

Moral Corruption in A.J.Cronin's *The Citadel* a Socio-Psychological Method

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Abstract: *The major concern of this paper about Moral Corruption in A.J.CRONIN'S The Citadel is to show how cupidity pushes people to conceive evil reasoning and very tricky evil schemes so as to get money or other favors forgetting the needs of the entire community. Throughout this paper, we intend then to transform the behavior of our contemporaries, among them we mention physicians and politicians. Briefly speaking, our contribution to this dissertation is to inform leaders that if they want to promote good moral values, they have to avoid corruption, misunderstanding of the ruled class, and they have to apply justice. It should be stressed from the beginning that the story turns around a young Doctor that we consider as the main character. His name is Andrew Manson. His story according to Cronin is situated around few years before World War II. He completed his studies in England where corruption is the only way of survival, above all in the medical field. MANSON gets really, shocked face to this bad situation which prevailed in the English medical world. That moral corruption is brought about and made possible by a bad medical organization system in England some few years before the global World War II. He tries to fight against it; but in the end he retraced his step, became himself the victim of this corruption. Our preoccupation is also to prove with Cronin that corruption is a universal matter.*

1. Introduction

Unlimited power is apt to corrupt the minds of those who possess it; and this I know, my Lord: that where laws end, tyranny begins.

.... William Pitt

2. Methodology

Concerning the method and the approach, we shall be using the intrinsic Method in applying a psychological approach for the study of the characters state of mind and behaviors. However, the sociological approach will not be left out for the two approaches work together. One cannot go without the other and vice versa. They are used to analyze a text from the outside point of view.

This study is dealing with the "Intrinsic approach" based on a "Socio-Psychological Method." As stated in the introduction, it is analyzing Cronin's novel The Citadel Exploring character's mind justifies the use of the psychological method on the one hand whereas the relationships among characters in a given and particular situation involves the use sociological method. The two methods are used together in this dissertation. One cannot go without the other and vice versa as claimed, for the purpose by ARCHIE SMITH that: *"There cannot be true sociology apart from psychology and no true psychology apart from sociology and history common life and individual biographies stand in a dialectical relation within an ongoing historical process"*.

MANDE MUTOMBO, comments the assertion above by saying that the sociological, the psychological and biographical approaches are applicable with the intrinsic method and that sociology not only defines but also shapes psychological reality.

To paraphrase Mande's comment, we would like to say that the sociological and the psychological approaches focus on character's behavior, their state of mind and the relationship

among themselves and their interactions with their immediate environment.

In this scope, we are constantly quoting passages from the text, interpreting and paraphrasing them in order to make the statement more explicit; this is a textual criticism to help reach the goal of our study.

However, the fact of applying the intrinsic method to our study does not prevent us from making some references to external sources capable of sustaining our argumentation. The psychological aspects linked to characters can be shown through the interpretation of the narrator's comments which depend upon the dissertation. We dare pretend we will reach the goal by this procedure.

In order to understand the psychological approach, it is worth defining first of all "Psychology". LARYS SKURNIK and FRANK GEORGES in Psychology For Every Man, define "Psychology" as follows: "The scientific study of the behavior of men and other animals" (3)

So understood Psychology, is therefore the study of mind and its activities as reflected in behavior. What then has psychology to do with literature? Before answering this question, it is worth reminding that there exists a relationship between scientific disciplines. For this very reason, psychology and literature are no exception; they are also interlocked.

As an answer to the above asked question, we would like to say that psychology intervenes in literature through the psychological approach to help us see and try to understand the why and the where of the characters' behaviors, the way they are acting and exchanging among themselves.

So to say, the psychology of literature is the study of psychological laws present in a work of literature. Within the framework of our study, we shall try to explain through the psychological approach the why of elder doctors were behaving whenever they found themselves in front of sick

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people's money they longed to get through any possible and inadmissible ways.

