

# Corruption and the leadership question in Nwabueze's A Parliament of Vultures and Ogbeche's Harvest of Corruption

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**Abstract-** *Corruption is one of the numerous problems that besieged most African nations immediately after their independence and is still eating deep into their systems. In Nigeria, the economic, socio-political and religious sectors are in disarray. Corruption is increasing and is at the edge of turning into a norm. It has reached the extent of undermining development and economic prosperity that more than 75% of the people are living in abject poverty. Politicians devoid of integrity, patriotism and commitment lead but blow the whistle on their efforts in the fight against corruption. Many writers have expressed the menace of corruption in their works. This paper explores playwrights' critical responses to the fight against corruption in Nigeria and aims at providing solutions by highlighting the severe punishments to be meted on citizens guilty of corruption. It also aims at unfolding qualities expected of the citizens for a meaningful fight of corruption.*

**Keywords-** Corruption, punishment, playwrights' view, integrity, patriotism, and commitment

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption in the form of rigging of elections, embezzlement of state funds, reservation of leadership positions for the highest bidders, bribery and paying off leadership oppositions, silencing opponents through the use of thugs, use of state security to oppress the people, reservation of political appointments for offspring, relatives and close friends etc. have marred political developments in African nations. Nigeria is rated one of the most corrupt nations of the world and has placed a label on Nigerian citizens everywhere they go. Fighting corruption in Nigeria has become a difficult task; the leaders involved in corrupt practices see it as 'their share of the national cake', while the led see it as the best option for survival. Okwuaghala (2018) in support of this asserts that corruption is highest in the political system and that in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, corruption is seen as normal<sup>1</sup> He further stresses that this is the reason why both the youth and the old struggle to find themselves in one political party or the other. The people believe that once they occupy any position in politics, even the smallest, they will use corrupt tricks to fill their pockets with public fund (<https://soapboxie.com>).<sup>2</sup> Foreign companies that have their business investments in the country join the political leaders in the bandwagon of

corruption. The corrupt leaders use all criminal strategies to create disharmony among masses and try to make corruption a norm in the socio-political, economic and cultural milieu of people. It has capstone into breeding political apathy, disillusionment, various shades of wanton violence and political instability in Nigeria that despite the ubiquitous natural and human resources in the country, corruption has led to wide-margined distribution of the nation's wealth. Over 75% of the people live in abject poverty and below 5% are ostentatiously rich. The fight against corruption has been the concern of Nigerians but corrupt practices are increasing day by day. African literary writers have been doing their work so well representing the problem with Africa that corruption is one of the major themes that saturate their literary texts.

Corruption has caused a number of woes which have not only smudged the image of Nigeria but have also bedevilled the peaceful day to day lives of Nigerians. This pile of woes includes such calamities as assassination, insecurity, robbery, militancy, kidnapping and all other sorts of violence. The vices all emanate from nepotism, tribalism and unpatriotic life of the people. Nigeria is created by the bringing together of Northern and Southern protectorates made up of different ethnic groups by the British colonial masters in the 19th century for their easy economic exploitation. Urama (2018) opines that this imposition under Lord Lugard which was done in 1914 has caused a thousand and one problems to Nigerians because the different ethnic groups in Nigeria refuse to accept the imposed amalgamation even after a century of the birth of

<sup>1</sup>Uzochukwu Mike Okwuaghala, 'Corruption in Nigeria: Review, Causes, Effects and Solution' (2018) highlights corruption in the Nigerian political system.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

the country and fifty-seven years of her independence.<sup>3</sup> Urama (2018) also brings to the limelight how the unaccepted oneness by Nigerians had led to marginalization which was the cause of the first civil war in Africa in 1967 (The Biafran War) and how the terrible wound caused by the war on the Igbo ethnic group of Nigeria has refused to heal even after fifty years (21)<sup>4</sup>. As the marginalization of the some ethnic groups increases day by day in Nigeria even in this 21st century, it results to hate speeches among the ethnic groups. The questions everyone asks becomes: How can there be peaceful co-existence and national development in Nigeria with corruption in the increase as the people have refused to learn from their past mistakes: Is restructuring the social system of Nigeria an impossible task?

