

## **Corruption in contemporary Nigerian fiction: A study of Ikechukwu Asika's *Pimples on Wrinkles***

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### ***Abstract***

*Political leadership is all about moving towards more stable, accountable and open political system. In Africa, politics is business where a certain political position makes one advantageous over others. Political leaders are in charge, they have absolute control over the distribution of power and resources in their communities. Against this background, they favour sycophants and loyal supporters and they are selectively favoured beyond measures. This supports corruption and bad governance. They are more concerned in accumulation of their countries' wealth instead of developing the nation's economy and other infrastructure considering the large and enormous human, material and natural resources God endowed them with. Corruption therefore becomes normal and even looks like ordinary norm to Nigerian leaders as most of them are neck deep into it. They succeed in exploiting the masses and wasting the resources that are supposed to be used in alleviating poverty just by ordinary provision of employment, good health system, good schools and agricultural facilities. The study looks at how the novelist reflect corruption, bad governance, oppression and negligence of duty to our political leaders and is of the view that African leaders are worshipped as 'gods' by their followers and bootlickers who always rally around them for 'crumbs' from their tables. Using content analysis approach of qualitative research method, this paper examines the 'patrimonial' system of*

*government and citizens' ability to accommodate it. Marxist theory is adopted for the analysis of the text, Pimples on Wrinkles by Asika Ikechukwu. It is the theory that spurs and encourages the masses to rise up and fight for their rights and freedom. This paper observes that the major cause of corruption is emptiness of the leaders. Some leaders come to power aimlessly, with no agenda and empty manifesto. Their actual intention is to intimidate the citizens by enriching themselves. This paper concludes that for sustainable leadership and sanity to come back to Africa, Nigeria in particular, the masses must rise up and transform their society by fighting back their leaders secretly and openly.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, corruption, political leaders, bad governance

## **Introduction**

Nigeria is richly blessed with natural and human resources but bad leadership and bad governance which made the leaders insincere and tactless to the masses they are supposed to serve have made Nigerians wallow in poverty and analphabetism. It is no news that corruption is the order of the day in Africa and Nigeria in particular as our leaders have mismanaged the countries' resources. After the independence of most African countries, it was expected that the indigenous leaders would perform wonderfully well to improve the economic and political standard of the continent instead they blighted the lives of Africans and become threats to the masses as they shatter the hopes and expectations of the masses who in most cases voted them in. Our colonial masters were replaced with a small group of greedy, inconsiderate, selfish and money-minded individuals

as leaders. It is obvious that political leaders in Africa till date are all involved in corruption, selfishness and greed. It is believed that African political leaders learnt their kind of leadership from their colonial masters. Ngozi Chuma-Udeh puts it this way:

It turned out that a group of ‘black power’ elite cult had stepped into the vacated seat of the colonial masters. Those leaders started where their masters stopped. Theirs was the same, if not worse than the colonial pattern of politics. The rulingclass was the product of the same evil they fought against. (131)

As a result, the masses become disillusioned, confused and perplexed as the so called leaders oppress them, spend public money recklessly, stop press freedom and neglect their duties as leaders. African political leaders have turned to ‘oppressors or colonizers’ as their governments are corrupt and some of them prefer making themselves life presidents which is another very serious problem which aid and support corruption and bad leadership. These presidents have been presidents for decades. According to [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), Paul Biya of Cameroon is serving his seventh tenure and he has been on that seat for thirty eight (38) years, which is from 1982 to date. Robert Mugabe ruled Zimbabwe for thirty (30) years, from 1987 to 2017, Libya’s Maumman Al-Qaddafi was in power for forty two (42) years. Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak was in office for thirty (30) years, Uganda’s Yoweri Museveni has been the president of Uganda since 1986, Equatorial Guinea’s Teodord Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has been in power since 1979, and Chad’s Idriss Deby has been in power since 1990. This type of leadership leads to insensitivity of leaders to the masses and state failure as the states

are ruled by clueless leaders whose ideas are based on only one person's ideology.