3. Conceptual Analysis in 'The Citadel'

For the purpose of conceptual classification and to limit the level of ambiguity, which as a rule is the hallmark of academic research, it is important to examine some of the concepts and terms that are used in this study that is moral, corruption, cupidity, society and moral corruption.

3.1 Moral

This key-concept will be explained first of all as an adjective, and secondly as a noun. Taken as an adjective, Webster defines it as follows: "1. Ethical; good; not transgressing. Pertaining to morality or character" (1).

Taken in the same sense as a plural noun, the same Webster gives the definition that follows: "Behavior in respect to accepted standards of conduct" (2).

Taken in the same sense as a plural noun, Longman Primary Dictionary defines it as "the rules about what is right or wrong that a person believes and uses in his life" (3)

Departing from the above mentioned definitions of the concept "moral", we can notice that the two last ones are fitting well the context in the sense that the thesis treats of the behavior of some elder doctors in their profession once in front of money they were earning especially by lying patients in England some few years before the World War II. This will be fully seen and explained through some passages of the novel.

3.2 Corruption

Being one of the key words the thesis consists of the concept corruption involves to be defined as well. The Grossest Webster Dictionary defines it as follows: "debasement, pollution, decay, bribery, venality, erroneous, alteration." It is the act consisting of gaining something or some favor by giving money or whatever thing to someone. Thus, the practice consists by one giving some advance so that she or he can favor you.

Clearly speaking, corruption is the act consisting of getting something by giving someone money or whatever thing or else by doing him a favor so that he can do wrong to help you. "Moral corruption" is therefore the act consisting of getting something from someone else through some mental ways by adopting an attitude of kindness, indifference or wickedness so as to look like a person wanting to help you whereas he is aiming vividly at getting the desired thing by adopting such attitudes so that you cannot suspect him as being an evil-minded person.

3.3 Cupidity

Normally, the term "cupidity" does not appear in the thesis title but, since it is cupidity that pushed the elder doctors to practise moral corruption, so it is important for us to define it so as to make the dissertation more explicit and complete.

The concept "cupidity" may have several definitions. According to The Grossest Webster Dictionary, this concept is defined as "an inordinate desire for wealth; avarice; covetousness. (4)

With regard to the above definition, we can easily understand that cupidity does not mean only the excessive longing for money, but also the longing for wealth, or any other thing capable of satisfying one's desires not in accordance with established laws. So understood the concept "cupidity" does not allude to the bad searching of money only, but also to the searching of any other thing one longs for, and this by evil schemes.

• Source

Like the concept cupidity, and for the sake of easy understanding of the whole study, the concept "source" is also worth defining even though it does not appear in the thesis title so that the reader will not be troubling further for the understanding of the dissertation when reading it, and will then understand the real source of the moral corruption the study is about.

After these introductory notes of this section, we define now the concept "source" with The Grossest Webster Dictionary, before looking into the subject matter itself: "1. Cause; Origin. 2. Fountainhead; Wellspring; Supplier. 3. Document, Book, etc., with original information" (5)

In consideration of the definitions above, those given to point one and two most fit well the context. As a matter of fact, the source we are dealing with here is the one expressing the origin or the cause of the moral corruption the study is about. That is why through the choice of meaningful details we shall show the real cause of this moral corruption by some of elder doctors.

• Society

Because the study is about moral corruption, and that one knows that this moral corruption is practiced by human beings living in a social sphere that is, society, so the concept "society" is also to be defined and explained for the good understanding of the English Society of that time described by the novel. So to say, the word "society" is implied in the thesis title.

After having briefly introduced this section, time has come now to define the concept "society" with the following dictionaries:

- The Grossest Webster Dictionary, defines the concept "society" as "the members of a civilization; the public" (6)
- Longman Primary Dictionary defines it as being "a group of people who live together with shared ideas about how to live" (7).

By defining the concept "society" we want to speak of the English society through its medical organization some few years before the World War II so as to understand the source of the moral corruption by some English doctors of that time. This will lead us to the good understanding of the spirit of the novel which is moreover the reflection of what had been happening in the twentieth century.