Despite the fact that Nigerian literary writers as prophets have predicted the trouble corruption would cause the nation in the future right from time, their call for social reconstruction is turned down by political leaders. Writers create literary works that suggest the proper ways to fight corruption meaningfully and the way forward for justice and peace to reign in the country. This study explores the menace caused by corruption in Nigeria as represented in the two drama texts, Emeka Nwabueze's *A Parliament of Vultures* (2000) and Frank Ogodo Ogbeche's *Harvest of Corruption* (2005).

Intertextuality approach to literary criticism which argues that words are parts of the structure of literature and they are interwoven to hide the meaning of the text is employed in this study. The theorists point out that textuality does not just mean written words but means the placement of the words as well as the reader's interpretation of the text (Barry 2002). It is reading a text and interpreting it by different people in different ways. Intertextuality creates an interrelationship between texts and generate related understanding in the separate works. The term intertextuality was invented by Kristeva (1980) argues that authors do not create texts from their own mind, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts (36)<sup>5</sup>. She further points out that the text becomes a combination of texts in which several utterances are taken from other texts to intersect and neutralize one another. Texts do not have unified meanings of their own according to Kristeva (2015), but the meaning is connected to the cultural and social processes on-going in a society. Hebel (1989) also argues that the shaping of a text's meaning by another text can be through allusion, quotation and referencing. It can

be said to be a continued dialogue with other literary texts for an examination of multiple meanings<sup>6</sup>. The two selected plays, *A Parliament of Vultures* and *Harvest of Corruption* expose the drug menace, religious bigotry, embezzlement of national fund, "419" or deception, cultism, moral decadence, bribery and corruption and disrespect for law and order in Nigeria. They have same themes and stylistic preoccupations which are not peculiar to Nigeria but almost all other African countries. This implies that the meanings/interpretations of the selected literary texts used in this study are not limited to the people of Nigeria but to African nation states. In short, the texts actually speak to other texts across the world to prove that corruption is detrimental to every society. The authors individual experiences as citizens of Nigeria and their knowledge from others texts that satirize societies equipped in creating the texts. Therefore, intertextuality approach to literary criticism is relevant for the study.

## **2. THE WRITERS AND THE REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND SOCIAL VICES**

Creative writers not only highlight the bribery, cultism, armed robbery, political assassinations, kidnapping, drug trafficking, sexual abuse and prostitution etc. going on in Nigeria but also "pen robbery" as one of the major corrupt practices that have helped in milking the country dry. In the play, *A Parliament of Vultures*, Emeka Nwabueze exposes the corrupt practices going on in the legislative arms of government in Nigeria to bring the hypocrisy of the political leaders to the limelight. The legislators assume office and empty the national treasury by milking the country dry. How they embezzle the nation's funds in the play is revealed in the use of the grant meant for payment of salaries to acquire personal properties and to fund their political parties. They do not see building a strong and sound educational system as so important. This is seen in the way and manner Habamero said it: "You can start with a hundred million. If you need supplementary fund, you can always divert some funds from the education allocation" (44). They enrich themselves with the national fund, yet they are insatiable. Their greed is portrayed in the dialogue between Brown and Madam Omeaku<sup>7</sup> thus:

Brown: You've really achieved a lot, madam.

Madam: What have I achieved? Because I now live in my own fifty-hectre estate, completed three buildings in Commercial Avenue and set up my import and export business for my husband to manage. You think I've achieved much. I feel I'm too slow. So far, I've been able

<sup>3</sup>Evelyn N. Urama, 'Literature and the Society: Lack of Patriotism and Unity of Purpose and Nigerian Democratic Government.' (2018) asserts that the amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorates without understanding the cultural differences of the people in 1914 by Lord Lugard is the root of division in Nigeria.

<sup>4</sup>Urama (2018) points out that the division because of ethnic differences leads to the Nigerian/Biafra War.

<sup>5</sup> Julie Kristeva, *Desire in Language: Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1980) argues that authors do not create texts from their own mind but compile them from pre-existent texts.

<sup>6</sup>Hebel, J. Udo, *Intertextuality, allusion, and quotation: an international bibliography of critical studies.* (1989) addresses the shaping of a text's meaning by another text through allusion, quotation and referencing.

<sup>7</sup>Omeaku which literally means spreading of wealth in Igbo language is a symbolical name chosen by the author to highlight how politicians squander money in Nigeria.

to purchase only three different models of the Mercedes, one model of BMW, and a Lexus and sent my children to study in America (Nwabueze 2000, 102-103).

