

LITERATURE AND INSTITUTIONALISED CORRUPTION: A MARXIST DECONSTRUCTION OF NIYI OSUNDARE'S *THE STATE VISIT*

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ABSTRACT

In spite of the abundant material and human resources Nigeria is endowed with, nothing seem to work, Health care, politics, education, infrastructure, aviation, tourism, economy, governance, security and all sectors of the economy are dysfunctional and the citizenry squirm under the yoke of reeking, seething, grinding, excruciating and ravaging poverty. The country's retrogression from a donor nation and the pride of Africa in 1970's to this despicable level of scorn in the 21st century as the World's capital of poverty is attributed to corruption. It is the desire to find out the reasons for and how institutionalized corruption is perpetuated that motivated this scholarship. The study, among other things defines Corruption, identifies reasons for corruption, explains the effects, and deconstructs Osundare's **The State Visit**, based on Marxist tenets. Findings from the study showed that governance in Africa is for self enrichment and the common wealth is squandered through **contractocracy**, borrowing, inflation/over-costing of contracts and other means shrouded in obscurity within the political establishment. The study ends with some recommendations: The rule of should be enforced at all times, contracts should be followed to their logical conclusion, Anti- Corruption agencies should be empowered and given free reins to work, the immunity Clause in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as adopted should be expunged from it. Erring political office holders should be made to face the wrath of the law if found culpable.

KEY WORDS: Corruption, Contractocracy, squander-mania,

Background to the Study

According to Oyabebefa (2021), '*Poverty in the midst of plenty is a paradox that must not go unchallenged*'. Nigeria, erstwhile under borrowed nation and the pride of black Africa in the 1970's albeit retrogression to a despicable state of scorn as debtor nation and world capital of poverty in the 21st century is a sobering thought, a paradox of history with myriad unanswered questions. Nigeria is the 6th exporter of oil in Africa, yet hosts the third largest of the World's poor after China and India with the highest unemployment rate. As reported by Peter Ugolo (2022) **This**

Day newspaper entitled, *Nigeria Still Poverty Capital of the World*’ citing Mr Busmirk Rewane, Managing Director of Financial Derivatives Company(FDC) Limited and a member President Buhari’s Economic Advisory Council in a monthly Lagos Business School economic breakfast meeting held, September 2021, stated:

Nigeria has maintained the infamous position as the poverty capital of the World, with 93.9 people in Africa’s most populous country currently living below poverty line’. The report further stated, ‘with the Covid 19 pandemic, the economic effect is that the number of Nigerians in extreme poverty increases by six people every minute, 87 million people in extreme poverty in comparison with India 73 million, while poverty in India continue to fall, Nigeria’s increases.

This fact is substantiated on March (2022-03-10) by **The World Poverty Clock (WPC)** an on line tool that monitors the progress against poverty globally and provides real time poverty data across countries stated, **‘87 million Nigerians in extreme poverty, representing 33 percent of Nigeria’s over 200 million people’**. She has been ranked the most corrupt country on planet Earth in Global Ranking Index as attested to by the Nigerian Human Development Report (NHDR) with 144 global gender gap and growth rate at 7.4 as cited by the World Bank on Global Economics and poverty at significant 33.1 in Nigeria ,Africa’s biggest economy in 2017.and with attendant lawlessness, general insecurity grinding and excruciating poverty, high infant mortality, deprivation, of women and children which limit their chances of fulfilment, exacerbated their misery and halved their life expectancy are indices that Nigeria is far from development. On the backdrop of the above negative ratings, the nagging question has been, “What exactly is/ are the problem/s of Nigeria?”. Juxtaposed with other nation, why is the country not at par in spite of the abundant human and material resources it is endowed with by nature? It is the desire to find out the root causes of this awry state of affairs in Nigeria in spite of its wealth that this study birthed.

Statement of the Problem

It is not only an eyesore but also a paradox of unimaginable dimension that in spite of the robust resources Nigeria is endowed and the huge revenue accruing from sales of oil, taxes, import duties, grants and donations from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other donor agencies, the vast majority of citizens still live below poverty level and other palliatives, over-whelming affluence of a few exists side by side with the vast majority of the citizens which only possession is poverty ,under its yoke they groan and squirm. Besides, the only signposts to show of such enormous wealth are: acute infrastructural deficit, mass unemployment, dysfunctional educational and medical systems, depressed economy, and epileptic power supply, compounded by cosmic lawlessness, general insecurity a variety of vices. The National Bureau of Statistics report in the second quarter of 2020 shows Nigeria as the World capital of poverty, having overrun India and China in, unemployment rate at 33% ,(the second highest on global list),and one of the distressed

nations and the most corrupt on the planet Earth. It is response to these disgusting indices that the idea of this study was conceived, with the thesis that at the centre of Nigeria's woes is corruption.

The objectives of this study, therefore is to: (a) define corruption (b) identify the causes and effects of Corruption. (c) deconstructs Niyi Osundare's *The State Visit* based on Marxist tenets and (d) recommend ways to combat corruption.

