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INDIVIDUAL STRUGGLES FOR SURVIVAL AND SOCIETAL CORRUPTION IN ADAOBI TRICIA NWAUBANI'S *I DO NOT COME TO YOU BY CHANCE AND CHINUA ACHEBE'S NO LONGER AT EASE*

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Abstract
This study examined the interplay between survival pressures and societal corruption in I Do Not Come to You by Chanceby Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani and No Longer at Ease by Chinua Achebe. It argues that corruption in both texts is not merely a product of individual moral failure but a structural response to socioeconomic deprivation, institutional collapse, and cultural expectations. Drawing on psychoanalytic theory and institutional anomie theory, the study analyzes how Obi Okonkwo and Kingsley Ibe navigate intense pressures arising from unemployment, familial obligations, and societal definitions of success. Through comparative textual analysis, the research reveals that both protagonists experience psychological fragmentation and moral disintegration as they attempt to reconcile personal ethics with survival imperatives. While Achebe presents a tragic trajectory of moral collapse, Nwaubani offers an ironic adaptation to corruption as a viable means of survival. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that in contexts where legitimate opportunities are limited, corruption becomes normalized, and morality is redefined by necessity, reflecting a broader crisis within postcolonial Nigerian society.

Introduction

The question of survival remains central to Nigerian and broader African literary discourse, particularly in narratives that interrogate the moral consequences of socioeconomic deprivation and institutional decay. Nigerian postcolonial fiction persistently explores how individuals negotiate dignity, responsibility, and integrity within environments structured by unemployment, inequality, and systemic corruption. In this regard, Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* and Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* present compelling

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portrayals of educated young men whose moral trajectories are shaped and ultimately distorted by the pressures of survival within compromised social systems. Although separated by historical context, both texts foreground protagonists whose descent from idealism into ethical compromise reflects not merely personal failure but the structural realities of postcolonial Nigeria.

Nigeria's socioeconomic landscape continues to be defined by economic instability, job scarcity, and widening inequality, leaving many graduates trapped between aspiration and despair. The erosion of education as a reliable pathway to upward mobility has produced what Adeosun et al. describe as a "generation betrayed by the state's broken social contract" (2), where success becomes a communal obligation rather than an individual pursuit. As Edewor et al. note, graduates face "conditions of structural exclusion and joblessness in key sectors" (4), forcing many into informal or illicit economies. In such settings, corruption is not only considered a crime but also a form of survival. Agbiboa's idea that people have "corruption as a way of life" (17) sums up this acceptance, which is clearly shown in Kingsley's change in *I Do Not Come to You by Chance*. Likewise, Obi Okonkwo's loss of morals in *No Longer at Ease* is an example of Epounda's description of "falling from hope into despair" (3) as a result of money problems, tense emotions, and pressure from the community.

Loyalty to culture makes these tensions worse. Young Nigerians usually carry the load of their families' expectations, thus shaping what Ndubuisi Okolo et al. call survival strategies "based on communal reciprocity" (5). This leads to a moral dilemma in which one's own ethics are the innocent victims of responsibilities to the group. Metu and Ogbodo see these scenarios as "Faustian sequences" (7) - situations where one's desperation leads to making morally questionable choices. Given this, corruption becomes a part of the whole socio-cultural environment. As Aina et al. put it, more and more people see it "as a survival kit for dealing with scarcity and bureaucratic profusion" (6), making the line between right and wrong very unclear.

Globalization and digital culture's pressures add another layer of complexity to this state of affairs. Lazarus et al. have pointed out that social media encourages "a culture of performative success" (8), whereas Ngoh has identified a "psychological dissonance between actual poverty and imagined wealth" (3). This friction leads to instances like the Japa migration wave, which Kanu et al. see as "a flight from hopelessness" (4). Those who cannot migrate are often left with the burden of expectation which leads them towards other survival means, including involvement in fake economies. Besides, educational system deficits, which Osinubi reveals as the production of graduates not at par with work demands (6), and the disintegration of the family as the first line of defense (2) only exacerbate this predicament. Besides media spreading stories about getting rich quickly (Ekeh and Musa 7), the absence of role models (Yusuf et al. 4), preaching of prosperity (Uche and Ibrahim 5), and political immunity (Omotola and Ibeanu 6) create a moral setting in which ethical violations not only make sense but also become inevitable.