Written in 1939 The Citadel is an archetype of the twentieth century novel considered as the modern period since it deals with one of the major literary themes of modern novels; that is absurdity. The other major themes of this period are alienation, disillusionment, skepticism and hopelessness born from the first World War.

To bring much light on this specific point of modern literary themes, let us consider IONESCO'S following statement: "cut off franchise, religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots man is lost, all his activities become senseless and absurd, useless"(8).

Commenting on IONESCO'S above-mentioned assertion, Mande Mutombo says that this IONESCO's view illuminates us to what regards modern literatures. Indeed, novelists, poets, playwrights have become very sensitive to the absurd situation of man, and have tried to find a form, an absurd form, and subject matters to match the disorders and madness of the world.

As a matter of fact, The Citadel tells an absurd story of a younger doctor freshly appointed in a medical organization where he notices quickly that the elder doctors were working, but for money and their selfish interests by crooking the sick people's money instead of being people's doctors in the true sense of the world. ANDREW MANSON, because it is about him, the protagonist of the story got really shocked face to this situation and decided to fight them mightily. But what came next is pitiful for the protagonist for a while and before he retraced his steps behaved in the same way he was however condemning.

With regard to this aspect of modern literature, The Citadel responds well to a modern period novel, for it deals with an absurd situation, absurdity being one of the chief of the modern writers.

So to say the mission of this piece of writing had been and is steel that of teaching the medical world by calling it out whenever its members misbehave in a way or another. This is the very role of Great Literature.

Moreover, there is a good reason to agree with the following authors when they state: "Fiction is an imaginary invention, usually a tale conceived by the writer although often with a basis in actuality; that is a writer may make a story out of the whole cloth or he may out of some real incident or real set of characters, mold a story" (9)

With regard to the definition above, we can say that in literature we are inspired by what is happening in society; that is from social realities, a writer may conceive a tale, create his own world (microcosm), put in it characters to whom he distributes different roles to fulfill for showing the deeds performed by human beings in the realistic society. DUNCAN HUGH DALZIEL in Language and Literature in Society comments that "Great Literature is the conscious exploration through the imagination of the possibility of human action in society. It is a form of imagery, an object created by the author, which we (reader and author) use during the symbolic phase action" (10)

As quoted above, we simply say that in great literature the writer gets his inspiration from what happens in society so as to teach it for its own good. However, a writer may through his writings leave society the way it is, change it in a good way or make it worse. That is why one should pay much more attention when producing a literary work, for good or bad changes in society may depend upon it. Yet, the great mission of Great Literature should be therefore, that of teaching society in the first instance, and entertaining it secondly.

• **Moral Corruption**

Being the theme of the study, it is logically important to know how the medical system was organized in England before the World War II so as to understand well the origin of the moral corruption by some of the elder doctors in the English hospitals of that time.

4. The Source of Moral Corruption

• **The English Medical Organization System.**

In England, before the World War II, the medical system was not very well organized. At that time, most people who were ill and needed medical treatment had to pay the doctor or the hospital to which they went. But, in some parts of England, such as in Drineffy and Aberlaw, there existed a system called "Panel System" under which a group of people would all pay a small amount of money every week into a Central Pool. Each member of the group would choose a doctor he wishes to go to and the later give him a card. The doctor was then paid from the central pool a fixed amount according to the number of cards or patients he had, and when a member of the panel system was ill his treatment cost nothing. But, because doctors could make money from private people, the Panel Doctors were not always very good and the system did not work very well. Illustratively, some of those doctors were making a lot of money by telling lies to patients. They were giving them colored water and told them that it was pure medicine. Some others were earning their money from out sick people by crooking them in a way or another. Then, came Andrew Manson, the protagonist of The Citadel, after having been taken in the Panel System as a younger doctor, and after having worked for a while in the System, Manson who was a clever, hard-working and honest doctor, found out hypocrisy of some of the doctors within the system by telling for instance a person who is only slightly ill that he must have a more expensive treatment than he really needs. Manson the hero of the story got really shocked face to this situation and decided to fight it in different places in England, more precisely in Drineffy, Aberlaw and in London where he had been tempted for a time by the discovery of how easy it is to make money by charging patients very high prices through telling them lies. But what The Citadel does chiefly is to describe the weaknesses of medical organizations in England before the World War II. After the World War II, however, it was widened by the Government into the National Health Service, and many more people are now able to get a good medical treatment for nothing. Even so, many of the temptations and weaknesses that Manson faced still exist, not only in England, but all over the world.

