



Representation of Deviant Behaviour as a Decaying Social Malaise in Chimamanda N. Adichie's *Cell One*

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Article Info

Received: 28 Oct 2021,

Received in revised form: 25 Nov 2021,

Accepted: 08 Dec 2021,

Available online: 14 Dec 2021

Keywords— *Collective inaction, deviant behaviour, guilty silence, parental inaction, social malaise.*

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine how Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, through her anonymous homo-diegetic female character, represents deviant behaviour as a decaying social malaise alongside other social vices like social injustice, Human Rights abuse, bribery and corruption in her short story entitled Cell One culled from The Thing Around Your Neck (2009). Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth, SFL) (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Webster, 2009; Fontaine, 2013; Bowcher, Fontaine & Schoenthal, 2019) for theoretical underpinnings, this study specifically studies how deviant behaviour is formed, sustained and endured in the social world of the story. To reach this goal, five extracts are purposively selected from the story and analysed in consonance with the theoretical requirements of SFL. The available literature on the study of deviant behaviour in children and adolescents indicates that there are three major causes of this social problem, namely: poor family backgrounds, effects of mass media and societal pressure/influence (Nicholas & Kennedy, 2018). However, this article cogently argues that these three causes are the (in-)direct effects of the disarticulation of traditional African social structures (Allagbé, Alou & Ouarodima, 2020). The findings reveal that deviant behaviour is formed and developed in families with deviant moral values or/and standards, and is sustained by parental inaction, self-deception, lenient or condoning parenting style, lack of home education, lack of parental restriction, etc. In addition, the findings exude that deviant behaviour like other social vices like social injustice, Human Rights abuse, bribery and corruption is sustained in society by collective inaction or 'guilty silence'.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to examine how Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, through her anonymous homo-diegetic female character, represents deviant behaviour as a decaying social malaise alongside other social vices like social injustice, Human Rights abuse, bribery and corruption in her short story entitled *Cell One* drawn from *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009). It specifically analyses how deviant behaviour is formed, sustained and endured in the social world of the story. Prior research on deviant behaviour has identified three main causes of children's and adolescents' deviant behaviour, namely: poor family

backgrounds, effects of mass media and societal pressure/influence (Nicholas & Kennedy, 2018). However, this article cogently argues that these three causes are the (in-)direct effects of the disarticulation of traditional African social structures (Allagbé, Alou & Ouarodima, 2020). Needless to say, the disarticulation of traditional African social structures has brought about a total disconnection between the family and society, on the one hand, and between the individual and his/her culture, on the other. Today, it is commonplace in contemporary African societies to find a great number of nuclear families

completely cut off from their society or/and a great number of individuals completely deracinated from their culture.

In fact, deviant behaviour is considered as a major characteristic of contemporary society (Vladimirovna, Igorevna, Nikolaevna, Nikolaevna, Gennad'evich, & Nikolaevna, 2016; Salakhova, Bulgakov, Sokolovskaya, Khammatova & Mikhaylovsky, 2016). It is also perceived as a social and psychological phenomenon, a social problem/malaise or a social pathology which cannot be fully apprehended from one single approach or perspective (Salakhova et al., 2016; Vist, 2016; Nicholas & Kennedy, 2018). For this reason, it has received the attention of researchers from disciplines like education, sociology and psychology. In other words, it has been studied from pedagogical, sociological and psychological perspectives. This article seeks to examine it from a linguistic perspective. This is the gap that this study sets out to fill in. To provide a full insight into the definition of the term 'deviant behaviour', the available literature on it is revisited. After this, the theoretical framework this study draws on is outlined before the linguistic analysis of the representation of deviant behaviour and other social vices in the story is properly displayed.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Current research on the formation, development and manifestation of deviant behaviour in children and adolescents has been carried out in education, sociology and psychology (Chikwature, Oyedele & Ganyani, 2016; Vladimirovna et al., 2016; Hanmoğlu, 2018; Asiyai, 2019; Salakhova et al., 2016; Vist, 2016; Nicholas & Kennedy, 2018; etc.). Asiyai (2019, p. 172) uses the term 'deviant behaviour' or 'deviance' simply to denote "Any conduct or act that violates the laws or acceptable standards of a society or group [...]." Suleiman (2011) (quoted in Asiyai, 2019, p. 172) notes three types of deviant behaviour: 1. behaviours that impede an individual's effective functioning in the society, 2. behaviours that hinder an individual from meeting his/her personal needs and 3. behaviours that interfere negatively with the wellbeing of other members of the society. Chikwature, Oyedele & Ganyani (2016) concur with the foregoing and further aver that deviant behaviour constitutes a discipline-related problem or means violence simply with many faces. It includes gang activity, locker thefts, bullying and intimidation, gun use and assault, just about anything that produces a victim (p. 35). To this list, one can add impoliteness, disobedience, sleeping outside home, insubordination, drug abuse, smoking, drinking, extortion, rape, truancy, murder, suicide, etc.