Review of Related Literature

Nigeria is a country of contradictions and paradoxes of sort, with seething, reeking and excruciating poverty in the midst of abundant wealth'. Scholars have come to a consensus that the parlous state of affairs in Nigeria is traceable to corruption and leadership crisis. To apt, it the violence of history and the history of violence perpetuated on one's country and the citizenry because of greed. This is the Nigerian and African verity espoused by Achebe (1983) in his analysis of Nigerian malaise in his classic *The Trouble with Nigeria*. In his submission:

There is nothing wrong with the land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or the inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership. (1983, p1).

By the same token, John Pepper Clark identified the trouble with Nigeria in a satiric quip with his poem *Here Nothing Works*. It is against the background of identifying corruption as the bane of Nigeria that the term will be explained and how it is perpetuated analysed. What then is corruption?

The term Corruption is variegated, relative to interpretations. To a large extent, perception, laws of the country, and their interpretations, situations, contexts and application all have a bearing on what corruption is. According to the Google online Dictionary, Corruption means '**dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power typically involving bribery**'. By the same token, The Transparency International defines Corruption, thus: '**the abuse of entrusted power for private gain**'. Nigerian political class have adopted and implemented policies that have occasioned the economic strangulation of a greater of the population of the country. The more than 30 years of military autocracy and the succeeding civilian regimes have adopted exploitative bureaucracies of military plunder and mismanagement which exacerbated the poverty of Nigerians, thereby increasing their misery. In remonstrance, the Academic Staff of Universities (ASU) (2002: pp40) as cited in Charles Okeke Okoko and Chidi Ejikeme Oguagwu (2016, p.346), thus:

Public expenditure has become synonymous with self enrichment of government functionaries and their cronies who pose as influential biz persons engaged largely in getting payments for contracts that are cloudy and hardly executed. The citizenry enmeshed in deeper deprivation and frustration witnesses, reckless and massive display of ill-gotten

wealth by clique off-fraudsters who usurped from them the succour of existence. All macro- economic indices that determine the health an economy portray a rather pitiable and gloomy outlook points to an economy significantly engulfed in the vicious cycle of stagnation, declining productivity, rising unemployment and widening inequality gap, all of which have resulted in the unimaginable appalling standard of living in Nigeria.

Persistent poverty breeds backwardness (retrogression) which impedes capacity to raise domestic gross profit, meritocracy is shunned for mediocrity. Corruption is any act of dishonesty such as fraud, and mismanagement of government and corporate resources in order to gain from them. It is the act of getting an unearned income. In the words of Todaro and Smith (2011) as cited by Enobong Ntoiden (2017, p143), thus:

Corruption is the appropriation of public resources for private profit and other private purposes through the use and abuse of official power or influence. Corruption as in the above definition include: bribery, extortion, gratification, graft, negligence, smuggling and embezzlement as acts of corruption.

By the same token, Black, a British economist, (2003) defines corruption as follow:

The use of bribery to influence politicians, civil servants and other officials which may be in cash or in kind almost any official action or inaction can be influenced by corruption. Officials may be bribed to do things they are legally supposed to do anyway or to do them promptly. They may be bribed to do their duties, to the advantage of the tribe, giver for example, building without planning permission and regulations. Corruption can be used to influence elections or to get laws changed. Corruption is extremely bad for efficiency and it undermines public confidence that decisions will be sensible, or that laws will be either fair or consistently enforced. May countries make corruption inevitable by paying their civil servants and police so poorly that they cannot live without receiving bribes. (p145)

According to the Commission for Africa (CFA) (2005), People in sub-Saharan Africa are chronically poor. In the same vein, the United Nations Development Organisation report (2004) study as cited by Hope (2006) reveals, thus:

The economies of most African states have been in decline since the last quarter of the 20th century while those living in poverty world- wide fell from 40% to 20% of the total population between (1981-2001) it increased from 42% to 47% in Africa during the same period.

What is gleaned from the above is that of poor selfish leaders who see governance as means of self- enrichment. The indices are the same in across Africa: weak governance, money laundering, budget padding, contractocracy, pillaging, plundering, squandermania, over budgeting among

others as strategies for personal gain. There is a conjunction between political leadership, good governance and national development. This has to do with participation of dedicated, selfless citizens as leaders who place public interest above self and successfully galvanize and harness Nigeria's rich natural resources, abundant human resources and capital to sustain national growth. It is unfortunate with the socio-political that Nigeria's retrogression and under development is as result of bad leaders and political ineptitude. According to Ota (2012, pp9), in breaches of the application of the recommendations in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as adopted,

the kind of leaders we have had all through our political history are ones that are more interested in personal aggrandisement than ensuring national development. In the wake of the ineptitude that has come to characterize the present crop of political leaders, insecurity, nepotism, opportunism and variety of other vices have taken the centre stage. These have also dented Nigeria's external image, especially in contemporary era of information technology where events in any country are instantly relayed to the wider world through satellite communication networks.

