

*The Worse than the Disease: Pay to Play in Chinua Achebe's
Novel "A Man of the People"*

Raid Jassim Mohammed

Received: 1/2/2021

Accepted: 10/4/2021

Published: 2021

*The Worse than the Disease: Pay to Play in Chinua Achebe's
Novel "A Man of the People"*

Raid Jassim Mohammed

English literature

Ministry of Education

General Directorate of Education / Diyala

07718825447

jassraed6@gmail.com

Abstract:

This paper sheds light on the issue of corruption in Nigeria among the political classes. By a modern novel, under the title A Man of the People written by a well-known Nigerian writer called Chenuia Achebe. He lampoons the political period of the first republic of Nigeria's existence after its independence. He reveals that corruption and governmental influence was seen as two sides of a coin. Leaders come to power purely for the intentions of falling up their own pockets to support their followers and clans, at the expense of the people living in poverty. The Minister of culture utilizes his role and influence to increase his personal fortune rather than to develop the culture of the country. A Man of the People is a gripping novel, which vividly describes the main characters who are the bootlicking Odili and the corrupting minister Chief Nanga. This novel chronicles the politics of African country, and its eat-and-let-eat leaders. The novel also depicts how one can reach the peak of the power by dirty ways such as deception, tribalism, bribery and nepotism.

Keywords: corruption; nepotism; revenge

Introduction:

Chinua Achebe was born in 1930, in Nigeria, in the large Ogidi village (Emenyonu xvii). He is considered as the pioneer Anglican missionaries work in Eastern Nigeria, graduated from college of Ibadan. He is considered as a literary figure in the twentieth century and is widely regarded to be the greatest African author to date, and one of the modern-day's best realms. His method of narrative and strategies gave rise to what has been characterized. The headline of the novel is taken from what Chief Nanga the main character in the novel was best described by his people in this area and in his home

*The Worse than the Disease: Pay to Play in Chinua Achebe's
Novel "A Man of the People"*

Raid Jassim Mohammed

town; he was known as "A Man of The People" (Tomlinson 275). Many African authors have claimed-and maybe very correctly so-that a number of African countries gain freedom since the late 1950's new nation-building challenges have emerged for the latter witnessing a transition from conventional to new lifestyles. Independence has undergone an indefatigable fight and search for political power. A new democratic class arose in the midst of the struggle, having ousted the colonial powers. Favor rules and distributes to those who support and sustain it. Indeed, the governing elite's goal is to maintain political achievements and guarantee stability at all costs. And to seek to use whatever gun at its disposal to maintain certain protection and control, it appeared to undermine the very reasons with which independence had been obtained (Ekaney 114) . It is impossible to suspect therefore, why Chinua Achebe represents the writer's unmistakable concern for selfishness, greed and abuse by many leaders of the newly formed African states of political influence and ranks. Through the four novels he wrote even though Achebe writes in a subtle, satiric style, the novel contains signs that he strongly and publicly abhors the corrupt machinations created by African ruling political classes and in other autonomy countries therefore, unjustly reaping the benefits of independence at the detriment of the oppressed masses (Ekaney 114). Corruption is a word that is passed between people's lips, every day and at any time it refers to the readers' imagination that money changing hands under doubtful circumstances. So, it is very important if the readers sat back and questioned themselves: How does corruption impact the growth of a country? (Kamau 19).

The government undoubtedly plays a significant role in the social, political and economic growth of a society. It serves as the foundation stone on which all other aspects of the state depend on.

A Man of the People was the first significant literary effort which written to represent what Chinua Achebe defined later as a cesspool of corruption and misrule. The events of this story are chronicles of revenge, fears, suspense, tensions, warlords, poor leaders and mentorship (Jones 8).

