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Power as a Means of Corruption in African Society: A Study of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*

Adama Bah

Research Scholar, Department of English Literature
The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India
 <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-6197-7515>

Moussa Zié Koné

Ph. D. Scholar, University of Bamako, Mali

Abstract

Power is a common aspect of political systems worldwide, but in Africa, the concept of power is often ambivalent, with corruption often causing hardship rather than improving living conditions. The interplay of power and corruption in modern African societies poses significant challenges to governance, economic growth, and social cohesion. This issue is more prevalent in African countries, where people are oppressed and their rights are violated. The study aims to provide a clearer understanding of the problem and its implications for African societies, highlighting the oppressive nature of people in societies where their rights are violated.

*This article examines the relationship between power and corruption in contemporary African societies, focusing on Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's novel *Smouldering Charcoal*. The novel critiques the pervasive nature of power and corruption, highlighting the struggles faced by many African nations. The study begins with a literature review, examining themes of power and corruption in African literature and theoretical frameworks. It then conducts a detailed textual analysis of the novel, focusing on key themes, symbols, and narrative strategies. The socio-political context of the novel is explored to draw parallels with actual historical and contemporary issues in African countries. Comparing the themes in *Smouldering Charcoal* with other African literary works highlights broader regional and thematic trends.*

*By investigating the depiction of power and corruption in *Smouldering Charcoal*, this article enhances the understanding of Zeleza's work and offers insights into the complex interplay of governance, power, and societal well-being in African contexts. It contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of literature in reflecting and challenging social realities, particularly in post-colonial settings.*

Keywords: African Society, Corruption, Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, Post-colonial Literature, Power, Public Life

Introduction

Power is a fundamental aspect of everyday social life, defined in terms of a relation between people and expressed in symbolic notation. It is found in society and politics, and can take various forms such as laws, wealth, and fame. Governments play a crucial role in stabilizing financial markets and managing responses to the world economy. However, these definitions of power are contrary to what is happening in today's world, particularly in African communities. Power is seen as a means through which the government manipulates, abuses, and corrupts the people it is supposed to guarantee a better life. Corruption is the abuse of public or private office for personal gain, including acts of bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, or state capture. The poor generally lack privileged access to decision-makers, which is necessary for corrupt societies to obtain certain goods and services. Governments play a vital role in economic management, welfare-oriented activities, and redistributive

equity and development. This is what Zeleza shows in *smoldering charcoal* where he defines power as a means through which the government manipulates, abuses, and corrupts the people he is supposed to guarantee a better life. Power is therefore considered as a means or an instrument to harm the life of the population. Instead of feeling at ease under the power of the state, the population goes through hell under this power.

This article explores the relationship between power and corruption in African society, focusing on Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's novel *Smouldering Charcoal*. The novel, set in a fictional African country, portrays the societal and individual consequences of power misused. Through the lives of its characters, the novel delves into themes of political oppression, economic disenfranchisement, and moral compromises made in their quest for power. Zeleza's work is not only a reflection of the specific socio-political milieu of Malawi but also a broader commentary on the pervasive nature of corruption in post-colonial African states. The study aims to analyze how Zeleza's narrative techniques and character development elucidate the dynamics of power and corruption, exploring the intersections of politics, economics, and morality in *Smouldering Charcoal*. The analysis will also consider the historical and cultural contexts that shape the characters' actions and the broader implications for understanding corruption in contemporary African societies.

Presentation of the Subject

African literature often discusses themes such as poverty, legacy, marriage clashes, lack of solidarity, and political issues like oppression, exploitation, corruption, violence, dictatorship, power, and neo-colonialism. Power is seen as the capacity of an individual to influence others' behavior, which is seen as good and inherited for exercising humanistic objectives. Power is derived from relationships among actors and is omnipresent in the non-unitary human activity space that influences human behaviours. Weber defines power as the chance of a man or many men to realize their will in communal action even against resistance. Corruption, derived from the Latin word 'corruptus', is the abuse of a trusted position in one of the branches of power to

obtain material benefit unjustly. The earliest records of corruption date back to the thirteenth century BC, and its forms include bribery, extortion, and misuse of inside information. The study of power and corruption in African countries helps understand why most African countries live under corrupt regimes and the changes in Africa's human rights landscape at the end of the 20th century.

It is in this perspective that African writers have written several articles to denounce this aspect of corruption in Africa. Among those articles, we have 'Things Fall Apart' (1958), 'Matigari' (1986), 'The bird boy's Song' (2002), 'Waiting for an Angel' (2002), 'Lokangaka Losambe' (2004), etc written respectively by Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Steve Chimonbo, Helon Habila, Harry Garuba, to quote just a few of them. However, our study will turn around the Malawian writer Paul Tiyambe Zeleza who brought his support by participating in the movement of the fighters for human rights. The concept of power is a central issue in various social sciences, including political science, sociology, social psychology, and urban politics. It is perceived differently, at the intersection of politics, economy, and society, in both visible and informal forms, and in various institutions, relationships, and spaces where it arises.

Statement of the Problem

Every research comes into being through the existence of a problem to which researchers tend to bring clarification, a solution. Therefore, a problem can be viewed as a general preoccupation that constitutes an obstacle for the whole society. In the article, the terms power and corruption represent a problem at the political level. The article's aim is then to examine these preoccupations by trying to know why and how they constitute a problem.

The issue of power is seen in political systems all over the world. It is generally a way of governing a nation by providing it with what it needs. Nevertheless, it is surprising to know that among the six continents, this notion of power in Africa seems to have an ambivalent view in that, instead of rendering the people's living conditions better, it is used to make it tough. The use of power is more frequent in African countries and is more and more

manifested through corruption in society. People live in societies where they are oppressed at any level and in which their rights are violated.

The Research Questions

The research questions are based on the research problems, highlighting its uniqueness. In this study, the researcher aims to clarify the issues of power corruption, its manifestation in society, and the potential solutions to end corruption in Africa. The questions cover the reasons behind power corruption, how it manifests in society, and the potential solutions to combat corruption in Africa.

- How does Paul Tiyambe Zeleza depict the mechanisms and impacts of power-induced corruption in African society in his novel *Smouldering Charcoal*?
- What are the key factors that contribute to the perpetuation of corruption in the context of the novel?
- What are the broader implications of Zeleza's critique of power and corruption for contemporary African societies?

To answer these questions, the study will employ a multidisciplinary approach, integrating post-colonial theory to understand the historical context, political theory to analyze the dynamics of power, and sociological perspectives to examine the societal impacts of corruption.

The Research Objectives

The study aims to analyze the representation of power and corruption in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's novel, *Smouldering Charcoal*, by examining how it is used to facilitate and perpetuate corruption in African societies. It will examine the various forms of power (political, economic, social) that Zeleza highlights and how they contribute to individual and systemic corruption.

The study will apply political theories such as authoritarianism, post-colonial theory, patrimonialism, and neoliberalism to understand corruption in post-colonial African contexts. This theoretical framework will help explain the structural and systemic nature of corruption in the novel and real-world African governance.

The study will critically assess the impact of corruption on African societies through the novel's lens, focusing on the socio-economic and political consequences of corruption. This will include an analysis of how corruption exacerbates inequality, weakens institutions, and impedes social and economic progress.

The study will propose institutional reforms based on the themes of the novel, such as strengthening democratic accountability mechanisms, implementing anti-corruption measures, and promoting economic reforms that prioritize equitable development. Additionally, the study will explore the role of literature as a tool for social and political reform, highlighting how literature not only reflects societal issues but also inspires citizens and policymakers to pursue ethical governance and resist corrupt practices.

The study's objectives provide a more specific and targeted approach to addressing corruption in African society.

The research objectives outline the study's overall goal, aiming to identify the main reasons for the spread of power and corruption in African societies. They will also evaluate the conditions under which African people live under such corruption and propose possible solutions to address the problem. The achievement of these objectives will provide a deeper understanding of the peculiarity of power and corruption issues in Africa, particularly corruption by power, and help to understand the manifestations of power through corruption in African societies and the various measures taken to address this issue. This will help to better understand the challenges faced by African communities in dealing with power and corruption.

