

Power Play, Politics, and Disillusionment in Emeka Nwabueze's *A Parliament of Vultures*

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Abstract

This study examined the themes of disillusionment and politics in Emeka Nwabueze's satirical play, *A Parliament of Vultures*, contextualizing it within Nigeria's socio-political scene. The play's portrayal of corruption, inept leadership, and the exploitation of power mirrored the country's challenges, evoking a sense of disillusionment among citizens. Through satire, Nwabueze critiqued the Nigerian political system, highlighting the struggles of the masses and the consequences of unchecked power. This analysis explored how the play reflected Nigeria's realities, sparking reflections on governance, accountability, and the need for change. The only solution as a way out of the perennial political cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Africa, especially Nigeria, will be the emergence of patriotic, selfless, honest, and diplomatic leadership that can identify and address the many challenges facing the country and its citizens. Marxist theory is the theoretical framework of this paper, which analyzed disillusionment in Nigerian politics across gender and concludes that unless corruption is dealt with and public office holders held accountable, the political decadence in Nigeria would remain a menace. The main crux of this paper is the exposition of the misnomer in politics, the fate of the nation, and the need for attitudinal change to restore sanity in the Nigerian political space.

Keywords: Disillusionment, Parliamentarians, Power Play, Politics, Corruption

Introduction

Emeka Nwabueze's satirical play, *A Parliament of Vultures*, presents a scathing critique of Nigeria's political system, highlighting the pervasive corruption, inept leadership, and exploitation of power. This article examines the themes of power play, disillusionment, and politics in the play, contextualizing it within Nigeria's socio-political sketch, particularly with the parliamentarians after the return of power to the fourth democratic rule. The average Nigerian character was full of expectations on the return of democratic rule in 1999. The democratic return came amidst raised hopes that it would, to a large extent, solve socio-political problems and create opportunities which would ensure a more fulfilled life for the average Nigerian. A lot of promises came in the wake of Nigeria's return to civilian democratic rule. The economic plans were based on broad egalitarian precepts. There were great promises of equal opportunities for all citizens in the areas of education, health, and employment. The return to civilian democratic rule was ordinarily expected to mark a new dawn of progress for all. Unfortunately, the return to civilian democratic rule in May 1999 has been a

dynamic and very challenging one. The period marked the end of decades of military rule and ushered in an era of multi-party politics and constitutional governance. After the death of military dictator General Sani Abacha in 1998, General Abdulsalami Abubakar initiated a swift transition programme. This culminated in the adoption of the 1999 constitution and the peaceful handover of power to elected civilian President Olusegun Obasanjo in May, 1999. The People's Democratic Party (PDP), which sponsored Obasanjo, dominated Nigerian politics for the first sixteen years of the Fourth Republic, controlling the presidency and a majority in the National Assembly. Within this period from 1999 to 2007, President Obasanjo's tenure focused on consolidating democracy, economic reforms, and fighting corruption, though critics often raised concerns about his style and attempt at constitutional amendment for a third term. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, same PDP, took over in 2007 to 2010. His presidency was cut short by illness, but he was known for his adherence to the rule of law and the declaration of amnesty for Niger Delta militants. Goodluck Jonathan (PDP) became the president after Yar'Adua's demise from 2010 to 2015. His administration grappled

with the rise of Boko Haram and growing insecurity. In 2015, Muhammadu Buhari of the All-Progressive Congress (APC), was elected as the president of Nigeria. His election marked the first time an opposition party, the APC, peacefully unseated an incumbent ruling party in Nigeria's history. His focus was on security, anti-corruption, and economic diversification. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the current president still under APC, took over from Buhari in 2023. His election was keenly contested and challenged in court, and it signifies continued power rotation between the major parties.

