INTRODUCTION

During the era following the achievement of the African independences, it fell on the new political leaders to find new concepts of community and government. But these were modelled largely on European political systems. Arguably, and as far as intellectuals and writers could observe, the colonial enclosure for the African model of governance was in certain ways more enduring and distressing than expected. The new leaders, for one thing, tried to prove and demonstrate that the ancestral model could no longer work, while the suggestion came, at the same time, that only the European model as a substitute could meet those very problems of the young nation against which the ancestral codes of conduct struggle in vain. In this sense, Basil Davidson emphasizes that : ‘‘In every crucial field of life, the British (and the French) had frozen the indigenous institutions while at the same time robbed colonized peoples of self-development’’.[1] Nkrumah, whose socio-political writings have their focus on criticizing neo-colonialism, suggests the concepts of Client State and Sham-independence to describe the post-independence state, i.e. those states whose ‘‘economic and thus political policy is directed from the outside’’[2]. Nkrumah shows how the client state embarked on a struggle with its people who are hardly taken into account in its affairs. Describing this conflict, he writes: ‘‘The neo-colonialist government is virtually in a state of permanent conflict with its own masses, whilst the gap between the puppet administration and neo-colonized workers widens everyday’’. And he goes on to explain : ‘‘It is clear that a puppet regime can not draw its strength from the support of the broad masses. It can only stay in power as long as it manages to subsist in the teeth of popular opposition and revolt’’[3]. In the face of this conflict, protest is turned inward- not against neo-colonialism or the exploitation of the national economies by large –scale foreign capital investment. The anger turns against the promises of the national struggle which are not kept, against the failures of the new regimes which had been thought to represent the utopian hopes of the young nations. Here, both civilian and military governments stand only as vain labels for irrational policies, and only one reality was meaningful, as Achebe noticed when he was writing *A Man of the People*, the political machine had been ‘‘so abused that whichever way you pressed it, it produced the same results’’[4]. These governments were usually elected

by at least some fair approximation of democratic voting ; and they seemed to owe no allegiance to the people who had allocated power to them. In one way or another, the Africans come to understand that there had been only a transposition of elites around the circles of power. The unattractive struggle among African ministers for European vacated positions seemed to offer no discernible advantages to the populations of the newly independent states ; for their new leaders behaved just like the old masters of colonialism, or worse .

This problem of power and nation-building became the central troubling issue of the African writer after independence, an issue which this dissertation will attempt to address through the study of the two novels *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* by the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe. There are specific reasons to choose this writer: he has been, from the time he wrote *Things Fall Apart,* concerned with the political choice and options for governance in Nigeria. He has been a keen observer of how his country has been ruled for the past half century. In fact, belonging to Nigeria has political and literary consequences. Independence in Nigeria was only a beginning for different historical stages of war and social unrest. Tribal and ethnic ambitions for political power featured the everyday scene of the country. At some point of this confusion, the drive to combat widespread corruption and ensure a just distribution of power between all tribes was usually to transform into intense inter-tribal conflicts and demands for secession. Under this dramatic episode of the nation's history, seven Coups d'Etat took place between the year of independence and 1985, and a civil war (1967-70) went on between the secessionist region of Biafra and the Federal government. Consequently, the country entered a period of serious political crises and bloody riots which shattered the already torn nation.

In this situation of national disorder and unclear paths, Achebe's fiction seems to combine and often wrestle with the confused realities of his country's society and politics. As a writer who has experienced two eras of his people's history –colonial and post-colonial- Achebe in his works shows a very deep awareness of the dramatic cultural clashes that have caused his society to endure confusing regimes and conflicting interests. For this reason, his novels, whatever is told about them by critics (reproach or praise), are representative and reflective of a social, political and cultural

reality they describe. The problem which revolves around the urgent project of nation-building and social construction has been the main issue dealt by him, as by many other African writers including outstanding figures like Ngugi, Soyinka, Awoonor, Ousmane, and that appears to occupy the whole sphere of his post-independence writings. The crisis of leadership, the corruption of society, the gap between government and people ; particularly between people and intellectuals and between past and present, are all preoccupations which Achebe attempts to communicate to his people and readership. At the heart of these issues, however, is Achebe's critical look at the African intellectuals' indifferent involvement and identification with the ordinary people's aspirations.

In reading his novels of colonial and post-colonial eras, one can observe the clear shift from the usually praiseful presentation of traditional society in the past to social comment and satire in the present situation, where the dualism of his people's – Igbo- cosmology and ethical tradition are brougth forward to show the contradictions and confusing conceptions of that present. At this stage of Achebe's writing, anger, ridicule and exposure became the devices used by him to display and negate the gross incompetence and greed of the new leaders who, meanwhile, are pictured as rapacious, cruel and self-seeking. Achebe's approach in conveying his criticism is insistently ironic and allegorical but it is the irony and allegory which are attached to the tragedy of the time. In *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* which are set in post-independence Nigeria and treat events almost as part of a process of history making, Achebe employs the irony and the allegory of the satirist in an attempt to attack and condemn the circumstances the books evoke and which determine their moralistic pattern. In resorting to satire and ridicule, Achebe's desire is primarily to push the course of history in a certain direction to alter the people's idea of the type of society they should strive for, a desire which is certainly directed and inspired by strong political belief in '*another force',* to use Achebe's words, that can provide better alternatives of social lives. In fact , Achebe's turn towards the contemporary situation is essentially a wish to draw a clear line between the almost forgotten traditional time and the damaging perspectives of the present, in other words, to find a third meaning for a period in which ''the worst elements of the old are retained and some elements of

the new are added on to them''[5]. This desired shift in emphasis produces also a shift in what Achebe sees as a growth of recognition of his responsibilities as an intellectual, notably as a committed writer. His attention is now fixed solidly on the indigenous ruling elite, whose only ambition after independence seems to move into the spaces vacated by the colonizers, without taking the trouble to reconstruct the political, social and cultural arrangements left behind by the colonizer. Whatever is the enemy, colonizer or black oppressor, Achebe never renounces his mission ; the mission of teacher and agent of social change that would light the way for his people. His desire is to push Nigerians to observe the ills of their present and make them assess how their age-long culture and ethos of communal life involve a collective sense of responsibility. About these lost arrangements Achebe writes :

> In Nigeria there's a sense of the loss of initiative in our own history, the loss of responsibility….And of course, the view of the government as alien : in our traditional culture everybody was supposed to participate in the government…. Now, all that has gone. Within one generation people lose even the memory of what used to be .The writer has a responsibility to remember what it was like before, and to keep talking about it .[6]

This can be seen and identified with what is called committed literature.Commitment, as Raymond Williams says, is ''a choice of position''[7] and committed literature is ''the application of commitment to the special field of literature''[8]. For Max Adereth, a committed man is ''a man who feels a sense of responsibility to his fellow men, and who takes practical steps to help them''[9]. In the same way, the writer can commit himself only by taking sides in the political and moral debates of his time. From a Marxist point of view, the efficacy of a writer depends on his ability to provide society in general with a true mirror of itself, of its tensions and conflicts. In a sense, he must be more than a mere chronicler of events, he must be, rather, an actor as well, a ''conscious actor''[10], as Adereth says. Therefore, he must side with certain social forces against injustice and refuse to compromise with the oppressor. For him literature is what Sartre calls an integrated and militant function (''une fonction intégrée et militante'')[11]. Sartre sees commitment as inherent in the act of writing[12]. To write for him is to reveal an aspect of the world in order to change it. He believes that a committed writer is different from others , ''not because he is involved in the world,

but because he is aware of it (…) because he transfers his commitment from the level of the immediately spontaneous to the level of conciousness''[13].