The novel is basically designed to prove that the conditions have gone so terrible in the modern country as to pervert the cherished values of the past and to undermine the idealism of the few who are still dedicated. In one hand, there is Odili, the protagonist, a college graduate and a high school instructor with a genuine intention to serve the common good. On the other hand, the Noble Nanga, member of Perelman and Cabinet Minister which people called them as backbenchers, a most amoral leader committed to reaching the

The Worse than the Disease: Pay to Play in Chinua Achebe's Novel "A Man of the People"

Raid Jassim Mohammed

maximum benefit from his job and contemplating the idealism of the educated class. But Nanga is an extremely charismatic fellow, so he wins in disarming Odili, who decries what he stands for, with a show of friendship that is truly patronage. Well, for a moment. Odili finds joy in this relationship and even sees attraction towards Nanga. But as Nanga seduces Odili's beloved, Odili plans revenge by entering a competing political group and vowing to reveal Nanga to electors. Nanga also wants to convince the young idealist to abandon the more realistic turf of the national politics to those, like him, He also persuades him with the promise of an advanced study university education abroad (Okpewho 16).

Chief Nanga uses his position as a minister of culture for gulping, but the people of his province and his relatives are also eating, in the minds of his electorate. Therefore, the folks are active participants in the corruption that engulfs their community. As Odili asserts: Tell them that this man had used his position to enrich himself and they would ask you – as my father did – if you thought a sensible man would spit out the juicy morsel that good fortune had placed in his mouth. (Watkins and Morrison 129)

Revenge is an omnipresent power throughout this novel. From Odili's role as narrator, the reader becomes conscious that a lot of his behaviors are motivated by his desire to exact vengeance. The structure of the A Man of the People is based on a two-tier conflict business relationship between Odili and Chief Nanga (Okafor 61). The first step is an intimate or private relationship, wherein Chief Nanga grabs Odili's girlfriend, brazenly and contemptuously, Elisa, and hold her to bedroom in Odili's existence. Then this occurs while Odili is in Chief Nanga's house as a visitor. The second stage of their relationship is a public one where Odili is eager to seize Nanga's position in parliament and hence to destroy this sample of corruption politically. Odili's reaction to Nanga's private abuse against him is to aim to gain the affection of Edna to whom Nanga has already offered a bride price as his second marriage (Okafor 61). Odili slowly starts to take a distasteful impression of Nanga's political indiscretions. He turns aggressive when Nanga seduces Elise, a girlfriend of Odili's, with no effort. Seeking vengeance, Odili follows his friend, Max, to establish a new political group- the ordinary citizens convention- to counter Nanga's reelection, The campaign is becoming aggressive. Odili is being badly attacked by thugs employed by Nanga. As he recovers in a hospital, Max is murdered by a campaign vehicle belonging to Chief Koko, one of the Nanga's friends:

*The Worse than the Disease: Pay to Play in Chinua Achebe's
Novel "A Man of the People"*

Raid Jassim Mohammed

Koko, in turn, is brutally murdered by Max's girlfriend, Eunice; Nanga's vicious hooligans cause chaos and destruction (Parehk and Jagne 25.)

Corruption is a slippery term. At a wide level, maybe it can be described as transparency international defines it: Misuse of entrusted power for private gain (Rennard 112). The president of the republic of Ghana identified corruption as "Mass killing" (Lansford 1783).

If you are born and raised up in an environment where everyone steals, do you choose to steal? The probability she/he will be arrested under the law but is low... and, even if she/he arrested, the odds of your getting heavily punished for such an increasing crime are low. Therefore she/he also steals. Conversely, if she/he resides in a community where robbed is rare, the odds are strong that you will be found and punished, Therefore, she/he decide not to rob (Belasen and Toma 39). Corruption was still with us. The incident had occurred at various locations in different times, and cause harmful effects to various degrees (Verhezen 126).

Corruption applies actions under which official authority is exploited for financial benefit, or when politicians exploit public services for private benefit. Political scientists claim that a public officer is corrupt if he accepts money or gifts' worth for doing something that he has an obligation to do anyway. Politicians deal with interested groups and work for their particular interests, in order to win or raise their own support among loyal supporters.