In this respect, literature plays the role of a social barometer, reflecting the waves of society's disillusionment by depicting individuals' problems and experiences. Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, according to Akwanya, "represents the phase when one's personal morals give way because of societal pressures" (9), whereas Nwaubani sets corruption in the frame of a business-like adjustment to a globalized world economy. Besides their differences in the time they depict, both narratives indicate that being a part of corrupt systems results in a breakdown of the psyche, a loss of morals, and an absence of emotions.

Although researchers have looked at these novels from different angles, such as colonial administration and tragic realism in Achebe, and cybercrime and globalization in Nwaubani, only a few have focused on survival as the main element in perpetuating corruption throughout different time periods. This paper fills that void by examining how poverty, social pressure, and the breakdown of institutions together help to weaken moral resolve in the two works. The thesis is that the fall of the heroes in terms of their ethics is not simply their personal failing but a sign of the wider sociocultural problem where the need to survive leads to a redefinition of what is right and

wrong. This consequently speaks to the discussion of youth disillusionment, corruption, and the tenuous link between education, ethics, and opportunity in postcolonial Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* stands as a compelling narrative that interrogates the moral, economic, and social crises defining contemporary Nigeria. Scholars have consistently acknowledged the text as both a satire and a moral parable, reflecting the contradictions of a society where honesty becomes a liability. While this overview foregrounds survival and corruption in a contemporary Nigerian context, the present study extends this concern by comparatively examining how similar pressures operate in both Nwaubani's modern setting and Achebe's earlier postcolonial Nigeria.

Adeniji reads *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* as a socially critical novel that highlights the "collapse of moral consciousness" in Nigerian society. Adeniji, using the author's words, shows the reader that the narrative is the means by which the consequences of poverty-induced criminality on one's ethical values are brought to light (8). Through reliance on secondary sources, the study illustrates how systemic failure that is manifested in unemployment, nepotism, and greed is the major contributing factor to moral compromise. Adeniji also argues that the author portrays neither fraudsters as evil by nature nor as the only victims of the failing society but rather as people of the society which is deceitful and, on the contrary, punishes the honest. The novel then is the author's criticism of both individuals and government officials who are involved in corruption. The author believes that moral decay in Nigeria is not the result of individuals but rather of the environment. This view is in line with the focus of the current study on societal pressure as one of the factors leading to moral collapse. However, Adeniji's work does not trace generational texts such as *No Longer at Ease* to reveal how structural corruption has evolved. It misses that point completely.

Akpan mainly directs his attention to the linguistic and stylistic aspects of Nwaubani's writings, emphasizing the use of satire, irony, and Nigerian Pidgin English as instruments of social critique. The writer states that the author's selection of vocabulary is a powerful means to depict the various voices that characterize postcolonial urban life (719). The text's linguistic flexibility enables it to switch between comedy and hopelessness, mirroring the ridiculousness of a society that considers fraud as normal. Akpan points out that the author's stylistic change is the reason why the story is not only a social critique but also an artistic expression of the author's protest against the moral insensitivity of contemporary Nigeria. This paper suggests that the novel's language is at the same time a mode of resistance and a mirror of the society's deterioration. In line with Akpan, who emphasizes stylistic resistance, the current paper, is in alignment with his examination of the text but instead, focuses on how survival strategies under corrupting social pressures intersect in both Nwaubani's and Achebe's texts.