Nigeria has seen several leaders at the helm of its National Assembly. It is important to differentiate between the Senate (the upper chamber) and the House of Representatives (the lower chamber). Nigeria, since 1999, has witnessed leaders of both houses. The Senate President is the presiding officer of the Nigerian Senate. Evan Enwerem (PDP) from June, 1999 to November, 1999. Chuba Okadigbo (PDP) November, 1999 to August, 2000. Anyim Pius Anyim (PDP), August, 2000 to June, 2003. Adolphus Wabara (PDP) June, 2003 to April, 2005. Ken Nnamani (PDP) April, 2005 to June, 2007. David Mark (PDP) June 2007 to June 2015 (longest serving Senate President). Bukola Saraki (APC/PDP) June, 2015 to June, 2019. Ahmed

Lawan (APC) June 2019 to June 2023. Godswill Akpabio (APC) June 2023 to date. On the other hand, the Speaker of the House of Representatives presides over the lower chamber in the following order since the return of democratic rule in 1999. Salisu Buhari (PDP) June, 1999 to July 1999 (shortest tenure, resigned due to certificate forgery and age falsification). Ghali Umar Na Abba (PDP) July, 1999 to June, 2003. Aminu Bello Masari (PDP) June, 2003 to June, 2007. Patricia Etteh (PDP), June, 2007 to October, 2007 (first and only female speaker). Dimeji Bankole (PDP) November, 2007 to June, 2011 (youngest Speaker at thirty-seven). Aminu Tambuwal (PDP), June, 2011 to May, 2015. Yakubu Dogara (APC/PDP) June, 2015 to June, 2019. Femi Gbajabiamila (APC) June 2019 to June 2023. Tajudeen Abbas (APC), June, 2023 to date.

It is interesting to see how the political landscape shifts and changes over the years, with different parties and individuals taking on crucial leadership roles. While many political parties exist, the political landscape has largely been dominated by two major parties: the PDP and the APC. More recently, parties like the Labour Party (LP) and the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) gained significant traction in the 2023 elections, particularly the LP with Peter Obi's

presidential candidacy, indicating a potential shift towards a more multi-polar political landscape. The period since Nigeria's return to civilian democratic rule has been characterized by a noticeable and often deepening sense of political disillusionment among the populace, intertwined with pervasive power play among the political elite. These two phenomena are often mutually reinforcing. *A Parliament of Vultures* is a satirical play that tells the story of a group of politicians who manipulate their way into power, only to exploit it for personal gain. The play's portrayal of corruption, nepotism, and electoral malpractice mirrors Nigeria's challenges. The play evokes a sense of disillusionment among citizens, reflecting the frustrations and disappointments of Nigerians with their leaders.

Disillusionment stems from a gap between the high hopes that accompanied the end of military rule and the often-frustrating realities of democratic governance. These include failure to translate democracy into tangible benefits. Despite being resource-rich, Nigeria continues to grapple with high poverty rates, unemployment, and inflation. Many citizens feel that the economic dividends of democracy have not reached them, leading to a belief that successive governments have failed to improve their

living standards. Poor governance and public services, inadequate infrastructure, failed public education and healthcare systems, and erratic power supply contribute to a sense that leaders are not effectively addressing core societal needs.

Corruption and lack of accountability remain rampant across all tiers of government. The public often witnesses allegations of embezzlement and mismanagement with little tangible accountability or successful prosecution of high-profile cases. This fosters cynicism and a belief that the system is rigged. The perceived impunity of political elites, where powerful figures often escape justice for corrupt practices, deepens public mistrust in the rule of law. Electoral malpractices and perceived unfairness during elections, marred by allegations of fraud, vote-buying, voter intimidation and manipulation of results, make citizens question the integrity of their votes and the legitimacy of elected officials. Voter apathy, a significant consequence of electoral malpractices and perceived unreliability of the electoral umpire is widespread. Many citizens feel their votes do not count, leading to decreased participation in elections. This poses a fundamental threat to the legitimacy of Nigeria's democracy.

Elite disconnection and lack of ideology pose danger in the return to democratic system. Political economist, Pat Utomi argues that since 1999, Nigeria has merely rotated elites rather than transformed governance. He stresses that many undesirables entered politics after the military transition, driven by self-interest and a focus on raw power rather than ideas or the common good. The play depicts a system where power is wielded for personal enrichment, echoing Nigeria's struggles with corruption. Characters in Nwabueze's play embody the greed and selfishness that pervade the country's politics.