Significance of the Study

The study of power as a means of corruption in African society through the lens of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* holds significant scholarly, social, and cultural importance. This study explores Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, a novel that addresses socio-political issues in African societies. It provides a nuanced understanding of corruption and its mechanisms within African societies, offering insights into the

historical roots and evolution of corruption in post-colonial African states. The novel serves as a cultural mirror, reflecting the values, struggles, and aspirations of African societies, and promoting ethical discourse on ethics, integrity, and accountability in leadership and governance.

The insights gained from this study can inform policy and reform, as literature often humanizes abstract concepts, making the consequences of corruption more tangible and urgent for policymakers. The study also has educational value, serving as an educational resource in African literature and cultural studies courses, helping students engage with complex social issues through literature. It promotes critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of literature and society.

Furthermore, it serves as a foundation for future research on the intersection of literature, power, and corruption in Africa, encouraging other scholars to explore similar works and contribute to the growing body of knowledge on this important subject. Overall, this study enhances the appreciation of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* and contributes to broader discussions on corruption, governance, and social justice in African societies.

Motivation of the Study

The motivation behind this study of power as a means of corruption in African society, through the lens of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, is multifaceted, drawing from literary, social, historical, and educational inspirations. The following points outline the core motivations: This study explores the rich tapestry of African literature, particularly works that address pressing socio-political issues. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* provides a poignant narrative that encapsulates the struggles and complexities of post-colonial African societies. The study highlights Zeleza's contribution to African literature and underscores his relevance in contemporary discussions about power and corruption.

Understanding corruption is crucial for addressing development, governance, and social justice in African societies. By analyzing the depiction of corrupt power structures in the novel, the study seeks to raise awareness about political realities in African

countries and encourage a critical examination of governance and leadership.

The historical and cultural contexts that shape African societies are crucial. The study delve into the historical background of Malawi, the setting of *Smouldering Charcoal*, and how historical events and cultural norms influence the narrative. The novel reflects broader cultural and societal issues in Africa, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of African identity, values, and struggles.

The study serves as a resource for educators and students in African literature and cultural studies, promoting the use of literature as a tool for understanding complex social issues. It also fosters critical thinking and analytical skills among students and scholars by engaging with a text that challenges them to consider the ethical and moral implications of power and corruption. The study's motivation is rooted in a deep appreciation for African literature, a commitment to understanding and addressing socio-political issues, and a desire to contribute to educational and scholarly discourse. Through the analysis of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, the study seeks to illuminate the complexities of power and corruption in African society and inspire meaningful dialogue and action.

Benefit of the Study

The study of power as a means of corruption in African society through Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* offers a range of benefits across literary, academic, social, and policy-making domains. The study *Smouldering Charcoal* by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza offers a comprehensive analysis of African literature, particularly the works of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza. It provides a deeper understanding of African literature and its use of narrative strategies to address complex socio-political themes. The study contributes to literary criticism by offering new perspectives and interpretations that can inform future research in African literary studies. It also bridges literature, history, political science, and cultural studies, providing interdisciplinary insights that enrich academic discourse.

The study illuminates corruption dynamics in African societies, using the novel as a lens to explore these issues in a relatable and engaging manner. It

promotes discussions on the importance of integrity, accountability, and ethical leadership in governance. The study serves as a valuable resource for educators and students in African literature, cultural studies, and political science, providing a detailed analysis of the novel that stimulates critical thinking and discussions.

Cultural understanding is enhanced by exploring the cultural contexts and historical background of Malawi, as depicted in the novel. The study emphasizes the importance of African narratives in representing diverse experiences and perspectives of African people, contributing to a more inclusive understanding of global literature.

The study informs policymakers about the underlying causes and impacts of corruption, making consequences of corruption more tangible and urgent for policymakers. It serves as a tool for advocacy, highlighting need for reforms in governance and encouraging efforts to combat corruption and promote ethical leadership in African societies.

The study's societal impact is significant, raising awareness and inspiring advocacy for change among readers, activists, and community leaders. It also encourages further research on power and corruption themes in African literature and beyond, expanding the scope of academic inquiry and understanding.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study of power as a means of corruption in African society through Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* makes several important contributions to various fields of knowledge. These contributions span literary criticism, socio-political analysis, cultural studies, and educational methodologies. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, enhancing the understanding of African literature and providing insights into the dynamics of power and corruption in African society. It examines Zeleza's narrative techniques, character development, and thematic concerns, providing insights into how African writers use literary devices to address complex socio-political issues. The study highlights under explored works, contributing to a more inclusive and diverse representation of African authors and their contributions to global literature.

The socio-political analysis of the novel offers insight into the dynamics of power and corruption in African societies, as depicted in the novel. Historical contextualization of the novel within Malawi's historical and political landscape provides a nuanced understanding of how historical events and political contexts shape societal dynamics and individual experiences. Cultural studies explore themes of cultural identity, social values, and moral dilemmas within African societies, offering a literary perspective on how cultural norms and traditions influence social behavior and governance.

The study serves as an educational resource for teaching African literature, cultural studies, and political science, providing educators with a comprehensive analysis that stimulates critical thinking and discussions in the classroom. It encourages critical thinking and analytical skills by engaging with the complex themes and moral questions presented in the novel.

Insights from the study can inform policy and reform, inspiring more effective and empathetic approaches to policy-making and governance reform. It underscores the importance of integrity, accountability, and ethical leadership, contributing to broader efforts to promote good governance and combat corruption in African societies and beyond.

The study provides a solid foundation for future research on themes of power, corruption, and governance in African literature, encouraging other scholars to explore similar works and themes. By bridging literature, history, political science, and cultural studies, the study promotes interdisciplinary scholarship and a holistic approach to understanding and addressing complex social issues.

Statement of Hypotheses

The study explores the role of power in perpetuating corruption in African society through Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*. It hypothesizes that the concentration of power in the hands of a few leads to systemic corruption and societal decay. The study also suggests that corruption is rooted in historical, socio-political, and economic factors, which are not solely a result of individual moral failings.

The characters in the novel respond to corruption in ways that reflect broader societal attitudes towards power and integrity. This suggests that their actions and decisions reflect broader societal attitudes and behaviors concerning power and corruption.

The study also suggests that literature, like *Smouldering Charcoal*, can effectively critique and illuminate the impact of corruption on African societies, contributing to social awareness and change. This suggests that literature can be a powerful tool for social critique and transformation.

The study also suggests that the portrayal of corrupt power structures in *Smouldering Charcoal* has significant implications for understanding contemporary governance challenges in African countries. The themes and critiques presented in the novel are relevant to current discussions on governance and reform in Africa.

In this article, three main hypotheses will be proposed to provide an immediate answer to the questions raised about power and corruption. The first hypotheses suggest that the use of corruption by power may be justified by the desire to show supremacy over lower people. The second hypotheses suggest that the question of corruption held by powerful people in Africa can be explained by their use of power for their own interests. The third hypotheses suggest that the excessive use of corruption by power can be justified by the bad governance of African political leaders and their strong love of money.

By testing these hypotheses, the study aims to uncover the nuanced ways in which power and corruption are interwoven in African societies and demonstrate the relevance of literary analysis in understanding and addressing these issues

All elements of the article, including the presentation of the subject, statement of the problem, research question, research objectives, and statement of hypotheses, provide an overview and understanding of the topic of power and corruption in African governance.

Methodological Framework

Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal* is a novel that explores the dynamics of authoritarianism, governance, and the role of state

institutions in curbing or facilitating corruption in post-colonial African societies. The novel serves as a compelling narrative to explore the dynamics of authoritarianism, governance, and the role of state institutions in either curbing or facilitating corrupt practices. By integrating political theory into this analysis, we can assess how various political structures democratic, authoritarian, or hybrid regimes - impact the prevalence of corruption in these settings.

