining: In fact one reason why I took this teaching job in a bush, private school instead of a smart civil service job in the city with car, free housing, etc., was to give myself a certain amount of autonomy (p. 16).

Odili's political views are inseparable from his character. His opinion of his girlfriend Elsie is also significant in revealing his character; he thinks that he has been unlucky in love, but Elsie is different:

Elsie was, and for that matter still is, the only girl I met and slept with the same day – in fact within an hour ... I can't pretend that I ever thought of marriage ... Elsie was such a beautiful, happy girl and she made no demands whatever (p. 22).

Achebe presents his foil Nanga as a political opportunist. Nanga has no concept of political morality; he has become rich through bribery, corruption, and intimidation, and knows how to work these things to his advantage. In the story, as in reality, Nanga and many others pursue self-interest with false promises of sharing with everyone. Odili is totally disillusioned at seeing such a debased form of politics in his country. Nanga begins his speech at Anata Grammar School in Pidgin English; by expressing local values and hopes, he appears to be a man from the grass roots and, ironically, *A Man of the People*.

He denounces the 'western – educated' Africans, claiming that "a university education alienates an African from his rich and ancient culture" (p. 4). As Minister of Culture, Nanga uses his privilege to attack the educated class in Africa, obviously vital to any country's development, but the villagers are far from understanding this fact. Along with his cunning manipulation, his friendly demeanor has an infectious effect on the villagers. Odili is taken aback when Nanga recognizes him from among the crowd as an ex-student and invites him to visit his house in Bori; he even promises help in getting

Odili a scholarship to England. Odili is drawn to Nanga's irresistible charm and observes: The man was still as handsome and youthful-looking as ever – there was no doubt about that ... The Minister had a jovial word for every one. You could never think – looking at him now – that his smile was anything but genuine. It seemed bloody minded to be skeptical (p. 34).

In spite of his early admiration for Nanga, Odili's brief stay at his house is an eye-opener; Odili has the opportunity to watch Nanga closely. Life at Nanga's house during the first few days undermines Odili's clear cut views, which are somewhat eroded by the opulence: All I can say is that on the first night there was no room for ... criticism. I was simply hypnotized by the luxury of the great suite assigned to me... I had to confess that if I were at that moment made a minister I would be most anxious to remain one for ever (p. 34).

Moreover, Odili even begins to feel sympathetic about the temptations faced by men in power:

A man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes, is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors all the time. The trouble with our new nation – as I saw it then lying on the bed – was that none of us had been indoors long enough to be able to say “to hell with it”. We had all been in the

rain together until yesterday. Then a handful of us – the smart and the lucky and hardly ever the best – had scrambled for the one shelter our former rulers left, and had taken it over and barricaded themselves in (p. 34).

At this point in the story, it is clear that Odili's disapproval of the country's politicians is mixed with his new understanding of how a common man could be tempted by power. Still, politicians like Nanga are the villains of the story; however attractive they may be, they are seen as immoral. In the story, as in reality, men like Nanga take bribes and use the money to build apartment blocks, which they rent to earn profit. They also make false promises to the population about future rewards if they are re-elected.

When Odili meets Jean and her husband at Nanga's house, differences arise between African and European codes of conduct. Odili attends a party at Jean's house while her husband is away on business, "advising ... government on how to improve its public image in America" (p. 42). Odili finds this situation particularly ironic as he learns about the corruption in Nigerian government through her. Jean takes him on a tour of the city as she takes him home, and Odili senses a hidden purpose, as he notes that "she certainly knew the city well, from the fresh smelling modern waterfront to the stinking, maggoty interior" (p. 51). Odili laughs uneasily at the signs of corruption and inequality in Bori but is simultaneously suspicious of Jean's motivation, wondering if the tour was

simply out of curiosity or for “some secret reason, like wanting me to feel ashamed about my country’s capital city ... Who the hell did she think she was to laugh so self-righteously? Wasn’t there enough in her own country to keep her laughing all her days or crying if she preferred it?” (pp. 51–52).

Achebe makes it clear that there are difficulties involved in an individual’s interpretation or judgment of a culture, especially one that he or she has not experienced directly or intimately, and that no-one has the right to remark on an alien culture without serious analysis.