Ajao and Adesanmi focus on the novel's rhetoric while pinpointing humor as a mediator for moral tensions and reader compassion. They highlight how Nwaubani's comic elements bring forth the human side of crime without the desire to glorify it (25). The depiction of Kingsley's dream-driven character and his moral lapse later on serves as a metaphor for the ethical dilemma faced by young Nigerians. This way, the authors by this means reveal that the survival paradox leads to a situation where good and evil get mixed up out of necessity. The authors argue that *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* is effective in revealing the psychological cost of moral compromises while still maintaining a tone of empathy that ushers one to self-reflection. This interpretation resonates with the present research which is also concerned with moral dilemmas. However, in contrast to the present study, it does not look at how such survival paradoxes are differently portrayed in Nigerian literature of various historical periods.

Garritano situates the novel within a global backdrop of cybercrime and digital capitalism and sees Nwaubani breaking the link between corruption and the Nigerian state to address it on a larger scale (27). The article notes that the story depicts cheating as something that is not limited to the city but as a global economic system that benefits from exploitation and inequality. Garritano states that the novel's depiction of "Yahoo Boys" refuses Western stereotypes by showing how international systems also contribute to economic injustice. The book thus

through this angle, becomes a cross-border commentary on moral failure, depicting Nigeria at the same time as a victim and a player in the worldwide networks of corruption. Although Garritano, expands the range of corruption to the global frame, this paper limits itself to the level of the individual survival under societal pressure and draws a parallel between the modes of this tension in the two historical phases of colonial and postcolonial Nigeria.

Ariole offers a psychoanalytic reading of the novel and contends that Kingsley's descent into fraud symbolizes the struggle between the conscience and the need for survival in society (17). Such a reading links Kingsley's mental conflict to the pressure of achieving the societal definition of success (especially being breadwinners) that pushes men to use dishonest ways to get money if the honest ones become unavailable. Ariole points out that the feelings of guilt, denial, and self- justification which are the dominant features of Kingsley's mind are really the symptoms of a society where the moral values are at loggerheads with the existential demands. The research also shows that Nwaubani's story characterizes masculinity as both a factor of manly pride and a source of men's woes. On the other hand, Ariole's research points out that the psychological anguish is only one aspect of the problem, the present paper goes beyond this aspect by considering how similar pressures are working structurally and historically in Nwaubani's and Achebe's characters.

Shirinde analyses the novel as an anti-Bildungsroman and shows that Kingsley's character development actually reverses the conventional pattern of moral awakening (417). The protagonist's evolution from his initial idealism to complete disillusionment mirrors the demise of a once morally stable society that now finds itself teeming with corruption. The paper argues that the author's purposeful turning upside down of the coming-of-age story particularly highlights the unfeasibility of a pristine morality amid a rotting system. Shirinde ends by saying that *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* takes away the ideal of change and replaces it with the actuality of moral weariness, thus providing a pessimistic view of postcolonial life. This reading connects well with the concern of the current project with moral disillusionment, although Shirinde concentrates on a single text, the present study draws a comparison between this anti-Bildungsroman trajectory and Achebe's earlier moral narrative.

Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* is a work that has attracted extensive scholarly debates which cover ethical psychological political as well as cultural aspects of the work. The majority of the studies in this field highlight moral decay and cultural conflict. However, a small number of them, if any, focus on the survival instincts and external factors that push a person to go astray in the context of a declining postcolonial system. This paper aims to address this issue by showing how an individual's efforts to survive amidst corrupting societal influences can be seen in Achebe's story which also reflects current situations as illustrated by Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You by Chance.*

Akwanya, in the paper "*No Longer at Ease* and the Thinking of Limits, " uses interpretive textual analysis to locate Achebe's novel in the tragic genre (8). The intention of the paper was to show that systemic and cultural constraints were the factors behind Obi Okonkwo's disillusionment with his morality. Results indicate that through the portrayal of a setting where societal demands, monetary limitations, and family responsibilities degrade one's character, Achebe exposes a stage for the moral dilemma of the individual. It is the opinion of this paper that by showing the disintegration of the individual's morality as a consequence of one's environment, Achebe depicts the drama of the situation. This article shares with the present paper a focus on social aspects as determining factors of corruption, yet this research is different in that it jointly analyses in both Achebe's and Nwaubani's works the issues of survival and moral decline across generations.