One key political theory that can be applied to *Smouldering Charcoal* is the theory of power consolidation, which posits that concentrated power in the hands of a few or a single ruler often leads to systemic corruption. In authoritarian contexts, leaders like Musa use state resources for personal gain while weakening institutions such as the judiciary, legislature, and media to stifle opposition. Political theorists like Juan Linz argue that in such systems, the absence of democratic accountability fosters corruption, as there are no mechanisms to check the excesses of the ruling elite. Zeleza's novel reflects this reality by showing how government officials, unchecked by any significant opposition, abuse their authority for self-enrichment and the consolidation of power.

Post-colonial theory is also crucial in understanding how power manifests as corruption in African societies as depicted in *Smouldering Charcoal*. Many African nations, following independence, inherited political structures that were ill-suited to the demands of democratic governance. These structures were often rooted in the centralization of power, a legacy of colonial rule, which favored a top-down approach to control. Political theorists like Frantz Fanon and Achille Mbembe argue that post-colonial states are prone to corruption because they often replicate the exploitative mechanisms of their former colonial rulers, consolidating power in small elites who perpetuate systemic inequality.

In *Smouldering Charcoal*, the ruling elite continue the colonial practice of using the state as a vehicle for personal and political control. The state apparatus is used to suppress civil society and exploit the working class, perpetuating economic disparities that existed during the colonial era. The failure to dismantle colonial power structures is evident in

how Zeleza's characters navigate a corrupt system that operates much like the colonial administrations that preceded it.

Democratic theory highlights the absence of accountability in weak or hybrid democracies, where democratic institutions are either co-opted or manipulated by those in power, rendering them ineffective in preventing corruption. This aligns with the work of scholars like Larry Diamond, who argue that without robust democratic mechanisms such as free press, independent judiciaries, and strong civil societies - power will be abused.

Patrimonialism and clientelism provide a useful framework for analyzing power and corruption in *Smouldering Charcoal*. These theories highlight that corruption is not merely a moral failing of individuals but a systemic issue rooted in the structures of power.

Zeleza's work underscores the need for political reforms that prioritize accountability, transparency, and the dismantling of oppressive power structures inherited from colonial rule. Whether through the lens of democratic theory, authoritarianism, or patrimonialism, *Smouldering Charcoal* serves as a powerful vehicle for understanding the complex relationship between power and corruption, offering critical insights into how African societies can move towards more equitable and just governance.

In examining power and corruption in African society through Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, it is valuable to draw on theories and concepts from Franz Fanon and other prominent postcolonial critics. These perspectives provide a theoretical framework to better understand the socio-political dynamics depicted in the novel. The article focuses on a critical review of the literature and the theoretical method(s) or approach(es). Franz Fanon's theories on colonialism and violence can be applied to analyze the themes of power and corruption in *Smouldering Charcoal*. He argued that colonialism is inherently violent and dehumanizing, leading to internal conflicts and corrupt practices. Fanon also explored the psychological impact of colonization on both the colonized and the colonizers, suggesting that colonization leads to a fractured identity and self-alienation among the colonized.

Fanon also emphasized the importance of developing a national consciousness as part of the

decolonization process. This theory can be used to critique the characters and society in the novel's post-colonial reality and struggle to build a new national identity free from corruption and external influences.

Other postcolonial critics, such as Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Achille Mbembe, can also be applied to analyze the novel. Said's concept of Orientalism critiques how the West constructs the East as the *other* to assert its dominance, while Bhabha's idea of hybridity examines how colonial subjects create new identities that challenge the binaries of colonizer and colonized.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's work on the subaltern focuses on the voices of the marginalized and oppressed within post-colonial contexts. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's advocacy for decolonizing language and culture emphasizes the need to reclaim indigenous languages and cultural practices from colonial influence. Mbembe's concept of necropolitics explores how power is exercised through the control of life and death, particularly in post-colonial contexts.

Integrating these theories and concepts from Franz Fanon and other postcolonial critics provides a robust framework for analyzing the themes of power and corruption in *Smouldering Charcoal*, offering valuable insights into the socio-political complexities of post-colonial African societies.

This article uses the sociological approach to analyse power and corruption in African societies. Dahl's functionalist and pluralist theories focus on the smooth running of society and the government's impartial participation in political power. Elite theories argue that power in a democratic society is concentrated in the hands of wealthy individuals and organizations, such as government, big business, and the military. These elites shape government decisions for their own interests, not those of the citizenry.

Steven Lukes argues that an entity exercises power over an individual or group when it affects them in a manner contrary to their interests. In serfdom, feudal lords dominated peasants, leading to significant curtailment of their freedom and dependence on them. These perspectives help understand power and corruption in African countries, where political

leaders rule based on their desires rather than providing for the needs of the people and promoting the country's development.

Heidenheimer, the first theoretician to analyze corruption, divided corruption theories into public office-centered corruption, market-centered corruption, and public interest-centered corruption. He identified three ideal types of corruption: public office-centered corruption, market-centered corruption, and public interest-centered corruption. Corruption is a significant obstacle to democratization and economic development, undermining democratic governance and diminishing openness and accountability. Lipset's perspective builds on Merton's proposition that people seeking restricted access to highly valued goods will seek rewards through means that violate social norms.

Zezeza Tiyambe's work '*Smouldering Charcoal*' is analyzed through the literary tool of Pierre Zima using sociocriticism as a theory. Zima believes that a text is a reaction to social issues and has a rapport with society. In Zezeza's novel, the author examines a troubled society with problems leading to corruption and abuse of power by political leaders. In Zima's perspective, the text teaches about the excesses of political leaders in Africa and the devaluation of language, which means that the meaning of words changes depending on social-historical conditions.

In the political domain, corruption is a complex issue that requires careful analysis and understanding. The role of political leaders in shaping the public's perception of corruption is crucial for addressing it effectively.

The methodological framework outlines various methods, theories, or approaches to analyze the topic, which will be discussed in detail. This part of the article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic and its potential applications.

Critical Review of Literature

The critical review of literature for the study Power as a Means of Corruption in African Society: A Study of Paul Tiyambe Zezeza's *Smouldering Charcoal* involves examining existing scholarly works on several interconnected themes: power, corruption, post-colonialism, and African literature.

This review synthesizes key insights from various sources to contextualize and support the analysis of Zezeza's novel. The review will focus on power and corruption in African governance, analysing the sociological approach used in Chinua Achebe's novels, particularly '*A man of the People*'. Achebe's realistic portrayal of the African social and political environment is a key aspect of the topic, and the review will group information or analyses done by researchers or authors on these main aspects. This approach will help the student understand the complex dynamics of power and corruption in African governance.

In this novel, he describes Nigeria in its post-independence phase, during which time the country became a 'cesspool of corruption and misrule' in the context of colonial-style social and economic development, a situation that resulted in conflict between the emergent elitist middle class and the general populace. His realistic characterization and diagnosis of his country's malaise have the power to inspire a revolution informed by African ideologies.

This aspect of tyranny in the governance after the colonial period changed the lives of African people. In *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Achebe reveals troubles in Nigeria where the leaders have placed their own interests before those of the nation.

In addition, this vesting of political power in the wrong hands after independence to the detriment of the African people is a reminder of the premonition of the retiring white District Officer, John Thompson in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's '*A Grain of Wheat*'.

His undiluted concern with the oppressed masses of the African continent more than justifies the location of the theoretical underpinning of this research in sociological criticism with a bias for the Marxist aspect which, in the observation of Jerry Eagleton is a scientific theory of human societies in which both men and women are struggling to free themselves from certain forms of exploitation and oppression.

This is also viewed in '*Petal of Blood*' where so-called African leaders' predilection for exploitation, oppression, and unparalleled tyranny has long made nonsense of the people's pre-independence dreams and aspirations.

