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POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL DISORDER IN OKEY NDIBE'S *ARROWS OF RAIN.*

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Abstract

The paper centers on the attendant effects of political corruption on the psychological and social constructs of Nigerian people. Various Nigerian writers have written to portray the evils of corruption on our national lives and body polities. Nothing has generated and dominated the central themes of literary discourse in Nigeria like bad governance and corruption. This paper is therefore an attempt to investigate the ugly dimension which this monster called corruption has assumed in Nigeria today. The paper tries to examine the psychological and social breakdown which the people have suffered on the account of the actions and inactions of our political leadership. The paper attempts a comprehensive analysis of Okey Ndibe's novel, Arrows of Rain to reflect the total psycho-social breakdown and disorder the people have suffered as a result of bad governance and corrupt leadership.

Keywords: Corruption, Political Corruption, Psycho-social Disorder, Okey Ndibe, Arrows of Rain.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's political problems sprang from the carefree manner in which the British took over, administered, and abandoned the government and people of Nigeria. British administrators did not make an effort to weld the country together and unite the heterogeneous groups of people. Though, many things we have today are due to their enlightenment, they still left the country hanging. According to Adewale Ademoyega in his book *Why We Struck* (1981), he says that when the British came, they forcibly rubber-stamped the political state of the ethnic groups of Nigeria, and maintained that status quo until they left. According to him upon their departure nearly a hundred years later, the people resumed fighting for their political rights. When the British came to Nigeria as an imperial nation to take over the governance of the country from 1861 (with the cession of Lagos), they met the people of the South totally free,

only observing and regulating their own monarchies and institutions. Chinua Achebe in his novel, *Things Fall Apart*, 1958, tries to portray the life Africans lived before and during the arrival of the Europeans in Nigeria.

Things Fall Apart tells the tragic story of the rise and fall of Okonkwo and the equally tragic story of the disintegration of Igbo culture, symbolized by the agrarian society of Umuofia, under the relentless encroachments of British Christian imperialism.

For Achebe, *Mister Johnson* by Joyce Cary represents the worst kind of portrayal of Africans by Europeans. To him, the portrayal was all the more disheartening because Joyce Cary was working hard to achieve an accurate depiction, unlike many British authors during the imperial colonial period who deliberately, often cynically, exploited stereotyped of Africans and African societies. It was precisely because Joyce Cary was a liberal- minded and sympathetic writer, as well as a colonial administrator that Achebe felt the record had to be set straight. Achebe's purpose then was to write about his own people. His first set of novels formed a continuum over one hundred years of Igbo civilization. The Europeans have not yet penetrated Umuofia, the setting of *Things Fall Apart.* When the novel ends colonial rule has been established. His other novels talk about the different changes that took place before independence and after it. The British governed Nigerian indirectly through their traditional rulers, as a result, the true leader of the masses were hamstrung and held down. Just because Africans were given authority to rule over their own people, they saw it as a means to maltreat those that have wronged them, extort from those that have more than them and sell his/her own brother and sister for favours from the superior leaders - The British. (Adewale Ademoyega. *Why We Struck*).

These actions by the local and foreign leaders made the people to seek for independence. Many of them were not thinking straight any more. Many people now saw the need to transfer their faults to others using others as an excuse. The present leadership blames the colonial masters and fore runners- for-independence for their actions for not doing what was expected of them well and also for the embezzlement and stealing of public funds. They claim that the colonial masters taught them to do so. The political elites in other to become rich and influential in the society, steal and blame it on the economy and leaders. No one takes responsibility for his own crime and faults.

Between the politicians and the military, they blame one another for a bad government no one agrees that the other is better. In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, people do all type of things just to steal from the petroleum companies, they believe that it is their own right. Everybody in the country is in one way or the other suffering from the harms political corruption brought, we are psycho-socially disordered. No ethnic group trusts the other. Mutual mistrust and discord pervades the land.

Kole Omotoso in his fictions focuses on identifying the problems in Nigerian society and proposing solutions. He lived his childhood and adolescence, sharing the nationalist dreams of peace, progress, and prosperity, as an adult and as a writer, he was forced to watch the systematic deferment of these dreams after independence for decades after freedom from

colonial rule, Nigeria was cursed by civil strife, including a civil war (1967 — 1970) and incessant military *coups d'etat*. These events, together with undemocratic rule, political chicanery and bureaucratic cynicism resulted in a steady decline in the quality of life in a nation that is the most populous black nation on earth and often looked upon as representative of the black race. Omotoso tries to use fiction to talk about the decay and chaos in the society but he tries to make it less real like Armah did in his *The Beaulyful Ones Are Not Yet Born.*

Political corruption is the use of legislated powers by government officials for illegitimate private gain, misuse of government power for other purposes, such as repression of political opponents and general police brutality is also considered political corruption.
Forms of corruption vary, it include: bribery, extortion, cronyism, nepotism, patronage, graft and embezzlement. While corruption may facilitate criminal enterprises such as drug trafficking, money laundering and trafficking, it is not restricted to these activities. While political corruption is an illegal abuse of power, psychosocial disorder is the mental reaction one gets from it.