As things get worse by the day, literary artists who inhabit among the masses have no option than to pick up their pens and write on the ills found in the society just to bring them to limelight and if possible get them corrected for a better and sustainable society. This is an acceptable way and a positive move to the right direction to fight corruption and bad governance as they succeed in creating awareness. The masses look upon these artists to reveal and uncover the injustice, corruption, embezzlement, wickedness, intimidation, oppression, confusion, displacement, abuse of power and negligence of duties exhibited by our leaders. Achebe supports the above as he writes:

The writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done. In fact, he should march right in front... I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past- with all imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the first European acting on God's behalf delivered them.(45)

With the above in mind, Chinua Achebe, and other literary artists like Helen Habila who wrote *Waiting for an Angel* which is about Africa waiting for corrupt free leaders as the present ones are all corrupt and thoughtless, Ayi Kwei Armah wrote the *Beautiful ones are not yet Born* and other novels that portray corrupt leaders and Asika Ikechukwu who joined the race by writing *Pimple on Wrinkles* to expose corruption especially in civil service and political offices to mention but these.

Atlas Syed Hussein writes that corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain. He goes further to define corruption as ‘the subordination of public interests to private aims involving a violation of norms of duty and welfare, accompanied by secrecy, betrayal, deception and a callous disregard for any consequence suffered by the public.’(12) Simply put, corruption is all about dishonest, insincere, selfish and greedy leaders who feed the masses with lies to deceive them and can do anything to enrich themselves to the detriment of their followers.

Corruption in Nigeria is so deep that it affects every facet of the society – right from the top most level of government to the least in the civil service. Corruption is the bedrock of injustice and bad governance in Nigeria. Corruption made so many Nigerian youth feel that they have been deprived of jobs and good standard of living which actually leads to poverty, under development, unemployment and perpetual economic slavery. They believe that their situation is hopeless as the judiciary and other law enforcement agencies are totally corrupt. Fumilola Ajala in his article ‘#EndSARSProtests: A Chronicle of Nigeria’s #BlackLivesMatter’ puts it this way, ‘For the Nigerian youth, the discontent being expressed through the viral #ENDSARS protest is an exhibition of their accumulated frustration against the social inequality and economic deprivations.’ In support, the former governor of Cross River State, Mr Donald Duke according to Ike Uchechukwu, Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup> 2020, Vanguard Newspaper said that Nigerian leaders have mismanaged the country’s resources and begged youths to forgive their leaders. He apparently blame #EndSARSprotest on corruption and unemployment. He accuses government of corruption and wickedness, in other words, Nigerian government lacks integrity. Uchechukwu writes:

He (the governor) said, ... The youths have to forgive us first, because we are the ones managing their resources and they are telling us that our management is poor, ... giving them job or engaging them is not a privilege but a right. ... From this moment, we must be very sincere with the people... Huge percentage of our youth are idle. (12)

Fumilola goes ahead to describe the Nigerian police as ‘the ‘most corrupt’ public institution in Nigeria. Akinrefon in his article ‘#EndSARS protests: No degree of brutality can quench repression flame’ on Monday, October 26, 2020 Vanguard Newspaper, writes that Tunde Bakare is of the view that Nigerian police is an ‘institution that has the worst reputation for corruption and ineptitude in the Nigerian public sector.’(10) Nigerian police is so corrupt that they extort money from innocent citizens and kill them for refusing to grease their palms. Government’s insensitiveness and callousness made Nigerian youths to protest between 9<sup>th</sup> October to 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 when thousands of Nigerian youths were on the streets across the nation asking for an end to the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad and bad governance which is garnished with corruption, wickedness, man’s inhumanity to man, injustice, bribery and other vices. Though Nigerian governments (past and present) have tried fighting corruption by introducing some corruption policies like ‘War Against Indiscipline’ (WAI) by Buhari/Idiagbon regime in 1983, ‘Economic and Financial Crimes Commission’ (EFCC) and ‘Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission’ (ICPC) by Gen Obasanjo regime between 1999and 2007, and ‘Change Begins

with me' by the present government, yet Nigeria has gradually relapsed into a disorganized nation.