Sir John Delberg-Acton, best famous for the proverb, power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely (York 2). Power is the same taste of salty water; you get thirsty in spite of the fact the person drinks a lot of it (Tillquist 143). Chief Nanga, offering Odili a better position in the state, informs him that it is unfair to give anything to the tribes of the highlands. He thinks that his followers deserve to take a big share of the national cake. Therefore, no doubt, a reminder of those warlords has led to the unequal allocation of resources by putting local concerns of tribe above national issues (Kamau 20) Achebe emphasizes on individual shortcomings, and allows readers to see them as part of the state of humankind. People sympathize with urgent needs of the deprived peasants, laughing at the teacher's self-deprecating account of his opportunism, and readers understand the Minister refusal to give up his leadership job and wealth. In addition, he demonstrates to the readers that the new state, unlike the rural society, does not have appropriate policy mechanisms to control human gluttony and the desire for power (Booker 148).

The Worse than the Disease: Pay to Play in Chinua Achebe's Novel "A Man of the People"

Raid Jassim Mohammed

The impression the readers get of Odili is that of a fantastic, principled youngster, he has attempted to gain scholarships both to high school and to post graduated, Although Odili laments the change in events after independence when he states that it did not important 'what one knew but whom one knew,' he has declined to bend a knee to fulfill his objectives. He strongly claims that he is not able to "lick any big man's boots", or to "sell his soul", or "beg anyone to help him". He only welcomed the deal because it gave him the chance to sleep with his girlfriend, Elsie. That is why the Nanga's offer could not have appeared at a more suitable time. Odili had a group of university girls in the center of the town would have had no problems in putting him up. Unfortunately they cannot equip a bed room with all comfortable things. As for Elsie, he tells us, she was the only young lady I ever encountered and slept with the same night, at the end of this scene the readers can recognize how Odili's self-interest demonstrates the condition of opportunism versus hypocrisy (kamau 3).

Hypocrisy is a theater performer, a pretender, an individual who claims to be what he is not (Saxton 45). Or someone who is pretending that his/her personality is like the personality of the pious person (Bellinger142). The most significant event in this novel happens when Chief Nanga, Odili and Elsie gather home in that day, when Chief Nanga invites Odili to his house. This evening represents the changing point between Chief Nanga and Odili. Chief Nanga pretends to be good with Odili who waits for Nanga to go to his bed room so he can creep to where Elsie is sleeping. Chief Nanga has his own wicked intrigues, and then he is steal Odili's girlfriend Elsie and makes love with her. Chief Nanga's lack of morals is demonstrated when he takes his friend's girlfriend to bed in his own wife's bedroom. The full psychology of a man seething all at once with rage, shame, disbelief, anger, ineptitude is depicted at a point when Odili makes up his mind to "boldly (...) knock on Elsie's door", he hears Elsie "as from a great distance... deliriously screaming my (his) name...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". (Emenyonu 213)

The readers can recognize that both Nanga and Elsie betrayed Odili. Nanga's sexual desire excesses had reached a climax when he avidly snatch Odili's libidinous girlfriend, Elsie, in his wife's bedroom this infuriates the totally

*The Worse than the Disease: Pay to Play in Chinua Achebe's
Novel "A Man of the People"*

Raid Jassim Mohammed

humiliated Odili and precipitates the persistent battle between Chief Nanga and Odili depend on party lines (Kamau 8).

Odili had classified Elsie as a "kabu-kabu", these words used to indicate to low price cabs which would force any passer-by to take a small cost trip. In the situation of Elsie, she would not differentiate between one ride and another, because all she is involved in is sex. She offers herself to the greatest buyer. Odili was very desperate to make relationship with Edna, he makes bids to woo her but finally he received this respond from her father. Edna's father attempts to tell Odili that he does not appreciate him as a new husband for his attractive daughter Edna and so names Odili's current car "a Volkswagon beetle" "a tortoise". Odili wants to revenge to himself upon Chief Nanga because the latest one sneaking and steals his girlfriend Elsie so Odili tries to seduce Nanga's new fiancée Edna. This situation is like killing two birds with one shoot. It shows parental complicity in selling teenager ladies to the potential buyer, and also by charging Odili with the deadly weapon he wants to face Nanga in his own house front (Emenyonu 224.)