Psycho-social disorder is a mental illness caused or influenced by maladjusted cognitive and behavioral processes.

Due to the political dictatorship and the high rate of starvation and poverty in the country, many of the people are suffering from problems caused by the many ways they are treated and controlled. Their manners of thinking have been blurred with the idea that if they steal or kill to survive, it is not a crime because their leaders are also thieves who loot the national treasury.

Again due to this, the citizens are psycho-socially disordered and their minds corrupt. The key problem is the government. Because of the corrupt nature of the society, the government sells her pride and glory to foreign companies and enterprises. These people now treat the natural inhabitants of the areas where the companies are located like animals without dignity. Example is the Niger Delta area of Nigeria which is the oil producing states. The major problem is between the people and their government. Both are psychologically and socially sick. The pain of poverty and starvation in abundant; money has destroyed the people's mind that they no longer think or reason straight.

According to Chinua Achebe, the consequence of the loss of predictable political power in a community is one thing; at the national level, they are quite different. He turns to this latter issue in his fourth novel, *A Man of the People* (1966) which is set in the post colonial period in an unnamed Independent African country. The governance of the country is, nominally, in the hands of the people. The quality of the leadership and the response of the people to that leadership are the central theme. There is neither collective will in the people nor responsible leadership. Moreover, a collective voice at the community level, through which agreement is articulated in *Things Fail Apart, Arrow of God and No Longer at Ease* is very visible.

Consequently, *A Man of the People* (1966) completes a tetralogy of novels that reveals the changes wrought in Nigerian life during the twentieth century against a background of

changing and evolving social and political realities. Chinua Achebe reveals his concern with individual humanity and with responses of his character to the social problems in which they become enmeshed. His interest is in failure, for out of his characters responses to new possibilities arise. This is why *A Man of the People* is open ended. At the close of the novel, Odili begins to have a sense of what needs to be done. Odili's discovery allows for due possibility that a new political attitude will emerge. *A Man of the People* is a prophetic novel. Its publication in January 1966 coincided almost exactly with the first military takeover in Nigeria. The worsening political situation in Nigeria led to the persecution of the Igbo people, most notable in Northern Nigeria where a series of massacres took place.

In African writers volume II, Obi Maduakor discusses Festus Iyayi's second novel — *The Contract* (1982). It highlights the racket in contract inflation and the greed of contract brokers. In this form of corruption, the percentage paid to members of contract award committees is officially built into the value of a contract. The novel opens with a vast panorama of environmental chaos reflected in the madding crowds at airports, traffic confusion on the roads, and mountain of refuse on the streets. Ogie Obala, the protagonist just back from the United Kingdom, is assaulted at the International airport by a sea of battered and hungry faces. At the domestic airport, were he goes to make a local connection, no sense of order or decorum exists as evidence of civilized behaviour; boarding passes are sold by scalpers, and the desperate, angry, confusion escalates into physical violence when broken bottles fly about the vast hall. As Ogie drives into the city from the airport, he is depressed by the squalid houses and the gigantic heaps of rubbish at the road side.

Everywhere there was dirt and filth and chaos. Chaos was there in the way the houses stood, in the way the refuse spilled into roads (7). Traffic disorder exacerbates the confusion. People deliberately drive on the wrong side of the road, blocking each other's way and driving into each other.

There was nothing but abuses and curses and the blaring of horns and the screeching of brakes and then more abuse and finally swiftly physical violence and then death (7).

The chaotic setting provides the backdrop for the theme of social decadence and psycho-social disorder in the novel. Ogie returns to a Nigeria in which corruption has been institutionalized. When he becomes assimilated into the system he is able to recognize the filth and vomit as external manifestations of the people's inner decay; inwardly the people were as rotting garbage, full of worms, beetles and mice. Yes, we are an indecent people. We are vomit. (66)
Also, in his novel *Heroes* (1989) — which he discusses in Nigeria civil war, which began in 1967 with the declaration of independence by the Igbo - led Republic of Biafra and ended in 1970 with defeat by the Federal Government. He gives real episodes from the war fronts with fictional interpretation. In the article "How the present shapes the past: Festus Iyayi's *Heroes* — The Nigeria civil war Revisited" relates some of the episodes in the novel to their historical analogues, using General Obasanjo's account of the civil war in *My Command* (1980). Iyayi re-appraises the war from a class perspective. As he imagines it, the real motive behind the war from the Nigerian side is not "to keep Nigeria one" but greed.