Political parties often lack distinct ideological platforms, leading to frequent defections and making it difficult for voters to differentiate based on policy, contributing to the feeling that politicians are all the same. Power play in Nigerian politics since 1999 refers to the intense, often ruthless, struggles among political actors and groups over state resources, positions, and influence, often at the expense of democratic norms or public welfare. Another bandwagon of disappointment among the political elite is the style of 'me, myself, and I' mentality. A culture where less deserving people moved into public office driven by consuming narcissism, where people began to say 'my grandma go chop.' This refers to a prebendal

system where public office is seen primarily as an opportunity for personal enrichment and dispensing patronage to one's ethnic or religious group, rather than public service. The struggle for power is heavily influenced by the desire to control Nigeria's vast oil revenues and other natural resources, leading to fierce competition for the presidency and key ministerial positions.

Weakening opposition and one-party drift dominance currently trending in the system pose a danger to democratic rule. There are concerns that Nigeria is drifting towards a de facto one-party state through defections. The weakening of opposition structures and the ruling party's increasing dominance raise great concern in the system of democracy. This reduces robust debate and checks on executive power. Internal crises rock major political parties like the PDP as seen with Nyeson Wike's comments. The APC is frequently plagued by internal crises, factionalism, and power struggles among its leaders, often stemming from clashes over nominations, patronage, or control of party structure.

Thuggery and violence, despite the return to civilian rule, persist particularly during elections as politicians use informal groups to intimidate opponents or manipulate voters.

The high stakes associated with gaining political office, due to control over vast resources, lead to a do-or-die mentality. The actors are willing to employ illicit means to secure power. The political disillusionment and intense power play are deeply ingrained features of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The failure to address fundamental issues like corruption, economic inequality, and electoral integrity has fueled public cynicism, while the elites continue to engage in high-stakes competition for control, often at the expense of genuine democratic development.

A Parliament of Vultures is a dramatic work by Nigerian playwright Emeka Nwabueze. It is considered a powerful critique of political corruption, bad governance, and the failure of leadership in many African nations, particularly Nigeria. The title itself is a strong metaphor, likening the legislative body to a parliament of vultures, predatory birds that feed on carrion, suggesting that politicians are preying on the nation's resources and its people. Nwabueze vividly portrays how politicians, once elected to serve the public, often prioritize their personal gain, greed, and selfish interests over the welfare of the masses. They are depicted as unscrupulously confiscating and sharing national resources. The play exposes the lawlessness and

intricate schemes that characterize legislative bodies.

It suggests that lawmakers often pursue personal goals and aggrandizement, sometimes through the institution and passage of obnoxious laws that benefit a few at the expense of the many. Nwabueze links the underdevelopment of many African countries despite their rich resources to the recklessness, greed, and dishonesty of corrupt politicians. The play argues that this moral failure, rather than just religious or ethnic differences, is a primary driver of societal decay. The play suggests that many Nigerian politicians lack a moral compass, leading to a situation where the nation, once a potential giant of Africa, becomes a laughing stock. The consequences of this political corruption are shown to be dire, leading to a neglect of the populace, with young people sometimes turning to crime as a result of desperation. Nwabueze uses drama as a close observer of society. The play aims to x-ray society, revealing to the public the hidden dangers created by unscrupulous leaders and prompting reflection and potential reformation.

There have been some specific and recent bribery allegations and concerns impacting Nigerian legislation and lawmakers. It has to

do with bribe-for-bills. A member of the House of Representatives, Hon. Ibrahim Auyo, alleged in a viral video that lawmakers pay between one to three million naira each to present bills, motions, and petitions in the National Assembly. The Socio-Economic Rights and Pan Project (SERAP) have taken this seriously, suing the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas for allegedly failing to investigate these claims. SERAP argues that such practices undermine the legislative process, public trust, and the democratic rights of Nigerians.