Vladimirovna et al. (2016, p. 295) define deviant behaviour as "a system of actions, which [is] contrary to public legal and moral norms." These researchers also observe that the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into the educational process and the computerisation of information processes have enhanced deviant behaviour today. Further, they suggest that children's and adolescents' access to the Internet be controlled by educators (parents and teachers included) to prevent their access to illegal and inappropriate contents like pornography, hate propaganda, drugs, terrorism, offences, crime, hooliganism, criminal actions, etc. For Hanmoğlu (2018), deviant behaviour can simply be described as behaviour that is different from the norm. He also holds that "Deviant behavio[u]r is defined by unorthodox traits that do not conform to officially established, generally accepted social norms." (p. 133). Further, he submits that:

"Social norms", can be interpreted as the limits or measures of conduct permissible within a society that ensure a society functions as it should, and, most importantly, social norms help to preserve societies (Aitchison, 2012). According to Lapinski and Rimal (2005), human behavio[u]r may deviate either positively or negatively from socially acceptable norms. Positive deviance occurs when one's conduct does not harm anyone and appears as non-conformity. Negative deviance disorders established social systems and usually results in violence and crime. Positive deviance relates to creativity that brings positive changes to a society, whereas negative deviance is destructive and does not bring anything positive to a society whatsoever (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). (ibid.).

Nicholas & Kennedy (2018) consider deviant behaviour as a social deviance. For these scholars (2018, p. 40), "Social deviance means those behaviours or characteristics that violate significant social norms and

expectations [which] are abhorred by a large number of people.” Further, they highlight three types of deviant behaviour: lying, bullying and fighting. According to Salakhova et al. (2016), deviant behaviour constitutes a social and psychological phenomenon in that it creates a set of problems for contemporary society. They also posit that it is impossible to analyse a complex problem like deviant behaviour by separating the individual from his/her social milieu. The point made here is that deviant behaviour is the result of the influence of a deviant social milieu and the distribution of its moral values or/and standards on an individual. In this perspective, Vist (2016) contends that the most dangerous types of deviant behaviour in children and adolescents are criminal offences. She also adds that “The problem of the prevention of social deviance is of paramount importance in many countries. Its solution goes to the state level, making the prevention and correction of deviant behavior among adolescents and children the most important social and educational problem of today.” (p. 8537).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As stated earlier on, this paper draws its theoretical underpinnings from Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth, SFL) (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Webster, 2009; Fontaine, 2013; Bowcher, Fontaine & Schoenthal, 2019). SFL is a social semiotic theory; a theory which views and studies “language from the perspective of systems of meaning— how these systems are shaped, and, at the same time, how they play a role in shaping human social systems and how they relate to other systems of meanings within society.” (Bowcher, Fontaine & Schoenthal, 2019, p. 1). Simply put, SFL considers language as “[...] a systemic resource for making and exchanging meaning.” (Webster in Halliday & Webster, 2009, p. 5). Systemic scholars generally posit that there are three types of meaning that language encodes simultaneously (Eggins, 2004; Fontaine, 2013), viz.: ideational (including experiential and logical), interpersonal and textual.

This study seeks to examine experiential and textual meanings in *Cell One*. Experiential meaning is generally perceived as the ‘construing experience’ function. It is realised as the structural configuration of process(es), participant(s) and circumstance(s) (Webster in Halliday and Webster, 2009, p. 6). With the theoretical construct of experiential meaning, systemicists contend that the ideology underlying a text/discourse can be unravelled. Textual meaning, on the other hand, is considered as the ‘enabling’ function. It is realised as the structural

configuration of Theme and Rheme (Eggins, 2004; Fontaine, 2013). Systemic linguists argue that the theoretical construct of textual meaning can help one uncover how a text/discourse is formed, made or textualised. It is important to mention here that the subsequent analysis does not cover the whole story. It only concerns five purposively selected extracts which are deemed to encode the gist of the story. The description of the linguistic features in the selected extracts is carried out based on the key below.

Key:

Transitivity: P=Process (in bold), Pm=material, Pme=mental, Pb=behavioural, Pv=verbal, Pe=existential, Pi=intensive, Pcc=circumstantial, Pp=possessive, Pc=causative. A=Actor, G=Goal, B=Beneficiary, R=Range S=Senser, Ph=Phenomenon. Sy=Sayer, Rv=Receiver, Vb=Verbiage. Be=Behaver, Bh=Behaviour. X=Existent. T=Token, V=Value, Cr=Carrier, At=Attribute. Pr=Possessor, Pd=Possessed. C=Circumstance, Cl=location, Cx=extent, Cm=manner, Cc=cause, Ca=accompagnement, Ct=matter, Co=role. Ag=Agent.

Theme: Marked/Thematized/Foregrounded circumstance is underlined. Conjunctive Theme is italicized. Dependent clause as Theme: whole clause in bold. Mn = Minor clause.