As a matter of fact, the bad medical organization system as described above had been the source of moral corruption by some of the elder doctors of the Panel System. The following sections of this point give us further information about the following points: The Panel System doctors engagement and working system; the Panel Doctors payment system, the sick people healing system and the elder doctors' cupidity and their private sick people moral corrupting systems.

- The Panel System Doctors' Engagement and working System.

In the Panel System, there were first of all chief elder doctors having each under responsibility a younger vice doctor he had to choose. The latter would have to share his salary with his direct chief and had no right to open an account unless in his chief's name. This is speaking the way the Panel Doctors were enrolled and had been working in this system.

To bring much more light on this aspect, let us quote the following passages of the novel after MANSON had been enrolled by doctor Page for whom he was going to work in the Panel System at the level of Drineffy. It was during a conversation between him and Miss Page, doctor Page's sister:

"We earn all our money from the miners the mining company has three doctors on its lists. Each of whom employs a younger doctor to help him. Doctor Page now employs you, and Doctor Nicolas employs a shameful man called Denny. Each miner chooses which of the three doctors he wishes to see in times of illness, and the company pays part of his wages each week to the doctor whom he has chosen. The doctor gives a fair share of his money to his helper and keeps the rest for himself. All that you must remember is that you are working for Doctor Page. Never forget that!" (1)

The above-mentioned quotation tells us sufficiently how the Panel System was organized, how its elder and younger doctors were paid. As soon as Miss Page stopped talking to and looking at Manson the latter understood the system. He was going to work for doctor Page, he was going to be paid by him, he could not help it at that specific time, but later he will revolt himself against this unfair working system.

Concerning doctor Page we would like to point out that he was a sick man of about sixty, with tired eyes and an expression of great suffering on this face, and that could not be fit for job again. Therefore, he was resting at home and meanwhile it was Manson who was doing all the work. However; the company was still giving him the money to be shared with Manson his helper.

Since doctor Page could no more work, Manson then was taking care of all his patients among which Morgan who gave him one day a cheque for five pounds as a little present for himself not for doctor Page and this after having saved Mrs Morgan's life from a difficult and painful childbirth. After having accepted it Manson took the cheque to the Page's bank and told the manager, Mr. Rees that he wished

to open an account. But what happened next is simply pitiful. Here is their conversation:

"Do you want this account to be in your own name?
Yes, why? Is the amount too small? Oh! No. Doctor. We're very pleased to do business with you. Er-you did Say that you want it in your own name? Yes, of course. All right, Doctor, I just wondered. Good morning Dr. Manson Good morning!" (2)

Departing from the above conversation which made Manson very surprised at the Manager's questions and hesitation, one may understand that the system was not good at all. It was purely and simply the exploitation of man by man; for how come that a younger and hard-working doctor such as Manson could not have right of opening his own account as a result of sweat and sacrifices? This is one of the reasons that pushed some of the Panel doctors to enrich themselves in dealing with private sick people by crooking them in a way or another. Logically, Miss Page, aware of the situation, scolded Manson energetically by reminding him that he was there only for doctor Page's sake and that all what he had to undertake should be done only in doctor's Page name and not in his own name. This is really something unbelievable case.