Odili’s sense of affinity with Nanga is badly shaken when he takes Elsie, his girlfriend, to stay at Nanga’s house. Odili refers to Elsie as “just a good-time girl” (p. 55). Before Odili can gather the courage to enter her room at night, Nanga enters her room and rapes her while Odili listens in a crisis of inertia to her apparent screams and calls for help: I trudged up the stairs in the incredible delusion that Elsie was calling on me to come and save her from her ravisher. But when I got to the door a strong revulsion and hatred swept over me and I turned sharply away and went down the stairs for the last time. Recollection and panic followed soon enough and then the humiliating wound came alive again and began to burn fresher than first inflicted ... My eyes misted... (p. 66).

Elsie's rape by Nanga exemplifies the poor status of women in Africa; African society portrays women in general as foolish, weak, dependent, frivolous, and seductive. It tends to cultivate "men's prerogatives to the allegiance and subservience of women, and legitimize men to exercise their power over women to sustain the latter's subordination and marginality" (Hussein, 2005: 60). Thus, the African novelist "often finds himself describing situations or modes of thought which have no direct equivalent in the English way of life" (Killiam, 1973: 12).

Odili's inaction is also an example that has no parallel in other literature. Characters such as Edna, Elsie, and Mrs. Nanga indicate the marginalized status of women in African society. Out of anger and humiliation Odili leaves Nanga's home at midnight but returns later to take revenge: "What a country! I said, 'You call yourself Minister of Culture? God help us.' And I spat; not a full spit but a token, albeit unmistakable one." (p. 69). Nanga offers him other girls in exchange for Elsie, but Odili's estrangement is final and continues throughout the novel. Nanga is no longer simply a politician whom Odili dislikes for his degradation and corruption; he is a ravisher who has taken Elsie, his beloved, by force. As a form of personal revenge, Odili decides to seduce Nanga's fiancée Edna; as a form of political revenge, Odili works with his friend Max, who is about to form a new political party, the Common People's Convention,

which aims to save the country from the grip of corrupt politicians. Odili discovers that this new party is backed by a junior minister in the current government and wonders why the minister does not resign if he is so discontented. He insists that Max not take any assistance from such politicians, “I would have thought it was better to start our new party clean, with a different kind of philosophy” (p. 79), but he gradually begins to realize that idealism does not work when a whole “country is on the verge of chaos” (p. 79).

Next, Odili decides to campaign against Nanga in his own constituency. At the inaugural campaign meeting, Nanga’s men laugh at Odili in front of a crowd and Edna’s father threatens him with a machete with the suggestion that he withdraw his nomination: My in law is like a bull ... and your challenge is like a challenge of a tick to a bull. The tick fills its belly with blood from the back of the bull and the bull does not even know it is there. He carries it wherever he goes – to eat, drink or pass ordure. Then one day the cattle egret comes, perches on the bull’s back and picks out the tick ... (p. 101).

Odili’s focus on revenge keeps him steadfast despite humiliations brought on him by his headmaster, Mrs. Nanga, and Nanga’s supporters; his focus on revenge changes into a genuine desire to destroy Nanga and the corruption he represents, as is clear in his statement, “although I had little hope of winning

Chief Nanga's seat, it was necessary nonetheless to fight him and expose him as much as possible" (p. 103). At this point, Odili's character has two clear aspects. Publicly, he wants to expose Nanga for his misdeeds in the hope that there "may be someone who would get up and say, No, Nanga has taken more than the owner could ignore!" (p. 104); privately, he wants to marry Edna out of love, as revenge on Nanga.

When Odili began his political campaign, he recalled that when he was at university, his sole ambition was to become "a full member of the privileged class whose symbol was the car" (p. 104), and that "many of us vowed then never to be corrupted by bourgeois privileges of which the car was the most visible symbol in our country" (p. 104). By this point, however, Odili has undergone a great change; he has acquired a new car through party funds. He assesses his present position: "and now here was I in this marvellous little affair eating the hills like yam – as Edna would have said. I hoped I was safe, for a man who avoids danger for years and then gets killed in the end has wasted his care" (p. 104). Odili is being pulled in two directions: he could become part of the corrupt political system in which no idealism can survive (similar to Nanga), or he could remain in a state of idealism and disillusionment about Nigeria's political situation.

At the novel's climax, Nanga is having his inaugural campaign meeting. In an attempt to expose Nanga to the people, Odili sneaks in wearing a disguise: What would

happen, if I were to push my way to the front and up the palm-leaf-festooned dais, wrench the microphone from the greasy hands of that blabbing buffoon and tell the whole people – this vast contemptible crowd – that the great man they had come to hear with their drums and dancing was an Honorable Thief. But of course they knew that already.