In the words of Janneh (2005),

Good government requires creation of and stabilization, nurturing and utilization of capacity for national development. Weak government hamper the capacity of the states to govern themselves. Under such circumstances according to Hope (2006:pp213), capacity deficits will remain in place and sustainable development will remain elusive. Weak government in Africa is characterized in most countries by a combination of such elements as poor institutional, bureaucratic and political corruption. Invidiously, they employ a retinue of assistants and earn salaries that are an affront to the sensitivities of Nigerians and foreigners with no accountability or transparency.

Governments have hijacked and personalized party political structures and organisations as well state funds according to Ota (2012). Example is the creation and funding of personal Universities by governors in Nigeria since the military autocracy to this democratic dispensation. Such schools include: the Mariam Babangida American University Niger Republic, Ibrahim Babangida University, Lapai, Mina State, Niger West University by erstwhile Delta State governor, Hon Onanefe Ibori, Edo State University Oyarone, Edo State by Adams Oshiomolu among others. In summation, since 1999, Corruption has become the pastime of politicians who perfected tactics and strategies for looting the national coffers. The question to ponder is, 'What are the reasons for corruption?'. This is looked into before the effects are discussed.

Reasons for Corruption

Monstrous greed (avarice) aggravated by our warped value system that placed premium on unbridled materialism is one reason for the crass corruption in Nigeria. The Nigerian Society as indicative of other nations is not only capitalist but classed (stratified). This predisposes competition among the citizenry who strive to be ahead of others, hence rivalries which in turn breeds a lot of evils among the citizenry, as everybody wants to get rich over night through genuine or foul means. The easiest and fastest money spinner/ short cut to wealth is politics hijacked by the market forces(elite) touts or political jobbers, and with political office, power is acquired to lord over the others. According to Emefiena Ezeani (2013),

...people were not going into government to transform the Nigerian economy or to benefit the ordinary Nigerians. They were in government for one purpose only: to control power and to use that power to steal. They take that money outside Nigeria and put into banks and institutions. This is totally opposed to every other nation in history of the world...(p190-191)

The above attitude of the elite depicts in the grimmest context the moral atrophy, mental poverty and that of ambition that blights the ruling class. Umeh's poem *Ambassadors of Poverty* satirizes this Africa's leadership flaw (quirk). It is an irony that in the midst of reeking poverty, Nigeria still maintains the most costly bicameral legislature in the whole world with nothing positive to show for it.

Another reason for corruption is poverty. This is compounded by the harsh conditions of living, soaring galloping inflation, fragile and unaffordable health care, the poor conditions of service workers are subjected to, in which they earn less than subsistence emolument, and dysfunctional retirement reward system. These are catalysts for corruption, as they predispose workers in public or private employment to corruption. They, therefore, exploit every available opportunity to make ends meet. According to Emefiene (2013, p193),

a report has it that the Nigerian government cannot say exactly how much oil is being lifted from the country mostly by Shell, Mobil, Chevron, Total, Agip and a few others. Instead the government of Umaru Yar'Adua, like all others before it, relies almost entirely on whatever the oil companies tell them (Black Hole) This is the type of country the West prefers to exist in Africa- a Zombie –state where its citizens conspire with foreigners to exploit and rob their own people or pull down the government for economic reasons with the latter taking the lion share of their plunder.

This accounts for why with the passage of each, millions of Nigerians become victims of grinding poverty and live below breadline in spite of increase in the countries revenues. The poor masses of the citizenry suffer on account of the villainy of the few elites who because of their cupidity which have subjected the poor to live in the margins, traumatized. Ola Rotimi summed up this

disgusting situation in his classic *If*, thus: ‘*There are men not gods that should be blamed for the tragedy of the ruled*’

The elite are guilty of complicity in this guise to have conspired with the expatriates to pilfer away the common wealth. While the country’s legislators debate whether the Nigerian worker deserved to be paid ‘Starvation wages’ (ASUU, 2011. PP47) of (18000,00) about \$100 a month, they readily approve for themselves’ fat cat’ payments of more than 8 million (about \$45, 000) a month, excluding entitlements.

Added to the above, people are corrupt because they are bereft of empathy. This is exacerbated by the ‘*get rich quick syndrome*’ that has caught Nigerians. Therefore, political appointees (office holders) are looked up to by kith and kin to use their offices as means of self enrichment and are derided at as failures if they do not specifically on the expiry of their tenures of office. Buoyed by this conviction, stealing is accepted as a norm. Erstwhile Petroleum Minister, Tam David West, in an annual lecture of the Nigeria British Association Lagos, as cited in Musa Oyabebefa (2021:pp37) submitted, thus:

I strongly hold the view that Africans under development is to a very large measure caused by Africans themselves and not necessarily Europe. While in the developed economies, fraudsters are apprehended and clamped within the jaws of the law, in Africa BIG fraudsters, MEGA thieves are decorated with accolades or spangled with confetti. Then the BIG chieftaincy titles, in all celebration of big thieving.

