



## THE SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOME OF THE EPISODES IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S NOVEL "A MAN OF THE PEOPLE"

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this Article is bring to the fore how Chinua Achebe has used *A Man of the people* to condemn the societal belief that politics is the best avenue for making money, which often lead people into siphoning money from the government purse unnecessarily when they finally have access to the mantle of power. Achebe has used different episodes in *A Man of the People* to show Clearly African people's thinking about the political terrain, seeing it as an avenue to enrich themselves, with the Society adoring Corrupt politicians abnormally. This research work aims at exploring the implications of Achebe's focus in putting in place this novel.

**Keywords:** Episodes, Literary, Politics, Society, Corruption, Belief.

### I. Introduction

African people have been seen by many to be people of kindness, easy-going, innocence and down-to-earth. However when it comes to politics, most Africans are always enmeshed in the belief that politics is the best way to make money, and this is one thing that Achebe sets out to lambast in *A Man of the People*. Most African people believe that the only way to get rich quickly is joining politics and when they attain political powers, they become extremely corrupt, putting the entire Society in economic jeopardy. Achebe also uses this novel to condemn the worshipping of Corrupt Politicians by the ordinary people in the different Africa societies. To Achebe when people hail and praise Corrupt Politicians, over their wealth, they are indirectly endorsing corruption in the society, which to Achebe is unwholesome. It is our contention therefore that Achebe without doubt has Achieved his purpose of writing this novel, exposing the mindset of those who Join politics and the ordinary people's belief concerning the need to grab favors from politicians when they are indeed supposed to condemn these corrupt people in government.

*A Man of the People* reveals Achebe's disappointment in the African politicians, based on their negative attitude and his disappointment also centers on the ordinary people in different African Societies not showing concern about what their politicians are doing wrong to them.

### II. Core Socio- Political Implications that Achebe Wanted to Show in His Novel.

#### A. People's Mindset Towards Joining Politics

In one of the episodes in this novel, Achebe showed how the African people often view politics. Achebe in this episode below showed the fact that African people's intention in joining politics is merely to acquire wealth, and not to serve the ordinary people in the different African Societies. The episode below Justifies people's thought in joining politics.

Nanga must have gone into politics soon afterwards  
and then won a seat in parliament (it was easy in  
those days – before we know its cash price (p.3)

The episode above shows that the member of Parliament Chief Nanga at the beginning of things in this novel joined Politics because of the money he could make out of it. He was actually a High School teacher initially in the world of this novel, but Nanga joined politics because he believes that teaching job cannot give so much money like joining politics and so he did, so he could have his own share of the "National cake".

Nanga also spends money lavishly in the world of this novel, since he believes he has much more of it which he has stolen from the government's purse. In the episode below some group of villagers have come to welcome Nanga to their village and Nanga a serving Minister in the incumbent government went on spending so much money for the villagers. Odili, a High School teacher had to complain saying the villagers have taken so such money from Nanga, and the politician posited in response:

You call this spend? You never see  
something my brother. I no de keep

anini for myself na so so troway (p.14)

The episode above shows the reckless way Nanga spends money. This episode reflects how African politicians spend money lavishly. Their intention is to join politics for the money they could make and since they did not work hard to get the money they have, what they do is to embark on spending spree. The statement Nanga made in the episode above “you never see anything my brother” means Nanga often spend much more money than Odili had seen. Also the statement “ I no dey keep anini for myself, na so so troway” means Nanga spends money the way he likes because he knows he can get more since he is a politician and has access to a lot of money.

### **B. The Indictment of the Ordinary People in the Society.**

Furthermore, Achebe condemned the ordinary people in the African societies for hailing and praising corrupt politicians whenever politicians come in their midst. Nanga, as he arrived a village in this novel was welcomed extremely well by the villagers and Odili, another character in the novel got annoyed in seeing the villagers dancing and expressing their happiness over the presence of Odili the serving Minister in their midst, Odili posited:

Here were silly ignorant villagers, dancing  
themselves lame and waiting to blow off their  
gun power in honour of one of those who had  
started the Country off down the slopes of inflation (P. 2)

This episode above is an indictment of the ordinary people in the world of this novel. The villagers were merely dancing and rejoicing at seeing chief Nanga, the politician in their midst not minding the fact that he is part of those who are sinking the society into serious economic problem, due to their corruptive activities. The episode above epitomizes how the people of most African countries do feel happy when they have a corrupt politician in their midst, instead of lambasting them, people in many African countries merely go into unnecessary ecstasy over the “big Man” before them. Achebe sees this act as a misnomer.