Paul Tiyambe Zezeza's *Smouldering Charcoal* is a novel that explores themes of power and corruption

within African literature and post-colonial theory. The novel critiques the abuse of power by the ruling elite and the disenfranchisement of the masses, providing a useful parallel to Zeleza's portrayal of similar issues in his work.

Fanon's analysis of the psychological and social impacts of colonialism provides a theoretical framework for understanding the roots of corruption in post-colonial societies. His concept of the *native intellectual* and the struggle for a new national consciousness are relevant to Zeleza's exploration of identity and power in a newly independent African nation. Said's critique of Western representations of the East underscores the ongoing impact of colonial discourses on post-colonial societies, which is useful in examining how colonial legacies continue to influence power structures and corruption in Zeleza's narrative.

Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and mimicry offer insights into the complex cultural dynamics in post-colonial societies, helping in understanding the characters' navigation of their identities amidst the lingering influences of colonial rule in *Smouldering Charcoal*. Meredith's historical overview of post-colonial Africa provides a backdrop for understanding the political and economic challenges that have contributed to corruption and power struggles. Bayart's analysis of African political systems and the concept of the 'politics of the belly' is instrumental in understanding the self-serving nature of power and corruption.

Specific studies on Zeleza and *Smouldering Charcoal* focus on the themes of identity and power in Zeleza's novel, exploring how the characters' personal and collective identities are shaped by their socio-political environment. Nwakanma's study examines Zeleza's broader body of work, highlighting his engagement with political themes.

By situating Zeleza's work within this broader scholarly context, the study can draw on established theories and critiques to illuminate the complexities of power dynamics and corruption in African society.

Moreover, Robert Guest, African editor of the Economist, tackles in *'The Shackled Continent'* the vexing issue of Africa's continuing poverty, and offers a surprising blunt answer. Africa is a shackled continent because of the abuse of power by 'vampire

states': authoritarian governments that have failed their people comprehensively. Guest details their abuses thoroughly. A particularly scathing chapter focusing on Zimbabwe and South Africa describes how post-liberation governments and their supporting elites take the shortcut of expropriating assets instead of developing their own. As a cure, Guest recommends 'simple ideas, rigorously applied'.

Governments must concentrate on providing basics: primary education, essential health care, and piped water. Elites must stop spending other people's money on limousines, mansions, and first-class flights to conferences. Finally, Africans must stop arguing that Africa's problems are someone else's fault. These sociological perspectives of Chinua Achebe, Robert Guest, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o analysed throughout their novels allow us to analyse our topic based on Zeleza Tiyambe's book *'Smouldering Charcoal'*. Hence, our choice for this corpus. In a critical literary dissection of Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, we discover that he is a fictional working out of his earlier thesis that Africa's independence is nothing more than a catalog of 'disaster, disappointment and disillusionment'.

Objectives

The Research Aims

- To explore the reasons and methods through which people corrupt the population through the use of power, as it serves as a means or instrument of corruption.
- To analyze the depiction of power dynamics and corruption in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*.
- To identify the socio-political and economic factors contributing to corruption as depicted in the novel.
- To explore the characters' responses to corruption and their moral choices.
- To draw connections between the novel's themes and real-life issues of power and corruption in African societies.
- To contribute to the scholarly discourse on African literature and its role in critiquing socio-political issues.

The Search for Interest by Both Lower and Upper Community

Interest has become a source of salvation for Africans seeking opportunities for survival, leading to corruption by those in power, particularly those from the inferior class. These individuals can easily be identified through gestures and can manipulate the population in exchange for money or goods. In the case of Zeleza, the illegal exploitation of bakery workers has allowed them to go on strike, with protests starting with Tione and followed by Bota and other strikers. These individuals are willing to do anything to corrupt the population in exchange for money or goods. Their objective is to react so that the committee can *'persuade management to avert the strike by re-employing the four dismissed workers and at least agreeing to consider the other demands over wages and conditions of service'* (P 26).

Their strike is legal since they are fighting for their rights that is to be treated as they should be. However, it is amazing to see that their demand has been refused by the management. And *'after the management's refusal to budge the committee had tried to appeal to the Ministry of Labour for help. The Ministry said there was little it could do'* (P 26). This shows that the management and the Ministry, all these persons who are supposed to defend the strikers by implementing the law are all corrupted. They are for sure looking just for interest.

And the position they hold gives them more strength to corrupt. The controversy in all that is when *'the union reminded the committee that the strikes were illegal'* (P 26). This is a serious reality in our world, especially in an African society where nothing is done for granted and people prefer sacrificing their blood in exchange for something. This situation is understandable since the rate of poverty is more spread in Africa in such a way that each person becomes the prey of the other one.

In the story of 'Matigari' by Ngugi WA Thiong'o, the world is losing its wisdom, particularly among the inferior class, due to the pursuit of interest. This leads to leaders manipulating individuals and potentially causing their deaths. The upper class, particularly those holding important positions, also suffers from corruption, which has become a

source of productivity and wealth for many leaders. Corruption is perceived as a way to gain employment, where money is exchanged for jobs.

Meanwhile, the government accepts the government's role in granting jobs to those who pay money, leading to a disorder in society. Graduates are often the most jobless, and employees are often the ones who have paid for jobs they do not deserve. This situation suggests that society is still late and that many people in the armed forces are not able to read or speak.

Zeleza's work emphasizes the importance of the search for interest for powerful people, as they can only be kind and available when they need help or find someone to help them achieve their goals. This search for interest in power can lead to a lack of worthiness in Africa.

This is shown in the novel when Nambe was looking for help from the Party chairman to send her son to the hospital because he had been injured. The party chairman refuses to help her saying *'How dare she come and ask him, the Party Chairman, to take her sick child to hospital?... He was not running an ambulance service.'* (P 45).

We understand here that one cannot be taken for granted. There must be an interest in every relationship among people, and the Party chairman has guaranteed the population to come to him any time they want for their problems. *'He said at his meeting that people should feel free to come and see him about their problems'* (P 44). The Party Chairman would help Nambe if she could give him something back.

That is the reason why he ignored the strikers during their protest and shared the point of the bakery owners. He automatically falls into corruption because he is promised something back. The sort of corruption through interest is viewed in justice when the defenders of the law fall into corruption without implementing the law.

Maintaining the Supremacy by Powerful People

Corruption in African society is rising due to a lack of money, leading to a poor society. Leaders abuse lower class rights to gain supremacy, similar to the animal world where superiors enjoy themselves. In rich societies, self-esteem is prioritized based

on productivity, and young politicians become embittered and attracted to fraudulent attempts as they grow older.

In Smouldering charcoal, strikers who undergo this aspect of corruption live in bad conditions. For instance, Mchere and his wife Nambe are extremely poor. They used to *'put that bucket there to collect the rain from this leaking roof'* (P 5).

This extreme poverty of the couple Mchere and Nambe obliges them to look for jobs. And this leads them to all sorts of discrimination, exploitation, corruption, and abuse of power. Leaders corrupt the people to make them suffer because they know they have nothing and can not do anything. This explains the nastiness and lack of love in African societies.

The social position of some individuals can lead to the imposing of their own laws and supremacy on those in poor conditions, disregarding their struggles. This is evident in the work of Zeleza, where law defenders are involved in corruption, resulting in the illegal exploitation and mistreatment of workers. Despite their obedient and punctual work, they are arrested without a credible trial, highlighting the involvement of law defenders, unions, bakery owners, and local associations.

The corruption of law defenders, unions, bakery owners, and local associations highlights the need for a more equitable and secure society. The social differences and hatred that divide citizens are rooted in self-gain and satisfaction, leading to a nastiness that views others as inhuman. The use of the 'Card' in the novel highlights the role of power in perpetuating corruption, as it serves as a symbol of the root cause of these issues.

In the work of Zeleza, Chola has been the victim of this corruption with the policemen who ask him for a card, especially a Party membership card. According to them, *'every citizen of the country was supposed to hold a Party membership card'* (P 17).