Lack of the right attitude to work is another factor. The parastatals in which employees work do not often time lay bare the implications of fraudulent acts and the ripple effects that will have on the establishment(s) and the employees. Therefore, employees see their jobs as fronts for fulfilment. Corruption under this is perpetuated out of ignorance.

The absence of institutionalized checks and balances mechanism and the weakness of the anti graft agencies are reasons for the unabated corruption. This not only promotes corruption but is responsible for widespread nature of it. This is because in most cases, the political establishment muzzle the press for exposing the corrupt practices and the myriad contradictions in their offices. Therefore an independent press to act as the arbiter of morality is an antidote to corruption. Walter Rodney 2009 as cited by Musa (2021:p40), posits lack of regulatory mechanisms/agents to checkmate reckless spending in lieu of prudence is a catalyst for corruption. According to him, thus:

In the developed world, ready and well defined mechanisms are usually in place to control existing or likely problems. In Africa such mechanisms are either nonexistent, or where

they are available at all, are often hindered by political considerations, red tape and sheer mismanagement...

Discerned from the above excerpt is the reason why the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission and other allied agencies that are supposedly to be at the forefront of the vanguard against corruption are dysfunctional in Nigeria.

The Judiciary which supposedly is to be an independent arm of government is now manipulated, thereby dancing to the whims of the elite class. This is as a result of the lack of patriotism on the part of the Judiciary exacerbated by poor remuneration and adverse working conditions which not only predispose them to corruption. According to Festus Iyayi as cited in (Oyabebefa 2021):

When in the society one man has more than enough to feed himself, his Dogs, Cat, Children and Monkey, and many other men are weak and their children are suffering from Kwashiorkor. This is violence...a violence consciously maintained in wetted and... by those who operate the system...We are part and parcel of the system that thrives and survive on violence. (Violence pp:186)

The Nigerian government encourages the above and the ripple effect is corruption that widens the chasm between the two parallels, rich and poor. The factors itemised above are some of the reasons why corruption thrives in Nigeria and why nothing works in the country as tellingly told in J. P. Clark's poem *Here Nothing Works*. It is against this background that the effects of corruption are explored in what follows.

Effects of Corruption

The effects of corruption on a nation like Nigeria are infinite. For example, it affects the economy, education, politics, agriculture, government, media, diplomatic ties and foreign policy among others and has permeated all strata of our individual cum national life. The effects of corruption are global on all facets of Nigerian national endeavour, including but not limited to the following aspects. Failure in infrastructure, increase in as the rights of individuals are trampled upon, promotion of human and salary inequality, rigid economic and political systems, impunity and partial justice, loss of freedom, widespread poverty, collapse of social structure, weakness of state income due to leakages, lack of incentives to shut out foreign investments, loss of prestige, dysfunctionality of public and private sectors, armed conflicts and other atrocious crimes, increasing polarization and socio-political unrest, and shun of meritocracy for mediocrity by promotion of ethnic sentiments.

Governance in African countries is a means of self enrichment. The rulers only plunder the public resources and money in the coffers the government purse, to their advantage and to the detriment of the masses. This is carefully implemented through calculated ploys such Supplies, patent rights

misappropriation of public fund and all forms of squander mania. These are the reasons why Nigeria and other third world nations are not at par with the developed countries when juxtaposed.

Marxist Deconstruction of Niyi Osundare's *The State Visit*

The need for moral probity in government expenditure and prudent use of resources by those in positions of authority has constrained governments with the welfare of the citizenry at heart to fight against corruption. To achieve this lofty goal underscores the formation of anti-corruption institutions such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, the Independent Corrupt practices Commission among other anti graft agencies. . Myriad of texts are written on the subject of corruption. Suffice here include, Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, Ayikwe's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Ouloguem's *Money Galore*, Alex Roy Omoni's *The Ugly Ones*, Olu Obafemi's *Naira Has No Gender*, Femi Osofisan's *Who is Afraid of Tai Solarin* and a host of others in which the quest to abate corruption resonated. In spite of this, corruption is unabated and brazenly perpetuated with impunity by opportunists (the elite) who use their positions as means of self enrichment. It is against this background that this study deconstructs Niyi Osundare's *The State Visit* to unravel how corruption is perpetuated in the governmental architecture of as in Nigeria.

Marxism as a political concept is the brain child of the German economist and philosopher Karl Marx and Engels who popularized it. According to Karl Marx, Society reflects class struggle, oppression and revolt. Social groups have conflicts of interests and that the lower of the opposing groups will eventually triumph, and it is on this basis that there will be the ultimate goal called Communism, a class less society in which the means of production and distribution are owned and controlled by the people. The belief is that in any given society, the striving of others and social life is full of contradictions. It is in the light of this that Osundare's *The State Visit* is deconstructed based Marxist precepts (tenets).