IV. REPRESENTATION OF DEVIANT SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AS A DECAYING SOCIAL MALAISE IN THE STORY

Before displaying how the language of *Cell One* represents deviant behaviour as a decaying social malaise, it is necessary to say a few words about its plot and main characters. *Cell One* is one of the twelve short stories in *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009) written by the Nigerian writer called Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The story actually revolves around the life of an Igbo family of four members (professor father, mother, Nnamabia and the narrator, an anonymous homo-diegetic female character) based on *Nsukka* campus. In the story, the anonymous homo-diegetic female character narrates the repeated experiences of deviant behaviour in her family and in her community. She begins her narration with two cases of robbery in their house. First, a neighbour called Osita (Professor Ebube’s son) breaks into their house and robs their TV, their VCR and the *Purple Rain* and *Thriller* which her father has brought back from America. Second, her brother, Nnamabia, fakes a break-in and steals their mother’s gold jewel, pawns it to Hausa traders in Enugu and squanders all the money on drinks. Not only does this narrator represent these cases of robbery, but she also

explores them to reveal and foreground the reasons of/for their occurrence or/and re-occurrence in her community. The first reason she foregrounds is parental inaction or 'self-deception'. This is shown in the extract below.

Extract 1 (Adichie, 2009, pp. 6-7)

1. The thieving boys (T) were (Pi) the popular ones (V).
2. They (A) drove (Pm) their parents' cars (G) in the evening (Cl), 3. their seats (G) [were] pushed back (Pm)
4. *and* their arms (G) [were] stretched out (Pm) [to reach (Pm) the steering wheel (G)] (Cc). 5. Osita, [the neighbour who (A) had stolen (Pm) our TV (G) only weeks (Cl) before the Nnamabia incident (Cl)] (Cr), was (Pi) lithe and handsome (At) in a brooding sort of way (Cl) 6. *and* walked (Pm) with the grace of a cat (Cm). 7. His shirts (G) were always sharply ironed (Pm); 8. I (Be) used to look (Pb) across the hedge (Cl) 9. *and* see (Pme) him (Ph) 10. *and* close (Pm) my eyes (G) 11. *and* imagine (Pme) 12. *that* he (A) was walking (Pm) toward me (Cl), 13. coming (Pm) 14. to claim (Pv) me (Rv) as his (Co). 15. He (S) never noticed (Pme) me (Ph). 16. **When he (A) stole (Pm) from us (Cl)**, 17. my parents (A) did not go over (Pm) to Professor Ebube's house (Cl) 18. to ask (Pv) him (Rv) 19. to ask (Pv) his son (Rv) 20. to bring back (Pm) our things (G). 21. They (Sy) said (Pv) publicly (Cm) 22. *that* it (T) was (Pi) ruffraff (V) from town (Cl). 23. *But* they (S) knew (Pme) 24. it (T) was (Pi) Osita (V).

As it clearly appears in the analysis above, Extract 1 comprises a total number of twenty-four clauses. One striking feature in the extract is that clauses 4 and 5 contain an embedded clause each. Hence, there is a total figure of twenty six processes in the text distributed as follows: 13 (i.e., 50%) material processes (2; 3; 4i; 4ii; 5; 6; 7; 10; 12; 13; 16; 17 and 20); 5 (i.e., 19.23%) mental processes (9; 11; 15; 23 and 24); 4 (i.e., 15.38%) verbal processes; 3 (11.53%) relational processes (1; 5 and 22) and 1 (i.e., 3.84%) behavioural process (8). Another striking feature in Extract 1 is that three of its constituent clauses (3; 4 and 7) are passivised. Again, all the twenty four clauses include only twelve circumstances: 8 (i.e., 66.66%) circumstances of location (2; 5i; 5ii; 5iii; 8; 12; 17 and 22); 2 (i.e., 16.66%) circumstances of manner (6 and 21); 1 (8.33%) circumstance of cause (4) and 1 (8.33%) circumstance of role (13). In addition, the passage counts nine conjunctive themes: *and* (4; 6; 9; 10 and 11); *that* (12 and 22); *when* (16) and *but* (23). While 8 (4; 6; 9; 10; 11; 12; 22 and 23) of these conjunctive themes are used to encode a paratactic relation in the passage, the remainder (16) is employed to realise a hypotactic relation therein.

As the analysis clearly indicates, clauses (1-6) prove that the narrator's parents and the community

entirely know the thieving boys (including the particular one who has robbed their house recently) and where they live; these boys are actually from wealthy homes and their parents are highly instructed people. Again, clauses (5-14) exude that Osita, one of the thieving boys is neatly good-looking and highly charming; the narrator truly falls for his charm but he does not notice her at all (clause 15). This suggests that either Osita comes from a higher social class or the narrator is not his taste. Clause (16), a dependent clause placed in Thematic position, and other subsequent clauses (17-24) further prove that the narrator's parents know the thief but choose not to act. That the narrator's parents and the entire community know those who recurrently break into their houses and prefer not to act or confront them can be very surprising. However, there may be a reason for this. They may behave this way perhaps because they want to avoid the social risk of openly confronting their neighbours. In fact, to ensure a good neighbouring and community peace, some people prefer, at their own expense, not to ever confront their neighbours openly, hence in public, such people will avoid accusing or even criticising their neighbours directly (see clauses 16-24). This may be a good thing somehow but it seems to condone robbery, which is considered as a deviant behaviour in this context. In fact, a deviant behaviour like robbery is likely to spread fast like a bush fire across the community and with time get completely entrenched therein if care is not taken.