This means that the population should forcibly have another card beyond the identity card and those who do not have this mighty card *'were beaten to death, their houses burnt, or women raped and children barred from school...'* (P 18).

The leaders willingly accept corruption and apply it in all situations to maintain their force, and their power and make people understand that they do

not have any choice but to complain since nothing will change. This is a sad situation that blinds the justice. This is apprehended during the questioning of the policemen towards Chola when they say: *'You know that this country belongs to our Great Leader'* (P 17).

This underlines the fear they undergo in this sacred post they hold. They fear they will be dismissed if they do not blindly execute what they have been told even though that seems to be illegal. The evidence is more obvious when the population is controlled *'except whites who were exempt from the search'* (P 17).

Police corruption is prevalent in African countries, where individuals holding minimal power consider themselves Almighty Gods, leading to injustice and corruption. Mayors, ministers, and superintendents may even insult and violate the rights of the population without reason, highlighting the need for societal equality and justice for all citizens, regardless of social status, color, or ethnicity.

The Search for Freedom by using Power to Corrupt

Corruption by power in justice occurs when leaders, businessmen, and kings corrupt judges by giving them money or gifts to win cases, despite acknowledging their guilt. This can harm the judge's reputation and mayor's, leading to public ridicule and criticism. Addressing corruption is crucial to maintain dignity and prevent further traumatization. In the work of Zeleza, *'there were prisoners of every description, and accused of every crime imaginable'* (P 120).

The work highlights the corruption in society, where power is used to corrupt individuals and maintain supremacy. Poor bakers, who lack the power to implement laws, are subjected to corruption and their rights are abused. The justice system is corrupted, and criminals pay money to obtain freedom. This results in a disorganized society filled with disorder and money as the only solution to problems. Corruption can be easily used, leading to forcible actions like raping girls under 18 or robbery. Bakery owners in Zeleza prioritize their own happiness over the dignity of their workers, despite their lack of right to oppress them. The sentence

passed on workers without a trial demonstrates the corruption that can occur when one holds a certain power in society. The work of Zeleza serves as an example of how corruption can be used to achieve personal gain and maintain power.

This can be illustrated through the sayings of Mchere when he says *'He and all those who had sacrificed their lives for Independence were probably turning in their graves'* (P 129). The workers of the bakery were just looking for their Independence and nothing at all, but they were condemned for what they had not done.

Justice defenders are passive in passing sentences on workers, claiming they committed murder. The bakery owners prioritize eliminating bakers, who frequently complain about their work, as they are paid to pass the sentence and condemn them as murderers.

The boss of the bakery often tends to threaten them with some side words when he says *'Those of you who don't want to get into trouble, please step this side...the strike is illegal and as such it should be ended forthwith, otherwise, you will have to deal with the forces of the law'* (P 128).

The bakers are in a difficult situation, with no one to help them. The justice system, which allows individuals to respect their rights and punish those who break rules, has been corrupted. Despite their right to negotiation, they choose to negotiate.

However, *'the management refused to enter into negotiation until we ended our strike, which we refused to do. And there was deadlock'* (P 128) said the bakers. The management is causing employees misery and is actively working to worsen their situation. A strike is considered illegal as workers refuse to suffer due to oppression and abuse of power. However, justice remains passive, as if controlled. Corruption persists, as powerful individuals dominate the weakest, as those who enforce laws are seeking interest and money, leading to corruption. Therefore, there is no good justice as long as corruption exists, as the weakest are often favored by the powerful. The Great Corruptors are people, including voters and politicians. To avoid corruption, it is best to be corrupt in controlled amounts, becoming a mass power. Frustrate enemies, block them, and take on their desires to weaken them. Politics requires

getting into the manure, and those who avoid it tend to support those who claim their cause is clean.

Corruption by Power in Offices

Power can transform individuals into powerful figures like Abraham Lincoln and Gandhi, or even Hitler and Mussolini. The true character of a person is determined by how they use their power, as it can either help or harm millions. As Abraham Lincoln said, *'If you want to know the true character of a person, give him power'*. Resisting corruption requires a conscious effort to challenge perceptions based on evolution, values, fears, needs, reason, and common sense. Zeleza Paul's work explores the concepts of power and corruption, which can be found in various political, economic, and social domains. She reveals that leaders and chiefs of associations use power to corrupt their people at two main levels: bakery and prison.

At the bakery, the National and Allied Bakery Workers' Union *'reminded the committee that strikers were illegal'* (P 26) in their protest. This effectively shows the extent to which this union works under corruption. Under the management of the Indian, Osman until the National Development Corporation, this union has done nothing to promote the welfare of bakers. This is because the leaders and managers of the bakery corrupt the leaders of this union and manifest power and pressure upon them to avoid protesting and claiming their rights. Bakers are often dismissed for no reason and the union stays passive.

'Our decision to ignore the advice of the union,' Bota explained to the attentive crowd, 'has neither been based on recklessness nor ignorance, but on a proper understanding of our situation. For Those of us who have worked in this bakery for a long time know that the union has never done anything for us. Some of you may recall those days immediately after independence when this bakery was taken over by that Indian, Osman from Smith. And what a hard time we had. I need not go into details. What I am saying is that the union did nothing to help us. Then Osman was deported and this bakery was taken over by Chide, that minister who was later detained. Again what did the union do when we told of our grievances? Nothing.' (P 26).

The bakery industry is a victim of power and corruption, causing bakers to face increasing difficulties. They lack a reliable source of support and are forced to undergo various treatments, making their independence an obstacle. Leaders abuse power and make decisions without opposition, corrupting union representatives and focusing on profit and interest. This issue also occurs in prison, where bakers arrested and sent to prison experience abuse of the law. Corruption also exists in justice, where law representatives and defenders are corrupt and marginalize the people. Strikers are not judged based on the law, leading to their condemnation without trial and illegal treatment. They still wonder about the real reason for their arrest since they think they did nothing wrong.

The prisoners resumed digging. Chola felt exhausted. He could sense that Mchere and the others were still wondering about the real reason for his arrest. But he felt it was too early to tell them everything about his experiences and convictions (P 123).

The abuse of power always ends with bad actions. In the prison, not only workers are arrested without trial, but they are also mistreated. They are starving, threatened, killed somehow. This corruption changes the life and the way of thinking of people. It influences their daily actions. There is no more truth and justice in whatever they do or say. They react as starving animals. In prison, *'Chola was told to strip naked. A stove of hot charcoal was brought. He was told to sit on it. Chola resisted. They grabbed him and put him there. He screamed as his buttocks felt the heat. After he was removed he saw one of the guards taking out a hot nail from the stove. It was pierced through his penis. Chola shrieked with terror'* (P 157).

The authority decides to punish severely Chola because they think he is the one who leads the movement. And as a journalist, he can put everything that is going on in newspapers. Therefore, they decide to put an end to his life. *'The authorities maintained that he had committed suicide'* (P 160), but her girlfriend Catherine knew they were lying since Chola was not the kind of man who would do such a thing. Mchere *'would later learn from Nangaine that the man who had killed Chola was Bonzo'* (P 159).

This guilt of Bonzo has been paid to commit the death of Chola. The authorities have corrupted him to brutalize his own brother. This reaction of the authorities shows their deep nastiness towards the other people. The right to life, freedom, and happiness, are no longer their concern. They marginalize the people through those who are supposed to defend and safeguard them. What we can guess here is that people like themselves, this aspect of corruption since it helps them survive through the interest they gain.

Money as a means of Corruption by Power

Money, like cars and guns, can be used in both good and evil ways. The Bible states that money is the root of all evil, and it has no moral standing. In African societies, money is used to manipulate and corrupt the population, making intelligence and merit less valuable in employment. People do not judge employees or those looking for jobs at their true value during competitive entrance examinations, where true success is mainly occasioned by money. People holding a certain power in society distribute jobs to their children or acquaintances even when they do not have any level or merit during entrance competitions. Money is unique in its ability to be portable, allowing individuals to have power in their communities and wherever they go. Some bad choices are considered corrupt but can generate more profit compared to what is good.