A former Binance executive, Tigran Gambaryan, who was detained in Nigeria, alleged that three Nigerian lawmakers demanded a one-hundred-and-fifty-million-dollar bribe from him for his release, though one of the accused lawmakers, Philip Agbese, strongly denied the allegations and demanded evidence. This case brought significant international attention to bribery allegations against Nigerian officials. Budget approval bribery is another scandal. The Centre for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity (CFTPI) has raised alarms about persistent reports of legislators demanding bribes from Vice-Chancellors of universities and other heads of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in exchange for

favourable evaluations or budget approvals. This practice directly affects the quality of governance and service delivery in critical sectors.

The issue of lack of transparency in legislative budgets on the other hand, mars the reforms. The ongoing legal action by a civil group, Advo K.C Foundation, against the National Assembly for refusing to disclose detailed legislative budget records for 2023 and 2024 hints at potential avenues for corruption. Transparency in public spending is crucial to prevent illicit financial flows and potential embezzlement. Corruption in the Judiciary an indirect legislative impact. A report by HEDA Resource Centre highlighted that bribery, delays, and corruption have become normalized in the Nigerian Judiciary. While this directly concerns the judicial arm, it indirectly impacts the legislative process by undermining the enforcement of laws and potentially allowing corrupt lawmakers to escape justice.

Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, representing Kogi Central Senatorial District, was suspended from the Senate for six months in 2025. This suspension has generated considerable controversy. The Senate cited gross misconduct and violation

of Senate rules as the reasons for her suspension. The ethics committee recommended her suspension after dismissing a sexual harassment petition, she filed against Senate President Godswill Akpabio. Based on the information available, the Federal High Court's ruling states that there are definitely some major flaws that suggest Natasha's suspension was not right. These include excessive duration, denial of representation, procedural concerns in handling the petition, appearance of retaliation, and contempt of court. In essence, the court's decision, combined with the context of her allegations and the reactions from civil society, strongly indicates that the suspension was problematic due to its unconstitutional length and the surrounding circumstances that suggested a lack of fairness and due process in handling her petition.

Corrupt politicians are celebrated and honoured at various levels, thereby creating disillusionment and inciting the young minds to see no dignity in labour or hard work.

Theoretical Framework

For a fundamental and profound understanding of this study, Marxism

approach was adopted. It is a philosophical thought that embodies the views, ideas, perceptions, and beliefs of Karl Marx. This philosophy studied the quality and quantity of interactions of people living in a particular environment Ifejirika (2014). It looked at human interactions from two major perspectives. These include economic (materialism) and political (power structure and control). In Marx's point of view, according to Ifejirika, all human life and struggle in the world were hinged on material acquisition and power control in all ramifications. It perceived human relationships not as ordinary relationships but as a struggle. It perceived society as made up of classes: the rich and the poor, the producers and consumers, the employers and the employees, the lower and the upper class, the haves and the have-nots, the oppressors and the oppressed, the exploiters and the exploited, the bourgeois and the proletariat. The postulation of the Marxist philosophy can be conveniently summarized in Nwabueze's *A Parliament of Vultures*.

Review of Related Literature

A Parliament of Vultures serves as a mirror to Nigeria's socio-political realities. The play's themes resonate with the experiences of many Nigerians, sparking reflections on

governance and accountability. Critical reviews were based on the play under study and other works on political, social, and economic affairs between the rich and poor, the ruler and the ruled. In line with this, Ekere (2020) stated that Nwabueze's work satirizes the country's corrupt leadership and societal ills. He speaks volume of Nigeria political class. This ushers in the experimental approach to social realism in the Nigerian literary scene. This sees through the ruse of the Nigerian political framework. His concern is with the wide gulf between the rich and the poor. It is all about the political dilemma and trauma of the oppressed and the absolute intoxication of power by the legislators. Affiah (2012) noted that one of the social evils in Nigeria today is the process of dispensation of justice. The Nigerian society, by its capitalist nature, favours the rich more to the detriment of the common man, and this is why most corrupt politicians and drug barons are honoured with titles without minding how they acquire their wealth. Nigerian political leaders abuse their positions in society; they go to extremes because they have the power and the cash. Ezeugo (2019) argued that the society is sick and therefore needs urgent attention to avert the danger of collapse that stares us all in the face. She had the strong conviction that the