As an addendum to the episode above, another episode in the novel, that condemns societal support of the activities of African corrupt politicians, is signposted by Achebe in this novel. A group of people were talking about the various problems associated with politics and Nanga, a serving Minister in the incumbent government tries to explain how difficult and troublesome politics can be and a woman, another participant in the discourse postulated:

I no kuku mind the katakata wey de inside  
Make you put Minister money for my hand  
and all the wahala on top. I no mind at all (P.15)

Achebe has used the episode above to lampoon the ordinary people of the different African societies. In the episode, the woman in the world of this novel did not take Cognizance of the fact that the Minister in their midst is a corrupt politician hers was just to get money from him without minding the source of it.

This negative attitude Achebe tends to frown at out completely. For Achebe the society should see corruption as a nefarious activity and not for the ordinary people to aid and abet it.

### **C. The Womanizing Nature of African Politicians**

More so, Achebe has used this novel to condemn the womanizing nature of African politicians. The episode below shows how African politicians suddenly become womanizers after joining politics. In the episode, Chief Nanga the politician took a lady for himself as a concubine with the intention of marrying her in addition to his first wife.

Andrew and Odili characters in this novel were having a discussion over who lady with chief Nanga was at a get –together and Andrew replied: “His girl friend”

Odili retorted “ I see” (p. 23)

Andrew later postulated:

Actually it’s more than that he is planning  
to marry her according to native law and  
custom. Apparently his missus is too “bush”  
for his present position so he want a bright new  
parlour wife to play hostess at his parties .(p.23)

The episode above shows that chief Nanga the politician took another woman as his girl friend with the intention of marrying her eventually, having got tired of his first wife. This episode shows how African politicians do get tired of their wives whom they married long back, thinking that they do not befit their status any more after joining politics and holding political powers.

Achebe used this episode to showcase the fact that politicians can never be trusted when it comes to the issue of women

### **D. The Bias of the Media**

Achebe has further shown in this novel how the media often tilt towards the government in power and neglecting the duty of fairness they owe the society. In this novel the Prime Minister had sacked some of the

Ministers serving under him because they did not support him in his move to spend huge amount of money on revitalizing the nose-diving coffee business in the country.

Some Ministers opposed him and he sacked them. A Newspaper, "*Daily Chronicle*" wrote an editorial supporting the Prime Minister's decision of sacking his Ministers. The editorial goes thus:

Let us now and for all time extract from out  
body politic as a dentist extracts a sinking  
tooth. All those decadent stooges versed in  
text-book economics and aping the white man's  
mannerisms and way of speaking. Our true  
leaders are not those intoxicated with their oxford  
Cambridge of hazard degrees but those who  
speak the language of the people.

In the episode above, the medium in question "The daily chronicle" supports the government in power at the expense of the rest of the people in the society. This exemplifies the attitude of those who work in the media houses in different African countries, supporting the government in power either for favors or for the fear of being persecuted.

Achebe condemns the bias of the press, giving support to the government, as this portends injustice on the part of the Masses..

### III. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is pertinent to say that Achebe has achieved his purpose of writing this novel by using **A Man of the People** to condemn the African politicians' negative tendencies and by extension, condemning the ordinary people in the different African societies, for their seeming endorsement of corrupt politicians. Achebe, an African writer of repute, realizes that African politicians are bereft of the right thinking and so must be corrected. The more reason he has written this novel to check their excesses accordingly. In addition, Achebe lambasts the ordinary people in different African societies for hailing, abetting and praising African corrupt politicians whom they are supposed to condemn for their misdeeds. For Achebe, the people in African societies should recognize that African politicians need to be put in the right track by the society pinpointing their wrongs in order that African societies become better and wholesome socially, economically and politically. Achebe, a morally upright personality is one man who believes that no society can experience any progress in an atmosphere of corruption and other unwholesome practices, hence the the reason he has written this novel as a weapon of attack on corrupt politicians and the society at large. For Achebe, any society that breeds corruption can never develop and so the people of Africa should live an upright way of life so that we can have an ideal African Societies free from social vices of all sorts.

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