This is the calibre of people that run our legislature in Nigeria. The playwright's creation of the character, Madam Omeaku, a bar owner, as one of the parliamentarians in the play is to highlight the kind of people 'elected' as legislators in Nigeria. School dropouts, incompetent and corrupt individuals make up the political leaders and they waste billions of the national funds on themselves. Many of Nigerian politicians also boost other nations' economy by building or buying houses in other nations, especially European countries. Facts and figures have proved that in many occasions they deposit the money they embezzle in foreign banks.

The parliamentarians are not afraid of diverting allocations meant for the development of the nation because they will always protect themselves from facing the consequences of their actions. Their salaries are in tens of millions naira and an annual salary of one parliamentarian is enough to employ and pay more than eighty people that earn one hundred thousand naira each month. Sotubo (2016) points out how the former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo has described the National Assembly. He describes it as a den of corruption on Wednesday November 24, 2016 in his speech at the First Akintola Williams Annual Lecture in Lagos. She further stresses on Obasanjo's speech thus:

Members of the national assembly pay themselves allowances for staff and offices they do not have or maintain. Once you are a member, you are co-opted and you cannot opt out as you go home with not less than N15 million a month for a Senator and N10 million for a member of House of Representatives (Sotubo 2016)<sup>8</sup>.

The reason why the political leaders pay less attention to the cry of educationalists for the improvement on the development of quality education in Nigeria is revealed in Mr. Habamero's speech in the play. The parliamentarians' children are sent to Europe and America to get quality education. The politicians claim that Nigerian universities are not giving quality education while they are bent on destroying the educational system. They embezzle the fund that is set for research, infrastructure and development of academics. Nwabueze uses dialogue, to portray the parliamentarians' attitude of sending their children to United States and United Kingdom for quality education.

Brown: That was a wise to send them to universities abroad.

Madam: You're telling me? Our universities are useless. No infrastructure, strikes all the time, and secret societies. And the lecturers are more interested in selling handouts than in teaching. My children deserve better than that (Nwabueze 2000, 103).

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<sup>8</sup>Jola Sotubo's article on Pulse.ng entitled 'Senators make N15M monthly, Reps 10M, Ex president says' points out how the former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo has described the National Assembly.

The play, *A Parliament of Vulture*, also satirizes the way and manner the illiterate politicians look down on their fellow politicians who want to promote transparency as a good quality of administration. The other members of the parliament are annoyed and plot for the elimination of Dr. Parkers and Mr. Otoibo because two of them reveal the embezzlements in the parliament to the men of the press. Dr. Parkers argues: "the Parliament is not a secret society. It's absurd that the parliament should mask its activities from the same people it purposes to be representing" (Nwabueze 2000, 88) but the other parliamentarians insist that the masses should be kept on the dark about what they are doing. Mr. Brown attacks Dr. Parkers reminding them of their responsibility to the masses and responds: "... parliament does not purport to represent anybody. It represents itself" (Nwabueze 2000, 88). This portrays how the Nigerian political leaders turn their backs on the masses immediately they are voted into power. A good example is the government's reaction to the recent spilling of innocent citizens' blood in Nigeria. The killings do not move the leaders into pity rather they prefer attending wedding feasts when some of the citizens are murdered like animals by the Fulani Herdsmen in Benue, Kogi, Taraba and Plateau States etc. Umaru Al Makura, the Special Adviser to the Nasarawa State Governor on Security matters, discloses that "due to the spill-over of killings in Benue State, over 18,000 people had been displaced in Nasarawa State" (Agency Report, January 11, 2018 Comment 1)<sup>9</sup>. Even while the Nigerian Herder Association called "Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association" claims responsibilities of the killings, the government keeps blaming it on opponents and enemies of the government. The five young men that killed one of the Fulani Herdsmen when they carried out attack in their community are sentenced to death by hanging and they have left the Fulani Herdsmen that kill men in hundreds to go their normal business. The situation makes many Nigerians conclude that the life of cows is more valuable to the Nigerian government than that of humans. Due to nepotism and tribalism, Nigerian government under President Mohammadu Buhari has continued to turn deaf ears to the cry of the people on the proffering ways to end the menace of the armed Fulani herdsmen that is threatening peace, order and productivity in the country. In a communiqué issued at the end of Summit of the Yoruba Council of Elders in January 2018 at Lagos, the leaders said, "it was imperative to declare the killer herdsmen and militias terrorists, disarm the Fulani herdsmen and militias and probe the source of their arms" (Armeh 2018)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup>Ogbunabali means he who kills in the night in Igbo language.