Commitment, however, is nothing new with Achebe ; it runs right through his writing, in the sense that he always feels the duty for him to alter the realities of his time, those in which he was directly involved. After the publication of his prophetic novel *A Man of the People*, which features a coup d'état at its end, Achebe was accused of complicity in the first actual Nigerian Coup d'Etat of 1966. In 1967, when Biafra declared its secession and a civil war broke out, Achebe was involved in raising money for Biafra and was working in its Ministry of Information. During this time of war, his house was bombed and his best friend, the poet Okigbo, was killed. Later, in 1983 he entered party politics as Deputy National President of People's Redemption Party. At the heart of all these historical connections the link between the work and the history of the author is made evident. Through all his essays, Achebe stresses the human value of literature and the interactions between the personal life of the author and history where the significance of the relation between the writer and his social context can be extended to the relation between literature and society. Achebe states clearly that the ''African creative writer who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary Africa will end up being completely irrelevant''[14]. In this claim, Achebe reminds us that he is and always has been a political novelist who struggles to find a fictional form flexible enough to engage directly within the recent history of his country. For example, after the publication of *A Man of the People*, he declares that his present ''interest in the novel is politics'', and adding that ''this is the beginning of a phase for me in which I intend to take a hard look at what we in Africa are making of independence using Nigeria which I know best''.[15]

However, in following the development of Achebe's political philosophy of government, as reflected through his fiction and non-fiction, one can notice that power as an issue has never been a new concern in his writings. In *Girls at War, and Other* Stories (notably *Vengeful Creditor* and *The Voter*), he shows how a child girl could try to kill because power denies her, as a poor child, the right to education ; how the ideal intellectual can be drawn to the filth of corruption at the very beginning of independence in *No Longer at Ease* ; and how the wise old priest can be seduced by

the temptations of power, and challenge even the will of his God in the Igbo cosmology of *Arrow of God.* All these destructive forms of power's influence constitute a part of a deep analysis of the causes of the Nigerian's political failures in his political booklet *The Trouble With Nigeria.* Along this booklet comes a bitter attack on Nigeria which he sees as ''one of the most disorderly nations in the world'',[16] in the form of brief critical chapters which list Tribalim, False Image of Ourselves, Leadership Nigerian- Style, Patriotism, Social Injustice, Corruption, and the Igbo Problem as the concatenation of social sins that have brought Nigerians to the brink of a national disaster. The study does not add up to any kind of political programme, nor a rational answer to the question of power. Rather, it seeks to attack false assumptions, unrealistic goals, blatant prejudices in order to replace them by the state of mind embodied in the party's leader : idealistic, democratic, non- materialistic, populist, and open .

In his last novels, *A Man of the People (1966)* and *Anthills of the Savannah (1987),* Achebe tackles the question of misused power as an 'ordinary' practice. This is shown to be an important feature in the functioning of society in its entirety, affecting the lives of countless people and slaughtering the deep essence of morality. He examines the devastating effects of the intellectuals' actions in the spheres of power on the masses ; the continuing power of colonialism / imperialism exerted on the national government and the elite; the power of men exerted on women; and how all these form a meeting ground in the corrupt power of the government vis-a-vis its citizens. A distinctive feature of Achebe's study of power in these novels, which significantly isolates him from many other African writers, is his rational examination of colonialist roots in the post-independence crisis of power. He does not dismiss the colonial past as a central culprit of the present problems, but he is fully aware of the interpretative and ideological limitations of positing colonialism as the sole origin of the African crisis of government. His accusations are directly pointed at the nationalist utopian hopes, at the so-called intellectual class which fails to represent the very simple aspirations of the people in life and survival in human conditions; at the people themselves who stand indifferent to their oppressors' exploitation. Concerning all these points, Achebe's criticism of post-independence power raises several important

questions which this dissertation will try to address : According to him, what share of responsibility do Africans themselves – whether leaders or led - bear in this crisis of governance ? Why have the ideologies and the discourses of national consciousness, which provided clarity and vision in the nationalist period, failed to enlighten the post-independence new nations, and stop functioning ? And to what extent can the supposedly still valid culture and wisdom of the past tradition reveal possible visions for the present lost paths as Achebe seems to purport?

Throughout this dissertation, it will be shown that Achebe is strongly committed to the defense of the powerless and deprived people of the African new states (whether peasants or workers) and that he essentially militates against the marginalization of African women from the circles of power. He believes in the building of a national state where all the social members, intellectuals or ordinary people, men or women, can participate, and where the use of power is organized under collective measures of moral and popular legitimacy. He believes in the telling of history which challenges the discourse of oppression, in the possibility to fit the truths and realities of modern times into a clear political vision synthesized in the form of traditional wisdom of government and present perspectives of power holding. At all events, one can see that Achebe marks a distance away from those African writers who describe the ills of the post-independence era through disillusionment, despair and a sense of failure as described by .A. Ravenscroft in ‘‘*Novels of Disillusionment’’* [17]. Achebe conveys through his works not only criticism but also hope, because his convictions are rooted in his Igbo culture whose world-view and philosophy encourage the tradition of dualism which may facilitate a flexible co-existence system of life. Achebe, who considers the serious predicaments of the era as a ‘necessary stage’’ for self-realization and growth, expresses his faithful optimism for real change. He says :

> If you were convinced that it was absolutely hopeless , then you would just drink and wait for your death . But the fact you are talking about it implies some optimism that somebody may listen , that there is still a possibility for change…. So one has to bring these problems out as forcefully as possible to draw attention to them.It has always been the method of the teacher .[18]

What Achebe is stressing here is the task of the writer, and the intellectual in particular, to expose and describe what is there, not only as a way of offering some hope for rebirth but also as a way to warn his people about where they are headed.

The ultimate objective of this dissertation is to demonstrate that Achebe's continual emphasis on the use of oral traditional narratives and typically African mythologies and legends at the core of his modern fiction, lead not only to traditional considerations about his techniques or artistic convictions, but in fact to more central questions. Among them, there could be the undefined post-independence identity of the African states whose power systems are still running in obedience to the alien colonizer's hegemonic potentials. The leading thread of my argument is that both Achebe's literary techniques and his world-view demonstrate a typical approach to how African leaders usually, if not always, proceed to establish the same corrupt systems which they themselves sought to bring down during their former idealistic and revolutionary ideas of nationalist struggle. The main idea is that in their very response to power, the African politicians and intellectuals often run the risk of betraying both the aspiration of their people to a decent life, and the ethical values on which their traditional systems of governance were based. In pursuit of Achebe's implications and groundings on the issue, key-terms like 'power'and 'dissidence', 'hegemony' and 'counter hegemony', 'the African intellectual', 'tradition' and other ones, too, are to be studied and used in relation to the development of the debate on Achebe's political ideas and visions. For this purpose, I shall refer to the theories of Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, Raymond Williams, Frantz Fanon, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Achille Mbembe, and others as well, to illuminate particular aspects of this study. At the same time, I shall concentrate on the textual analysis of the two concerned novels. However, reference to other literary works and essays by him will be made for emphasis or comparison's sake. Likewise, as mentioned earlier, comparisons with other writers' works will be made where necessary. The three chapters constituting this dissertation will be as follows :

The first chapter examines Achebe's identification of leadership as a key-issue in the post-independence crisis of power. In both novels, I shall focus on Achebe's criticism of the African leaders' moral blemishes under the obsession of power-

holding, emphasizing essentially the wide gap which exists between the leaders and the led .