In the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, poverty, coupled with the rampant pollution throughout the Niger Delta region have driven the Ogoni, Ijaws and other ethnic minorities in the oil producing areas of Nigeria to demand environmental and economic justice. Environmental justice brings to fore the issues of ethnicity in the use and management of our environmental resources in Nigeria. Human ethnics or values about their environment and its associated problems are very important in the proper management of the environment as it would shape and determine how policies and decisions are made on resources use.

The value of human beings and human dignity cannot be disassociated from the base, i.e. the environment on which we are living, unabated rapid population growth coupled with unethical use and conservation practices are now lowering the standard of living for a large segment of the people. Unfortunately, there is as yet a little recognition in the country's political discourse on the threat posed by unethical economy on the country in the new millennium.

In a world of social injustice, economic in equity, environmental degradation, coupled with human right violations, people are asking more clearly than ever before what are the roles of the leaders in bringing about justice and peace in the nation?

In the same vein, Wole Soyinka attacks political intimidation and repression in Nigeria's second republican government using his autobiography Aké (1981). The campaign for freedom, equality, and justice continues in post colonial societies (8). Also, Wole Soyinka while in Ghana during his exile used his editorship of the *Journal Transition* (1974 — 1976) to attack Africa's military dictatorships. in 1978, after the latest Nigerian military government had refused permission for the staging of his *Opera Wonyosi* (1981) in Lagos, he used his newly formed University of Ife Guerrilla Theatre Unit to improvise revenue performances in market places and parking lots for trucks, exposing and excoriating the racketeering political murders, and army outrage that were the hallmarks of the second Nigerian republic. Furthermore, Wole Soyinka adopts a militant stance in asking for radical changes with this vision; a writer is inclined to paint a picture of doom that would befall the society if care is not taken. Thus the writer becomes a prophet of doom. It has been observed that Achebe attained this social vision with the publication of his novel, *A Man of the People*. Just like Wole Soyinka, Achebe had predicted a military take-over following an insight into the political development in his fictional society.

There are other novels whose action ends in a military coup such as Chief Aluko's *The Honourable Minister* and Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The novels indeed proffer a change but more often than not these admonitory works do not reach their target coining off with a lot of deliriously committed political statements. He sees the artist and therefore sees himself, as a man leads the army of the revolution into the Promised Land.

Terry Eagleton's position on political criticism attests to what Sembene Ousmane perceives as the relationship between a politique i.e. the affair of the city and literature. The Marxist-Leninist construct of national question radiates around the issues raised by Eagleton. Lenin opines that national literature should recognize and problematize the contradictions and

alienation in human and social relationship emanating from bourgeois ethics and psychology of development. Niyi Osundare like Ayi Kwei Armah is advocating a symbolic world political culture based on the law of reciprocity. This is the dynamics in artistic creativity that can generate authentic human and social development.

Consequently, political criticism hegemonic discourse deals with exercise of power and the maintenance culture of the policy. The artists are conscious of that fact; the growth and modernization in African are impeded and stampeded by bad leadership. The artist or writer creates caricature of African leaders, exposing their slavish mentality, lack of organizing ability, business acumen and concern for the governed. They tower and excel autocratic and megalomaniac tendencies, turning into archetypes of I' enfant terrible. Just as Christopher Okigbo recreates the hollowness and chartilanism of this leadership in 'Paths of Thunder", equally Wole Soyinka writes *Kongi 's Harvest* to establish a hall of shame for prototypes of President Kamuzu Banda of Malawi. He draws a more dreadful barbaric portrait of the best and brute force in African leaders in the *Play of Giant*. They are masters of tenor and censorship, draining the national wealth and improvising the masses. The fiasco in leadership qualities in Africa prompts Ola Rotimi to explore a more viable and pragmatic concept of leadership in *Hopes of the Living Dead*, Harcourt Whyte, a leper, is the leader of the struggle of the oppressed in the play. Hegemonic discourse in political criticism is more relevant in explaining the inter-factional imbalance especially in the distribution of available wealth and resources. Quality egalitarianism is the hallmarks of development. But these are denied the majority in Africa. Hunger as delineated by the African writer leads to the attrition of human psyche and physique. The functionality of the physiognomic and psychic environment functionality and dynamic motion of the body politic, the writer perceives the politics of hunger as debacle to growth and development in Africa. The ugly scenario has fully produced the efficacy of the scatological technique in a critical working of national literature in Africa. The technique has become a strategic play for depicting the famished existence of the majority in Africa.