<sup>10</sup> In a news conference on Thursday January 11 2018, the Special Adviser to the Nasarawa State Governor, Umaru Al Makura reports that due to the killings in Benue State, Nigeria by the Fulani Herdsmen, over 18,000 people have been displaced in Nasarawa State. (Benue killings over <https://www.premiumtimesng.com>).



In Nwabueze (2000), when Dr. Parkers tries to advice the parliamentarians as an expert, as a political scientist, they call him "Textbook politician" (89). This is to bring to the limelight the height of mockery the school dropouts in politics that embezzle the nation's money give to the experts and professionals. They see the educated citizens' suggestions and advice as hindrances on their hunger for power and money-making motifs. The government turn deaf ears to the advice of the people to bring the Fulani herdsmen to book instead the people killed are given mass burial within 72 hours. They denied their loved ones and families claim over their corpse because they want to hide their misdeeds from the International Court of Justice. When the other members of the parliament see Mr. Otobo and Dr. Parkers as threat to their embezzlement plans, they conspire against them and pass vote of no confidence on them. Nwabueze's presentation of how they deal ruthlessly with them. Mr. Otobo and Dr. Parker, the two patriots that want to expose the evil acts of the legislators in the play is to created character traits that portray the minority of Nigerian politicians who still maintain their integrity. This is a realistic representation of the nature of politics in Nigeria. The politicians form cliques among themselves, have group meetings after general meetings against one another just to eliminate those who care for the masses. They see such people as obstacles to their "sharing of the national cake."

The parliamentarians in the play introduced the use of Ogbunabani<sup>11</sup>, a fetish symbol instead of the normal bible-swearing. They are more comfortable using the Ogbunabani because they know the secret of the potency of Ogbunabani and can always alter its power at will. They also made this fetish element Ogbunabani to help them in carrying out their evil activities and they call it 'the symbol of our ancestors' (Nwabueze 2000, 37). Nwabueze creates this fetish element to expose occultism among the political leaders in Nigeria. Most of the politicians are occultists. They protect one another and conceal their corrupt activities from the people. The parliamentarians in A Parliament of Vultures take oaths to protect one another.

Anyone here who reports any other member to the journalists or who accuses another member of any offence without going through the chairman, anyone who talks evil about anyone here, especially with regard to financial gratification, may Ogbunabani rub that fellow with ashes (Nwabueze 2000, 38).

Nigerian politicians use some of the unemployed youths as thugs and equip them with guns to carry out the assassinations of their opponents for them. Most times these political thugs are school dropouts and they are paid

more than senior civil servants. They take the thugs to fetish shrines and make them swear oaths that they pledge their allegiance to them. This is why Nigerian youth keep following the corrupt politicians sheepishly and support them even when they know all their ill intentions. If the political leaders who employ the thugs finish their tenure and the thugs are no longer paid their stipends, they use what they have got from the politicians which are the guns to earn their living. They turn into armed robbers, kidnappers and terrorists. The thugs not only stop at being criminal but struggle to enter politics to get their own shares of 'the national cake'.

Madam Omeaku in A Parliament of Vultures uses her daughter, Nkechi, to achieve the deceitful plots of her fellow corrupt legislators against Mr. Otobo and Dr. Parkers. This is to highlight that there is much moral bankruptcy among our political leaders in Nigeria. Politicians keep mistresses; they sleep around with young girls that are younger than their daughters and that is the reason why they set up one another with women to destroy their political career. The representation of Madam Omeaku's use of her daughter to delay fellow parliamentarians from attend their meeting until the others have taken decisions against them portrays how the corrupt are the majority. They connive to suppress the good ones. There is a networking operation of these corrupt politicians in Nigeria. They know the evils they commit and therefore protect one another. They cause divisions among the ethnic groups and go back to reconcile issues among themselves in their meetings where their common goal is how to enrich their pockets.

In the play, Harvest of Corruption, Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka, Ochuole and Madam Hoha form a network to make it easier for them to collect money from the people. Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka, as the Honourable Minister, exploits the jobless graduates by employing the services of Ochuole, his Administrative Officer and partner in crime, and Madam Hoha, the manager of Akpara Hotel. Akpara Hotel is the hotel where Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka perpetuates his criminal activities. He also plans and executes his drug business using them – Chief's "escapades with young girls in his by different people and Ministry as well as smuggling and the drug racket associated with him" (Ogbeche 2005, 23).