Through the first person and omniscient points of view, the author cum narrator unravels to us the predatory relationship between the ruled and the rulers as explicitly depicted in the symbols, thus:

The national armorial bearing –placed on the back wall behind and above the Head depicts a running Lion with a prey in its mouth. (Act 1: pp9).

The narrator betrayed his disgust at the dismal state of affairs in the besieged and stratified nation.

Narrator: **There is a land of two Rivers, a blessed land with milk and honey, the softest and healthiest of sunshine... to others .As I was saying, this land is rich in everything. But the wealth is in the hands of a few kings and Queens. The only possession the people have in abundance is poverty.**(...wipes his face) smiles a wry smile(Act 1:pp9-10).

What is gleaned from the narrator's submission above is that the citizenry are victims of circumstance not by their will but as willed for them by the rulers. The statement betrayed the rulers brazen recklessness and are unperturbed and give no care about the dilapidated infrastructure. Emotionally spent and puzzled at the sorry state of things, the seething, reeking and excruciating and grinding poverty in the midst of plenty, he commented further, thus:

‘ **Oh, how many can we count?.**(Act 1: iii)

In a satiric quip, the narrator went on his tirade to tell how cosmic the corruption is in Nigeria as in most third World rulers, thus:

The journalist, turns a mere minion for looting,...The policeman who flogs bribes out of mere suspects, the port worker who makes cargos disappear. Some know these problems exist...Let us see how our looters... prepare for the visit of one of their friends across the border (pp11-12)

The above explicitly unravels how corruption is perfected in the governmental system. The narrator, in an ironical twist reveals how the rulers turned neo-colonialists overnight by promotion of systemic corruption, thus: *To stop tribal rivalries, we brought in expatriates to head all the co-operations...*(pp13-14).

We are at a stake-

Public morality ... But money says, *Let nobody takes any plan without me.* How much are we budgeting for the great visit? (pp14).

Finance... And of course, the relief materials, the fertilizers...for the farmers, where did they go? (pp15).

Agric, Each of us knows how we run or ministries.

Head Finance, how much do we have for the visit?.

Finance...I don't know...but I know we have two hundred *arina* altogether in the treasury.

Agric (On war path again) Aaaah! How do you count your own money- forward or backward? I thought it was five hundred million *arina* last week.

Finance: Ask the Head. He withdrew three hundred million three days ago without my knowledge. (*All eyes turn to head*).

The above reflects brazen display of power and reckless spending of government fund without approval.

Head: Yes, yes, yes... It is time we need it to buy a jet fighter from friendly country.

External affairs But we are not at war. Indeed, we have the reputation of being the most peaceful country in the world...(pp15). The above shows misappropriation of public fund for selfish reasons.

Head (*Cutting in*) . Yes, but we need weapons of war to maintain peace. You see peace is like a machine: if you don't service it with jets and tankers and armoured cars, it breaks down irreparably...). This submission of the Head of state is an expression of myopia as opposed to 21st century realities. According to Jude Azuka Asinine (2011:p1):

Historically, analysts assume that military power for defence was the most significant issue in national and global security. However, this is increasingly obsolete with the unfolding events in the 21st century. Indeed, the greatest threat to individual and national security are; hunger and poverty. This explains the Global campaigns on Poverty by the United Nations since 2005 as well as huge increases in financial aids and cancellations of over fifty billion US dollars owed Africa and the poorest countries the World after undergoing years of military dictatorship, benefitted from the gesture. However, Nigeria is still chaotic, generally unstable and the security of lives and property porous.

The above submission is true in the context that in spite of the robust investment on security Nigeria remains unsafe because majority of the population are poor. Corruption induced poverty, according to Musa F Oyabebefa (2022), is a catalyst for crime. He submits that the phase we are in our national life is **a balance of terror in which the poor cannot sleep because they are hungry and the rich cannot sleep because the poor are awake.**

ALL THE MINSTERS EXCEPT FINANCE: Good words Lion of Yankee! Absolute truth!

Head: So finance, what is the true amount in your account?

Finance: I have said it, hundred million.

Head: We shall need too hundred million more.

Finance: Aaaah !,... but...

Head: But, but, but... but is the beat of the butt.(laughs self indulgently). Yes, you see, people accuse us these days of talking in terms of millions and billions. They don't know that everything has gone up,...!. (*The cabinet laughs wildly as if the job depends on it*). You see there are places in

this country today where they now take Television, refrigerators and Motor cycles as bride pride. Our people are fast, we the government must learn to keep pace.(pp11).

The above betrays in the grimmest context how corruption has permeated every aspect of our National life and how spuriously the money is wasted on frivolities without the leaders being held to account.

Finance: How do we come about that extra amount?.

Head: Borrow it from a friendly nation...(pp17)

Finance : Our masters! Debtors and Creditors are never equals. Debts, debts. Debts eat away into our freedom, debts enslave our future.(pp18).

The above submission by the Finance minister is the grim truth and objective reality. It is the real cost of borrowing (which leaders seem not to know) that is responsible for the retrogression of third world countries as they borrow from the World Bank and other donor agencies including some shylock creditors that charge exorbitant interest rates.