Another reason sustaining robbery which the narrator suggests in the text above is a lack of home education. The boys mentioned in the passage do lack home education even though they come from wealthy homes and their parents are highly instructed people. Home education should be distinguished from instruction here. Home education, as the name implies, is the education received at/from home, but school provides children with instruction. Like their parents, the thieving boys (Osita and Nnamabia included) are instructed as they all go to school (secondary school or university) (Adichie, 2009, p. 5). One other striking feature in the text (or the story entirely) is the assumption that robbery (or deviant behaviour in general) is male gender-specific. However, this assumption is quickly overruled by a scene on page 14, a scene in which the narrator openly defies her parents because she does not want them to visit her brother in prison. To prevent her parents from going to visit her brother in prison, she throws a stone at the windshield of her father's Volvo and it cracks. She then runs upstairs and locks herself up in her room to protect herself from her mother's fury (more details will be subsequently provided on Nnamabia's arrest and incarceration).

Further, the narrator suggestively attributes the recurrence of robbery in her community to a lack of parental restriction in the homes from which the thieving boys hail. This is to say, these male children king children; they are allowed to do whatever they like or want. For instance, they are allowed to drive their parents' cars, which is not the case with girls. This plainly denotes discrimination in the ways children (male and female) are educated in most contemporary African societies. Moreover, the narrator discursively traces the origin of the male children's deviant behaviour to the family. In this sense, she redirects the reader's attention to Nnamabia, her brother, describing him, how he (mis-)behaves and especially how her parents treat him. She discursively implies, in her depiction, that the fundamental reason for the formation and development of deviant behaviour in her brother, Nnamabia, is the lenient or condoning parenting style their parents have adopted. In the story, the reader outrageously notices that Nnamabia is always excused for almost all his faults. For instance, when he is suspected of robbing his mother's gold jewel, he gets angry and leaves home to return two weeks after (Adichie, 2009, p. 4), no one really queries him about his whereabouts. In addition, when he finally avows his crime, no parental correction or punishment is meted out to him. This reality is depicted in Extract 2.

Extract 2 (Adichie, 2009, pp. 4-5)

1. "How much (G) did they [the Hausa traders in Enugu] (A) give (Pm) you (B) for my gold (Cc)?" 2. my mother (Sy) asked (Pv) him (Rv). 3. **And when he (Sy) told (Pv) her (Rv)**, 4. she (A) placed (Pm) both hands (G) on her head (Cl) 5. *and* cried (Pv), "*Oh! Oh! Chi m egbuo! m!*" 6. My God (A) has killed (Pm) me (G)!" 7. It (Cr) was (Pi) 8. *as if* she (S) felt (Pme) 9. *that* the least [he (A) could have done (Pm)] (A) was (Pi) 10. get (Pm) a good price (G). 11. I (S) wanted (Pme) 12. to slap (Pm) her (G). 13. My father (Sy) asked (Pv) 14. Nnamabia (A) to write (Pm) a report (G): 15. how (Cm) he (A) had sold (Pm) the jewelry (G), 16. what (B) he (A) had spent (Pm) the money on (G), 17. with whom (Ca) he (A) had spent (Pm) it (G). 18. I (S) didn't think (Pme) 19. Nnamabia (Sy) would tell (Pv) the truth (Vb), 20. *and* I (S) don't think (Pme) 21. my father (S) thought (Pme) 22. he (Sy) would (Pv), either, 23. *but* he (S) liked (Pme) reports (Ph), 24. my professor father, he (S) liked (Pme) things (Ph) 25. [which (G) were] written down (Pm) 26. *and* [which (G) were] nicely documented (Pm). 27. *Besides*, Nnamabia (T) was (Pi) seventeen (V), with a carefully tended beard (Cm). 28. He (Cr) was (Pi) in that space between secondary school and university (Cl) 29. *and* was (Pi) too old (At) for caning (Cc). 30. What else (G) could my father (A) have done (Pm)? 31. **After Nnamabia (A) wrote (Pm) the report (G)**, 32. my father

(A) filed (Pm) it (G) in the steel drawer (Cl) in his study (Cl) 33. where (Cl) he (A) kept (Pm) our papers (G).

As the analysis above shows, Extract 2 comprises a total number of thirty-three clauses. One of these clauses is embedded (9ii) whereas two of them (25 and 26) are passivised. The 33 clauses comprise, *so to speak*, 34 processes: 16 (i.e., 47.05%) material processes (1; 4; 6; 9ii; 10; 12; 14; 15; 16; 17; 25; 26; 30; 31; 32 and 33); 7 (i.e., 20.58%) mental processes (8; 11; 18; 20; 21; 23 and 24); 6 (i.e., 17.64%) verbal processes (2; 3; 5; 13; 19 and 22) and 5 (i.e., 14.70%) relational processes (7; 9i; 27; 28 and 29). One major striking feature in this extract is that it is highly poor in circumstances. It only contains 09 circumstances: 4 (i.e., 44.44%) circumstances of location (4; 28; 32 and 33); 2 (i.e., 22.22%) circumstances of manner (15 and 27); 2 (i.e., 22.22%) circumstances of cause (1 and 29) and 1 (i.e., 11.11%) circumstance of accompaniment (17). Again, this extract is marked by a paucity of conjunctive themes. It includes all in all 10 conjunctive themes: *And when* (3); *and* (5; 20; 26 and 29); *as if* (8); *that* (9); *but* (23); *Besides* (27) and *After* (31). While the narrator uses 7 (5; 9; 20; 23; 26; 27 and 29) of these conjunctive themes to establish a paratactic relation in the text, she employs the remaining 3 (3; 8 and 31) to build a hypotactic relation in it.