In Harvest of Corruption, Frank Ogodo Ogbeche, a civil servant that works in the presidency in Abuja, exposes corrupt practices of public servants in the country using the fictional country called Jacassa. The Honourable Minister of External Relations' 'pen robbery' presented in the play is to expose the embezzlement of public funds by top public officers in Nigeria. The amount of public money embezzled by Chief Haladu-Amaka is one point two billion naira. The representation of the huge sum of money he embezzled is to portray billions of naira stole by public servants in Nigeria and to show that Nigeria looses more through 'pen robbery' than she looses from armed robbery. Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka grows so fat because he has enough naira to throw about while many Nigerians are

<sup>11</sup> Comrade Godwin Ameh, 'Declare Fulani herdsmen terrorist group now – Yoruba Leaders tell Nigeria government' in Daily Post.ng News January 26, 2018 addresses the killings of the armed Fulani herdsmen to highlight insecurity of Nigerian citizens under Mohammodu Buhari's government.

living in abject poverty. 'He has protruding stomach that his friend call him 'the pregnant chief' (16). He gives and accepts bribe, runs after girls and enjoys the warmth of women's company. He is involved in drug trafficking and uses the warehouse for his cocaine deals. His personal life therefore depicts the life of a typical Nigerian politician who is usually involved in a chain of corrupt practices. They usually pay off the security officers to buy them over and corruption keeps increasing everyday.

Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka gives bribe to the Police Officer, Justice Odili (a.k.a. Chief Justice) investigating his involvement in drug trafficking. Justice Odili accepts the bribe with joy - He receives "with a glow of gratitude" (30): Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka also gives bribe to Assistant Police Commissioner, ACP Yakubu investigating his embezzlement case but ACP Yakubu turns down the offer. The creation of these two police officers, one honest and the other corrupt in the play, portrays that despite the corruption among security officers, there are still some who are honest and maintain their dignity. It is also to encourage those who fight corruption to continue, even though majority of the people are corrupt. The playwright describes Yakubu thus: "Assistant Police Commissioner, (ACP) Yakubu, is a disciplinarian to the core who has cracked so many crime cases to his credit" (22).

In the play, Inspector Inaku, a Detective Inspector in the Criminal Investigation Department of the Jacassan Police Force, also obtains his evidence against Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka and his cohorts by bribing Ayo, a clerk in the Ministry of External Relations, to secure the relevant documents. Ayo quickly accepts two thousand naira which is almost equals to his monthly salary from Inspector Inaku and gives out all the relevant official documents and vouchers relating to the Ministers embezzlement of one point two billion naira. This is to portray how civil servants receive bribes and expose official secrets.

AYO: (Begins to rub his forehead and looking sideways.) my monthly salary now is two thousand five hundred naira take-home.

INSPECTOR INAKU: Okay! Do not worry, I shall give you two thousand naira right now if you will give me the information I need.

(The Clerk looks greedily at the Inspector. He shakes his head indicating willingness)

AYO: I shall tell you anything you need ... (Ogbeche 2005, 27).

The Inspector who is aware of the height of corruption in the society uses bribing to entice Ayo. Ayo has to serve fives years jail term for that even though his release of the documents is useful to the Inspector.

In the play, Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka succeeded in making Aloho part of the drug trafficking network because of her desperation in searching for a job. The play therefore exposes unemployment problems in Nigeria. Unemployment is one of the major challenges in Nigeria and people are pushed into corrupt practices because of what they have suffered due to unemployment. It also

portrays the trauma and depression Nigerian graduates suffer for years hunting for jobs. Those already working in public offices accept bribe from the graduates that have not been employed before they give them employment. Some Nigerians who work in offices even tell job seekers to make payments for processing documents when they know that they would not be given any appointment. Ogodo Ogbeche is able to expose the activities of governmental officials because of his experiences as senior Council Affairs officer in the office of the secretary to the Government of the Federation.