The second chapter shall be concerned with the impact of power on the intellectuals. In this connection, I shall primarily examine their initial obsessions of position and privilege and then their bold decision to challenge the hegemonic regime on which they are involved and to create a culture of dissidence which strives to set a counter-power / hegemony conceived in a conception of nation-state that will bring them at one with the alienated people.

The third chapter will investigate Achebe's use of tradition to explain the failures and ironies of the present power, and its ability to offer a redemptive substitute through its essence of popular and moralistic-based conception of governance to complete the fragmented project of the post-independence state.

The conclusion will synthesize the contours of Achebe's philosophy of an African epistemology of nation-building, emphasize in this consideration the political implications which Achebe's two novels have for African literature and stress the important function of the writer, and the intellectual in general, in setting the ordinary people in the correct grounds of social and political co-existence .

Notes and References :

1-Basil Davidson, quoted in Tejumula Olanyane. ''Chinua Achebe and an Archaeology of Post-colonial African State''. *Research in African Literatures.*Vol.32, N.3.(Indiana University Press , 1993),p.22.
2-Kwame Nkrumah, quoted in M.H. Msiska & Paul Hyland , eds. *Writing and Africa.* (U.S.A : Longman ,1997) , p .248.
3-Kwame Nkrumah. ''Know the Enemy'', in G.C.M.Mutiso & S.W. Rohio, eds. *Readings in African Political Thought*. (London: Heinemann, 1975),p.434
4-Chinua Achebe, in, *African Writers Talking* .Dennis Duerden &Cosmo Pieterse, eds. (London : Heinemann, 1972),pp.13-4.
5-Ibid.,p. 13.
6-Chinua Achebe. Quoted in, Anuratha Dingwaney Neetham. ''Articulating the Post-Colonial Writer's Responsibilities : The Example of Chinua Achebe''. *South Asian Responses to Chinua Achebe* . eds, Bernth Lindfors & Bala Kothandaraman.(New Delhi: Prestige Books International, 1993),p.11.
7-Raymond Williams . *Marxism and Literature* . (Oxford University Press :1977),p.200.
8-Max Adereth ''What is littérature engagée ? '', in David Graig ,ed. *Marxists on Literature : an Anthology.*(London : Penguin ,1975) ,p.482.
9-Ibid , .p.480.
10-Ibid ,.p.445.
11-J.P. Sartre . *Situations II.* (Hollandes :Gallimard ,1964),p.185.

12-Williams has the same opinion : ‘‘It is a central position of Marxism (…) that writing , like other practices is in an important sense always aligned : that is to say , that is variously expresses ,explicitly or implicitly, specifically selected experience from specific point of view ‘’. *Marxism and Literature.* op.cit. ,p.199

13-Cited in Max Adereth .Op.cit . , p .452.

14-Chinua Achebe . *Morning Yet on Creation Day.* (London : Heinemann ,1975),.p.78.

15- ‘Chinua Achebe talking to Tonny Hall’ , *Sunday Nation* .(Nairobi ,15 jan,1967),.p.15.

16-Chinua Achebe. *The Trouble With Nigeria* . (London : Heinemann ,1983),.p.9.

17-A. Ravenscroft . ‘‘ Novels of Disillusionment’’ , in *The Journal of Common Wealth Literature.* N.6,1969,. pp.120-137.

18-Chinua Achebe. Quoted in Anuradha Dingwaney Neetham, in Bernth Lindfors & Bala Kothandaraman . eds, *South Asian Responses to Chinua Achebe. O*p.cit. , pp. 24-5.

The following analysis brings together *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*.[1] Though written over a twenty year- period interval one from the other they show a similar number of thematic and structural features.They are closely modelled on the Achebean traditional didactic form revolving around the quest for self-understanding and social belonging in a society divided between the old demands of colonial culture and the more confused identity of the present. Nevertheless, it is just this dilemma which the new black leaders enhance in their policies to blind their people to the realities of their lives.

With these novels, Achebe epitomizes the history of post-independence Nigeria, and Africa in general, under the two types of government ; the civilian mode represented by Nanga in *A Man* and the military mode represented by Sam in *Anthills.* Both modes exhibit all the negative characteristics identified by Fanon's compelling study of the black national bourgeoisie in his book *Les Damnés de la Terre* - self-interested, greedy, parasitic, cynical and , above all, unproductive.

Through both novels Achebe sees the progressive development of a society conditioned by the whole conscious structures which power provided in guiding its members. He makes it evident that power could lead to both progressive and destructive situations. This explains his claim that ''Nigerians are what they are only because their leaders are not what they should be''[2]. In terms of discipline as an aspect of governance, Achebe considers those leaders as 'role models' from which society copies its behaviour and mannerisms. It is this reflected relationship which Odili in *A Man* has crudely called 'the eat-and-let-eat regime' (p149). Achebe, in fact, shows no hesitation in throwing the burden of responsibility on to those who can really intiate a real change in social behaviour, for the people are only subjects to power manipulations and laws. In regard to this point, Achebe says that ''the whole point of being a leader is that in spite of the cynicism or the despair of the masses, it is the leaders' job to do something for them. The masses don't have to deserve it because they are law-abiding, sensible and obedient''[3]. More exactly, for Achebe, the role of leadership is ''to create the circumstances in which the people begin to act with awareness''[4]. In fact, it is this role which both Nanga and Sam fail to play responsibly

for the sake of their country and people. Through them as representatives of the African leaders, Achebe emphasizes the failure of leadership in terms of moral values and responsibility. He states very clearly that ‘‘the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership’’, their failure, Achebe identifies it, ‘‘is their unwillingness or inability (…) to raise to the responsibility, to the challenge on personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership’’[5]. Achebe’s criticism is essentially moralistic, steeped in a severe appraisal of governance in Nigeria. In denouncing both civilian and military governments, Achebe’s argument reveals clearly that the failure of leadership ought not to be seen in terms of ideologies or systems of politics, but, rather, in terms of those individuals who order and maintain the whole system. In sum, the failure constitutes a realization of Lord Acton’s famous and well-often quoted thesis ‘‘*power tends to corrupt ; absolute power corrupts absolutely’’.* In this case, the subject of the two novels is not political corruption but the corrupting power of politics and the quest of those affected by its corruption to find a counter moralistic substitute.

More concretely, I shall rely on the analysis of the novels which will reveal what I consider Achebe’s deepest political insight and stamina : the elucidation of the cultural and political complications which he observes offering and promising a serious opposition to the ‘‘alien’’ identity which seems to characterise the new black Africa of independence. This is how I shall examine the novelist’s indictement of the Nigerian leaders and portrayal of them as conveyed through various characters and situations which enhance socio-political deficiencies. The process of this presentation will express their ideological discourse of government as it is made under Achebe’s criticism and satire. Out of this analysis I hope to bring out the writer’s position towards the current native hegemony.