The analysis above clearly exudes how the narrator describes her parents' attitudes toward their son's deviant behaviour. It also reveals her reaction toward her parents. For instance, from clauses (1-6), she portrays her mother, using such verbs as 'asked', 'placed', 'cried' and 'killed'. The verbs 'asked' and 'cried' are verbs of saying while 'placed' and 'killed' are action verbs. But the paradox here is that none of the identified material clauses really involves the mother and her deviant son, encoding a scene wherein the mother is acting on the son. This gives one the impression that she is avoiding to correct or punish him for his misdemeanour. From the narrator's point of view, this is uncalled for and very annoying, indeed! She voices out her anger in clauses (7-10). To make her anger obvious even more, she says: "11. I (S) wanted (Pme) 12. to slap (Pm) her (G)." because she cannot understand why her mother, an African mother for that matter, is behaving so unreasonably before a child's deviant behaviour which deserves an immediate parental correction or punishment. Likewise, she describes her father's reaction from clauses (13-26), employing verbs like 'asked', 'thought', 'liked', etc., to project his unexpected inaction or leniency. In these clauses too, she copiously mocks her father's lenient or condoning parenting style. The only action verbs the narrator truly associates with her father are 'could have done' in (30) and 'filed' in (32). But none of them really projects any fatherly correction one would naturally expect

in such a context. In fact, the narrator's mockery of her father is mixed with pity. She profoundly pities the old man who is also a victim of his "Western education philosophy" which he fails to domesticate, tropicalise and adapt to satisfy the educational needs of his son. Her rhetorical question in clause (30) perfectly confirms this apprehension.

The narrator's father later regrets his inaction or leniency or lenient or condoning parenting style. He actually makes this known to his family when they return from Enugu police station wherein Nnamabia is imprisoned for staying out late (drinking with his friends in a bar), knowing quite well that there is a curfew. The curfew is, as a matter of fact, decreed after some armed cult members (all boys) have killed three students on campus. The carceral life seems to have shaken the incorrigible Nnamabia (see Adichie, 2009, pp. 10-11). And that's why his father profoundly regrets for not sending him to prison when he has stolen his mother's gold jewel in the first place. He puts this better in these terms: "This is what I should have done when he broke into the house. I should have had him locked up in a cell." (p. 11). It is noteworthy to state that, at the police station, Nnamabia's mother has to bribe the policemen before they allow him to come out of his cell: "My mother (A) bribed (Pm) the two policemen (G) at the desk (Cl) with money and with *jollof* rice and meat, all tied up in a black waterproof bag (Cm), and they (A) allowed (Pm) Nnamabia (G) to come (Pm) out of his cell (Cl) and sit (Pm) on a bench (Cl) with us (Cm) under an umbrella tree (Cl)." (p. 10). The material process 'bribed' and the circumstance of manner 'with money and with *jollof* rice and meat, all tied up in a black waterproof bag' in the foregoing textual snippet plainly encode an act of bribing (bribery) or corruption, another deviant behaviour or social malaise in contemporary Nigeria. It is also noteworthy to recall that it is Nnamabia's mother who has made a criminal of him. In fact, she is the one who has created a deviant and decaying social environment for the formation and development of deviant behaviour in her child. By means of flashback, the narrator describes this heart-rending situation better in Extract 3.

Extract 3 (Adichie, 2009, pp. 6-7)

1. **When, at eleven (Cl), Nnamabia (A) broke (Pm) the window of his classroom (G) with a stone (Cm)**, 2. my mother (A) gave (Pm) him (B) the money (G) 3. to replace (Pm) it (G) 4. **and** did not tell (Pv) my father (Rv). 5. **When he (A) lost (Pm) some library books (G) in class two (Cl)**, 6. she (Sy) told (Pv) his form-mistress (Rv) 7. [*that* our houseboy (A) had stolen (Pm) them (G).] (Vb) 8. **When, in class three (Cl), he (A) left (Pm) early (Cl) every day (Cl) 9. to attend (Pm) catechism (G) 10. and**