The work of Zeleza illustrates how money plays an important role in understanding how powerful people, particularly bakery owners, corrupt society. Money closes the mouth and allows for the transmission of information based on lies, nastiness, hypocrisy, and selfishness. Two main ways money has been used implicitly to corrupt the work are:

The party union, which was supposed to fight for the rights of bakers, stayed passive without any reaction, as though they were afraid of the owners. This passivity demonstrates how money can change the mind, voice, walk, personality, and loyalty of a person. In 1962, the bakers were united when they won their first strike, where money was not the privilege of people and there was no corruption among them.

Employment through Recruitment: Manifestation of Corruption by Power

Ethnicity in African society is causing division and instability, leading to conflicts and even violence. This has resulted in corruption in employment, with recruitment based on personal relationships rather than degrees. In the army, recruitment criteria are often neglected, leading to people working in positions without proper education or training. Corruption is also evident in entrance competitions, where merit is no longer a factor. This has led to many children not attending school or obtaining important degrees, and many secondary and university students losing the courage to pursue long studies. In Zeleza, bakery owners and Njala, many people have been chosen to be chairmen of associations to defend the cause of the population. These individuals have fallen into corruption and their actions serve as evidence of their fall into it. Leaders are chosen to favor the will of bribers, demonstrating that leaders are corrupt and chosen to favor the will of bribers.

Corruption in African society divides people and complicates lives, exacerbated by ethnic differences and conflicts. Employment and recruitment corruption, often based on personal relationships, contribute to instability and diversity in society. The power here plays a very crucial role in the achievement of the goal of dishonest people, people with bad ideologies. It gives them the largest opportunity to stand for the weak people. As a consequence, they consider themselves automatically invulnerable. This is explicitly shown in the sayings of the Party Chairman when he was addressing Nambe: *'How dared she come and ask him, the Party Chairman, to take her sick child to hospital?'* (P 45).

The Party leader's lack of humanism and disregard for the suffering of his people is a clear indication that he does not deserve the position. He is not understanding the domain in which he works and does not sympathize with the suffering of his people. A bakery worker should be welcomed to lead this position, as they can deeply understand the pains of their colleagues and share their opinions. This is a sad reality, as people from nowhere are often chosen to lead positions they do not master or are controlled as machines. This is also true in justice, where the minister of Justice and law defenders are often seen

as examples of corruption by power.

Their presence at these important places is meaningless. They are all active agents of corruption. They can not recruit or position a person who implements the law to avoid misleading them. Catherine manifests this bad side of justice in sayings: *'Why aren't we allowed in?'*, *'Is that just?'* *'Justice, my God! The guards laughed in her face'*. *'Justice for subversives? Where did you get that idea? Even God himself sends subversives to hell'* (P 142).

Through the discussion between Catherine and the guards, we understand that power is effectively one of the causes of corruption. Corruption is spreading from the upper to the bottom and people are recruited through affinity. It is obvious through the guards of the prison that they have been positioned to blindly put into practice the rules of their boss.

They do anything that is against the norms simply because they are ordered to. In prison, *'the women realized that the guards had cheated them. When they went back to the prison gates they found new guards who told them that the superintendent had left for the day. Your jobs are disgraceful enough without being liars at the same time!'* Nambe screamed at them (P 142).

In addition to what has happened in the prison, *'the refugees who had received their papers found it difficult to get employment. It was equally difficult for them to start an income-generating project'* (P 176).

Impacts of Corruption by Power

Harold Laski, a prominent political theorist and a key figure in the development of political science in the early 20th century, had comprehensive and influential views on the nature of power. His theories provide valuable insights into the dynamics of power, governance, and society, which are relevant to understanding power and corruption in various contexts, including African societies as explored in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*.

Harold Laski's views on power are rooted in his understanding of the relationship between power and its context. He argued that power exists only in the context of relationships between individuals or groups, and its exercise and impact depend heavily on the historical, social, and economic conditions.

Laski advocated for pluralism, which suggests that power should be distributed among various groups and institutions rather than being concentrated in a single authority. He also emphasized the importance of checks and balances in political systems to prevent tyranny and abuse of power.

Laski believed that democratic governance is the most effective way to manage power, as it provides mechanisms to limit and regulate power. He also emphasized the role of the state in managing power, acting as a mediator and regulator of power among various groups and interests. He was particularly concerned with the concentration of economic power and its implications for social justice, as economic inequalities lead to power imbalances that can undermine democratic processes and social stability.

Laski critiqued absolute power, arguing that it leads to corruption, oppression, and the erosion of individual liberties. He emphasized the need to empower individuals and communities to participate actively in governance and decision-making processes, diffusing power and enhancing democratic engagement.

In Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, Laski's views on power provide a theoretical lens to analyze the dynamics of power and corruption depicted in the novel. The relational dynamics between characters and institutions can be analyzed through Laski's perspective, helping understand how historical and socio-political contexts shape these relationships. Laski's advocacy for distributed power underscores the need for checks and balances to prevent corruption.

By integrating Laski's views on power, the study of *Smouldering Charcoal* can gain a deeper theoretical foundation, enhancing the analysis of power, corruption, and their impacts on society. His ideas help illuminate the complexities of power relations and the importance of democratic principles in addressing corruption and promoting social justice.

The article aims to highlight the negative impact of power-driven corruption on society, specifically focusing on how such corruption can negatively affect certain social businesses.

Social and Administrative Impacts of Corruption by Power

Corruption negatively impacts economic growth, affecting investment, taxation, public expenditures, and human development. It undermines the regulatory environment and efficiency of state institutions due to rent-seeking. Corruption also affects the equitable distribution of resources, increasing income inequalities, undermining social welfare programs, and potentially undermining long-term sustainable development and economic growth.

Corruption Threatens Social Stability

Corruption, a result of power and greed, poses a significant threat to stability and peace. It is covert, opportunistic, and powerful, relying on dominance, fear, and unspoken codes. Corruption increases conflict risk and harms human rights, particularly the poor and marginalized. Civil society organizations play a crucial role in fighting against corruption and giving voice to victims. Reducing corruption in post-conflict states increases security and facilitates the effective use of national resources. Violent conflict generates costs for both the country and the international community, including lives lost, displacement, and the rise of organized crime groups. Early conflict prevention with a focus on anti-corruption is in the national interest of all states, allowing challenges to be addressed before their consequences have broader impacts.

Corruption by Power: Impediment in Administration

Corruption negatively impacts economic growth, investment, taxation, public expenditures, human development, regulatory efficiency, resource distribution, income inequalities, social welfare programs, and sustainable development. The major impact of corruption on public administration is the failure to make a clear separation between public and private resources, leading to a tendency to dissuade public resources for private profit. Additionally, corruption can create arbitrary rules, regulations, and authorizing requirements that hinder market functioning and encourage rent-seeking, leading to the misallocation of resources.

When corruption by power exists in an administration, it can lead to disorder, misunderstanding, and quarrels, as seen in the case of the bakery in Njala. The consideration of human beings in the enterprise is crucial, and treating everything according to what is normal, just, and appropriate for everyone is essential.

Corruption Affects Inequality and Income Distribution

Corruption significantly impacts human development and wealth distribution, with a negative correlation between corruption and GDP per capita. An increase in corruption results in an income reduction for the poor of 7.8 percentage points a year, leading to unequal access to education and public services. Corruption is positively correlated to income inequality, as the benefits from corruption flow to better-connected individuals and groups, undermining the government's ability to ensure equitable distribution of resources.

Research shows that dependent variables measuring human development are negatively affected by corruption, with more corrupt countries tending to have lower levels of human development. Corruption creates a biased tax system that affects income distribution, undermining the government's capacity to ensure equitable wealth redistribution. As inequality increases and more people slide into poverty, there will be higher pressure and demand for more extensive redistribution through higher progressive taxation to compensate for and correct inequalities and injustices generated by corruption. Corruption affects the targeting, quantity, quality, and outcomes of social spending, negatively impacting economic growth and business operations, and reducing the resources available for other uses, including financing social spending. In some cases, losses due to corruption may outweigh the intended benefits of social welfare programs, suggesting that corruption can seriously hamper the redistributive efforts of developing countries.