I will in this way emphasize Achebe’s sensitive concern with such a crucial game of power. Here, I will argue that he presents the problem of power as a psycho-political state functioning above conventional ethics. Following this line of resolution, it has appeared pertinent to me that at the core of the novels, the interest lies not so much in the corrupt nature of power as in the process whereby the supposedly idealistic and moralistic claims of the individuals, notably intellectuals, gradually

succumb to the temptations of power. For all this bewildering complexity of power, I will argue that the novels emphasize that aspect in Achebe's artistic consciousness that has perhaps most forcefully informed his creative efforts - the constant quest for moral significance in social action, particularly at the level of power and authority. While relying on the contents of the novels, I shall seek to find logical relations between Achebe's convictions and the literary aesthetic forms he pursues his arguments. The study of characterization, imagery, language are to be used as vehicles for discussing Achebe's cultural and political standpoint and will indirectly disclose the relationship between politics and literature in the two novels.

A close reading of the novels reveals that the post-independence model of government is based primordialy on the same colonial superstructures which constitute the system of power. The national bourgeoisie and its collaborators, who form the elite, of which Fanon speaks so ominously, in effect tended to replace the colonial force with a new class which only replicated the colonial structures in new mystifying terms. Important is the fact that as the reader embarks on reading the novels, he / she discerns that the old perceptions of state craft which has been for ages on the communal model is on the verge of being shaken and even totally superseded by a radically different perception, that of population control and maximum power. For a more critical vision of post-independence state, it is necessary here to recall the original shape of power-holding that guided the ancient generations. For this purpose, the Igbo tribe of Nigeria would be the most representative of the socio-political background of the two novels.

The Igbos were well known for their democratic forms of government even though they had no notion of central government. They believe that the ruler (elder chief) rules the people , but the people own the ruler. The implication is that despite the fact that the ruler is the executive and judicial head of the community he would not act without their approval. No action would be taken until an issue had been fully debated at a general meeting and some degree of consensus achieved. So, based on the general good and health of society, social freedom is in the final analysis related to legality. Under this principle, traditional society has never been a tyrannical community, it was never remote from the people who composed it, and was not easily

manipulated by ambitious and perverse individuals because of its corporate nature. From here, the traditional law justifies itself on the ground that social order must be maintained. What characterizes this general order is the collective responsibility, the responsibility of the group for the lives and well-being of the members, that is the group and its interests always take precedence over the individual's self interest. About this assumption of social responsibility in the Igbo culture, Achebe records that ''the obvious curtailment of a man's power to walk alone and do as he will is provided by another potent force –the will of his community. For wherever Something stands, no matter what, Something Else will stand beside it. No man however great can win judgement against all the people''[6]. These standards explain Kwasi Wiredu's study of democracy and consensus in African traditional politics. W.E. Abraham, commenting on the Akans in his book *The Mind of Africa,* points out : ''kingship was more a sacred office than a political one''[7]. Explaining this statement, Wiredu maintains that the office was 'sacred' because a chief was supposed to be the link between the living population and their departed ancestors, who were supposed to supervise human interests from their postmortem vantage point. His article on ''Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics'' can give a further impetus and intellectual grounds to Achebe's vision.

In a general sense, Wiredu's concept of the 'consensual democracy' seems to embody the same ideals of Igbo culture, and which forms the basis and assumptions of Achebe's political model. In his formulation, and with reference to the Ashanti political tradition, Wiredu proclaims that consensual democracy belongs to the African 'traditional' pre-colonial past, while 'adversarial' democracy is a western import to post-independence Africa. A look at the features of consensual democracy is important to detect the similarities appearing between Achebe's political vision of social governance and that of Wiredu. The latter notices that the remarkable thing in the system is that if and when a resolution of issues was negociated, the point of it was seen in the attainment of reconciliation rather than the mere abstention from further recriminations or collisions. The point here, according to Wiredu, is that consensus usually presupposes an original position of diversity. Along this political process, substantive representation is a matter of a fundamental human right. Each member has

the right to be represented in any matter relevant to his or her interests or those of their groups. What comes to form a bridging-line of thoughts between Achebe's philosophy of power and Wiredu's study of the consensus system is in the very implication of power itself. Wiredu stresses that none of the communal groups ''organized themselves for the purpose of gaining power in a way which entailed others not being in power, or, worse, being out of it. For all concerned, the system was set up for participation in power, not its appropriation, and the underlying philosophy was one of cooperation, not confrontation''[8].

In close relation to the issue of power in post-independence Africa stands Achille Mbembe's book *On The Postcolony* (2001) which is written with respect to the age of decolonization. In this book, Mbembe sets out to describe the conditions under which the present social realities across the African continent came about. The thread that binds this book together is the *'nothing'* that forms the situation of human existence in Africa. Mbembe is interested not simply in asking the question of ''where is Africa ?'', but to find out ''where is it possible to be African in the post-colony ?'', or, ''where is the postcolony ?''[9]. The real question, and Mbembe's attempt to account for this negation, is this : how does one get from the colony to what comes after ? The time after the colony is a new phase of negation, that of death which comes in many forms. Mbembe's account of the hollowness of the time is fairly standard, and touches on the emptiness of the land and the metaphorical emptiness of those already there, morally and socially. Concerning the prefix 'post' in 'postcolony', Mbembe could wonder if history has really moved into a stage past the colonial period. Since its colonial conquest, Mbembe says, Africa has served as ''the supreme receptacle of the West's obsession with, and circular discourse about, the facts of 'absence', 'lack', and 'non-being', of identity and difference, of negativeness-in short, of nothingness''[10]. Here, he explains that slavery and colonization forced Africans into contact with the opaque and murky domain of power, and this domain, as it evolves in Africa, is filled with obscure drives whose essential components include 'animality', 'arbitrariness' and 'tyranny'. Mbembe stresses that if the African postcolonial age has anything close to a spirit at all, it is defined by these undesirable features.

The chapter titled 'Of Commandement' contains the book's most profound contributions to the understanding of Africa's political predicaments. In this chapter, Mbembe analyzes, through a partially evolutionary history of the African state, the parameters of the 'relations of subjection' specific to Africa. Beginning with the age of colonialism, he explains that 'power and authority' were founded on illiberal grounds that systematically shunned decent notions of rights. From its moments of founding, through conquests, to its dictatorial self-arrogation as the sole source of power and law, colonization rested on violence. The dominated had no rights against the colonial power. He or she was bound to the power structure like a slave to the master. For Mbembe, here lies the irrefutable origin of the African potentate and dictator whose acts, up till this moment, are largely defined by an overwhelming disregard for the common law. Decolonization expressed as the transfer of authority and power to indigenous interests, Mbembe believes, is fatally flawed because the process fails to reestablish the principle of the reciprocity of legally codified obligations between the state, power holders, society, and individuals. In effect, the potentate that emerges as the ruler after independence simply assumes the role of the colonial lord and the citizens remain slaves. Hence, Mbembe writes, ''almost universally in sub-Saharan Africa, any practical distinction between the task of conducting what would properly be called public affairs (government) and the institutional and unbridled use of violence and coercion was virtually non-existent''[11]. Mbembe explains that the postcolony is a lawless outpost of modern sensibilities from its beginning. In this world, public prerogatives are privatized violently and, arbitrarily, ''power (is) reduced to the right to demand, to force, to ban, to compel, to authorize, to punish, to reward, to be obeyed, in short, to enjoin and direct''[12]. Within this structure of commandement also thrives an 'imaginary' of the governed, actually the dominated who is considered to be a simple, unambitious creature who liked to be left alone. In fact, civility, Mbembe seems to be saying, cannot develop in the colony because the state does not 'exist' to manage violence, but to subsist on it.