problems of the Nigerian society were a result of the fact that no one had been courageous enough to speak against perceived and real injustices and corruption prevalent in the society. Aniago et al (2021) used the metaphors of vultures and candles to highlight the country's poor governance and corruption. They condemn the boredom created by the leaders in their quest for power. According to Nnyagu et al (2023), there was no other way for the playwrights than to use history or contemporary events as their raw material to do away with such issues of the moment or even the national circumstances of which politics not only forms an integral part, but had imposed its full weight due to the turn democracy had taken in Nigeria. They posited that dramatists like Emeka Nwabueze assiduously continued to use their works to expose the political predicaments in Nigeria with a view to reawakening the interest of the citizens, especially as regards the issues of responsible leadership and followership in Africa and Nigeria, to be precise. Their reason was simply that this was the sure means to reduce political maneuverings and widen the nation's democracy and ethos. It is obvious that once Nigerians free their minds from the political actors' unwholesome spell, the nation can be sure of a generation of politicians with the

political will to rise appropriately to the challenges of our critical times. This will be possible through voting into power credible politicians like Dr. Parker and Otoro to avert the shameful acts in Nigerian politics and the political system. Nnyagu et al clearly stated that *A Parliament of Vultures* was a one play that poignantly encapsulated the dramatist's vision to create political awareness to wean Nigerians off their dangerous complacent attitude towards a new politics of peace and fair play in Nigeria. They posted that political corruption masterminded by political zealots was the major menace plaguing the Nigerian state in recent times. It is envisaged in every front of its political administration both at the federal, state and the local level. It is also observed that this nuance is mostly visible in the legislative arm of government where laws that define the fate of the nation are made. This is plausible because it is through the laws that they make that define the power of the executive and the judicial arm. To this, the legislative arm has the power to shape and reshape any nation. It is due to this fact that Emeka Nwabueze interrogates the issue of corruption using the legislative arm as his case study. This paper therefore, wakes the consciousness of the students and young minds in this country Nigeria, to reject such offers that put their integrity to test and

remain firm and focus towards building a society to be proud of.

For a fundamental and profound understanding of this research, Marxism as a philosophical et critical approach is adapted for the analysis of this paper. The man, Karl Marx, as explained in Encyclopedia Britannica, was both a thinker and a man of action. He spent his adolescent life in the enlightened liberal Rhenish environment. Later, he attached himself to a group that called itself "The Berlin young Hegelians," who equipped him with historical criticism of many religious works and the works of Ludwig Feuerbach, a young philosopher. He turned to journalism and became the editor of the Rhenish Zeitung in 1842. In collaboration with Friedrich Engels, a friend he met in 1844, he embarked on the writing of critical works and pamphlets. From 1848, Marx's life and his political writings achieved what could be termed inseparable interwovenness. This brought about a series of his expulsions from states, as he was perceived as an agent of political and economic revolution. His philosophy studies the quality and quantity of interactions of people living in a given society. It looks at human interaction from two major perspectives and this forms the crux of this paper.