it (T) turned out (Pi) 11. he (A) never (Cl) once (Cl) went (Pm) 12. and so could not receive (Pm) Holy Communion (G), 13. she (Sy) told (Pv) the other parents (Rv) 14. [*that* he (Pr) had (Pi) malaria (Pd) on the examination day (Cl)] (Vb). 15. **When he (A) took (Pm) the key of my father's car (G) 16. and pressed (Pm) it (G) into a piece of soap (Cl) 17. that my father (A) found (Pm) 18. before Nnamabia (A) could take (Pm) it (G) to the locksmith (Cl)**, 19. she (Sy) made (Pv) vague sounds (Vb) 20. [*about* how he (A) was just experimenting (Pm)] (Ct) 21. **and** it (A) didn't mean (Pm) a thing (G). 22. **When he (A) stole (Pm) the exam questions (G) from the study (Cl) 23. and sold (Pm) them (G) to my father's students (Cl)**, 24. she (Sy) shouted at (Pv) him (Rv) 25. **but then** told (Pv) my father (Rv) 26. [Nnamabia (T) was (Pi) sixteen (V) after all, 27. **and** really should be given (Pm) more pocket money (G)] (Vb).

Extract 3 counts 27 ranking clauses. One striking feature in this passage is that it contains five dependent clauses, all placed in Thematic position (1; 5; 8-12; 15-18 and 22-23). By placing these dependent clauses in Thematic position, the narrator wants to make the text "[...] appear more spoken [than written], as the frequent use of dependent clauses in Thematic position contributes to neutrali[s]ing the distinction between spoken and written language." (Eggsins, 2004, p. 339). Again, the text contains 27 processes distributed as follows: 18 (i.e., 66.66%) material processes (1; 2; 3; 5; 7; 8; 9; 11; 12; 15; 16; 17; 18; 20; 21; 22; 23 and 27); 6 (i.e., 22.22%) verbal processes (4; 6; 13; 19; 24 and 25) and 3 (i.e., 11.11%) relational processes (10; 14 and 26). In addition, extract 3 includes 14 circumstances: 12 (i.e., 85.71%) circumstances of location (1i; 5; 8i; 8ii; 8iii; 11i; 11ii; 14; 16; 18; 22 and 23); 1 (i.e., 7.14%) circumstance of manner (1ii) and 1 (i.e., 7.14%) circumstance of extent (20). Another striking feature in this text is that two of the circumstances are foregrounded: *at eleven* in (1) and *in class three* in (8). As Eggsins (2004, p. 339) observes, the use of foregrounded Themes in a text shows "[...] one reali[s]ation of a careful written mode, in which the writer [or the speaker/the narrator] has planned the rhetorical development of the text to allow the foregrounding of Circumstantial information". One other striking feature in this text is that it comprises 18 conjunctive themes: *When* (1; 5; 8; 15 and 22); *and* (4; 10; 16; 21; 23 and 27); *that* (7; 14 and 17); *and so* (12); *before* (18); *about* (20) and *but then* (25). The narrator uses 12 conjunctive themes (4; 7; 10; 12; 14; 16; 17; 20; 21; 23; 25 and 27) to build a paratactic relation in the passage but she employs 6 conjunctive themes (1; 5; 8; 15; 18 and 22) to establish a hypotactic relation therein.

As the study above plainly shows, Nnamabia, like any growing up child of his age, commits reprehensible

acts that require instant parental correction or punishment. Processes like ‘broke’ in (1), ‘lost’ in (5), for instance, indicate this. But his mother, in her attempts to protect him, covers all his wrongs, which is not a good thing. For example, in clause (1), she gives her son the money to replace the window of his class he has broken without telling his father. In clauses (5-7), to protect her son still, she has to lie to the form-mistress that their houseboy has stolen the library’s books that her son has borrowed. Again, in clauses (8-14), she has to tell a lie to other parents that her son has fallen sick on the examination day in order to cover his truancy from catechism class, save him from public mockery or save his public image simply. Further, in clauses (15-21), she has to support her son against his father, finding an excuse to justify his misconduct. In the same vein, in clauses (22-27), she supports her son against his father, proving to the latter that Nnamabia is just sixteen years old and needs more pocket money. Her use of ‘after all’ in (26) after the Value ‘sixteen’ exudes clearly that she can go to any length to protect her son. But her protection strategy is at odds with the established social ‘norm’. In fact, she is arguably breeding a child who will grow up to be in a constant conflict with his society, its set norms, conventions, value systems, etc., an individual with a social pathology simply. That Nnamabia finally finds himself in prison in Enugu confirms the foregoing argument. In prison, Nnamabia learns to behave more or less well. There he begins to see life differently. The first thing that really strikes him when he first lands in prison is its social organisation. He recounts this new experience to his parents in Extract 4 when they come to visit him.

Extract 4 (Adichie, 2009, pp. 10-11)

“1. *If we (A) ran (pm) Nigeria (G) like this cell (Cm),*”
 2. he (Sy) said (Pv), 3. “we (Pr) would have (Pi) no problems (Pd) in this country (Cl). 4. Things (Cr) are (Pi) so organi[s]ed (At). 5. Our cell (Pr) has (Pi) a chief (Pd) 6. [who (Rv) is] called (Pv) General Abacha (Vb) 7. *and* he (Pr) has (Pi) a second in command (Pd). 8. *Once you (A) come in (Pm),* 9. you (A) have to give (Pm) them (B) some money (G). 10. *If you (A) don’t (Pm),* 11. you (T) ’re (Pi) in trouble (Cl).”