Agric: You can pour as much as your *ewi* as your ... allow .What future are you talking about?. The future is not the problem now. When it comes to, it will take care of itself. Let us eat and be merry today. Why should we bother about tomorrow?. You can grab what you see.(pp18).

The above submission shows crass corruption, the worst leadership quirks among the rulers as the bane of third world countries- the result of which they are impoverished and ever reliant on the West for assistance. Epicurean habits utterly bereft of saving culture for the rainy days. They are the least prudent on planet earth. As a folly, the leaders are only to pillage, plunder, squander mania which the elite indulge in and exploit the resources of their countries. To betray the bareness of their thoughts, the minster for Public morality enthused as in the following thus:

Public morality: I have an idea. Let us print more money.

Agric: ...has the government mint run out of paper?.

Public morality: (*Her face screwed up*). Aaaah.! What about the Maize Project?.

Head : Oh Oh , Okae ! That reminds me .Why should we chase in Sokoto what we have here in the pocket of our *sokoto...* Transfer half (*pause! hesitantly*) Transfer the entire amount to the welcome project.(19).

Finance : The entire six hundred million ?.

Head : Yes-ooo !

The deduction one can make of the above dialogue is the lack of checks and balances, accountability, and prudence (probity) in government expenditure.

Finance : (*With his face aflame with protest*).But but...

Agric :(Snapping) What is but there?. It has happened before. Remember that the money for our Water Project was diverted to the funeral ceremony of our leaders' grand fathers burial. After all it was the people who ate the food and drank the wine.

The above are the antics deployed by the ruling class to divert public funds-using state burials as conduit, when they in the saddle lose any of their parents.

Finance: But, but. But this is crazy. I have already told the nation about the Maize project at a widely publicized press conference- And—

Head: Oh! Is that the problem?. What is *Kresi* about that?. We can always unsay what we have already said.(-*Sergeant round about –turn, executes a ferocious salute-calls in the Journalist*). (19).

The excerpts below are so revealing on how official truths are perjured, thus :

Head: Okay! How many roles of film have you used?.

Journalist: My head, my leader, my Lord, Lion of Yanke, only twenty rolls, twenty four shots each...

Head: Four hundred and eighty shots altogether eh?... that is not bad I think, we can now begin our discussion with him.

External Affairs: Yes Journalist, pick up your pen and write. (*Journalist scurries back to his papers, picks up his jotter and pen and scribbles frantically as the cabinet speak*).

Agric: **Akowe**, last week, Finance—

Journalist: Eeem,...em...

Agric: Minister of Finance...announced at a news conference that we have collected six hundred million **arina** for Maize project.

Journalist: Yes Sir, and I put it in the most conspicuous part of ***The Daily Gist***, and I...

Agric: Alright,...write in your papers again that it is not true.

The above are the ploys of the rulers to defraud the government. The journalist initially was hesitant to do as mandated but with subtle pleas baked with money bowed to the pressure, as shown in the following dialogue.

Journalist: Ah! How...?.

External affairs: Okay, Okay, just say that you had frank and fruitful discussion with the cabinet and discovered that the six hundred million *arina* announced by the minster last week for the Maize project has in fact not been received. So the Minister announced it (hesitates by mistake...ee... in error... through oversight... No ...as a matter of fact did not actually say that. His statement was misconstrued... He was misquoted ...(*Agric and Public morality exchanged blank, confused looks*).Create a small but conspicuous column apologizing for any embarrassment this might have caused the cabinet....eh...eh the government.

Finance: But it was true... I said ... How can I turn round to say I did not say what I actually sai?.

Head: I think I should come in here... I am calling you to order, Finance. Ah ah, what is the problem?. .You said something and we are saying you didn't say it- Abi?.

External Affairs: This is not the first time such things have happened. They are regular occurrences in the process of governance. And protocol. In diplomatic circles, such denials are called (ostentatious emphasis).restatements.

Head: Thank you... You are truly the son of your father ... You know we have the power to say and unsay. We control the Newspapers and the Radio and Television, and we can always tell them what to say. After all we spend a lot on these media and we must get our money's worth...

External Affairs: ...I see no problem here. If they demand freedom of speech, we reserve freedom of policy and action not to permit. In diplomatic circles, that is what we call tit –for- tat.

Head: Alright Journalist, you hear?.Put it in your papers. It is the first thing I will look for tomorrow morning.

Agric: And you know *akowe* , if you do this well we will always know how to reward you. When a child washes his hands clean, he will eat with the elders...

Journalist: But... but Lion of Yanke, the people will know. The ...market women... the students...the...the...

Head: Di di di di what?. Who are the people when we talk about government?. What are the people ... the people, well the ...people may do what they like. After all they didn't vote us into power, and we are never going to ask them for votes .(22).