Through *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, Mbembe's philosophical discourse of the postcolony is recycled and imbued with deeper artistic meanings. Whether in the cultural, political or aesthetic realms, the African modern

state is depicted along an assemblage of tales and artefacts that Achebe organized around multiple central tropes that come to function as both images and allegories. In both novels, Achebe emphasizes the basic truth that life under the banality and fantasy of post-colonial power is hallucinatory, a life of insane laughter mixed with suffering. This confused state of 'proliferation' and 'multiplicity' is what Mbembe calls 'The Thing and Its Doubles'. One might read this in the novels through the complicated aspects of alienation and representation. Here, representation shows alienation, not simply as a faithful report of a condition, but as a complex dialectic between what is present and what is absent. Achebe puts the visible and the invisible in tension in an attempt to show the domination under which people live. 'Being there' (real presence) and 'non-being' (irremedial absence) are both juxtaposed in these representations. This is not simply a cover-up of reality, Achebe maintains. It is a set of resemblances between the seen and the invisible, which allows a critique of power in society as well as the emergence of a form of life. Under this situation, he displays the dramatic emptiness of the time, and, to use Mbembe's term, the 'nothingness' of the African leaders who appear intentionally incapable of acting within a unity of morality and responsibility. In *A Man of the People,* we see how the individuals who have been given positions in authority are tempted to abuse those positions and indulge in self-aggrandisement at the expense of the majority. In *Anthills of the Savannah,* we are made to reflect more deeply on the problem. There is massive corruption; there is subservience to foreign manipulation, which is despicable, there is a deeper problem as Ikem begins to realize: ''The prime failure of this government (…) is the failure to re-establish vital inner links with the poor and dispossessed of this country''(p.135). The leadership does not have the interests of the people at heart, and has lost contact with them. In this resolution, Achebe's repetitive proverb ''that no man however great was greater than his people ; that no man won judgement against his clan'' becomes symbolic. For it evokes and underlines the derivative basis of power which its holders seem to forget. In the rhetorical manner, the proverb stands as the main established measure by means of which the nature of the Nangas' and the Sams' power is to be judged. The proverb also emphasizes Achebe's established inquiry of the responsibility that power imposes on those who exercise it.

Within the post-colonial states of Nanga and Sam, the Igbo sacred culture of power becomes a mechanical process of socio-political degradation and corruption. Through both novels, holding power seems like a game of successive climbing up and down the holy throne. In a dramatic utterance, one peasent in A*nthills* sums up the whole psychological degeneration: ‘‘We go make another president. That one no hard….new president climb palm-tree and not fit come down again’’(p.205). This is made more distinguishable in the image of the house extension which is uttered by Odili in *A Man of the People*: here, power is portrayed as a building or construction. It is seen not as an institution erected by local indigenous hard work, but as ‘‘the one shelter our former rulers left ’’, from which a ‘‘handful of us (…) hardly ever the best (…) had scrambled ’’ and in which the new rulers ‘‘barricated themselves’’. The sterility of the new rulers to offer any kind of transformation and radical destruction of the colonial house is indicated by the extension of the house where ‘‘all argument should cease and people speak with one voice’’ since ‘dissent’ will only ‘‘ subvert and bring down the whole house’’(p.37). What the two images suggest is a dramatic image of non-existence and physical vacuum in which the excluded people will dwell. They suggest also that the new leaders embrace the same colonial psychology of representation, to use the words of Edward Said, that is ‘‘keeping the subordinate subordinate, the inferior inferior ’’[13]. By acting out of this notion the people are assured that they have not the initiative to take decisions for themselves. It is this thesis that the regime uses as an access and excuse for unleashing its oppressive and corrupt hegemony on both the people and those who stand to defend them. This hegemony features two clear separated concepts : the leaders as dominators and the people and the intellectuals who oppose them as subordinate .

Hegemony as a political notion has its most political definition in Gramsci’s studies of the Fascist government. Antonio Gramsci has made the useful analytical distinction between ‘‘civil society’’ and ‘‘political society’’[14] in which the former is made up of rational and noncoercise affliations (schools, unions…), the latter of state institutions (the army, the police….) whose role in polity is direct domination. On the other side, the civil society bases itself on cultural dimensions, where the relationship

is not that of domination but is what Gramsci calls consent. In this connection, he considers any clash or gap between the two societies as an organic crisis.

Hegemony takes a flexible mode of interrelation between the two societies. In fact, it is against the classic Marxist notion of ideology as false consciousness or an imaginary representation of real social relations that Gramsci proposed the more complex and flexible term of hegemony to emphasize how people's everyday lives and identities are defined in and through dominant social structures that are relatively autonomous of economic relations. Gramsci identifies 'hegemony' in terms of a democratic organic relation, a connection between the ruler and ruled where the economic development and all its institutions tend to facilitate the gradual passage of the ruled groups into the position of the ruler groups. In this regard, Gramsci makes a distinction between 'rule' (dominio) and 'hegemony' : 'rule' is expressed through a direct domination and an effective coercion as practiced by the political society divorced from its social one ; 'hegemony', however, is the juxtaposition of the two societies under the relation of organization and guidance. He argues that the hegemony of one class over another is shown through the exercise of power over the subordinate class. That power is generally a combination of coercion and persuasion. Gramsci writes that : ''« Le chef de l'Etat » a le « pouvoir de fait », il exerce la fonction d'hégémonie et par conséquent d'équilibre entre les intérêts différents, dans la société civile, qui, pourtant, est si étroitement mêlée en fait à la société politique que tout les citoyens sentent que c'est lui qui, au contraire, règne et gouverne''.[15]

However, this Gramscian hegemonic system which is seen in terms of guidance and persuasion does not represent the African post-independence system which bases itself mainly on the notion of 'rule' as 'domination'. This relation, in fact, is what Gramsci calls an organic crisis, the clash which the African rulers (Nanga & Sam) have created between the government and the social life. In this case, Raymond Williams's perspectives of hegemony as a relation of domination and subordination is more fitting to the African issue of power.