Political and Economic Impacts of Corruption by Power

Corruption has a long-term impact on economic growth, equality, and a country's governance and

institutional environment. It negatively affects investment, taxation, public expenditures, human development, and regulatory efficiency. It also increases income inequalities, undermines social welfare programs, and lowers human development levels. Extractive political corruption involves bribery, embezzlement, and fraud for individual power-holders and the regime, while power-preserving political corruption builds political support, protection, and impunity through favoritism, co-optations, and fraudulent manipulation of institutions. The buying of votes in elections and parliaments is often part of this picture.

Corruption Affects the Overall Governance and Institutional Environment

Corruption significantly affects governance, the regulatory environment, and state efficiency. It encourages politicians and officials to create more regulations to extort small payments, leading to rent-seeking behavior and inefficiencies. This is particularly true for the business environment, where well-regulated businesses can alleviate bureaucratic procedures and red tape. Corruption also undermines the purpose and integrity of regulation, as corrupt officials can circumvent or bend regulations for their own interests. It also undermines state legitimacy and the rule of law, as perceptions of corruption erode citizens' confidence in public institutions and corrode the rule of law. Addressing corruption and promoting transparency can help improve the regulation of the business environment and strengthen the rule of law. The citizens of Njala no longer trust justice because nothing is just, or correct in that justice. *The name 'Justice' remains but it has lost its real meaning. And they mock this bad way to implement the law and rule the power. Catherine laughs at this justice saying 'Is that Just?' 'Justice, my God!' (P 142).* There is no more respect between the ruling party and the citizens because of their corrupt acts.

The current system of power-sharing leads to disorder and lack of mutual respect, as people lose trust in leaders and no longer respect norms. This affects various positions, such as president, minister, or manager, as it is considered their business, and failure to perform duties may result in insults and disrespect.

This is what happens when women decide to pay a visit to their husbands in prison. The misunderstanding between the guards and them allows them to manifest their anger and this is perceived through the sayings of Lucy when she insults the guards: *'Dogs! Stinking dogs, that's what you are!'* (P 142).

Corruption by Power Affects the Economic Growth of the Country

Corruption in African countries can hinder economic development by misallocating aid into private wealth, raising production costs, and reducing investment profitability. It can also degrade resource productivity, such as in education and healthcare, resulting in decreased human capital. Corruption increases production costs and uncertainty, especially in decentralized cases, decreasing investment in both physical and human capital. Rent-seeking behavior creates inefficiencies, fueling waste of resources and undermining public expenditure efficiency. In Zeleza's work, corruption has impeded the country's economy, with the ruling party corrupting many people to impose their supremacy and prevent them from doing their jobs illegally. This abuse of power, greed, and nastiness has led to famine and population suffering. Addressing corruption is crucial for sustainable economic growth and development in African countries.

Results

In Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, power is portrayed as a central agent of corruption, systematically eroding society and morality. The novel highlights the abuse of power by authoritarian rulers and complicit institutions, leading to widespread corruption that pervades all aspects of life. Zeleza uses both individual and systemic corruption to demonstrate how the abuse of power perpetuates social inequality, stifles resistance, and fuels oppression.

Institutional corruption is the primary embodiment of corrupt power in the central government. The ruling class exploits the state apparatus for personal gain, disregarding the needs of common citizens. The political elite, immune to the laws they create, act with impunity, benefiting

from systems designed to protect their interests. For example, corrupt officials control essential resources, creating scarcity and dependency to manipulate and suppress the population, a tactic common to many authoritarian regimes in Africa.

Musa, a character in the novel, serves as a poignant representation of the corrupt ruling class, using his position to secure wealth and political power, disregarding the plight of the poor. His rise to power exemplifies how unchecked authority leads to moral decay. His character arc reflects the dangers of authoritarianism, showing how those in power can easily become corrupt when there are no systems of accountability. His corruption is not just about financial greed but also about consolidating his authority, ensuring that anyone who opposes him is silenced or punished. This use of power for personal gain and suppression is a major theme Zeleza explores in the novel, showing how it fuels inequality and injustice.

Economic oppression is another form of corruption in the novel. The workers in the factory, who struggle under harsh conditions, represent the broader population suffering from systemic exploitation. Those in positions of power use their authority to extract maximum profit, disregarding labor rights and basic human dignity. The factory becomes a microcosm of the broader society, where those at the top use their power to exploit the labor and resources of the lower classes.

The corruption of the judiciary is exposed in the novel, as the legal system is portrayed as complicit in maintaining the status quo, with judges and law enforcement officials serving the interests of the powerful rather than dispensing justice. Individuals who speak out against the government are swiftly arrested or imprisoned without due process, illustrating the breakdown of the rule of law. This misuse of power results in a deeply unjust society where legal recourse is available only to those with influence, while the disenfranchised are left without protection.

Psychological corruption is also explored in the novel, as characters who initially oppose the regime are slowly broken down by the relentless oppression, becoming complicit in the very corruption they once resisted. This psychological toll is one of the most

insidious aspects of power corruption, as it not only destroys individual morality but also weakens the collective will to resist authoritarianism.

Smouldering Charcoal serves as a powerful reminder of the need for accountability, transparency, and civic participation in governance. It underscores the importance of resisting corrupt power structures and advocating for systems that prioritize justice, equality, and the well-being of all citizens.

The study explores the complexities of power and corruption in African societies through the lens of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's novel *Smouldering Charcoal*. It posits that concentrated power leads to systemic corruption, affecting governance structures and societal well-being. The novel also highlights the role of historical, socio-political, and economic factors in perpetuating corruption in African societies.

The study also reveals varied responses among characters to corruption, reflecting diverse societal attitudes towards power and integrity. These responses range from resistance to complicity, reflecting prevalent societal norms and values. The novel serves as a powerful critique of corruption, raising awareness about its devastating impacts on African societies and advocating for ethical governance reforms.

The study also identifies parallels between the novel's depiction of corrupt power structures and contemporary governance challenges in African countries. Insights from the novel offer valuable lessons for addressing governance deficiencies, promoting transparency, and combating systemic corruption in real-world contexts.

The study enriches African literary criticism by providing a detailed analysis of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's novel, contributing to a deeper understanding of how literature reflects and critiques societal issues. It offers new insights into the dynamics of power and corruption in post-colonial African societies, integrating theoretical perspectives from scholars like Franz Fanon, Edward Said, and Harold Laski. The research on *Power as a Means of Corruption in African Society: A Study of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's Smouldering Charcoal* contributes significant insights into the complexities of power and corruption in African contexts.

This article focuses on the various measures and reforms implemented to combat corruption in African societies.

Preventive Measures against Corruption by Power

Corruption in Africa is a pervasive issue that has been labeled the 'AIDS of democracy', destroying the future of many societies. The existence of anti-corruption laws and institutions in Africa has questioned the commitment of African leaders to combat corruption, as it remains a challenge to governance. This research aims to assess the dimensions and challenges of anti-corruption efforts in Africa and recommend workable solutions.

Political governance and corruption influence each other in many ways, with corruption facilitating the diversion of public resources into private hands. To effectively address corruption, African states should embark on political and economic reforms that promote free and open competition, transparency, and accountability in the private sector. Civil society plays an important oversight role in the fight against corruption, including monitoring, advocating for effective legislation, exposing acts of corruption, and naming and shaming public officials engaging in corrupt activities.

The study explores the correlation between corruption and economic development in developing countries, questioning whether corruption is the primary reason for economic failure or if economic development increases the demand for fighting corruption. It also explores the costs of corruption and the most effective ways to de-corruption institutions in government administration, security forces, and business. It also explores exit opportunities for petty offenders, the effectiveness of monetary incentives, and the role of businesses in encouraging good governance.