Oindrilla Bhattacharya, in "As the Text Speaks The Repressed Returns in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease,* " employs a psychoanalytical lens to analyze Obi Okonkwo's moral and psychological tension (18). The paper uses the Freudian idea of repression to show that Obi's training in the West leads to a split in his mind between his subconscious faithfulness to traditional values and his conscious reasoning for adopting modernity. While this work reveals the psychological aspect of Obi's estrangement, it fails to consider the economic situations that

worsen this dilemma. This paper builds on Bhattacharya's understandings by highlighting the ways in which poverty and unequal access to resources lead to the breakdown of moral values in Achebe's story.

Yusuf Boylu in "The Image of African Intellectuals and the Position of Education in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*" reveals how Western education makes the African intellectual a stranger to himself instead of freeing him (Boylu 66). Their point is that Achebe depicts education as a double-edged instrument that educates one but at the same time traps one morally within the colonial and postcolonial structures. This article points out how the educated elites through their actions contribute to the cause of corruption but it doesn't consider the role of economic desperation in their moral compromise. The present paper supports this thesis by integrating the concept of the alienation of the intellectual into his being unemployed, economically insecure, having no financial resources, and being fearful of survival in a postcolonial environment of Nigeria.

Kanak Raj Chandna and Surekha Ahlawat, in their article "Corruption, Both Personal and Social The Predominant Theme of Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, " point to corruption as the major theme in the novel, and portray its progression from a personal flaw to a social disease (65). They describe corruption as a morally accepted condition that is woven into the newly independent Nigeria's postcolonial scenario. The article does a wonderful job of revealing the pervasiveness of corruption but it does not discuss its relation to the instinct of survival. This paper therefore aims to use human struggle for survival in the face of economic hardship as a backdrop to analyze corruption.

Epounda in "The World of Conflicts in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*" discusses the paradoxes in postcolonial Nigerian life which lead to moral ambiguity and internal conflict (21). The critic sees Achebe's novel as a space in which different value systems (colonial, traditional, and modern) clash. This research piece gives us a better understanding of the moral contradictions but it does not probe the survival dimension which is our core matter here. We are going to extend this concept to survival as the main factor in moral conflict.

Theoretical Framework

Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytic theory, founded by Sigmund Freud and later expanded by Carl Jung, provides a profound framework for analyzing the human mind and its influence on behavior. It explores how unconscious drives, repressed emotions, archetypal patterns, and internal conflicts shape human actions (Grzybowski and Żołnierz 5). Sigmund Freud argues that human behavior is not purely rational but is motivated by hidden impulses residing in the unconscious mind, structured into the id, ego, and superego. Carl Jung extends this by proposing the collective unconscious, which contains universal archetypes that influence perception and behavior. These interacting psychic structures become particularly significant when individuals face moral dilemmas or societal pressures. In contexts of survival and corruption, psychoanalytic theory explains how deviant behavior may emerge as an expression of inner turmoil rather than deliberate moral failure.

The id represents instinctual desires seeking immediate gratification, while the superego embodies internalized moral values, creating tension that the ego must mediate (Sharma 12). Jung complements this by introducing the concept of the shadow, which consists of suppressed and morally unacceptable traits. When individuals experience intense social or economic pressure, this balance becomes unstable, allowing repressed desires or shadow elements to surface. Mistry et al. explain that such psychic tension often results in behavior shaped by unresolved unconscious conflicts (3). In such situations, moral compromise can be understood as a psychological response to survival pressure, where instinctual drives override ethical restraint under extreme conditions.