According to Raymond Williams, hegemony is a concept which both includes and goes beyond culture and ideology. On the one hand, he distinguishes hegemony from culture, for it goes beyond culture in its insistence on relating the whole social

process to specified relations of power. According to him, all social constructions are built on the basis of inequalities prescribed by hegemonic systems which deny man the freedom in all fields of life. On the other hand, Williams distinguishes hegemony from ideology, for it goes beyond all the superstructures of ideology which bases its systems on an imaginary relationships of domination and subordination (the study of ideology will be furthered later on). Hegemony, for Williams, is a practical consciousness of this imaginary-relationship that affects the whole process of living. In elaborating its definition, he states :

> It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy ,our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world . It is a lived system of meanings and values (…). It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society , a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move , in most areas of their lives. It is, that is to say , in the strongest sense a 'culture' , but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes .[16]

At the same time, Williams identifies two immediate advantages in this concept. First, hegemony as a form of domination deals much more with the common institutions of social conduct and control. That is, in its positive sense it can assure an organized social life, and, so, it goes beyond the trivializing explanations of a mere system of manipulation through uses of corruption and betrayal. Second, Williams shows how the whole social experiences constitute the very framework of hegemony. Hegemony manifests itself through all the living motions of the people ; their direct relationship with each other and with their own environment is thoroughly constructed to fit those economic and political practices. This assumption of hegemony is, in fact, not very far from the concept of *'Power'* provided by the late distinguished French thinker, theorist and historian of science, Michel Foucault. For what is power but an exercise of hegemony in its utmost forms through masked strategies and discourses?[17]

Foucault came up with a whole body of systems by means of which power is dispersed throughout all social institutions. Through all his studies of the Western history, he notices its devotion to abstraction and utopian theories in approaching the problem of political order. Instead, Foucault's philosophy attempts to cast aside these utopian schemes and to ask how power actually operates in society. He argues that

power should be understood in terms of its operations, techniques, tools (‘what does power do?’) rather than in terms of simply what it is. In this sense, his goal has not been to analyze the truth or falsity of the power systems, but, rather, to create a history of the different models of objectification by which human beings are made ‘subjects’. From that position, Foucault comes to define power as ‘‘a certain type of relation between individuals, (whose) characteristic feature (…) is that some men can more or less entirely determine other men’s conduct’’.[18]

It is worth noting that Foucault arrives at these conceptions of power using the Nietzschean genealogical method [19]. His studies of the position of the subject in different societies and under different historical periods (ancient Greece and Rome, Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe) allows him to come up with a whole body of systems by means of which power and knowledge are interrelated. According to Foucault’s studies, it was during the late sixteenth century that a set of analyses and forms of knowledge about society and population began to emerge and develop. They were essentially to do with the knowledge of the state, in all its fields, forming statistics which were identified as ‘the science of the state’. This was through mercantalism which was the first rationalization of power. It developed a system of knowledge of state as a tactic of government ; a system which sought not so much to increase the wealth of the country as to allow the ruler to accumulate his own treasury and create his army through which he could carry out his politics. It was during the eighteenth century that a new regime of power took shape, articulated in the art of government ; where population come to be above all else as the ultimate end of the government. Foucault calls this regime ‘bio-power’[20], a form which resorted to a realm of explicit calculations based on the interrelation of knowledge and power. This regime depends on what Foucault calls ‘disciplinary technology’, as a set of techniques which are used to forge a ‘‘docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved’’[21]. This rationality of knowledge made all the while possible for the same state to deepen, install and legitimize its power and imply the vitality of the state in the everyday workings of the subjects.

For a firm knowledge on the subject, the modern state devises some systems of linguistic strategies, by means of which it could use power effectively or to maintain it

over its subjects. In the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) Foucault outlines these linguistic tools that the state uses in its power relationship with its subjects and labels them 'Strategies of Subjectification', offered by 'discursive / non-discursive formations'. He distinguishes four stages in the shift from 'discursive' to 'non-discursive' formation. At the first stage there must be a set of 'Positivity', that is an account of resemblances and generic characters of classification used to establish good relationship between the state and its subject. Positivity is extended into 'Epistemologization' when a group of articulated statements excercise a dominant function over the original state / knowledge of the subject, and when this epistemological figure comes to be under obedience, a threshold of Scientificity is crossed. This stage is consolidated into 'Formalization' of this discursive formation that takes an axiomatic form defined through the propositional structures and transformations that are legitimate to it. This discursive process is oriented towards 'the codification' of the discursive practice which in the end will take the shape of 'non-discursive', that is, a power-informed and hegemonic. Such a shift in all the four Foucauldian stages of codification from 'positivity' to 'epistemologization' to 'scientificity' up to 'formalization' occurs thanks to the linguistic medium of the Statement (énoncé). As a verbal modality, statement plays a central role in allowing a subsequent and minor shift from formations of 'objects', to 'concepts', to 'enunciative modalities', and in the end 'themes and strategies'. For Foucault, 'strategies' are the ultimate stage in the whole system of power, for they constitute a means to prescribe a definite position to the 'subject'.

These assumptions of hegemony and power are relevant to Nanga's and Sam's system of government which strives by means of all strategies to implement oppressive power and repressive hegemony effectively over the people. In *A Man of the People*, we read about chief Nanga's pretence of authenticity and populism, his claim to be serviceable to his people and his artificial criticism of the Western intellectuals is only a Foucauldian strategy to hold his power over his people and even the elite class. However, in *Anthills*, Sam makes it clear that as a dictator, he is not in need of linguistic strategies and tools (as in Foucault) to hold his culture of direct domination and repression over his slave-like government. It is important here to make

it clear that Foucault has excluded all forms of repression and violence from the system of power-relation. Power, for him, as a form of domination can control the whole population without the latter's awareness, through its masked tools and strategies. For its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms. Considering this outlook, Foucault's system of power-relation is to be applied respectively in our study of *A Man of the People* to its representative Chief Nanga. On the other side, we will base our study of power in *Anthills*, on its representative Sam, on the conception of hegemony as it is defined by Williams, i.e. a culture of domination and subordination.

A Man of the People : Towards a Foucauldian Discourse of Power

In *A Man of the People*, politicians make power-holding functions through confused stances of notions and concepts. They conduct a pernicious game of contradictory perceptions of order by means of which they exclude people from any factual understanding of power mechanism. From the beginning of the novel Achebe focuses on the significant conjunction of the existence of an older way of life alongside the growing manifestations of the new which adds piquancy to the setting of the novel. The opening sentence reads : ''No one can deny that chief the Honourable M.A.Nanga M.P. was the most approachable politician in the country''(p.1). The juxtaposition of the tribal title alongside the Western honorific one, imported from the British political system, sets the key-note for the way power is subsequently portrayed in the novel. Its whole section reveals the blurred and confused situations where this mixture of the two elements is present in all facets of life presented –food, clothing, language and the whole range of social and personal relationship and interactions.

In a comical and caricatural touch, Achebe exposes his criticism and satire over this political atmosphere. Chief Koko, Nanga's colleague and Minister of Overseas Training, is more than a puppet. When he accuses his cook of having tried to poison him (pp.33-34), a poison which was only a local product which the government encourages its citizens to consume, Koko's hysteria makes us laugh at the comic stance of the scene but also see the government's contradictions, and at the same time allows us a glimpse at the climate of suspicion and fear in which the new men of

power live. This comedy presents just the tragedy of the country which Achebe strives to convey and to negate.

A most eloquent specimen of this comic politics is Chief Nanga, the Minister for Culture. With his charming surface appearance, his rhetorical eloquence, his cunning and aquisitiveness, Nanga is the stereotype of the fictional West African politician. Achebe forces the irony that he is an illiterate Minister of culture. For Nanga, who opens the first book exhibition of works by local writers, does not know the name of the country's most famous novelist, and goes simply to rebuke him for not dressing according to protocol. Nanga shows some respect for the artist only when he notices the deferential treatment accorded to him by foreign diplomats. Odili, the protagonist, contemptuously comments on the scene : ''just think of such a cultureless man going abroad and calling himself Minister of Culture''(p.23).