Nigeria wallow in corruption, insecurity, injustice and human rights violation issues, to worsen the situation, their leaders play double-standard, they are selfish, thoughtless, unserious and lack discipline. The text under study paints the picture of a particular governor and other characters as civil servants swimming in corruption, embezzlement, oppression, abuse of power as they try to survive against all odds.

### **Conceptual framework**

Marxist theory was formulated in 1848 by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. For Karl Marx, an ideal society is ruled by thoughtful leaders who are corruption free, there will not be exploitation, no improper use of power nor class distinction. Man's needs will be satisfied when man provides means of production for it and his need for private property and accumulation leads to what Marx refer to primitive accumulation. This divides the society into two – the haves and the have-nots. Then, there is the struggle between these two classes of people in the society, the struggle between the bourgeoisie (the haves) who are in charge of means of production and proletariat (the have-nots) who labour hard to survive. The relationship between the two classes of people is not palatable and it usually ends up in crisis which is traumatic and stressful for the have-nots. This act causes conflicts as the bourgeoisie always exploit the masses and the oppressed will be left with no other option than to rebel. it usually leads to revolution by the masses. The bourgeoisie suppress the awareness of class distinction using the super structure. The proletariats labour hard to survive daily while the bourgeoisie are interested in acquiring more and more properties.

This gradually makes the masses to resist the already established authority, they fight (revolt against bourgeoisie) and try to seize the means of production; they may in the cause become violent. The theory explains this dialectic process and the emergence of the ideal communist state after the revolution in which the oppressed and the exploited take over control of means of production. This is exactly what happens in a deprived and debased country. Usually if a country is corrupt, the masses will be exploited and when the exploitation becomes unbearable, they revolt, just like what happened in the text under study, *Pimples on Wrinkles*, where Mrs Thelma revolted and killed the commissioner. Revolution can be done openly or secretly (killing the oppressors secretly), Thelma prefers to kill them secretly.

### **Corruption and its consequences in Asika Ikechukwu's *Pimples on Wrinkles***

Corruption causes a lot of damage to human psyche and it makes upright citizens sick. The rate of Corruption in the text is alarming and it gives room for wicked act, fraud, moral decadence, selfishness, dishonesty, heartlessness, prostitution, mal-administration, lack of integrity, lack of dedication and commitment towards work, nonchalant attitude towards work especially civil servants. Corruption also cripples one's talent. In the text under study, Mr Azubuike, the Commissioner of works is so wicked, mean, heartless and can do anything to make money or have his way and his actions of course affect the economy negatively. There is usually loss of revenue seen in the numerous useless parties the governor in the text usually throws and the percentages he and his top government officials demand at the award of any contract no matter how small the contract is. The governor decides to squander peoples' money just to enjoy

himself, host secret parties and punish the masses. He enjoys himself to the detriment of his citizens. Corruption in Nigerian public offices is like ordinary water we drink daily and it is a canker worm that has eaten deep into our society. Once you are not corrupt, your colleagues in the public office will look at you as an insane person; no wonder Oladipupo in his *Research Report: Qualitative Study on the Patterns, Experiences and Manifestations of Corruption in Nigeria*, is of the view that the most corrupt people in the society are the government officials: this is exactly what is happening in *Pimples on Wrinkles*. The whole civil servants in the text except one person, Mr. Odiolisa are all corrupt.