### **3. THE WRITERS AND THE REPRESENTATION OF MORAL BANKRUPTCY**

A Parliament of Vultures exposes the immoral acts of the executives and legislatures in the incidents that took place at Madam Omeaku and Habamero's houses. Mr Brown, one of the parliamentarians, visits his mistresses, Madam Omeaku a married woman, in her husband's house. Madam Omeaku treats her husband like a houseboy in presence of Mr Brown. This is to portray the level of moral decadence in Nigeria in which the politicians are the champions. Madam Omeaku also uses her daughter, Nkechi, to get herself to the top. She is even commended by fellow parliamentarians for her wisdom in planting her daughter, Nkechi, as the presidential press secretary. She is proud to let one of the parliamentarians know that all she has got from the national fund is just a tip of the iceberg because she is not only preparing herself for more siphoning of the national treasury but plans that her daughter would also get her own share. Madam Omeaku intention in making all her family members rich is for every body in her family to be respected in the society. This is to portray how Nigerian political leaders neglect the masses but save and make plans for their generations unborn.

Brown: And your daughter is now the presidential press secretary!

Madam: Do you call that one achievement? I have better plans for her. When they mature, you'll be told. In a country where people are respected when they have houses in London and New York, in a country where individuals own their own jets, and having an account in Swiss bank is the order of the day. I don't believe I've achieved anything yet (Nwabueze 2000, 103).

Madam: ...There's too much money in this country. What one needs is a little wisdom to harness it and live like a king.

Brown: Enjoyment unlimited (laughs) Madam Ho ha!

Madam: ... I've had my own share of poverty in the past. Now that God has buttered my bread, I'll never allow myself to be poor again. Not in this world, or even in the world to come. I'll make enough money to last two lifetimes (Nwabueze 2000, 101).

Mr Omeaku who is formerly speaking against his wife immoral acts at the beginning of the play is bought over by

the wealth Madam Omeaku makes through her immoral acts and politics. The parliamentarians boast of how they are recognized immediately they are on money. This is represented to highlight the way Nigerians hail the political leaders that milk the country dry instead of speaking against their corrupt and criminal activities. This attitude of Nigerians helps in increasing the people's plight in the hands of their political leaders. It also helps in hardening the hearts of the political leaders who see the people as 'mumu'<sup>12</sup> or fools. Even when some social activists marched the streets of Abuja demonstrating with placards inscribed 'Our mumu don do' which means "Our foolishness has stopped", the corrupt political leaders are still adamant in their ambitions to suck the country dry. Through dialogue the parliamentarians discuss the foolishness of the masses thus:

Brown: ...I've learnt that lesson since I became an honourable member. People have changed their opinion of me. The treatment you receive from people does not depend on the content of your head, but on the size of your wallet.

Madam: Are you telling me? My husband is a typical example. Since he started cruising in a chauffeur-driven Mercedes, and living in a large estate, he has learnt to respect me. Now he treats me like a queen, and his family members believe I'm the best thing that happened in them (Nwabueze 2000, 102).

The parliamentarians in the play allotted billions of naira to organize a party for themselves which they call parliamentary party. In estimating the fund to spend for the party, millions on naira are also allotted for making young university undergraduates girls that will satisfy their sexual urges during in the party. This is to portray how Nigerian political leaders are known for keeping mistresses, especially young girls. They build mansions for these girls that are of the same ages with their daughters, take them to trips abroad and buy expensive cars for them.

Jossy: What about the girls? How do you plan to procure them for the party?

Brown: ... All he has requested from the committee is ten air-conditioned vehicles and a modest sum of one million naira fuel the vehicles to collect senior girls from University campuses, and take them back after the party.

Madam: ...Furthermore, my daughter, Nkechi, has been contracted to bring the younger generation of aspiring senior girls, the young school leavers, popularly known as Jambites. We're yet to receive her estimate (Nwabueze 2000, 85).

The resultant effect of students' riots, the drug menace, religious bigotry, armed robbery and paid assassins, "419", cultism, moral decadence, corruption in high and low places and disrespect for law and order in Nigeria that according to Oshienedo (2005), "is the emergence of a

lawless and undisciplined society without development, and without a positive national image" (ix)<sup>13</sup>. This is evident in the life of Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka in the play, *Harvest of Corruption*. Not only that Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka runs hard drug business but, he molests junior public servants under him. Ochuole. Chief's administrative officer aids him in his sexual immoral lifestyle by providing him with ladies. He collaborates with Ochuole, who is a notorious wayward and lures Aloho into drug trafficking. He pays Ochuole for providing ladies for him while Madam Hoha is paid for providing the accommodation for him and his mistresses. The presentation of Ochuole, addressed in the play as "that girl, who has soiled the reputations of all decent girls in Jabu" (8), as the Administrative Officer of the Minister of External Relations exposes the height of criminal and immoral activities in the country, Nigeria. The brilliant students who graduate with First Class Honours and Second Class Upper Divisions are the unemployed youths parading the entire cities of the country seeking for jobs while the dullards who sleep with lecturers to get grades are employed. This category of students also sleeps with men to be employed and even continue to sleep with their bosses for money and promotion. Ochuole is not doing the work of Chief's administrative officer but is also his mistresses. This is why she controls the Ministers and any one she wants him to employ is not denied employment.