The panel proposes three areas of action: measuring costs, raising transparency, and fighting systemic corruption. The findings aim to generate concrete measures to address corruption in developing economies. Measuring the costs of corruption at the micro level involves analyzing the corrupt system from beginning to end, considering factors like buyer-seller matching, implicit contract

enforcement, illicit transaction footprints, and cover-up measures.

Raising transparency and defining good practice are essential for addressing corruption and promoting economic development. Anti-corruption policies must be detected and supported by various actors, including citizens' groups, the press, religious groups, business groups, international organizations, public counterparts, congressional committees, supreme audit authorities, and independent government agencies.

Adoption of legislative measures to combat corruption by power is crucial, as it identifies elements of corruption that can be proven in court. Countries under review have made good progress in adopting anti-corruption measures, but the historical context of each country is essential when reviewing anti-corruption laws.

Establishing administrative reforms and codes of good practice is essential to address corruption in Africa. Article 7 of the African Union Convention on Corruption mandates public officials to declare their assets while in the public service, which includes simplifying government systems, establishing merit-based recruitment and remuneration, establishing effective revenue collection systems, and declaring assets by public officials.

Discussion

Literature has long served as a mirror of society, reflecting both its virtues and flaws, and *Smouldering Charcoal* is a prime example of how African literature can engage with pressing socio-political issues like corruption. Through compelling narratives, the novel raises awareness about the impact of corrupt practices on everyday life, offering nuanced critiques of power and governance. It demonstrates that literature can be a powerful tool for social change by fostering empathy and awareness, challenging the status quo, inspiring collective action, and providing alternative visions.

By immersing readers in the experiences of characters affected by corruption, literature helps foster empathy and a deeper understanding of the human toll corruption takes on individuals and communities. It also challenges the normalization of corrupt practices, encouraging readers to question

the legitimacy of power structures that perpetuate injustice.

Smouldering Charcoal highlights the potential of African literature as a reflection of societal issues and a catalyst for meaningful social change. By engaging with literary works that address corruption, scholars, policymakers, and citizens can develop a more nuanced understanding of power dynamics and work towards creating more just and transparent societies.

The article explores the novel *Smouldering Charcoal* by Zeleza, which portrays power dynamics and corruption as a pervasive force in African societies. It examines the historical, socio-political, and economic factors that contribute to corruption and how these factors shape characters' behaviors and choices. The novel also examines the character responses to corruption, reflecting broader societal attitudes towards power, integrity, ethical conduct.

The study highlights the novel's contribution to African literature and cultural discourse, challenging stereotypes and broadening representation of African experiences, particularly concerning governance and corruption. It also discusses the theoretical contributions of scholars like Franz Fanon, Edward Said, and Harold Laski, which inform the analysis of power and corruption in the novel.

The practical implications of the findings for policy-makers, advocacy groups, and practitioners include proposing recommendations for addressing corruption and advocating for governance reforms that promote transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership.

The study acknowledges limitations, such as potential biases in interpretation or gaps in data, and suggests areas for future research to address these shortcomings. Future research directions include exploring related themes in Zeleza's other works, conducting comparative analyses with literature from different regions or historical periods, and identifying emerging topics or theoretical frameworks that could deepen understanding of power and corruption in African literature and society.

The article emphasizes the novel's significance in raising awareness about the complexities of power dynamics and corruption in African societies and its potential to inspire positive change through critical reflection and informed action.

Humans are naturally competitive and desire instant gratification, but fear of punishment prevents them from committing evil acts. When fear of punishment disappears, they often pursue immoral or illegal desires for wealth, material comforts, and power. Corruption occurs when people use power for selfish purposes, moving from a negative feedback loop to a positive one. Social animals, such as individuals, families, and tribes, can survive effectively without relentless competition. However, the natural competitive drive to be more powerful can lead to breaking social contracts and breaking social contracts, leading to corruption.

Conclusion

In Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's *Smouldering Charcoal*, power is depicted as a central force behind societal corruption, illustrating the devastating effects of authoritarian regimes on the collective well-being of African communities. The novel serves as a powerful lens through which readers can explore the intricacies of political and economic oppression, as well as the complicity of various social actors in perpetuating this cycle of corruption.

For scholars, the text provides rich material for analyzing the intersection between literature and politics, where fictional narratives serve as a reflection of the lived experiences of individuals under oppressive governments. By examining such works, scholars can deepen their understanding of how corruption functions in African societies and its far-reaching consequences. They can also explore how literary narratives offer alternative perspectives on governance, power dynamics, and resistance, contributing to the broader discourse on social justice and equity.

For policymakers, Zeleza's work is a stark reminder of the importance of transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership in governance. The novel illustrates how unchecked power leads to institutional decay, widening socio-economic gaps, and the marginalization of ordinary citizens. Policymakers can draw on the themes in *Smouldering Charcoal* to rethink governance frameworks, implementing reforms that promote transparency and strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms. Furthermore, Zeleza's portrayal of

grassroots resistance against tyranny underscores the importance of civic engagement and participatory governance.

For African citizens, the novel holds profound relevance as it emphasizes the power of collective action and the moral imperative to hold leaders accountable. It resonates with the lived realities of many across the continent, offering a sense of solidarity and hope in the fight against corruption and authoritarianism. By highlighting the resilience and agency of ordinary individuals, Zeleza's narrative can inspire citizens to challenge systemic corruption and demand more just and accountable leadership.

Power is a crucial aspect in shaping social dynamics, including social groups, professional organizations, and governments. It influences the lower population, who listen to authority figures and perceive their objectives as reasonable and beneficial. This fear of lower people regarding the authority or social position of powerful people leads to corruption.

The sociocritic approach of Pierre Zima has allowed us to understand all the parameters of power leading to corruption in African society. The main reasons for corruption by power are three: maintaining and imposing supremacy by powerful people, money, and interest. People in the upper class corrupt the population to maintain or impose their supremacy, showing that their position allows them to do whatever they want without any penalties. Money is considered the 'gate of paradise' and powerful people use it to do whatever side they want. Interest is another reason why many people corrupt the population, as everything they have in mind is to 'fill their belly'.

Corruption by power can be manifested during recruitment, through money, and entrance competitions. The manifestation of corruption negatively influences society and interpersonal relationships between those who follow norms and those going through corruption. It impedes administrative, political, cultural, and social relationships.

The research has shown that bakers and women resist this corruption by power, which illegally abuses their rights and puts them in bad living conditions. In conclusion, the study proposes preventive measures

to fight against corruption by power. In Kenya, the adoption of legislative measures to combat corruption was difficult due to the relative youth of the ruling coalition that replaced the Kenyan African National Union (KANU). However, changes in the legislative framework suggest that the government has a stronger commitment to fight corruption than its predecessor. In Ethiopia, there is little evidence of the political will to fight corruption, with anti-corruption campaigns used to settle political scores. Algeria and Senegal also have little to show in terms of political will to fight corruption. In Algeria, President Bouteflika's reform efforts have achieved very little, despite his numerous promises. In Nigeria, administrative reforms and codes of good practice have been developed to address civil service problems, but various problems have been encountered, making the realization of these programs difficult. In Ethiopia, the under-resourced FEACC and jurisdictional problems have rendered reform efforts fruitless. However, it is important to consider whether power alone is necessary for corruption, or if other social aspects also contribute to corruption. In conclusion, Smouldering Charcoal underscores the potential of African literature not only as a reflection of societal issues but also as a catalyst for meaningful social change. By engaging with literary works that address corruption, scholars, policymakers, and citizens alike can develop a more nuanced understanding of power dynamics and work towards creating more just and transparent societies.

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Author Details

Adama Bah, Research Scholar, Department of English Literature, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India, **Email ID**: bahabou1941@gmail.com

Moussa Zié Koné, Ph. D Scholar, University of Bamako, Mali, **Email ID**: moussaziekone8@gmail.com