Corruption and other social problems which lead to bad governance are responsible for people's sadness and actions. Asika writes: '...He was organizing a grand party for all his commissioners and top rank government officials to celebrate his return and partnership with the Chinese government' (87). Top government officials throw parties at random to waste and lavish money with their girlfriends and enjoy themselves at the expense of the masses. It was Mr Azubuikwe that organizes such grand parties which are usually strictly on invitation and no media coverage or news report to avoid implicating themselves. Phones are usually banned from such gatherings to enable them conceal their evil, malevolent and morally corrupt acts. One of such parties was thrown when the governor came back 'from a three week trip to China and was in a celebrative mood.'(86) He throws party and enjoys at the slightest instance just to waste money instead of improving the living standard of his people especially the destitute people in their mist. A situation that pushes people to the wall and makes them react. Their reaction in most cases is revolution, just like what happened in Nigeria in

October, 2020, where masses were on the streets across the country to protest against police brutality and bad governance. Corruption and bad governance are the major reasons for the protest, Chinedu Adonu in his article 'Blame protest on Failure of Governance' in Vanguard Newspaper, Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2020 writes: 'Most Rev Emmanuel Chukwuma has blamed the #EndSARS protests on the failure of the Nigerian government to provide good governance to citizens' (13). It is obvious that the poor and the vulnerable suffer more from corruption and bad governance as depicted in the text; it hits them badly in the society as it affects employment opportunities, standard of living and purchasing power. This is exactly the case of bourgeoisies and the have-nots as the society is automatically divided into two major groups of people. Of course, the very rich got rich through corruption and try to subdue the proletariats. Apart from this, the government is insensitive and callous. It makes life very difficult for the people. Government borrows money carelessly and increases price of fuel to increase its revenue thereby afflicting the people with more pains. In Love of an Angel, Asika also shows that corrupt leaders are mean as he writes how they increase fuel price at random to please themselves. He writes:

The idea of fuel hike is something that delights every government. It is a game to them. An easy to of making billions in one day. The system is like one playing music where someone was fast asleep. It is obvious that the music will disturb the person sleeping but for the fun of it, he must increase the volume and decrease it just to enjoy himself and cause the person sleeping some discomfort. ... He will be expecting the sleeping man to react

immediately, so when the masses will be getting ready to react, they will decrease it. The man will try to sleep again and he will increase it to his happiness. That is how they increase and decrease the price of fuel to their happiness. (142 – 143)

Nigerians are denied of good quality roads, good schools, access to electricity and quality and standard health care. Corruption in Nigeria did not start recently as Festus Iyayi in his prose *Violence*, shows the moral decadence in Nigeria between 1960 and the early 1980s. The judiciary, the civil service, the business community are all corrupt as their officials enrich themselves in crooked manner at the expense of the innocent masses. The judiciary is very corrupt, instead of protecting life and properties; maintaining law and order, treating cases promptly and fairly, they dehumanize people. People lack basic amenities of life and decent standard of living due to corruption and bad governance. In the text under study, the masses really suffer; the governor is a big crook that Indonesian government declared him wanted. The governor illegally deals on arms and ammunition and when the governor was caught in Indonesia, Mr. Azubuike, ordinary civil servant, volunteered to help him by claiming that he, Mr Azubuike was the brain behind all the atrocities. Indonesian government could not do anything but to jail Azubuike instead of the governor for five years. Asika puts it this way:

The governor was very notorious in his illegal dealing in arms, drugs and money laundering until he undertook one failed business in Indonesia and was uncovered. (78)

The governor agreed to pay Azubuike two hundred million naira to go to jail on his behalf. He paid the first half into a secret account and gave him the rest when he finally comes back. Where did the money come from? Apart from this, the governor steals money and transfers it abroad. He uses Azubuike to steal and rewards him handsomely. 'The governor soon began to use him to launder money abroad. Azubuike became a money laundering agent for the governor...' (71). When Mr Azubuike was later released by Indonesian government, the governor welcomes him by throwing a party for him and finally made him commissioner for Works. Poor production and incompetence become the order of the day. The Commissioner for Works, Mr Azubuike is a good example of a round peg in a square hole. He is a novice as he is in charge of an office he knows nothing about. The portfolio is strange to him but his main job is to make money for the governor and himself without bothering whose ox is gored. The impoverished are the worst hit as they are devoid of the country's resources. There is ineffective development because there is a decline in productivity; they cut corners to achieve their illegal aims and business. Appointing inappropriate people to head offices, ministries and other parastatals is corruption as these heads of offices will never deliver, just like Mr Azubuike. Being in that office as a commissioner jeopardizes his service delivery and encourages corruption.