Through Odili's narration and criticism of Nanga, we are not told many things about Nanga's old values as a teacher before coming to power. However, if we may trust Odili's first description of him as a popular teacher and impressive scoutmaster, we can admit the claim that he was a symbol of purity and idealism in the school. One expression from the novel, I believe, can bridge the two Nangas ; Nanga the teacher and Nanga the politician : ''Not what I have but what I do is my kingdom. That was in 1948''(p.3). Ironically enough, Nanga's kingdom, after becoming a politician, is manifested in extravagant ceremonies populated by British figures who develop intimate relationships, the accumulation of large personal wealth helped by imperial forces, and the endless seduction of young women, married and single, Western and African .

In one general judgement, Nanga is a Machiavelian type of politician whose ideal is one of survival. He uses all means that help him to stay forever in his position. Without any rational political theory, Nanga makes his people believe that he is their voice in the national politics to bring them their share of wealth. In fact, politics is established right at the beginning as a means by which people clamber for access to materials, power and ego. In this sense, Achebe shows that the government resolves itself into a squabble of local loyalties and interests. Nanga and his ministerial gang pursue their forms of self-interest with an occasional return to the constituency with

promises of a slice of the national cake for everybody. In this tribal complex, Nanga, who has to represent the national sphere, invites Odili to have his share in the civil service. He openly states that ‘‘we shouldn’t leave everything to the highland tribes. Our people must press for their share of the national cake’’(p.12). Fanon’s distinguished analysis of the post-independence state has noticed that the state becomes no more ‘‘une dictature bourgeoisie’’, but ‘‘ une dictature tribale’’ on which ‘‘les ministres, les chefs de cabinets (…) sont choisis dans l’ethnie du leader’’[22] . One of the village elders expresses their political demands and rights in a cynical and, to some degree, naive way, a statement which reveals only the country’s basic conception of power :

> The village of Anata has already eaten , now they must make the way for us to reach the plate (…). We are ignorant people and we are like children .But I want to tell our son one thing: he already knows where to go and what to say when he gets there ; he should tell them that we are waiting here like a babe cutting its first tooth: any one who wants to look at our new tooth should know that his bag should be heavy (pp.125-6) .

This passage recalls, if need be, that the Igbo society has always been a materialistic community. For example, in the traditional world of *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo, the protagonist, who epitomizes his society’s principles and demands of success and status is plagued through all his life by fear of failure and weakness. He becomes obsessed with accumulating wealth and titles to satisfy his society’s rigid claims of rank and prestige. The significance of these claims, however, is that the status attainment was totally linked to the acquisition of wealth through personal hard work. To bring this tradition of ethical gain into the elder’s naive words, we can see no displacement of the original basis of the culture of social materialism. In this way, Nanga can easily be seen as a titled chief elder who has to win the fight engaged against other tribes. But the trouble with the elder’s words is that they are restricted in representation, and therefore at variance with the changing conceptions of the time and the unlimited corruption that underlies all the national government affairs. In fact, this man of tradition does not understand that the Nangas of the time have totally divorced their traditional values of personal honor and morality, and have directed their power greedily towards a dirty struggle of materialism. In a lamenting tone, Achebe writes in one of his essays: ‘‘The success of the culture was the balance between the two, the

material and the spiritual (…). Today we have kept the materialism and thrown away the spiritualy which we should keep it in check''[23]. It is this aspect of materialism which Nanga always investigates to keep his constituency as subjects in need of help in an ever-ending space of submission.

Foucault's power-relation system is exemplified in the very title of the novel. Chief Nanga calls himself 'a man of the people' while making use of his cunning and aquisitiveness to exploit, deceive, and rob the people. He develops a power-relation system through which he can catch all his subjects –people and even pretentious idealists such as Odili- in closely controlled and manipulated spaces. All his verbal statements, physical signs and mannerisms are oriented towards creating a Foucauldian discursive formation of subjects by which he can realize his interests. However, it is important to suggest at this level that Nanga has already found ready-made subjects (of course , this is not the case with Odili, as we will see in the second chapter concerning power / intellectuals) which through their own original ideas of traditional life - populism and materialism- are to be directly used and manipulated for the ends of power. With the people, Nanga tries only to reinforce their already common state of subjectification – 'primitive loyalties'- and their social aspect of materialism to start the process of non-discursive formation, where the people are to be brought actively into a power mechanism of control and use.

To borrow Achebe's words in *Things Fall Apart*, Nanga has put the knife of power on the very aspects which hold the people together: culture and tradition. Nanga could use his people's culture and tradition opportunistically to gain social advantage, to cover up evil-doing, validate felonies and justify perversities. The effect here is not so much to enhance communication as to achieve some personal advantage. For example, he attacks those Africans who have received a Western education which, according to him, ''only alienates an African from his rich and ancient culture and puts him above his people''(p.5). From the people's point of view, Nanga is really a man of the people. He reveals that he possesses more 'culture' than the disinherited class to which Odili as a hybrid intellectual belongs. At the same time, Achebe makes us laugh at the derisive image he offers of Nanga to mark his shallow understanding of his people's culture. His culture is manifested in its most superficial aspects of

gestures, dance, language and dress. Still, it is through these that Nanga comes to seduce his subjects into blind loyalty and acquires the means to establish his new role, a role which the villagers only dimly understand in relation to their traditional needs.

To ensure his hold on the village, Nanga displays an attractive personality with everyone. In describing his charming appearance, Odili, who is himself baffled by Nanga, says : ‘‘You could never think –looking at him now- that his smile was anything but genuine. It seemed bloody–minded to be sceptical’’(p.8). So, recognizing the materialism of his people, Nanga shows a tremendous generosity with the elders, the poor and especially the journalists to whom he promises to fill their large bellies during the election campaign. In addressing Odili, Nanga speaks in a loud voice so that the villagers hear him : ‘‘Don’t you know that minister means servant ? Busy or not busy he must see his master’’(p.9). The whole statement veils only a cunning intention towards hidden ends. The villagers are informed that the politician ‘‘had not come to beg for their votes ; it was just a family reunion- pure and simple’’(p.13). The hidden meaning here is just the opposite for each word. The visit is not as pure or simple as the statement reads. Nanga has really come to pave the way for his coming election which the people, of course, do not know about. Explaining the ‘banality’ and the ‘fantasy’ of this post-independence power, Mbembe says in an interview:

> Because of sheer coercive repetition , these fantasies end up becoming a ‘habitus’ or at least part of the stylistics of everyday life, a prosaics . More radically , the starkness and the brutality of these fantasies may, on occasion, assume a nightmarish appearance , as reality and fable reflect each other , thereby transforming the very identity of the original and its referents. This is why an analysis a la Foucault or a reading from within the usual categories of political economy are unable to highlight its complexities. In this kind of power formation, reality is each time erased, recreated and duplicated. It is this power of proliferation (and its ability to obliterate the distinctions between truth and falsehood , the visible and the occult) that turns domination and subjection into a magical song , at that point where the originary arbitrariness produces terror and hilarity .[24]