No single man and human there that afternoon was stranger to that news – not even the innocent looking convent girl on the dais (p. 131).

While Odili considers his next step, he is spotted by Josiah, now an ally of Nanga. Nanga calls Odili a thief, forcing him to pause in order to respond. Nanga calls him to the dais and publicly ridicules him, beginning with his own interpretation of the past: This is the boy ... He came to my house in Bori, ate my food, drank my water and my wine and instead of saying thank you to me he set out plotting how to drive me out and take over my house ... He was once my pupil. I taught him A B C and I called him to my house to arrange for him to go to England (p. 132).

Nanga offers him the microphone. At this point, Odili thinks he has a chance to expose Nanga's corruption: "I come to tell your people that you are a liar and ..." (pp. 132-33). As he speaks, Nanga slaps him on the face. To Odili's shock, the crowd joins in the beating: He pulled the microphone away smartly, set it down, walked up to me and

slapped my face ... immediately hands seized my arms, but I am happy that he got one fairly good kick from me. He slapped me again and again.

Edna rushed forward crying and tried to get between us but he pushed her ... By this time blows were falling as fast as rain on my head and body until something heavier than the rest seemed to split my skull. The last thing I remembered was seeing all the policemen turn round and walk quietly away (p. 133).

By creating this climax, Achebe was able to project the fate of educated individuals who want to bring about societal change but fail because they are easily outnumbered by villains. Odili finds satisfaction in his selfless public act, even though he ends up in a hospital, defeated. His friends, Max and Eunice, then go on to play important roles. Max is killed by an election jeep belonging to Koko, a ministerial colleague of Nanga, and Eunice kills Koko out of anger after Max's death. Private armies begin to rampage, and in this state of anarchy, the Prime Minister reappoints the old cabinet to office. The army cannot accept this decision and stages a coup, putting the ministers behind bars.

The political turmoil serves to help Odili; after Nanga is arrested, Edna reveals that she never wanted to marry him: "Marry him? To be frank with you I did not want to marry him ... All the girls in the college were laughing at me ... It was only my father ..."

(p. 137). Still, despite the military coup Odili knows that nothing has changed and refuses to accept the simple consolation that the will of the people has been served: No the people had nothing to do with the fall of our Government. What happened was simply that unruly mobs and private armies having tasted blood and power during the election had got out of hand and ruined their masters and employers. And they had no public reason whatever for doing it. Let's make no mistake about that (p. 136).

Overnight, Max becomes a hero of the revolution, and the people who had previously idolized Nanga and Koko now denounce them. Odili comes to understand the entire ethic of social acceptance and rejection within Nigerian society: Max was avenged not by the people's collective will but by one solitary woman who loved him. Had his spirit waited for the people to demand redress it would have been waiting still, in the rain and out in the sun? But he was lucky (p. 140). As Odili seeks to understand why private loyalty seems to be more important than public morality, he remembers the story of Josiah. Rejected by the whole village at the beginning of the novel for stealing a blind man's stick, Josiah ends up as Nanga's most trusted man. As Odili observes, it is "a regime in which a ... fellow cursed in the morning for stealing ... and later in the evening saw him again mounting the altar of the new shrine in the presence of all the people to whisper into the ear of the chief celebrant" (p. 141). This exemplifies how priorities can

change suddenly, when individual self-interest comes into play. In this way, Josiah's story foreshadows events later in the novel. In this context, Eunice has done a noble deed, as Odili summarizes: ... I do honestly believe that in the fat dripping, gummy, eat-and-let-eat regime just ended – a regime which inspired the common saying that a man could only be sure of what he had put away safely in his gut ... in such a regime, I say, you died a good death if your life had inspired someone to come forward and shoot your murderer in the chest – without asking to be paid (p. 141).

By the punishment of Nanga, Achebe has suggested that if a nation is to progress, it must take proper care when selecting leaders, otherwise corrupt politicians will always get their way and citizens will simply be a means by which they can fulfill their corrupt goals. An electorate needs to be strong enough to withstand the opposing pulls of private and public pressures; as Achebe has noted, “for a society to function smoothly and effectively its members must share certain basic tenets of belief and norms of behavior” (Achebe, 1988b: 100). National interest must be given supreme importance as opposed to selfinterest, which has the power to corrupt leaders. Achebe successfully projected his own ideals through Odili Samalu, the protagonist of *A Man of the People*. This has been the goal of many African writers writing about their own pasts and their nation. According to Ngugi, it is a means to assert African identity: I believe that the African

intellectuals must align themselves with the struggle of the African masses for a meaningful national ideal. For we must strive for a form of social organization that will free the manacled spirit and energy of our people from corruption so we can build a new country and sing a new song (Ngugi, 1975: 50)