Psychoanalytic theory further emphasizes defense mechanisms such as repression, projection, and rationalization. Repression involves burying distressing emotions and moral conflicts within the unconscious (Bhattacharya et al. 41), while projection allows individuals to attribute their moral failings to external forces such as society or circumstance (Maemunah Indah et al. 16). Rationalization enables individuals to justify unethical behavior by constructing logical explanations that reduce guilt (Zahrah et al. 24). According to Sigmund Freud, these

mechanisms provide temporary psychological relief but often lead to deeper anxiety (Maemunah Indah et al. 7). Carl Jung similarly maintains that repressed elements accumulate in the shadow and later manifest in distorted forms, suggesting that corruption may reflect suppressed psychological distress rather than purely social deviance.

Psychoanalytic theory also explains identity crisis and moral ambiguity, particularly in postcolonial societies. Grey Khondowe notes that conflicting values between traditional morality and modern aspirations generate identity fragmentation (4). Jung's concept of individuation further explains how failure to integrate the conscious and unconscious aspects of the self leads to imbalance. Zahrah et al. observe that individuals often resort to rationalization and compensation to cope with such pressures (23). Additionally, Sigmund Freud associates anxiety with the anticipation of punishment from the superego or society (Maemunah Indah et al. 18), while Sharma explains that blocked ambitions may result in regression to primitive instincts (18). Oghenekaro Ilolo concludes that such psychological tensions manifest as corruption and disillusionment in African contexts (39). Thus, psychoanalytic theory frames moral compromise as a psychological negotiation between survival instinct, unconscious desire, and ethical obligation.

Institutional Anomie Theory

Institutional Anomie Theory, developed by Steven Messner and Richard Rosenfeld in 1994, explains moral breakdown as a product of structural imbalance within society. Drawing from Émile Durkheim's concept of anomie, the theory argues that deviance arises when societies overemphasize economic success while weakening the regulatory influence of social institutions such as family, education, religion, and governance (Messner and Rosenfeld 6). In such contexts, cultural pressure to succeed overrides moral restraint, creating an environment in which unethical behavior becomes normalized. This perspective shifts attention from individual moral failure to the structural conditions that produce corruption.

At the core of the theory is the interaction between culture and social structure. Messner and Rosenfeld argue that when monetary success dominates collective consciousness, individuals internalize it as the ultimate measure of worth, regardless of the means used to achieve it (12). The concept of the "American Dream" ideology illustrates how achievement and individual success are prioritized above ethical considerations (19). When legitimate opportunities are limited, this cultural emphasis creates pressure that encourages individuals to pursue success through alternative, often unethical, means. Consequently, corruption becomes a predictable outcome of systemic imbalance rather than an isolated act of deviance.

Institutional imbalance further explains the weakening of social control. Messner and Rosenfeld note that when the economy dominates other institutions, values such as moral discipline, communal responsibility, and social welfare are subordinated to profit and competition (23). This weakens institutions like family and education that traditionally regulate behavior. Additionally, social inequality intensifies this condition, as access to legitimate means of success is uneven while expectations remain universal (27). Individuals are therefore compelled to innovate morally through corruption or fraud as rational responses to structural constraints. In this sense, deviance becomes embedded within the normal functioning of society.

The theory also highlights how weak governance, institutional failure, and economic insecurity shape individual choices. Messner and Rosenfeld argue that in such environments, rules become flexible and ethical standards negotiable, with success through corruption often celebrated while honest failure is stigmatized (31). Individuals do not act in isolation but within systems that shape their behavior, leading to the normalization of corruption as a survival strategy. This makes Institutional Anomie Theory particularly relevant for literary analysis, as it explains how characters' moral decline reflects broader societal dysfunction. Ultimately, the theory demonstrates that corruption is not merely a personal failing but a structural condition arising from the imbalance of social institutions and the overwhelming pressure to survive.