To depict how corrupt he (the commissioner) is, he promises Mrs Thelma Odilisa, a colleague's wife, a standard car, a standard boutique and one hundred and fifty million naira contract if she agrees to sleep with him. Where does he plan to get the money from if not from the general government purse which is people's money? This singular act shows how corrupt

the civil servants in *Pimples on Wrinkles* and Nigeria at large are, they divert public money.

Azubiike wants to get rich at all cost so he does anything for the sake of money, the governor and Azubiike are ‘corruption’ personified. The novel shows the level of decay in the society. Mr Azubiike arranges girls for top government officials and equally buys arms for them. Asika writes: ‘From arranging girls for the top government officials in their party venues and procuring arms for their illegal dealings, he gained their confidence and soon began to also push money abroad for them’ (74). Arrangement of these girls of course made him ‘discover the level of rot, indecency and decay in many of the girls that flock all around the universities parading themselves as students.’ (76). Asika Ikechukwu in *Love of an Angel* call corruption and waste of public money wickedness and he paints these top officials as inhuman who derive pleasure in punishing the masses. In fact, they purposely come to power to punish the masses as ‘...they sit in the air-conditioned room, laughing and drinking, their potbellies, round bellies, cup bellies, cubed bellies dangling side by side’(142). The writer believes that these top officials see the masses as toys which they can handle and discard at any time with ease. To them, it is like a game. It is like music that they can increase or decrease the sound as they want. In actual sense, they play with the destinies of the masses. Even in *Waiting for an Angel* by Helen Habila, government embezzles public money, neglects their duties, opposes the masses and violates press freedom.

The governor in the text under study mismanaged the money allocated to his state that Asika referred to him as ‘the Chief in corruption’.(88) Due to corruption, bad governance and bad leadership, the society is grinded to a halt. One can no longer

trust anything in the country, ordinary beauty contest done in the University for fresh students is rigged. ‘My dear, do you think crowns are given out just like that? It is beyond the competition. That competition is just a show to make it look credible and fulfill all righteousness’ (109). This was what Mr Azubuike told Thelma (now Mrs Thelma Odiolisa) back in the university when Thelma wanted to contest for Miss Fresher in University of Benin. This shows that such contests are rigged. It boils down to who you know and how well you are willing to play your card - in cash or kind (bribery). How can human beings be so heartless that the judges and organizers of the contest want to sleep with the contestants? Where are their moral values and standard? Azubuike was even proud to announce that you use what you have to get what you want, nothing goes for anything and so he must sleep with Thelma for her to win the contest. Apart from Azubuike, other organizers wanted to sleep with the contestants, what a shame. These men are corrupt, ruthless, callous and inhuman. Thelma refused them all but later won the beauty contest; Azubuike claimed the success and tried raping Thelma much later just to ensure that he slept with her. This can only happen where we have corrupt government officials who care less about the citizens and the few rich people, the bourgeoisie will never allow the masses to breathe.

Good and vibrant leaders are very vital for any country to move forward. Hardworking, visionary, peaceful, humble and accommodating leaders are the characteristics of democratic government and good governance. Incidentally, Nigeria lacks such leaders as seen in the text under study. Azubuike, the Commissioner is a proud rouge who spent part of his youthful years in prison. He went to Libya after his youth service where he was deported and then he found his way into the civil service