Recalling, Armah uses the language of the compost setting to explore due abject poverty and social miasmas polluting development in Africa. Dambudzo Marechera the bizarre Zimbabwean genius of creativity depicts the politic of hunger and deprivation in a neo-colonial setting by evolving stench and squalor. *The House of Hunger*, Dambudzo Marechera 1979, transforms prostitution to a stylistic play of exposing the mutilation social environment of deprivation Kenya. Sexual obscenity is a social imposed by impoverished existence and it is a corollary of an odious body politics. It is a reflection of the social and political prostitution of neo-colonial African leaders.

Many or almost all the African writers are trying to fight corruption which has caused psycho-social effect on the citizens. This writers or artists have given us fictional answer or theory on how to solve them. It is now left for the government to come down from her high horse and provide us the citizens with solution and the proper way to see Africa.

The plot of Okey Ndibe's novel *Arrows of Rain* is in three stages, firstly, the present situation of the novel (must), secondly, a flash back (recollection of the past) (memories) and thirdly, the return to the present situation, which now concludes the novel.

The first stage presents a bizarre situation! Bukuru the major character is accused of raping a lady and later kill her by drowning her. Bukuru gives his own story but he is not believed because he is labeled a mad man. After he is arrested, interrogated, and taken to court for judgment, the case is The State Vs Mr. X male adult, of no ascertainable address (21) He is accused of contributing, by acts of omission or commission to the death by drowning of a lady at B. Beach and unlawfully assaulting her by physical and sexual manner prior to her death and aided and abetted the death of the mentioned deceased by hindering her resuscitation. He refuses a lawyer for his case because he says "my case is beyond a lawyer understanding" (22) and lie, pleads not guilty.

The police send a psychiatrist to examine him, when he is brought before the court, he says "After several sessions with the accused I found him to be quite discerning, lucid and possessed of rational faculty" (23). The so called detective claims to have arrived at his conclusion that Bukuru, rapes the lady, who he calls a prostitute and later drowns her after an exhaustive thorough and professional investigation. Because Bukuru accuses the military government and the present military head of state for raping a prostitute and stabbing her in the vagina with a dagger, he also accuses the soldier (four in number) for the death of the drown lady. The justice-justice Kayode asks that the issue about General Isa Palat Bello should not be in the news and the court will resume on a later date. But a journalist named Femi who is the narrator of the story, publishes the story and he is afraid for some days for his dear life. The last part of this stage is when Mr. Mandi a psychiatrist invites Femi to follow him to visit Bukuru in the prison because Bukuru wants someone to publish his story which he refuses to tell twenty- three years ago because he is afraid of his life. The difference between Bukuru and Femi is that Femi tells his story and waits for the worse but Bukuru does not because he lacks courage.

The second stage is a reflection, a flash back into history that reveals who Bukuru actually is. How he lives his life before he fnds himself on the B beach and the circumstance that leads to his arrest. Bukuru like Femi was once a journalist, a good one for that matter, he dates a prostitute that is regularly frequented by the military men which includes Isa Palat Bello.

Before he declares himself head of state, he is and still a brutal man. When he finds out that Iyese is seeing another man, Bukuru, he threatens her and gives her a beating of her life. After some days he would come with gifts to bribe her so that he will be able to sleep with her again. When he finds out that she is pregnant and is giving birth. he and other four military men beat her and used dagger to cut her vagina and want to kill the baby. The dagger cut the baby in his right leg. He refuses to help her and the baby because he is afraid that he might be killed - the death that he knows that eventually one day he will die, he decides to choose silence and that silence, leads to his present situation. He resigns from work and forgets about everything and everybody that he knows and takes refuge at B Beach so that he will not be recognized and killed the way Iyese is killed by Isa Palat Bello and the other soldiers.

The third and final stage resolves the entire problem in a style that portrayed the author as a good writer. After, Femi reads Bukuru story, he is shocked to find out that Bukuru is his father, the father that rejected him twenty-three years ago to die from bleeding because of his cowardice nature. When he meets Bukuru, that is confronting him to find out if really he — Bukuru - is his father, Bukuru is silent, silent for the second time in his life rejecting him again and again.

After, Bukuru commits suicide. He writes a suicide note telling Femi that even if he is released today, how will he gain freedom from the guilt of turning away from a sleeping and bleeding child? From the memories of the many victims of his silence, he cannot watch another man die for him again and the only way to pay the prize of his silence is by dying himself.