- The Panel Doctors Payment System

As already said above, the Panel elder doctors were paid by their central pool a given amount according to the number of sick people cards they received, and then had to share it with their helpers by keeping the great share for themselves. It was also happening from time to time that some patients could have no more confidence in some doctors to whom they gave previously their medical cards. As it was so, they were then taking back their cards from them and handed them in to other doctors. So, each returned card was reducing the wages of the elder doctor; consequently, those of his helper. So to say, such a situation was therefore potentially available of pushing the Panel doctors to corrupt morally their rich private sick people they were running after

- The sick people healing system

In Drineffy as well as in Aberalaw, the sick people healed by the panel system were mine workers. So, they had to pay a small amount every week into a central pool. Each member of the group would choose the doctor he wished to go and gave him a card, and would be treated after he had done this in case of illness. But, when a member of the Panel System was ill his treatment cost nothing. However, the sick man or woman had a right to change doctors in case he or she could no longer trust his or her own treating doctor. He or She could therefore withdraw his or her card and give it to another doctor of his or her own choice. This is in short how the mining company workers were treated in the Panel System.

- The Panel Doctors' Cupidity and Their Private Sick people Moral Corrupting Systems

Disappointed by the Panel System payment and the payment itself, and seduced by the god of money, some of the Panel System doctors took the opportunity of enriching themselves through the opening here and there of their own private practices after the Panel System working hours. Their telling

them lies. They were charging them very high prices whereas many of them were only slightly ill. In this section and through these detailed and meaningful following passages of the text, we are pointing out the moral corruption prevailing in the novel. The passages below illustrating well the moral corruption we have been talking about; it is doctor Ivory's words in a conversation with one of his service mates:

"I must get to know these men better. They are so rich and successful.

I did a clever trick the other day. I persuaded a patient to have a course of twelve treatments. I told him that the usual charge for this was fifty guineas, but that I would be willing to reduce the price to forty-five if he paid me in advance. He gave me a cheque immediately! That's the way to make money! And a bottle of medicine would have done him just as good! Yes, and the price of the medicine is twelve shillings! Most people do not realize how little these treatments really cost. The important thing is to make them think that they are expensive. The more you charge a patient, the more confidence he has in you" (3)

The above mentioned statement by doctor Ivory is much telling about moral corruption. Indeed, He knew very well that his client was very ill and that his treatment was less costing. But, in the name of making money, he made him believe psychologically that his illness was dangerous by charging him an unrealistic price for such a healing. So, to say, Ivory corrupted his customer psychologically. What he aimed at was not the healing of his patient, but on the contrary his wallet. This is purely and simply a case of moral corruption.

Here is another statement by the same Ivory about his excessive love of money when addressing Manson during a meal:" Leave the money arrangements for the operation to me. I hear that the Thorntons are very rich. I can charge them more than you can".(4)

Here once more, Ivory's only thought is making money by faster means. First of all he was not the treating doctor of the Thorntons; but what is most surprising is that he is the one wanting to charge the Thorntons whereas the operation was done by somebody else. This is really pitiful. A doctor's mind should not be dominated by the searching of money in disorder; but on the contrary a doctor in the true sense of the word should be constantly worried by the bad state of health of his patients firstly, and then think of money in exchange of his good work and not the reverse.

This men's thought of making fast money by faster means is also evoked in Cyprian EKWENSI's Jaqua Nana: "Many people leave their own villages for Logos to make fast money by faster means. Many others were practically strangers in town where all come to make fast money by faster means" (5)

Earning money is a good thing, however we should not consider it was our first priority. What does the bible say about moral values? The bible points quite well that" But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (6)

Thus, God says that we have first of all to receive his kingdom in hearts then he will give us everything we need. So, we have to lean on moral and religious values in our daily life in whatever domain.