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 SUMMARY

The reconstruction of the two distinct phases of the post-colonial Nigerian condition in *A Man of the People* and *Witness to Tears*, shows the reality as a product of historical forces and the characters appear to be caught helplessly in the web of conflict and social evolution. Although concerned with the contemporary reality, the colonial legacy looms large in both the novels. The historical events related to colonization seem to have shattered the spiritual fabric of the Nigerians causing their loss of traditional values and making them participate in the historical development for which they have not been prepared. The immediate consequences are chaos, corruption, and instability in all spheres of life. With a keen awareness to the socio-political forces operating in post-colonial Nigeria, Achebe presents this crisis in fictional terms. His conviction about art's "disquieting relationship" with a "recognizable reality" and his understanding of the artist's responsibility in the African context have enabled him to give a poignant expression to the prevailing corruption and instability—the two disrupting forces affecting the health of the entire nation.

Corruption may well be defined as the evil of present times, but this claim should be not taken too seriously when recognizing that most of the actions, ideas and rhetoric on which corruption is substantiated at the level of everyday practices are much older. One possible way to avoid reducing corruption to a black-box definition in the coming future is to analyse those practices that accompany the spread of corruption, such as gift and informal exchanges, as well as the strategic use of corruption talk in the light of the policy and power implications that the anti-corruption struggles require worldwide.

5.2 CONCLUSION

They have equally used their writings to awaken the consciousness of the masses to the realities of their circumstances. Some of the writers do not only stop at this level of awakening but go further to recommend serious resistance measures against the enemies of the people. The contemporary world is an epoch of national liberation revolutions. Masses of most Third World countries have risen to challenge their subjection to external domination or internal oppression and this has made them assert their right freely in order to determine their own destiny. Both the anti-colonial movement and the current struggle against neo colonialism in Africa are part of this historical trend. (Nzongola Ntalaja: ix). This captures in clear term the real situation in Africa, which is most dismal. The continent has remained comparatively the least developed of all continents in terms of the

production and sustenance of critically significant social -goods such as physical infrastructure, telecommunication facilities, food supply, electricity, medical and health services, shelter, employment and other vital materials for human, personal and social being.

Generally, English-language fiction falls into the categories of romance or realism. Romances tend to represent life as one might think it to be, and create a relatively heroic, adventurous, or picturesque world. In contrast, works of realism portray the world as it really appears. Books by realists such as Defoe tend to use a reportorial manner, presenting material in a circumstantial, matter- of-fact kind of way, and create for the reader an illusion of actual experience. Abrams (1971: 141) noted that the term ‘realistic novel’ “is more usefully applied to works which are realistic both in subject and manner ... throughout the whole rather in parts” Additionally, Gray (1992: 241) has noted that realism “is best used for writers who show explicit concern to convey an authentic impression of actuality, either in their narrative style, or by their serious approach to their subject matter”. Among English-speaking African novelists.

The realism of Achebe’s 1967 novel *A Man of the People* is demonstrated by the fact that events portrayed in the novel actually went on to occur in Nigeria in 1967: a

military coup placed the politicians behind bars. Commenting on this coincidence, Achebe claimed:

If you take the example of Nigeria, which is a place I know best, things had got to such a point politically that there was no answer – no way could you resolve this impasse politically. The political machine had been so abused that whichever way you pressed it, it produced the same results; and therefore you wanted another force, another force just had to come in (Duerden & Pieterse, 1972: 14).

Achebe's *A Man of the People* successfully recreated the dynamic spirit of Nigerian society in a thoroughly realistic way. In this respect, Alumona has noted that, "Achebe achieves it by building argument and persuasive rhetoric around the lives of some dominant individuals, and the operations or failures of societal institutions ... the family, government, morality, law and order, diplomacy, etc" (Alumona, 2003: 62). Achebe rejected the idea that "art should be accountable to no one and needs to justify itself to nobody" (Achebe, 1975: 36). Instead, he has claimed that "art is, and always was, at the service of man.