Disillusionment and Power Play in *A Parliament of Vultures*

Through satire, Nwabueze critiques Nigeria's political system, urging citizens to demand better from their leaders. The play's portrayal of disillusionment serves as a call to action instead of the pun exhibited by the parliamentary characters in the play under study. All in all, politics as played by most politicians in Nigeria is characterized by corruption and is a rather dirty game. Emeka Nwabueze exposes politicians as people highly desperate to climb political positions. The nature of Nigerian politics is seen as politics for personal aggrandisement, tribalism, corruption, and empty promises. There are analyses of how a colonized people can be brought to this mournful state of affairs, as in the case of Nigeria. The irony in pungent in Emeka Nwabueze's play, *A Parliament of Vultures*. Nwabueze presents politicians as ritualists and insensitive to human feelings in his play. Corruption in politics, in some cases, could be regarded as a kind of vendetta. One evil deed begets another, and nothing is hidden under the sun; therefore, every evil deed perpetrated against humanity is exposed to society just as the secret dealings of Habamero are exposed in the play. Habamero is a typical example of the generation of politicians in Nigeria. One

of the major problems faced by Nigerians is political instability. This manifests itself in various ways. In whatever way it comes, it retards the growth and development of a society. Nwabueze in the play under study expresses his views on corruption in the way it devalues Nigeria. He raises vital issues about the survival of man in such an environment that is flawed, abused, and exploited by those elected to pilot the affairs of the nation. Rather than deliberating on issues for the betterment of the masses, they legislate in their own interest. The self-centered legislative members think and talk less of the masses they represent. They only represent their own interest and that of their immediate families. The newly elected thinks fast on how to grow fat immediately he gets into power just to change and better his own life while abandoning those he went to represent to their fate. Nwabueze exposes this ugly trend through one of the newly elected parliamentarians as he was visited soon after their election:

"I had a rough time finding this place. The houses must have been numbered by someone with a peculiar way of counting. The whole place is so congested. And the inhabitants look like hungry

folks; the whole place is filthy and ..." (9).

The playwright worries over the type of environment people from such a rich nation endowed with rich natural resources reside in while their elected members waste so much money and time on irrelevant affairs like functions to attend, the type of dresses to put on at each occasion etc, since they would henceforth announce their presence as distinguished members of the house. They allocate money to themselves for both eating and sleeping.

"Wait ! Are we not entitled to inconvenience allowance? I mean, for eating out or sleeping out. What are we parliamentarians for" (26)? Through this statement, one wonders the spirit that dwelt in these politicians that once they climb the position, everything about them changes including thinking. They soon forget the promises made to the masses for good representation, good governance and quality leadership. They live in a given particular location with all social amenities including good road network, solar electric power supply, etc, they approve huge sum of money for themselves. The approval is certain as even those who object such motions get little or no recognition provided the speaker buys the idea, "By the powers

invested in me as speaker of the House, and Chairman of this assembly, I approve the sum of two million naira for each member as inconvenience allowance" (27).

Nwabueze decries the corrupt, sharp practices of these members who waste natural resources and abandon the masses and their plights, especially as regards the economic status of the society. Nwabueze's call on everyone to instill sanity in society is in line with the traditional African society as buttressed by Awoonor (2005), "That an underlying unity of structure runs through the various patterns of African traditional society. These important factors are responsible with varying degrees of consistency, for a coherence in certain features of African life for sanity among citizens of different classes. African society placed man at the centre of universe. Some African playwrights' preoccupation is the question of political power and the movement of history as the essential comment on the use of this power. In political conception, land form the most solid source of power, and its alienation is the basic cause of political conflict. Nwabueze expressed dissatisfaction towards the land act. Each new government revokes land, reallocates it to themselves, "Since this is the opinion of the honourable members of the House, the entire land allocation made by the

previous administrations stand revoked. This parliament should be given the opportunity to make our own allocation. Honourable member should write me a short memo stating the location they are interested in. Approved" (109)? To further make this allocation more taxing and difficult, they come up with the motion so move, "I move that we make a new edict which will make it difficult for every Tom, Dick and Harry to obtain allocation" (109). The laws made by these House Members stiff and strangle life out of the citizens mostly the middle and lower class. They struggle without achievement. They work hard to earn wages or salaries which could barely solve their immediate problems. Despite all odds, the citizens push towards success; survival of the fittest and arrival of the strongest. Achebe (2012) stated that Nigeria was not ready or willing to face her problems. He further stressed that if her leaders had approached their dirty with humility, they all might have realized long before now that the country was in deep trouble. Nigeria was rocked by one crisis after another but the leaders and policy makers drive towards religious, ethnicity et political waves, create more problems that only give freedom to the political class to loot more resources. These political leaders increase tax cum revenue to sustain their big