Issues of political corruption can well be seen throughout the novel and that of social disorder. Right from chapter one, we could see how a lady who is abused and raped and killed by soldier, those who claim to be eradicating prostitution in the state of Madia been a fictional name for Nigeria. The proof is seen when Bukuru mentions the day of Madia's independence from colonial masters to be 1 of October 1960 which is the same as that of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Due to the abuses she has received before and now which has caused her psychological disorder, she screams with terror and runs into the water and her action leads to her death because that was the only option for her, it is better to die in the wave than to be raped again. Before we discuss the main character Bukuru, let's talk about the detectives who investigate the case for the fear of their own death, turn against a man who willingly rectifies the truth and this brings about his imprisonment and later his death. They are told that soldiers raped the woman for two horrible hours without stopping but they could not investigate that because they do not see the reason to do so. Because there is no other way to prove to the public that what Bukuru is saying is not true, they label him a mad man. Now, about Justice Kayode, he as a justice knows that what Bukuru is saying is the truth, he had to find another way to make the truth sour". He says to Bukuru.

> Listen to me, Mr. man of no name! You understand and respect due process in this court. This is a court of law, not a civic class. I 'm sure that everybody in this room, he pointed to the pregnant woman among the spectators. Everybody including the baby in that woman's womb knows that General I.P. Bello is the president and commander-in -chief of the Madia armed fbrces. it is a blatant and evil show of disrespect to the person and office of His Excellency, president of the sovereign Republic of Madia. Let me sound a strong warning, once and for all: this court will not sit idly; and allow you to use the name of his Excellency in vain. (38)

Can you imagine what comes out from the mouth of the justice? In a state where a president declares himself president for life and the people sit idle watching and praying so that they will not have an untimely death what do you expect! While justice Kayode is giving his final judgment, he asks the journalist not to report where the name of General Isa Palat Bello is

maliciously smeared. According to him and whoever dare report or who flouts this order which he has given will be summarily dealt with.

Now, about General Isa Palat Bello, the president and Commander-in- Chief of the armed forces of Madia, the terror who makes Bukuru to go on exile. Almost all the death in the novel is caused by him directly or indirectly. After ruling Madia for ten years, it is not still enough for him that he declares himself president for life. The front pages read;

> His Excellency proclaims self president for life. Release on hundred and 114 political prisoners as a gesture of his statesmanship and generosity. Wishes Madians to know that he is still the sun, rising and setting with unfailing regularity. That he steadily sees all the traitors, all the patriots, too. All saboteurs and colluders with imperialist agent working to undermine the Madia nation will be fished out and thoroughly dealt with. All patriots will be rewarded by His Excellency (17)

How will he be the sun when he is the darkness that prevents sunshine from Madia? He predicts that 1988 will be a year of plenty not for the masses but for his co-political thieves. He decrees that it is an offence for any editor to use a story whose length or prominence upstage a presidential pronouncement or deed. The offence is punishable according to the discretion of a special tribunal by a minimum of five years in jail. His leadership is so brutal that they raise war against prostitution, instead of them rehabilitating them, they will use them until they are fill, then they will send the juniors to do with them what pleases them.

Isa Palat Bello is so psychologically sick because of the power which he could not control daggered a woman's vagina after raping her serially. It is said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupt absolutely. The power that General Isa Palat Bello possesses has eaten him up to the extent of publicly threatening those that opposes his leadership.

Coming to Bukuru, he is accused yet corrupt because he knows that by keeping quiet he is promoting corruptions, yet he did not deem it fit to speak or write against what he sees or knows and to crown it up, goes on self exile for no just cause, dodging his responsibilities as a journalist. But as fate will have it, what goes around, comes around, the same lady he abandons to die, another lady of the same profession leads to his untimely death. Had he overcome the spirit of fear of the known and the unknown, he will not have been in the situation he finds himself. Speaking up at the dying minute that which he should have done twenty-three years ago, his son Femi and Iyese would have been happy as a family but he is afraid and stupid and decides to go into voluntary madness.

Conclusion

The paper tries to define the term political corruption and psycho-social disorder. It also tries to state the different forms of corruption and disorders and also what other writers have said and done to see that in some way people will see the evil of corruption and what it can do to the human body, causing it to be both psychologically and socially disordered. Political corruption is the use of legislated powers by government officials for illegitimate private gain

while a psychosocial disorder is a mental illness caused or influenced by life experiences, as well as maladjusted cognitive and behavioral processes.

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