Finally, the readers can recognize from the plot of the novel that individuals are not sincere both in personal and public affairs as they betray their relatives, the society and friends. War leaders often utilize government resources to accomplish their own personal ends-like while Nanga needs a tarnished path to win political support from its constituents and he hopes to add new buses to ply along the path. Personal accountability, for those leaders, falls before public benefit. Those war leaders promote nepotism and tribalism in the country (kamau19). Despite their apparent social duty, political leaders are especially interested in the reinforcing of their power, even if this means the persecution of dissidents (Zapata 214).

Chief Nanga makes a deal with a minister of public Construction; Chief Nanga wants to tar an unpaved path before the next elections. This means that he is employing government resources to satisfy fans in order to achieve electoral benefits. He is not pleased when he is informed that a specialist has recommended against the tarring of the path before they checking the soil. He shows disrespect for local specialists and usually states that he wants to communicate with Europeans' experts. Ten luxurious buses were commissioned by Nanga to ply the road as soon as it was tarred. Any of them would cost him six thousand pounds. Hence, he has two explanations why he needs major road tarred- Political benefit during election campaign and economic benefit through the cars. Although he says that he is going to buy those buses, there seems to be that they may be a sort of gift from his abroad

***The Worse than the Disease: Pay to Play in Chinua Achebe's
Novel "A Man of the People"***

Raid Jassim Mohammed

political coworkers or probably a type of kickback (kamau 6.) Ralph was Elsie's first boyfriend when she first got sexually involved with Odili, when Odili and Elsie had first had sex. She was calling out Ralph's name, and then going away to medical school at the university. This situation leads Irre, a student colleague and the local clown, to call Odili "Assistant Ralph". Ironically, when Elsie slept with Chief Nanga in her wife's room even as Odili is nearing her room in the intention of a sexual contact, she calls Odili's name at the key moment (Booker 299). The reader gets the impression that Odili is only beginning and that he will be as corrupt if not more than Chief Nanga. He will later accept bribe money in the name of his new party and hire thugs. What will be the hope for the country where both the older and younger generations are the likes of these two men? Who is the actual man of the people? (Emenyonu 226)

Conclusion:

For a community to work smoothly and efficiently its citizens should adopt certain fundamental values and ethical principles. Public morals must prevail among people over private loyalty. A person should always be certain of what he had put away properly in his belly. In contrary to self-interest, which has the potential to corrupt politicians, the public interest should be given special privileges priority. The significance of life depends in its ethics. And, as it has always been correct, lies in its ethical conflict, then in comprehension and virtue. The pursuit of absolute personal integrity, Sincerity and equity will always be a respectable and hard task but not impossible. Dwight D. Eisenhower said: The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionable integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office. (Pal and Mathew 1) One of a successful leader's qualities is honesty. Integrity is a term of consistency of behaviors, morals, techniques, measures, concepts, objectives and results. It indicates a strong commitment to work the correct job for the correct purpose, each human being is born with a conscience and the potential to distinguish between correct from mistake. Selecting the correct, regardless of the result is the mark of integrity.

Works Cited Belasen, Alan T. Toma, Roxana. *Confronting Corruption in Business: Trusted Leadership: Civic Engagement*. New York: Routledge, 2016. Bellinger, Charles K. *The Trinitarian Self: The Key to the Puzzle of Violence*. United States of America: Pickwick, 2008. Booker, M. Keith. *The Chinua Achebe Encyclopedia*. London: Greenwood Press, 2003.