Our ancestors created their myths and told their stories for a human purpose" (Culross, 2007: 1) and "any good story, any good novel, should have a message, should have a purpose" (Culross, 2007: 1). He insisted that "we should see it as a life actually

lived by plausible men and women before we dismiss it, with the usual shrug, as nothing but ignorance, darkness and death” (Moore, 1962: 59). The delineation of Nanga as a practical politician, and of Odili as an alienated young man, is realistic to the core; these characters emerge powerfully in the novel. Nanga represents “the opportunist, the rogue of the cities” while

Odili is a nostalgic young man and “the romantic hero with his heightened sensitivity and divided consciousness pulling him into ... tragedy” (Gleason, 1965: xvi). Other characters such as Edna, Mrs. Nanga, and Josiah are credible, and the reader never gets the impression that they are far-fetched. This kind of authentic characterization constitutes a basic quality of Achebe’s novels, and is one of the reasons they are so widely read and accepted not only by Africans but by readers from all continents. Bruce King (Culross, 2007: 1) was correct when he pointed out that “Achebe was the first Nigerian writer to successfully transmute the conventions of the novel, a European art form, into African literature” in such a way that the “European character study is subordinated to the portrayal of communal life; European economy of form is replaced by an aesthetic appropriate to the rhythms of traditional tribal life”. Achebe’s reputation rests on his unbiased interpretation of the post-independence Nigerian environment and his ability to elaborate this through his novels. In this way, his works have the ability to

inspire a revolution, “a revolution that aims towards true independence, that moves towards the creation of modern states in place of new colonial enclaves ... a revolution that is informed with African ideologies” (Lindfors, 1970: 18). The Nigerian Civil War was the culmination of this movement. *A Man of the People* proved to be a prologue to this event and, as Ngugi has noted, “Chinua Achebe’s characters, shaped by a different social climate, do not have to assert their humanity ... they have a vital relationship with their social and economic landscape. We can see, and feel, how his characters, their world view, their very aspirations, have been shaped by a particular environment in a particular historical phase” (Ngugi, 1975: 44). This kind of comment attests to the realism that is such a feature of *A Man of the People* which is tied to the exposure of the act of corruption of the people, a work that proves Achebe’s worth as a writer, one who is not only involved in the diagnosis of his own country’s malaise but also in the cultural analysis of Africa’s relationship with Europe.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION

The African writer has continued to show deep concern for his continent in his writings. He is irked by the various problems that bedevil the continent. The writer in Africa assumes a special responsibility as the voice of the people. He calls attention to these problems and insists on redress. Many a time the writer has suffered persecution as

a result of his writing. This points to the fact that his writings are taken seriously. Given that one of the present crisis of social order that is prevalent in Africa is caused by erosion of values, the study recommends an educational system that should empower the students not only academically but morally as well. This type of education should focus on orientation. It will point out to the people some of the practices that undermined Africa's political process and truncated its economic promises.

The foundation of any establishment defines the future of that establishment. The African nations which form the bone of contention here were built on more or less shaky foundation. The extent each nation has gone in terms of human and material development is a result of what the inhabitants of each nation have done in the face of the challenges of colonialism and neo-colonialism. In other words, the destiny of Africa is and should be in the hands of Africans. This is why this study focuses on both suggestions for further studies and ways of realizing the African Dream which appears to have so far remained an illusion.

The study upholds that there ought to emerge a new thinking process that involves self-examination and re-examination on the part of Africans. Africans must go inwards to evoke the spirit of change if a really new day must dawn on the destiny of the continent – the African Dream. There must be a non-violent revolution in Africa for Africans and by

Africans to effect the ‘good attempt’ that will drastically change the destiny of Africa; change (or rather end) the negative impacts of colonialism and build new foundations from which ‘new’ nations will emerge. This involves exploring the basis for good governance and proper leadership as idealized in the African Dream. It immediately takes us back to what we are supposed to know - the right kind of education. This is no mean task and it involves a definite plan to allow a new educational system and curriculum to emerge so that the new generation of leaders that will soon be on stage will have the right orientation and therefore the right attitude and intellectual insight towards their responsibilities. Almost everything hinges on education because that is the process of training known to man.

Thus, what is recommended is a critical literacy. A critical literacy will inspire leaders who are capable of questioning even the manner of education they receive. The postindependence leaders failed because they received a type of education that alienated them from their own people and set their eyes towards Europe. Education is one stop shop for human development. When it is done right it produces extraordinary results and progress but when it’s done wrong, it’s tragic. The present leadership in Africa owes it to posterity to effect this change. The founding fathers met colonialism and with almost no resources but with abundant sense of purpose, determination, and faith in God and

changed African countries from colonized to independent nations. That was one clean job accomplished over decades. Unfortunately, the result is not what was expected which is what has necessitated this study. The salient point here is that we in Africa must disengage from living in the past and face the unavoidable responsibility of recreating a new society that we so much desire.