As the analysis unveils, there are 11 ranking clauses in Extract 4. The first striking feature in the text is that three of its constituent clauses (1; 8 and 10) are placed in Thematic position. The extract also counts 11 processes: 5 (i.e., 45.45%) relational processes (3; 4; 5; 7 and 11); 4 (i.e., 36.36%) material processes (1; 8; 9 and 10) and 2 (i.e., 18.18%) verbal processes (2 and 6). Further, this extract includes 3 circumstances: 2 (i.e., 66.66%) circumstances of location (3 and 11) and 1 (i.e., 33.33%)

circumstance of manner (1). It also contains 4 conjunctive themes: *If* (1 and 10); *and* (7) and *Once* (8). Interestingly, three of these conjunctive themes (1; 8 and 10) encode a hypotactic relation in the text. The remainder (7) is used to realise a paratactic relation in it.

The aforementioned analysis clearly shows that relational processes are the most dominant process type in Extract 4. Nnamabia actually draws on relational processes to describe and ascribe Values/Attributes to his new experience in prison. For instance, the Attribute ‘so organi[s]ed’ he uses in clause (4) strikes out the difference between the social structure wherein he has hailed and that of the prison. Again, his use of the Possessed ‘a chief’ in clause (5) further indicates that the family setting in which he is socialised lacks a true leader; a true authority. In fact, it is in the prison that Nnamabia is exposed to, for the first time, and learns the true meaning of the concept ‘authority’. This may sound strange but it is the truth. The relational process ‘has’ in (7) associated with the Possessed ‘a chief’ replaced by the pronoun ‘he’ in (7) further suggests that a true authority really commands respect. The second thing that really affects Nnamabia in his carceral milieu is social injustice and Human Rights abuse. An old and ill man is unjustly locked up in the same cell with Nnamabia for a crime he has not committed. It is his son who is wanted for armed robbery, and when the police cannot find him they decide to lock him up instead (Adichie, 2009, p. 15). Nnamabia thinks this is not fair. When the police violate the old man’s rights, Nnamabia unbelievably stands up to defend him, not minding what this might cost him. Of course, as expected, he is subsequently tortured and thrown into Cell One (a very terrifying place where convicts are tortured and even killed) and from there taken to another unnamed site. He recounts this sad experience to his parents in Extract 5 after his release.

Extract 5 (Adichie, 2009, p. 20)

“1. Yesterday (Cl) the policemen (Sy) asked (Pv) the old man (Rv) 2. *if* he (S) wanted (Pme) a free bucket of water (Ph). 3. He (Sy) said (Pv) yes (Vb). 4. *So* they (Sy) told (Pv) him (Rv) 5. to take (Pm) his clothes (G) off 6. *and* parade (Pm) the corridor (G). 7. My cell mates (Be) were laughing (Pb). 8. *But* some of them (Sy) said (Pv) [9. It (Cr) was (Pi) wrong (At) 10. to treat (Pm) an old man (G) like that (Cm).]” (Vb) 11. Nnamabia (A) paused (Pm), 12. his eyes (Cr) [were (Pi)] distant (At). “13. I (Sy) shouted at (Pv) the policeman (Rv). 14. I (Sy) said (Pv) [15. the old man (Cr) was (Pi) innocent (At) 16. *and* [he (Cr) was (Pi)] ill (At) 17. *and if* they (A) kept (Pm) him (G) here (Cl) 18. they (A) would never (Cl) find (Pm) his son (G) 19. *because* he (S) did not even know (Pme) 20. where (Cl) his

son (T) was (Pi).] (Vb) 21. They (Sy) said (Pv) [22. I (Sy) should shut up (Pv) immediately (Cm) 23. *or* they (A) would take (Pm) me (G) to Cell One (Cl).] (Vb) 24. I (S) didn't care (Pme). 25. I (Sy) didn't shut up (Pv). 26. *So* they (A) pulled (Pm) me (G) 27. *and* beat (Pm) me (G) 28. *and* took (Pm) me (G) to Cell One (Cl).”

Extract 5 comprises 28 clauses. All the clauses contain a process each. The 28 processes are distributed as follows: 10 (i.e., 35.71%) material processes (5; 6; 10; 11; 17; 18; 23; 26; 27 and 28) 9 (i.e., 32.14%) verbal processes (1; 3; 4; 8; 13; 14; 21; 22 and 25); 5 (i.e., 17.85%) relational processes; 3 (i.e., 10.71%) mental processes (2; 19 and 24) and 1 (i.e., 3.57%) behavioural process (7). One major striking feature in Extract 5 is that some of the clauses therein project others (see 8; 9-10; where 8 projects 9-10, for instance). Again, this extract includes 8 circumstances: 6 (i.e., 75%) circumstances of location (1; 17; 18; 20; 23 and 28) and 2 (i.e., 25%) circumstances of manner (10 and 22). Another striking feature in the text is that one of the circumstances is foregrounded. The foregrounded circumstance is *Yesterday* in clause (1). In addition, the text counts 11 conjunctive themes: *if* (2); *So* (4 and 26); *and* (6; 16; 27 and 28); *But* (8); *and if* (17); *because* (19) and *or* (23). While 8 (4; 6; 8; 16; 23; 26; 27 and 28) of these conjunctive themes are employed to encode a paratactic relation in the passage, the remaining 3 (2; 17 and 19) are used to realise a hypotactic relation therein.