Textual Analysis

The novels *No Longer at Ease* by Chinua Achebe and *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* by Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani present deeply layered explorations of pressure, corruption, and survival within Nigerian society. Though separated by historical context, Achebe writing in the early post independence period and Nwaubani addressing contemporary realities, both texts converge in their portrayal of individuals trapped within systems that simultaneously demand success and deny legitimate means of achieving it. The protagonists, Obi Okonkwo and Kingsley Ibe, are not inherently immoral; rather, they are shaped, pressured, and ultimately transformed by the socio economic and psychological conditions surrounding them. Through careful narrative construction, both authors demonstrate that moral collapse is not abrupt but gradual, emerging from sustained exposure to institutional failure, emotional strain, and societal contradiction.

Pressure in both novels operates as a pervasive and cumulative force that destabilizes the individual psyche. Achebe introduces this early through Obi's emotional vulnerability, noting that "all that stuff about education and promise and betrayal had not taken him unawares… he was betrayed by treacherous tears" (*No Longer at Ease*, 2). The phrase "treacherous tears" reveals an internal conflict between composure and suppressed anxiety, indicating that Obi's struggle is psychological as much as social. This tension is reinforced by Achebe's ironic expression "Dear old Nigeria" (*No Longer at Ease*, 2), which encapsulates a nation that both nurtures and suffocates its citizens. Similarly, Kingsley in Nwaubani's novel expresses profound frustration: "I had done everything right, gone to school, passed my exams, and still I was nothing" (*I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, 23). This statement captures the collapse of the meritocratic ideal, marking the beginning of psychological disillusionment.

Education, which should function as a pathway to success, instead becomes a source of pressure and entrapment. In Achebe's text, the Umuofia Progressive Union reduces Obi's education to an economic investment: "We paid eight hundred pounds to train him in England" (*No Longer at Ease*, 24). This financial framing strips education of its intrinsic value and transforms it into a debt that must be repaid, thereby eroding Obi's autonomy. The Union's justification that "a kinsman in trouble had to be saved, not blamed" further complicates this dynamic, as communal support becomes inseparable from control. In Nwaubani's narrative, Kingsley undergoes a similar experience, initially internalizing the belief that "education is the only way of putting one's potential to maximum use… 'Wisdom is better than gold, understanding better than choice silver'" (*I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, 12 to 23). However, repeated rejection letters, "We are sorry to inform you that you did not meet the requirements," shatter this belief, creating a psychological vacuum where frustration replaces hope.

This vacuum is intensified by unemployment and systemic inequality, which undermine the protagonists' sense of self worth. Kingsley's lament, "Perplexed and stupefied and woebegone… as if I was stuck in a maze," (*I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, 24) vividly illustrates the exhaustion produced by repeated failure. His recognition that success requires "long leg" exposes the structural corruption of the labor market. Achebe presents a parallel situation in Obi's gradual realization that integrity is insufficient within a corrupt civil service. Both characters are thus forced into a psychological negotiation between survival and morality, where the ego becomes increasingly overwhelmed by external pressures.

Familial expectations further deepen this crisis by transforming social pressure into emotional obligation. Obi's mother's ultimatum, "If you marry her while I am alive, you will see me dead" (*No Longer at Ease*, 74), represents an extreme form of moral coercion rooted in tradition and religion. This statement not only enforces obedience but also induces guilt, effectively weaponizing familial love. Similarly, Kingsley's mother pleads, "The only thing that can make me happy is if you get a proper job" (*I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, 38), linking moral legitimacy to economic success. Her insistence that "I did not train you to steal" (55) reflects a moral stance that is increasingly difficult to sustain within a failing system. In both cases, the family becomes a site of tension where love, duty, and expectation collide, intensifying the protagonists' internal conflict.