Africans must press forward starting from the much needed revolution in our educational system. How then do we do this? This study contends that there are people in the continent who have whatever it takes to effect this change. Like the writers, like the nationalists, these are not men and women to be ‘elected’, appointed or recruited. They are men and women who understand the language of service, patriotism, sacrifice, equity and posterity. These are people who have the vision, sense of mission, focus, and clarity of purpose. These are men and women who believe that the destiny of the nation is more important than the destiny of the individual and whose interest is not winning the next election but securing the future of the next generation.

REFERENCES

- Achebe, Chinua. *A Man of the People*. New York: Anchor Books, 1988.
- Alumona, V.S. 2003. Culture and societal institutions in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*: A critical reading. In (P.J. Kishindo, ed.) *Journal of Humanities*, 17. Univ. of Malawi.
- Amadi, Sami. (2007) *Colonial Legacy, Elite Dissension and the Making of the Genocide: The Story of Biafra*. Available at: <http://howgenocidesend.ssrc.org/Amadi/printable.html> (03March2008).
- Amoo, Sam G. (1997) *The challenge of ethnicity and conflicts in Africa: The need for a new paradigm*. Emergency Response Division, United Nations Development Program.
- Blanton, Robert, David T. Mason and Brian Athow (2001) 'Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa,' *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 473-491.
- Carol, D. 1975. *Chinua Achebe: Novelist, Poet, Critic*. Heinemann, London.
- Culross, M. 2007. *Chinua Achebe's Biography and Style*. Online. <http://www.postcolonialweb.org/authors.html/achebebioov.html> (Accessed Feb. 6, 2007).
- Duerden, D. & C. Pieterse 1972. *African Writers Talking*. Heinemann, London.
- Easterly, William (2006) *The Whiteman's Burden: why the West efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Eko, Lyombe (2003) 'Press Freedom in Africa,' *Encyclopaedia of International Media and Communications* 2: 95—116.
- Gimba, A. (2007) *Witnesses to Tears*. Ibadan: Kraftgriots.
- Gleason, J. I. 1965. *This Africa*. Northwestern UP, Evanston.

- Gray, M. 1992. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Longman York Press, London.
- Heywood, C., ed. 1975. *Perspectives on African Literature*. Heinemann, London.
- Hussein, J.W. 2005. The social and ethno-cultural construction of masculinity and femininity in African proverbs. *African Study Monographs*, 26(2): 59–88.
- Lindfors, B. 1970. Achebe on commitment and African writers. *Africa Report*, March 3, 1970. pp. 16-18. Washington, D.C.
- Mwaura, Ndirangu (2005) *Kenya today: Breaking the yoke of colonialism in Africa*. USA: Algora Publishing.
- New York Times (24/05/1996) *Anger at French Troops Grows in Central Africa*. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CEED71039F937A15756C0A960958260> (20 August, 2008).
- Nguigi, Wa Thiongo, (1972) *The Writer in a Changing Society, Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics*, Heinemann, London.
- Nkrumah, Kwame (1975) ‘Redefinition of Neo-Colonialism’, *Readings in African Political Thought*, edited by Mutiso, Gideon-Cyrus M. and S. W. Rohio, 415: 418. London: Heinemann.
- Ogunbadejo, Oye (1979) *Conflict Images: Colonial Legacy, Ethnicity, and Corruption in Nigerian Politics, 1960-1966*, in: Utafiti – Vol. 4 No. 1, 85-100.
- Ojinmah Umelo (1991) *CHINUA ACHEBE: New Perspectives*, Spectrum Books Ltd, Ibadan.
- Peterson, Kirsten Holst Holst Peterson, Kirsten and Rutherford, Anna (eds) (1991) *Working with Chinua Achebe: The African Writers Series: James Currey, Alan Hill and Keith Sambrook in Conversation with Kirsten Peterson.. Chinua Achebe: A Celebration* Heinemann and Dangaroo Press, Oxford, Portsmouth, Sydney, Coventry, and Aarhus.

Shillington, Kevin (1989) *History of Africa*. Revised Edition. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Vachaspati D. *Aspects of Realism in Chinua Achebe's A Man of the People*, Department of English, Haramaya University, Ethiopia.