MADAM HOHA: Now you are talking Chief. You can join your girl. She is dying to have you already. (Raises her voice.) Ochuole take things easy o! I beg you. There he is. He is all yours. Chop am if you like. (Gesturing Chief towards where Ochuole is sitting. Chief moves towards Ochuole...)

CHIEF: What's cooking baby: (Adjust his chair and places his hands on the laps of Ochuole.) ...

OCHUOLE: I need twenty thousand naira, Chief, to send to the village. I got a message yesterday that my mother is sick and in the hospital.

CHIEF: ... That's twenty thousand naira, baby. You can send it now if you like, but let me enjoy my stout when it is cold. ... (Ogbeche 2005, 15-16).

Ochuole gets the money she requested for from the chief and also secures an employment for Aloho so that her access to gain more from the corrupt Minister of External Relations increases. Through dialogue Madam Hoha and Ochuole the two women are seen laughing over their exploitation exercise on Aloho thus:

MADAM HOHA: (She smiles) The usual works, you know these things. We'll dangle this babe before the Chief for a price. He will employ her and we can make use of her to get what we want. She will run the errands while we pick the bucks. (They laugh).

<sup>12</sup> Mumu or fools is used to address the masses that accept silly excuses from the political leaders who milk the nation dry.

<sup>13</sup> Barth O.Y. Oshienedo, Foreword on *Harvest of Corruption* (2005) points out that crime and corruption in Nigeria have made it an indisciplined society without development, and without a positive national image.



OCHUOLE: Trust me. My duty is to convince her to play ball with him and then the usual commission keeps rolling in she you get?... Well. I have come to wait for Chief here. We planned to meet here which involves money (Ogbeche 2005, 13).

In *Harvest of Corruption*, Ogo Ogoche also presents suffering as having the capacity to weaken people's moral integrity. The play exposes sexual abuse as one of the experiences and depression Nigerian graduates as they suffer for years hunting for jobs. It also exposes how job seekers have lost their dignity because of their desperate attempts to gain employment. Unemployment transforms Aloho into 'anything goes'. Despite the fact that Ogenyi asserts that the source of job matters, Aloho questions her stance in God and her old moral beliefs: "Look at me, with all the decency what have I achieved? Where has decency or dignity taken me to?" (9) She scorns the notion of being a "born again Christian"- "Being "born again does not mean we should sit down and fold our arms waiting for God" (10). Aloho falls victim of Ochuole and Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka's deception and pays for her mistake with her life. She is caught with hard drugs; she becomes pregnant and died while in the delivery of the baby. Ogo Ogoche presents Aloho's unpleasant experiences to portray how sufferings in the society make jobless graduates and young girls succumb to societal pressure by giving bribe and their body to head of public institutions and men who are old enough to be their fathers just to be employed.

#### **4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REPRESENTATION OF THE LEADERS' CORRUPT PRACTICES IN LITERATURE AND THE INEVITABLE CHANGE IN REORDERING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**

Nigerian creative writers represented by the two playwrights see the decay that has engulfed their country as a result of corruption and rudderless leadership that exploited the economy and shamelessly dislocated the social, political and economic system. The writers have started fighting the battle by exposing societal ills in Nigeria because they have no choice other than fight. The Nigerian government and the people of Nigeria are expected to be in their own side of the battlefield fighting so that Nigeria would be cleansed of corruption. wa Thiong'o (1981) in support of the use of literature to fight corruption points out that:

Literature cannot escape from the power structure that sharpens our everyday life. A writer has no choice whether or not he is aware of it, his work reflects in one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural and ideological struggles in society. What he chooses is the side of the social battlefield. The side of his people is the

side of those social forces and classes that try to keep his people down (wa Thiong'o 1981, 64)<sup>14</sup>.