Romantic relationships in both novels serve as critical turning points that accelerate moral decline. Kingsley's rejection by Ola, "I really don't think you should come and see me again… my mother is very unhappy with you" (*I Do Not Come to You by Chance,* 30 to 31), reveals the extent to which love is conditioned by economic status. Ola's mother's blunt question, "Is it certificate that we shall eat?" (71) reduces Kingsley's identity to his financial inadequacy, reinforcing the cultural prioritization of material success. Similarly, Obi's relationship with Clara becomes a source of immense pressure, particularly when her status as an osu is revealed: "I am an osu" (*No Longer at Ease*, 72). His father's warning that "Osu is like leprosy in the minds of our people" (133) highlights the enduring power of tradition, even in a supposedly modern society. These romantic conflicts expose the intersection of personal desire and societal expectation, ultimately contributing to the protagonists' psychological fragmentation.

Institutional forces complete the cycle of pressure by normalizing corruption and redefining morality. In Achebe's novel, corruption is treated as a routine practice, with the UPU President remarking that "it was a thing of shame… to go to prison for twenty pounds" (*No Longer at Ease*, 7), implying that the problem lies not in corruption itself but in its inadequate execution. This perspective is reinforced by the claim that "Obi tried to do what everyone does without finding out how it was done," suggesting that corruption is a learned skill rather than a moral failing. Nwaubani presents an even more explicit normalization through Cash Daddy, who declares, "I'm too big to chase dollars… Money should be chasing me instead" (*I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, 142). His manipulation of identity, "What year of birth do you want us to put?" (154), illustrates the extent to which institutional structures have been compromised.

Corruption in both texts is therefore systemic, embedded in everyday interactions and reinforced by social expectations. Achebe's depiction of Nigeria as a place where "the government was 'they'… an alien institution" (*No Longer at Ease*, 46) explains the moral detachment that enables corruption. Individuals do not perceive themselves as harming their own society, but rather exploiting an external entity. In Nwaubani's novel, Kingsley's justification, "I did it for you people!" (*I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, 209), demonstrates how corruption is rationalized as a form of familial duty. His eventual acceptance of fraud as a profession, "All that big grammar… this is the time to speak all of it" (134), marks the complete transformation of his moral framework.

Ultimately, the trajectories of Obi and Kingsley reveal two different responses to the same structural conditions. Obi's story ends in tragic collapse, symbolized by the return of "treacherous tears," while Kingsley achieves material success at the cost of moral compromise, concluding that "not being able to take care of my family was the real sin" (*I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, 98). These contrasting outcomes underscore the central argument of both novels that corruption is not merely an individual choice but a systemic condition shaped by pressure, inequality, and institutional failure. Through their rich characterization and powerful use of language, Achebe and Nwaubani expose the complex interplay between society and the individual, revealing how moral integrity is both challenged and redefined in the struggle for survival.

Summary and Conclusion

The analysis of *No Longer at Ease* and *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* reveals that both novels present pressure as a cumulative and destabilizing force arising from intertwined social, economic, familial, and institutional conditions. Through the experiences of Obi Okonkwo and Kingsley Ibe, Achebe and Nwaubani demonstrate that the promise of education and hard work is undermined by systemic failures such as unemployment, nepotism, and entrenched corruption. The protagonists are subjected to expectations from their communities, families, and romantic partners, all of which equate personal worth with financial success. As these pressures intensify, both characters experience psychological strain that weakens their moral resistance, forcing them into difficult negotiations between integrity and survival. The texts therefore expose how societal structures not only shape individual choices but also normalize moral compromise.

In conclusion, the novels collectively argue that corruption is not simply a product of individual moral weakness but a systemic condition sustained by institutional imbalance and cultural expectations. Achebe presents a tragic vision in which Obi's inability to reconcile his ideals with societal realities leads to his downfall, while Nwaubani offers a more ironic outcome in which Kingsley adapts to the corrupt system and achieves material stability at the cost of ethical integrity. Despite these differing endings, both narratives underscore the same reality: in societies where success is prioritized over morality and legitimate opportunities are limited, individuals are compelled to redefine their values in order to survive. Ultimately, the works highlight the complex relationship between the individual and society, revealing that moral collapse is often the consequence of sustained pressure rather than deliberate choice.

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