The above shows the height of impunity, of tyranny and lack of the rule of law, and accountability. Muzzling of press freedom, lack of restraint with which the rulers subsumed the citizenry. The author exposes the putrid nature of the country's democracy in which votes do not count, rather the rulers imposed and/or their stooges on the people. The dialogue below shows this even clearer:

Head: Happy, reassured. Thank you. We have the people in our hand. We decide what they eat, where they sleep, when they live, when they die... we may banish them, dissolve them if we choose. Our government owes nothing, absolutely nothing to their existence...Yes, and those students...why are you scared of them?... Just pluck a dozen (*snapping fingers*) from the crowds and the rest will not need to be told what to do. Instead of reading and ...praying for their rulers, they... carrying placards, raining abuses—on those of us who labour...to serve them (pp22).

It is inferable from the above statement that rulers in third world countries of which Nigeria is one rule by violence and violation of people's right...

Head of State further reveals how he manipulates the Press as can be deduced from the following:

Head:... You may be wondering how that journalist became so tamed.(*laughs*)...the easiest horse to train is the stubbornest one. Increase its dose of whips as well as its ration of food and it surrenders its back even before you ask for it.(*pauses, paces up and down, full of swagger*). The journalist you see was the one that set The Daily Gist ablaze, and he was called the spit fire of **Wawaka**, the place where his pen daily spat venom like a cobra(*laughs*).But with a little threat here and there, and a lots of money and other sweet things , we removed the venom and turned the cobra into a harmless sting, ready to bend wherever you wish(*laughs*)... Now Finance, what is inside you that has kept you silent since...?.

The above scenario of taming the journalist to dance to their whims suggests that, nobody is immune to corruption, rather everybody is susceptible to it, in as much as there are no checks and balances, rule of law, and crime is not adequately punished. This fact is corroborated by the Minister of Finance as can be deduced from his statement tinged with sarcasm, thus:

Finance: What is there to say when rulers have turned liars like prophets of the Bar beach, when those pretending to be statesmen say one thing while they mean another?. What am I to tell the poor people of Yanke?. (27).

The above clearly shows Niyi Osundare uses Minister of Finance as his mask /mouthpiece through whom the follies of the rulers are scorned with a view to effecting change in governance, specifically, to shorn themselves of corruption. The Minister of Finance did not stop there after the rhetoric question asked in the above paragraph, thus:

Finance: The rulers, yes, must have enough strength to bury their subjects. But I will leave you to explain to the people how funds meant for relieving their hunger have gone into feeding state guests. I have suffered these contradictions long enough now I find it difficult to live with myself and my conscience. Lion of Yanke, this is your port folio.

Head: (*Somewhat agitated*) : That bastard has the boldness to challenge our authority. We shall tell him that it is not for nothing that ours is called The Land of the prowling Lion,(pause).This throne is ours and shall it remain until we die and pass it on to our Children and children's children. We are living in an era of life Presidents and Presidents for life, and we have to move with the times. And for me, I will not live be called ex-president, ex-this, ex- that (*A sharp black out*) (pp29).

The deduction from the above paragraph is that rulers quell opposition and all forms of dissention, clamping them down by means of incarcerations and extra judicial killings. This has turned most African so democratic governments to monarchies ensuring not to relinquish power. This sit-tight syndrome prevalent among African rulers is motivated by vaulting ambition and monstrous avarice. Examples of such leadership abound in Nigeria, Central African Republic of the Congo, Republic of Cameroun, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Cote Voire, Burkina Faso among others. Some of these countries have had coups, and others civil war. Today, most of these countries are hot beds of war arising from turbulent political temperaments and unrestrained attitudes of their rulers in times past and present.

Sequel to the opposition from the Minister of Finance, he was dethroned as announced by the Head of State in subsequent cabinet meeting as in Act 3,thus:

... The Cabinet is seated as usual, and its mood appears more upbeat than before. A new Minister of Finance is now in place, a vain obsequious replacement...

Head: Welcome again, Lady and Gentlemen, let me start by spelling welcoming our new minister of Finance.(Finance rises from his seat with an exaggerated sense of self importance)... we are a good government ruling over very ungrateful people. Heeh...'

...play your part well, and I promise you-you and your family, your friends and all those lucky enough to be your relations will never know your poverty forever.(42).

History is retold in the above statement as Osundare has captured the exact words of former Nigerian military Head of State Ibrahim Babangida's injunction to a newly appointed minister in a Federal Executive Ruling Council (FERC) meeting while in the saddle as cited in Akinlo (pp10) ,Succeeding military heads of administration offered jobs and opportunities to people and said; thus, **Don't ever come and tell me that you and your family are poor again.** The above statement is not only reminiscent of Nigeria's messy past but further corroborates the fact that

Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida democratized corruption in Nigeria. The Babangida and Abacha dictatorships privatized the Nigerian state with huge amounts of money plundered and unaccounted for through the apparatus of the state police and other agents to suppress dissent. They, not only set new standards in pursuit of wealth and involvement in official but also in their brazenness. Today government officials, legislators and public officials launder funds in private foreign accounts. It is in their regimes that corruption acquired new connotation, **SETTLEMENT**, namely to induce an official to perform legitimate duty. Accounts were settled before payments were made to contractors. In summation, Awosika (1999) summed up corruption and its multiplier effects in Nigeria in the seminal *A President's Responsibilities* as captured in **The Guardian**, June 17th, as quoted by Ossai Agnes (:pp81-82),thus:

...People are poor because they are being denied access to opportunities. People steal because they are hungry and destitute. People are hungry and destitute because they cannot earn wages. They have no wages because they have been retrenched. They have been retrenched because industries cannot cope with their wage bills. Industries cannot cope with their wage bills because production costs have increased. Production costs have increased because infrastructures have died. The infrastructures have died because that funds meant for their maintenance and installation of others meant for the common good ends in private pockets.

The above is the reason why nothing works in Third World Countries as exemplified in the poems John Pepper Clark's *Here Nothing Works* and Niyi Osundare's *Grand Ma's Words* as cited by Oyabebefa (2021). A few lines of the latent poem below will suffice to reinforce the reeking, seething poverty arising from corruption under which yoke the masses squirm:

**... that Land is never at peace
She often stressed,
Where a few have so much
And the rest have so little
There is enough corn
For all the chickens of the World
If only they peck with equal beaks
And the fast take their haste
For the benefit of those behind**

The above lines depict the cause of corruption as a product of monstrous avarice on part of the elite, who plunder the common wealth of the nation without restraint, for which the country has retrogressed to this dismal (awry) state it is now. In sum, Osundare's *The State Visit* is a caustic

swipe on the cosmic corruption perpetuated by the elite and a concise interrogation of the paradox of history as articulated by Chinua Achebe (1983:pp3) in a barrage of questions; thus:

...But what have we done with it?. Stolen and salted away by people in power and their accomplices. Squandered in uncontrolled importation of all kinds of useless consumer merchandise from every corner of the globe Embezzled through inflated contracts to an increasing army of party loyalists who have neither the desire nor the competence to execute their contracts Consumed in escalating salaries of a grossly overstaffed and unproductive public service. And so on ad infinitum. Does it not worry us that history which neither personal wealth nor power can pre-empt will pass terrible judgement on us, pronounce anathema in our names when we have accomplished our betrayal and passed on?.

For a different perspective to corruption narrative of Africa, I recommend Jaramogi Oginga Odinga's *Not Yet Uhuru* which articulate the view that it is not yet independence, for independence because of bad leaders has not brought us any good rather we are into 'new, re or neo-colonialism'. Independence is a mere change of nomenclature.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Third world countries are what they are today because the leadership crisis. Development will remain elusive if there is no paradigm shift in leadership style and in the manner policies are made and implemented. It is only in Africa the aged rule as sharks with their moribund ideas. They deploy the same modus operandi motivated by greed and monstrous avarice to plunder the commonwealth for self interests. To achieve these they deploy corruptive practices unrestrained, and this retrogress their countries.

Based on the findings in this study, I make the following submissions.

As a result of corruption undue interference by the government, Institutions like Economic and Financial Crimes Commission(EFCC), National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency(NDLA) National Agency for the Prohibition of Human Trafficking (NAPHT) ,National Agency for Food and Drug Control(NAFDC),Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC)and other allied agencies are all dysfunctional. I recommend that they be well funded and given free reins to operate so as to checkmate corruption in high places, especially within the governmental Organisations. This aligns with the submission of erstwhile United States' President, Barrack Obamah (2009) as cited by B.B .Awata (235) thus: **Africa does not need strong men but strong institutions.**

It is further recommended that the National Orientation Agency should carry out sensitization workshops on Value Orientation to the citizens on their rights to create awareness on what to do

in their spheres of influence to report corruption cases to the Economic Crimes Financial Commission (ECFC) for action.

The Rule of Law should be enforced and stringently applied when trying corruption cases.

Courts should be given time frame to abdicate corruption matters and freedom to offer trials and dispensation of judgments, to forestall external influence. In other words, the Judiciary should be independent from other arms of government and be free from interference, given free reins to adjudicate on corruption matters.

The Whistle Blowers Programme(WBP) introduced by the former President Dr Good luck Jonathan's administration, now operational, should be upheld since its give the citizenry free hands to report corruption cases when the need arises. Government, in fidelity to its promise should pay deserving citizens the money promised for reporting cases of corruption after investigation.

The citizenry should be encouraged to say things suspicious upon sight. This is the philosophy behind the Whistle Blowers Programme which the erstwhile President Goodluck Jonathan introduced. The programme provides for the whistle blower(reporter of corruption) to be rewarded with a percentage of the money after the theft is established in a competent court of law.

The Fiscal Reasonability Act established at the Federal level should be enforced in all Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government to checkmate the executive arm of government in the appropriation of funds.

Lastly, there should be Rule of Law for the above conditions to properly function.

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