Emeka Nwabueze and Frank Ogo Ogoche are apt in their exposition of corruption Nigeria. They dismiss the leaders as all corrupt and greedy in order to portray the need for accountability from our political. The consciousness created in the people is significant as it helps them in making the decision to fight even if they will lay their lives for it. Collective fight against corruption in Nigeria will bring reformation that enhances growth and development of the country. In *Harvest of Corruption*, Ogo Ogoche presents the manipulation of they law by the political leaders and the judges to confuse the nation. Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka is protected by the judge and the commissioner of police he pays handsomely. This portrays how some Nigerians are politicizing the taken away of huge sum of money from the national treasury and converting some of the money to the political leaders unending greed and avarice. Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka and his cohorts are brought to book at the end of the play. Through the creation of Inspector John Odey Inaku who refuses to be bribed and works to expose the criminal activities of the Minister and the Security Forces, justice is achieved. This is to portray that individual and collective efforts of good willed Nigerians are needed to assist to bring the corrupt political leaders to book, therefore, the fight against corruption should egg on even now that the political leaders that blow the trumpet on the fight against corruption are found out to be the most corrupt.

The fight the creative writers advocate is not fighting through hate speeches or for the educated Nigerians to migrate to European countries where they feel have suitable economy and where they feel safe. It is a call for all the educated and goodwill Nigerians at home and those that are scattered in all parts of the world to come together, vote into power new set of politicians that have the masses interest in heart. Those who are educated and support sound education, research and technological development, trade and industry should be voted into power. Recycling of the old political leaders that defect from one political party to the other would not solve our problems. The people should be wise to note that the old political leaders that are handed over the leadership of the country by the first generation politicians cannot provide even the minimum educational certificates and are lost when the importance of the global research and invention of new technology are mentioned. The older generation that sees having mansions in European countries and accumulating wealth for their great grand children unborn as great political achievements have mismanaged our resources for so long. These old politicians should be made to understand that they are not meant to occupy the leadership position till they die on it.

<sup>14</sup> Ngugu wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics* (1981) addresses the use of literature to fight corruption.

Creative writers as prophets foretell the future but the people turn deaf ears to warnings. It is a terrible that Nigeria would still be battling for an effective democratic government after two decades of satirizing the ills in the society as seen in the selected texts. If the people still play hide and seek with the fight against corruption and other evil practices that mar the development of the country, and gullibility is preferred to intellectualism, the people are sitting on a keg of gunpowder.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The writers of the selected two literary texts paint the ugly picture that portrays the inability of Nigerian leaders to establish effective democratic governance for the betterment of the people. The executive arm of the government fails in their duty and the legislative house filled with gluttons (vultures) also fails to ensure that the executives deliver good governance. They are both portrayed as hypocrites in their claim against fighting corruption. Their fight against corruption is only one sided because members of the ruling party have immune jurisdiction while they are corrupt to their bones. The political leaders keep changing political parties as if they are changing clothes in order to achieve their thirst for power. There cannot be true fight against corruption if lack of patriotism is a common trait among the leaders. Tribalism and Nepotism have to be dealt with so that the shout of one Nigeria be real. Reconstruction is the only way out for a true federalism. This will make each political zone puts more effort to in improving the sources of revenue for development. When every section is competing and working hard to best developed zones, there would be no time for hate speeches and tribal conflicts. All the parliamentarians that relocate to Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory and embezzle the money meant for the development of their constituencies would see the need and be more concerned in the development of their zones.

The language the authors use in the selected works is so captivating that the readers feel a force ordering them to rise up and fight corruption. The authors' realistic representation of corrupt practices of the leaders reveals the burden in their hearts. Ordinary men in the society that are caught stealing are languishing in prisons, awaiting trials for donkey years while the real thieves involve in "pen robbery" that have milked the country dry are in mansions in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory enjoying their lives. They take constant trips to European countries where they spend the masses money in procuring properties and money laundry. The portrayal of the poverty of the masses while the leaders are billionaires accumulating wealth for their unborn generations makes

the audience to feel what the writers feel. Therefore the language of the authors is so persuasive and calls the readers to action. Corruption is not a standard and can never be a standard in any society where reasonable people exist. Nigerian authors as revolutionaries have fulfilled their own part of the fight against corruption in Nigeria. They have also succeeded in ushering in a revolutionary inclination in the people. It is now left for the people to shun corruption; rise up and execute their own part, which is calling for social reconstruction of Nigeria for effective democratic governance.

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