system and finally wins the confidence of the governor and his men. It is obvious that he does not possess leadership qualities and so cannot make a good leader but the governor never bothered to look for a good leader because he is not one, rather he wants a money launderer to help him steal peoples' money. Mr Azubuike hates Mr Odiolisa for refusing to soil his hands as a civil servant. Mr Odiolisa as a civil servant refused to receive or give bribes as the head of his section; he never wanted embezzlement of any sort in his section. Azubuike never forgave Mr Odiolisa for being a patriotic citizen. Azubuike laments: 'You didn't eat them, yet you refused others from looting them' (95). In his office as a commissioner, he talks to Mr Odiolisa recklessly blaming Mr Odiolisa for his (Odiolisa's) misfortune. To crown Mr Azubuike's shameful attitude and show how unrepentant and hell bent he can be whenever he wants anything, he tells Thelma 'Many of us look forward to hell... hell will be fun... many of us, the politicians, doctors, lawyers, lecturers, even clergymen, all of us will still meet there and make it fun'(128). He is so selfish and corrupt that he cares less about other people's feelings. Government is a calamity whose lawless leadership and governance drive people like Mrs Thelma Odiolisa crazy.

Government is supposed to provide employment for everybody, decent working conditions, enough social protection and increase gender quality but the reverse is the case. Our leaders are elected and voted into public offices (governors) to serve and protect the masses but instead they provide the masses with systematic government failure which has worsened the peoples' living conditions. Mrs Thelma is constantly tormented by the commissioner until she throws shame and caution to the wind as she sleeps with Mr Azubuike, the Commissioner for Works, to win a contract for her retired husband, who after his

retirement becomes so poor that at a time feeding his family and paying school fees become an uphill task. Poverty due to corruption is the cause of her stupid act. Her husband retired from civil service and for more than one year, his pension is not forthcoming and the kids in school can no longer be catered for. The worst is that they have no place to call their own and so when the lawyer notifies them to pack out of their house for not being able to pay the house rent, they are left with no other option than going to their village. Thelma cannot bear the agony and humiliation of living in the village. The corrupt Commissioner refuses to give the contract to Thelma's husband unless he sleeps with her. In order to maintain her standard of living, she gives in. This becomes the last straw that broke the camel's back as this singular act causes the death of Mr Odiolisa, Thelma's husband and ruined her family which she worked so hard to build. Social and political institutions are means of coercion and enforcing compliance by the bourgeoisie. These bourgeoisies emotionally and psychologically blackmail people to get what they want. Thelma at last kills the commissioner and herself to liberate her soul from the guilt of murder (her husband's death) and liberate others who must have been in Mr Azubuike's cage. She did this to end corruption from Mr Azubuike's end but the reverse is the case in *Love of an Angel* as Mrs Chendo kills her husband to be with her boss, her boyfriend.

*Pimples on Wrinkles* is among the novels that draw critical mental focus to the suffering, tormenting and painful experiences of Nigerians. The citizens suffer from insecurity, unemployment, hunger, poverty and underdevelopment. The gait of gentlemanliness, hard work and honesty are farfetched in every political leader and government contractor. A good number of them want to loot the government, they all have to be corrupt for

them to succeed, the contractors they have to pay some percentages to people that matter. Mr Odiolisa, an upright retired civil servant cannot be given a contract because the people that matter believe that he, (Mr Odiolisa) will not give kick back (some percentages) and will like to do the work excellently well as a civil engineer so that the masses will benefit. The Commissioner did not find it funny with him in the Commissioner's office when he (Mr Odiolisa) came for the contract. The Commissioner asked him to forget about the masses and do the needful (play his card well). Mr Odiolisa tries to explain to him that many contractors are not interested in the job but only want the money attached to the job by saying 'These men would not do this work. You know they will share out the percentages and the people, the masses would continue to suffer' (96). The Commissioner replies:

And who cares? Who cares? Is your name masses? ... God has always taken care of them ... God will never abandon them but you don't know that Government comes and goes, the masses survive... So forget about the masses (96)