*The Worse than the Disease: Pay to Play in Chinua Achebe's
Novel "A Man of the People"*

Raid Jassim Mohammed

-
-
- Ekaney, Nkwelle. Corruption and Politics in Chinua Achebe's "A Man of the People": An Assessment. Presence African Editions.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24349492>.
- Emenyonu, Ernest N. Emerging Perspective on Chinua Achebe. Vol.1. Omenka: the Master Artist. Eritrea: Africa World Press, Inc., 2004.
- Emenyonu, Ernest N. Goatskin Bags and Wisdom: New Critical Perspectives on African Literature. Asmara: Eritrea, Africa World Press, Inc., 2000.
- Jones, Derek. Censorship: A World Encyclopedia. Volume 1-4. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Kamau, Kiarie. Notes on Chinua Achebe's: A Man of The People. Nairobi. Kampala: East African Educational, 2002.
- Lansford, Tom. Political Handbook of the World 2016-2017. United States of America: CQ Press, 2017.
- Okafor, Dubern. Meditations on African Literature. London: Greenwood Press, 2001.
- Okpewho, Isidore. Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart: A Casebook. New York Oxford University Press, Inc., 2003.
- Pal, Partha Pratim. Mathew, Jones. The Leadership Essentials: A practical Handbook for Success
Workplace Series Presentation. India: Blue Rose, 2020.
- Parekh, Pushpa Naidu. Jagne, Siga Fatima. Postcolonial African Writers: A Bio-Biographical Critical Sourcebook. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Rennard, Jean-Philip. Handbook of Research on Nature- Inspired Computing for Economics and Management. United States of America: Idea Group Reference, 2007.
- Saxton, Jeff. The New Pharisee. New York: Strategic Book, 2010.
- Tillquist, Kristin, Capitalizing on Kindness: Why 21st Century Professionals need to be Nice. United States of America: the Career Press, Inc., 2009.
- Tomlinson, Brian. Materials Development in Language Teaching. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Verhezen, Peter. Gifts, Corruption, Philanthropy: The Ambiguity of Gift Practices in Business. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2009.
- Watkins, Susan. Morrison, Jago. Scandalous Fictions: The Twentieth-Century Novel in The Public Sphere. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- York, Ronald J. The Police Negotiator's Handbook. United States of America: Policepay. Net, Inc., 2007.

The Worse than the Disease: Pay to Play in Chinua Achebe's Novel "A Man of the People"

Raid Jassim Mohammed

Zapata, Jesus Varela. Men of the People: Chinua Achebe's Post-Colonial Intellectuals and Politicians.vol.15. Aedan: Asociacion espanola de estudios –americanos. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41054715>.

الأسوأ من المرض، الدفع مقابل اللعب في رواية تشينوا أشيبي "رجل الشعب"

م.م. رائد جاسم محمد

الأدب الانكليزي- وزارة التربية

المديرية العامة للتربية في ديالى

مستخلص البحث:

تسلط هذه الورقة الضوء على قضية الفساد بين الطبقة السياسية في نيجيريا، من خلال رواية حديثة، تحت عنوان "رجل الشعب" من قبل كاتب نيجيري مشهور يدعى تشينوا أشيبي. الكاتب يهجو الحقبة السياسية للجمهورية النيجرية الأولى بعد استقلالها. يكشف فيها أن الفساد وتأثير الحكومة يعتبران وجهين لعملة واحدة. يأتي القادة إلى السلطة بمجرد ملء جيوبهم الخاصة لدعم أتباعهم وعشائرتهم على حساب الفقراء. يستخدم وزير الثقافة دوره ونفوذه لزيادة ثروته الشخصية بدلاً من تطوير ثقافة البلاد. رجل الشعب رواية جذابة، مع وصف واضح للشخصيات الرئيسية: وهم أوديلي المتملق ورئيس الوزراء الفاسد نانجا. تسجل هذه الرواية سياسات الدولة الأفريقية وقادتها الذين يأكلون ويؤكلون. تصور هذه الرواية أيضاً كيف يمكن للمرء أن يصل إلى ذروة السلطة بأساليب قذرة مثل الخداع والقبلية والرشوة والمحسوبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفساد، المحاباة، الانتقام.