As the study above overtly exudes, Nnamabia describes his experience in his cell, how he reacts to the humiliation and torture of the old man by the police. To represent this, he employs processes like ‘asked’ in (1); ‘told’ in (4); ‘to take ...off’ in (5) and ‘parade’ in (6). The prisoners are actually divided before this scene of blatant Human Rights abuse; some of them mock the old man (‘were laughing’ in clause [8]) while others think it is wrong (‘wrong’ in clause [9]). Nnamabia is one of those who think it is wrong to maltreat the old man. He then stands up for the old man (see clauses 13-20). He is really warned by the police to shut up and mind his own business, but he refuses to obey (see clauses 21-28). Here, it is obvious that, in his attempts to defend the old man whose dignity and rights are being baffled, Nnamabia openly defies the police at the expense of his own life. Note that his behaviour deviates from the expected ‘norm’ in a carceral milieu but it exudes a rebirth; an indicator of awareness and a sense of responsibility in him. In challenging the expected ‘norm’ in prison, Nnamabia essentially challenges the entire police institution to effect a change. Therefore, his deviant behaviour in this context can be viewed as a positive deviant behaviour or as a positive social deviance.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined how Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, through her anonymous homo-diegetic female character, represents deviant behaviour as a decaying social malaise alongside other social vices like social injustice, Human Rights abuse, bribery and corruption in her short story entitled *Cell One* drawn from *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009). It has drawn its theoretical underpinnings (experiential and textual meanings) from SFL to specifically analyse how deviant behaviour is formed, sustained and endured in the social world of the story. To reach this goal, it has purposively selected five extracts from the story to which it has applied the aforementioned theoretical constructs. The analysis has revealed very important findings.

The analysis has exuded how deviant behaviour is formed, developed and sustained in the social world of the story. The first factor favouring the formation and development of deviant behaviour in children and adolescents is the nature of the family structure. As the study has indicated, the family is the first social milieu wherein children and adolescents socialise. And if this social milieu is deviant and distributes deviant moral values, as is the case with Nnamabia whose mother is ready to go to any length to protect him against physical correction or punishment, then a child bred therein will indubitably form and develop deviant behaviour. The way Nnamabia’s mother behaves in the story under scrutiny points to the attitude of most contemporary deracinated so-called important African parents. When Nnamabia is about to be released from Enugu prison, his mother notices some bruises on his body and immediately puts on her usual over-protecting and over-caring air. This is what the policeman serves her and her husband: “You cannot raise your children well, all of you people who feel important because you work in the university. When your children misbehave, you think they should not be punished.” (Adichie, 2009, p. 20). The clause ‘because you work in the university’ in the preceding quote ideologically suggests ‘because you belong to the aristocratic or upper class’.

All the children with deviant behaviour depicted in the story truly share in common one thing: they all come from wealthy homes wherein there is little or no parental restriction. In other words, their parents have adopted a lenient or condoning parenting style, which is a major characteristic of ‘Western education philosophy’. The foregoing finding actually dispels one of the three causes (poor family backgrounds, effects of mass media and societal pressure/influence [Nicholas & Kennedy, 2018]) of deviant behaviour prior research has revealed; this cause

is poor family backgrounds. However, it is in conformity with the remaining two: effects of mass media and societal pressure/influence. This study has initially argued that the abovementioned three causes of deviant behaviour in children and adolescents are the (in-)direct effects the disarticulation of traditional African social structures. In fact, it has proved this to be true. For instance, it has proved that Nnamabia is completely deracinated from his culture, for he has been raised up in a family (and presumably by parents) completely cut off from the society/culture; its set norms, conventions and value systems.

The second factor which seems to sustain deviant behaviour in the story is community's 'guilty silence' or inaction. It is actually the 'guilty silence' or inaction of the entire community which constitutes the main drive that basically promotes young thieving boys to young adult cult members or/and armed robbers. It is still the same community's 'guilty silence' or inaction that fundamentally encourages the increase of other social vices like social injustice, Human Rights abuse, bribery, corruption, etc. In fact, collective 'guilty silence' has made the abnormal become normal over time in contemporary Nigeria. However, Nnamabia's reaction, when the old man is being maltreated by the police, is a challenge to the abnormal normalised, hence it can be considered as a positive deviant behaviour or a positive social deviance. It can also be viewed as an epitome of the positive effects that his sojourn in prison has had on him by making him perceive how bad social injustice and Human Rights abuse are. In conclusion, this paper suggests that future research explore the effects of deviant behaviour on social relations in the family and society at large as depicted in contemporary African literature, using interpersonal meaning as a theoretical construct.

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