Mr Odiolisa refuses to agree with him and because of this he did not get the contract until the Commissioner slept with his wife. It is all about exploitation, stealing, injustice, humiliation, wickedness and avarice. Mr Azubuike is a good example of the wealthy that use physical and moral force to ensure that their wicked acts are carried out by the have nots. This alone calls for revolution as the rich who are in charge of production are mean and ruthless. The masses are always intimidated just like what happened in Nigeria (Lagos - Lekki Toll Gate) on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 where armless masses were shot and killed during a

peaceful protest just to shut them up from showing their grievances against the corrupt government. The Commissioner (Mr Azubuiké) and the governor's action give us a clear picture of political, social and economic corruptions in Nigeria. Mr Azubuiké is involved in so many evil deeds right from his University days as an undergraduate. No wonder he couldn't survive as a civil servant. 'He was also the chief in corruption and there seemed to be no way out' (88). He mismanages and loots the economy of his province. The governor had awarded many abandoned projects, these projects are abandoned because the governor and his company of thieves would keep on demanding for percentages that the contractors would not have enough to tidy up the projects. Yet this doesn't move the governor to change and for once think of the masses. It is so bad that he equally pushes away foreign contractors. Asika writes:

He (the governor) knew that the Chinese Government may decide to withdraw their support by the time many of the big shots and god-fathers in the state will rear their ugly heads and would be determined to loot the funds allocated for the project... The Chinese government once they smell any layer of corruption or mismanagement would back out and abandon the project for good. That had been the case of many viable projects the governor had ever embarked upon. (88)

The Chinese want to invest but 'percentage' becomes a problem, some government officials even want to dupe the Chinese government if it is possible. This makes investment impossible and so underdevelopment creeps in. Same thing (corruption) is the major theme in *Love of an Angel*, by same

author, road contractors always do shabby work so that the roads will damage in no time and they will be called back and paid again for same job. The author writes: ‘If you want a construction company to finish any road: ...they can do it: but corruption is our problem. As for what will be done, we know it’. (145) *Iyayiin Violence* portrays corrupt police officers. The hospital is not left out as there is preferential treatment of patients. There is no health care service as people (two patients) share a bed because available ones are given to patients that can grease the officials’ palms. Corruption is actually so open and common in Nigeria that even the sick are affected, no accountability and accurate records. Nobody cares; their only interest is how to make money legally or illegally.

In the novel under study, there is lack of transparency as the governor is not answerable to anybody, he is above the law and so he squanders people's money with impunity. The worst part of immorality is the Commissioner sleeping with his girlfriend, Isabella in his office during office hours (85), this is the highest sign of irresponsibility. The governor’s administration was nothing to write home about that is why his workers are corrupt because he is nonchalant towards his work, he has no sense of duty, commitment, responsibility and lacks initiative. With this, corruption is on the high side, then oppression and man’s inhumanity to man come into existence. The only option left for the masses is to revolt and demand for their rights.

## **Conclusion**

It is crystal clear from the study that literary writers have a whole lot to play in correcting the unfair and unjust treatment of the masses by the political leaders. A literary artist is therefore the eye of the people, a mouth piece, a social crusader and moral

consciousness of his society. Asika Ikechukwu, a literary artist does the above by x-raying how corruption, oppression, injustice, wickedness, greed, fraud and misappropriation of public funds have turned our leaders into tyrants and despots. In actual fact, people's hopes, dreams and desire are crushed. In the novel Mrs Thelma Odiolisa an unhappy woman willingly killed the corrupt commissioner, Mr Azubuikwe, by cutting off his manhood to retaliate his wickedness. Thelma slept with the commissioner to salvage her husband who wanted a contract from the commissioner badly. This singular action killed the man as the man, Mr Odiolisa feels that his ego has been destroyed and trampled upon. Other events in the novel make the masses to be emotionally injured, the writer gives a clarion call for revolution which can be done secretly or openly as the only solution to our leaders' evil disposition and objectionable behavior. The novel shows that Nigeria lacks good governance and the speed at which the country is being drawn backwards. This study will benefit the public in general and so will definitely help our present and future leaders and politicians at large to avert mistakes made in the text under study as the novel x-rays the causes and consequences of corruption. It will help the next generation of leaders not to imitate or emulate the bad and corrupt leadership as portrayed in the novel. To achieve corrupt-free Nigeria, the leaders (especially) and the led should endeavour to be up right, honest, diligent and patriotic.

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