life style within and outside the country. Those who pay tax do not enjoy any amenity from the government. The leaders dream more on how to loot, what to gain, send their wards abroad, build structures across the globe for their pleasure as the playwright instigates, "We have to run the parliament in our own way as long as we achieve results" (55). Result of making the most expensive dresses for mere thanksgiving service to create awareness, use a loud music to announce their presence and also to differentiate them from ordinary groups. In their own terms, parliamentary is about living big, vote huge sum for parties and its likes, "The next is the matter of a parliamentary party. Whatever it is called, honourable members deserve a party where nice things must flow" (64). From the above statement, one comes to term with the actual meaning of Echeruo's stand in his interview when he declares that, "Every generation produces its own crises." He confirms that one generation takes over from another, whether politely or rudely; in an orderly transition or in violent upheaval" (62).

Nwabueze frowns at the level of thinking of the people of this generation, especially those piloting the affairs of the nation, and their belief that people gain respect only when they have houses in London and New York, where

individuals own their own jets, and have an account in a Swiss Bank. He demands a thorough examination of conscience as the only means of restoring sanity across the board. He moves his searchlight to the institutions of higher learning. "Our universities are useless. No infrastructure, strike all the time, and secret societies. And the lecturers are more interested in selling handouts than in teaching" (103). One sees the most compelling aspect of the play in the exploration of the tension between personal freedom and societal expectations. The pursuit of wealth is often portrayed as an aspiration, but the play exposes this as a corrosive effect on societal values and personal integrity.

Yes, financial success is vital, but it should never come at the cost of our humanity, relationships, and cultural heritage. The struggle for economic and social liberation is marred by negative leadership policies and styles, as these continue to affect the choices made and the system upheld. Leadership in this play is layered with emotions, challenges, and contradictions, and it often requires sacrifice and a willingness to confront difficult truths as the playwright exposes through the characters of Otobo and Parkers, who resisted forces in solidarity. These

characters ultimately find strength in resistance and solidarity:

"I suggest that care be exercised in choosing these individuals. We owe this nation a duty to ensure that there is enough money to justify their existence. And this can only be ensured by the appointment of men of honesty and integrity if we want to improve the economy of this impoverished and economically raped nation. As we all know ..." (73).

Though these House Members are aware of the relationship between honesty and integrity, they adhere to the tradition of their predecessors in appointments of all sorts, irrespective of the area of discipline. Board membership is solely reserved for people who helped the ruling party during elections to secure the mandate and those who can prove their cooperation with the members of the parliament. In view of these, nobody evaluates people based on their curriculum vitae and their possible contribution to the development of the nation. Appointment is no longer open to the scrutiny of the members of the house. Their integrity and competence

no longer count. The expected outcome of such rehabilitation is cultural and leadership changes. Society is dynamic in nature, the implication being that change is of significant value to life, and for societal improvement. This is the demand of both Otobo and Parkers as presented by Nwabueze.

Politics in Nigeria is for self-aggrandizement, and culture demands holiness and purity as against the exploitation, embezzlement, and corruption characteristic of Nigerian politics. The unlawful arrest and detention of Otobo and Parkers motivated the citizens to organize themselves against the House Members, who thought, as usual, the march was in their favour when they heard the solidarity march song, "The minister of Youth is charged with the responsibility of organizing such marches from time to time to give impression that the government enjoys the support of the masses" (111). This emerges as a destructive force that distances individuals from their roots and disrupts relationships. The pursuit of wealth is often buttressed as an aspiration, but the play under study warns of its corrosive effect on community values and personal integrity. The characters like Otobo and Parkers ultimately find strength in resistance and solidarity. In the face of overwhelming odds, collective action is one of the most powerful