The Citadel offers us another instance of moral corruption. It consists in examining and treating one single patient by a great deal of doctors so as to get him believe that he has been very well treated and that would be ready to pay them a lot of money. Here is a statement illustrating it well when doctor Manson went to pay his friend doctor Hamson a visit:

Come in and meet Ida. Her Home is one of the worst in London, but she makes a lot of money. She's a person worth knowing! She is a rich woman and like to spend her money on her health. Come in with me and see my patient. Ivory and I are doing a few experiments on her. Come and examine her chest. That would please her. And she'd pay you five guineas! Don't look so surprised! That's how we work here – Ivory. Deedman and I. You really ought join up with us. The success of our system would astonish you. You're no idea how much money we have made from that old woman!(7)

The above mentioned quotation is another instance of moral corruption as said above. In fact, Ida was just suffering from the street noises because her house was by a highly frequented street and they all knew that, and the only solution for her simple healing was to isolate her from that noisy spot. But, since she was a very rich woman, they could not take the risk of telling her so for she was their money provider and they could by this fact miss her money.

As a matter of fact, The Citadel offers a great deal of instances of moral corruption. By the way, let us mention the following one: "What are you putting into those bottles? Water. Doctor. I colour the water to make it look like medicine. The patients don't know this they think it makes them better". (8)

In view of the above mentioned statement, we may quiz ourselves whether such so-called doctors were still mentally healthy or simply demons. Indeed, we all know that ordinary water is just a soft drink and not a medicine and that it cannot in any way cure someone from a disease caused by germs. But giving it to patients in the place of pure medicines just for the sake of making money is simply devilish, and only somebody under the Devil's influence is able of such an action.

Before closing up this dissertation on moral corruption, I would like to add that apart from some of the instances of moral corruption listed in the preceding lines, there exist other forms of moral corruption in whatever domain of life.

Here I am illustrating one besides those already mentioned:

"Buraimoh Ajikatu was his name. He was a clerk in a big department store and he was married, with four children. He had been finding it increasingly difficult to support his family. He complained about and a friend at the office who worked no harder but always enjoyed the good things of life told him to join the 'Ufemfe Society'. He went, and was enrolled. They promised him all he wanted. And strangely

enough, life became bearable. He could not understand why his salary was increased, or why he was promoted to store assistant. There was even a promise of becoming manager within one month'.(9)

The assertion above is also an instance of moral corruption. In fact, the 'Ufemfe Society' was a mystic organization in the department store and Buraimoh Ajikatu was the only non-member in the department store. So they wanted him to join with it so that he would give them his first-born son. Therefore, his salary was made lower on purpose to push him join up with them. When he joined with, the secret was revealed to him and became successful. Why all this had not happened all the time he was not an Ufemfe member? It is at this level that he had been morally corrupted by lowering his salary whereas the others were constantly increased in the same company however.

Later on they asked him in a matter of fact manner to give them his first-born son. He protested and asked for an alternative sacrifice or would leave 'Ufemfe Society'. But they told him that there was only a way in, but none out except through death. That is the worst of secret societies. They seem to appear very kind with you at the very beginning, but in the long run they will show you what they really are in reality. Applying and promoting good moral values in our daily life should be our motto.

5. Conclusion

From our survey of Moral Corruption in A.J.Cronin's The Citadel have chiefly been concerned with some cases of moral corruption by some of the Panel System Doctors in their private practices after the Panel System working hours. Indeed, disappointment by the Panel System working and by its lower wages, also pushed by a strong desire of enriching themselves by faster means, the Panel Doctors practised moral corruption especially by telling lies to patients. So to say, the major concern of this article has been that of trying to point out the source where this high moral corruption in question was believed to come from. After the analysis of the text, I have found out that the true source of this indescribable moral corruption had been the bad medical organization system of the English hospitals before the Global War II.

As a matter of fact, the love of money in a field as important as medicine, and above all its aftermath upon patients lives, was the chief reason that attracted our attention so that we dealt with such a topic. Our preoccupation in this thesis was that of showing the very negative implication of the love of money in the field of medicine that is, death.

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