tools to be used in creating change and confronting injustice. The playwright believes such would give pressure to our leaders for change just as the House Members were deliberating on what to import for the party from various parts of the world, including bush meat and fish, "Yes. The bush meat. To give a cultural bent to this party, we have made special arrangements for bush meat of the best species. The lady members will be travelling to Brazil to make arrangements with the renowned International Guild of Hunters for assorted kinds of bush meat to be prepared to our specifications" (85). The masses were set for revolution. Their anger was high on the detention without trial of both Otobo and Parkers, "They will be charged with treasonable felony" (105) for speaking the truth and standing against corruption. It has always been the case that these leaders block everywhere, use the security personnel, including soldiers, to wage war against their bad rules, "Just close down the university and ask the military or the police to drive them out of campus. And you know that the police and the soldiers love that job very much" (106). House Members never believed anything revolution would meet them. If the trouble is from the students as a matter of fact, they would be settled through their leaders,

"Just call their leaders and grease their palms, and they will start singing a different song immediately" (107). Trust was glued much on the parliamentarians' side that they tagged everything that could result in revolution as impossible. They believe this part of the world is immune to revolution, thus, "No, not Africa. Africa is the domain of men and women who interpret every situation into which you place them as ordained by God" (108). When any group or persons come up with an attack as radicals or something similar, give them political appointments as a form of settlement, "If he still does not dance to your tune, then annihilate him completely" (108).

Conclusion

In conclusion, *A Parliament of Vultures*, is more than a mere social or political play. It is simply a deeply personal exploration of the human condition as regards political affairs in Nigeria. Until we address the root causes, disillusionment will continue to spread and destroy our democracy. To nip this in the bud, anti-corruption institutions should be strengthened and made independent. Agencies like EFCC and ICPC need genuine independence, free from political interference in their investigations and prosecutions. Their leadership should be

appointed based purely on merit and integrity, not political loyalty. These bodies should be well-funded and their staff highly trained in forensic accounting, cybercrime, and complex corruption investigation techniques. Corruption cases are to be prosecuted quickly, and convictions lead to appropriate penalties, including asset forfeiture, to deter future acts.

Legislative transparency and accountability should be enhanced and enforced. The National Assembly's budget, spending, and financial records should be fully public and easily accessible. This includes details of allowances, project allocations, and procurement. More importantly, inclusive public hearings for bills and oversight functions, and allowing citizens and civil societies to contribute meaningfully and scrutinize legislative actions should become the norm. The constitutional mechanism should be strengthened and simplified for citizens to recall underperforming or corrupt representatives. A robust code of conduct for legislators, with clear penalties for breaches, including financial misconduct or abuse of office, should be strictly enforced.

There should be electoral reforms to ensure credibility. Electronic voting and transmission should be fully implemented. Reliable electronic voting and real-time

electronic transmission of results should be mandatory to minimize human interference, ballot snatching, and result manipulation. The electoral commission (INEC) should be truly independent, with its appointments and funding insulated from political pressure. There should be an introduction and enforcement of harsh penalties for electoral malpractices like vote-buying, voter intimidation, and rigging. Transparent and democratic primaries should be encouraged and enforced within political parties to ensure that credible and competent candidates, not just those with deep pockets, emerge for elections.

Citizens should be educated on their rights, responsibilities, and how to hold elected officials accountable, especially the legislators. Strong legal frameworks should be implemented to protect whistle-blowers who expose corruption, ensuring their safety and preventing retaliation. Civil society organizations and investigative journalism should be supported and empowered to monitor legislative activities, expose corruption, and advocate for good governance. Citizens should be encouraged to demand concrete performance and legislative outcomes from their representatives, moving beyond ethnic or religious sentiments during elections.

The Judiciary should remain independent and free from executions or legislative interference. Speed and efficiency in the judicial system, especially for corruption cases, should be improved to avoid endless delays that undermine public confidence. By focusing on these areas, a system where the vultures find it much harder to prey on the nation would be created, and accountability would become the norm rather than the exception. This is a tough fight, but a very crucial one!

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