In fact, Nanga’s opportunistic form of power can only be identified in these terms of Mbembe’s conception of post-independence power, that is a culture of ‘‘domination and subjection’’ conceptualized under the complexities of ‘reality’ and ‘fable’, ‘truth’ and ‘falsehood’. He is, undoubtedly, ‘‘a born politician’’, as Odili describes him. He is an expert in the art of public relations. He recognizes the need to keep in touch with

the people in every detail which he can use to benefit from as he wishes. The whole threat in Nanga's strategy is that he had what Odili calls a ''rare gift of making people feel (…) that there was not a drop of ill will in his entire frame''(p.65). Achebe makes it clear that the politician's threat is all the more menacing because he can be so charming and human. About this threat Achebe writes:

> …he 's a very important character ; and he is proficient. He knows what he wants to do, and he's prepared to do it and has the training , the historical preparation for it .This is in part, perhaps the tragedy of our situation .Here indeed he's this proficient, and yet he's applying it all to destroy the society (…). He's applying it in a very narrow, selfish way .[25]

What Achebe is suggesting here, is Nanga's selfish percerption of what he calls 'African authenticity', this political ideology which he presumes to defend against the hybrid class of the African Western intellectuals. Nanga's policy can best be seen through the study of the concept of 'ideology' that will be looked into hereafter.

Terry Eagleton has noted that ideology is more than a set of doctrines : ''it is a mode of perception that signifies the way men live out their roles in class society, the values, ideas, and images which tie them to their social functions and so prevent them from a true knowledge of society as a whole''[26]. In this sense, ideology is only an artificial construct divorced from the material conditions of people's existence in order to legitimize the power of the ruling class in society. The point here is that of self – generalization and, thus, domination which Annah Arendt has noticed in her study of the totalitarian rule. She observes that the ideal subject of this regime is the people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction, that is the reality of experience, and the distinction between true and false, that is the standards of thought and reason, does not exist. At this stage we come near to Louis Althusser's definition of ideology as ''a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence''[27]. These imagined relations are what in effect can represent the unconscious process as a structure imposed by the dominant class upon its subordinated classes. The dominant class, or the leading ideologist, has this ideology in relatively pure and simple form, on the other side, the subordinated class has nothing but this ideology as its consciousness since the production of all ideas is, by

axiomatic definition, in the hands of those who control the primary means of production.

Felix Oppenheim puts the issue in more simple terms. He sees ideology as a way to influence political behaviour, whether to legitimize or to undermine political authority. According to him, the problem is not in the ideology and how it manages its theory into action, but partly in the demands of sacrifice and moral devotion to the cause it places upon its adherents, a demand which hardly can be satisfied. Oppenheim sums up this common deception in this passage :

> More often , serving a cause requires sacrificing one's own interest .So the ideologist must deceive those to whom they address themselves .The former makes the latter believe that they are acting for the sake of the cause , when in fact they are promoting the interests of the former .The ideology thus creates what Marx called false consciousness .[28]

Most relevant are these studies of ideology to Nanga's real conception of authenticism as a means for false consciousness of the real facts of the state politics. All his meetings with the people are decorated by local 'ideological songs' - ''we are proud to be Africans. Our true leaders are not those intoxicated with their Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard degrees but those who speak the language of the people''(p.4) – which only alienate the people from the realities of their lives. The whole system supports the culture of 'eat and let eat regime' which is reinforced by a mystifying ideology of 'pure and simple family reunion' between the dominator and the subordinate. In this sense, the people are not very far from Arendt's remarks on the totalitarian subject who cannot distinguish between facts and fiction. Nanga the champion of African authenticity hankers after everything which is Western, preferring to speak English, and yet he also uses his people's language to exploit their 'primitive loyalties', and to grab the largest share he can of the ''national cake''.

Achebe's criticism of Nanga's authenticity is steeped in a severe appraisal of those African invented and imported ideologies of post-independence which have their share and influence in the making of modern African politics of social conduct. What singles out his political philosophy in this ground of power analysis is his deep disillusionment with the practical results of these ideologies. According to him, the very basis of most African ideologies centers around abstract concepts and

metaphysical speculation which do not make any allowance for the history and culture of the land. Most of them have been developed following the observation of and in response to social, economic and political conditions totally different from those prevailing in Africa. In fact, this disapproval of post-independence ideologies is a critical issue which has found a particular ground of analysis in the works of some outstanding historical and political theorists, such as Achille Mbembe and V.Y. Mudimbe. According to Mbembe's study of the 'postcolony', Africa, as a discursive realm and as an episteme, still functions under the sign of '*nothingness*'. Mbembe is not proposing that the African thinkers have not reacted to some of the challenges colonialism formed to existence in the postcolony. He only finds the responses to be not quite adequate, given the appalling conditions that persist on the ground till today. Ideologies of refutation and assertion like Negritude, Africanism, etc - are considered to be largely ineffectual because they do not directly address the persistence of ''nothingness'' in the lives of the colonized and the enslaved. Mbembe also finds African Marxism wanting for its allegiance to the outmoded way of directly locating the motivation of a social subject's consciousness in the economic and material conditions of existence. Mbembe declares categorically that ''human action'' in Africa, in reality, serves ends other than ''resistance'' and ''quantifiable calculation''[29]. There is no doubt for Mbembe that modern social theories depend too heavily on Western Europe's 'provincialism'. Testing these theories in non-European contexts, without reworking them from top to bottom, translates them into a universal grammar that they are not. Expressing this feeling about the limited range of practical possibilities that social theories can effect in Africa, Mbembe acknowledges that Africa and Africans, like other colonized places and peoples, have lost their distinctive historicity since the contact with Europe, and they now seem inextricably embedded in times heavily conditioned by European domination. Mudimbe's criticism of African ideologies is on similar grounds. In his book *The Idea of Africa*, Mudimbe provides an account of the Marxist influence upon the working thoughts of the independent African states. He stresses that African Marxism and African Socialism revealed themselves to be nothing other than direct interpretations of the Marxist ideas they were claiming to establish. In fact, Mudimbe does not hesitate to maintain that even

Negritude and Black Personality appeared to hail in one direct line from the Marxist presupposition of the centrality of the individual as a historical agent. In these critical terms, Mudimbe's study shows clearly how Marxism is viewed by many African leaders and theorists as the exemplary model with which the new states can go beyond what colonialism incarnated and ordained in the name of capital. Here, seduced by the metaphors of an egalitarian society, the African leaders advocate Marxist thoughts of social and historical analysis in establishing the core of their ideological discourses, and thus they ignore the complexity of their own 'epistemological' roots of social existence. What emerges significantly from Mudimbe's criticism is the ineffectiveness of all those ideologies and their powerlessness to set a unique African epistemological discourse. For example, in expressing his contemptuous dismissal of the Nyererian African Socialism of 'Ujamaa', Mudimbe says that: ''The Ujamaa of Nyerere unveiled nothing but the contradictions of bureaucratic mechanisms that asphyxiated the disenfranchised classes whose state socialism was supposed to improve''[30]. Mudimbe states very clearly that the ideology of African Socialism which based itself mainly on African authenticity of episteme and experience, and which presumed to end for an egalitarian society and a better life for all, was only another label and way to perpetuate the government's hegemony of exploitation.

The same can be said of other ideologies such as President Mobutu's 'Authenticity', President Senghor's 'Negritude' and J.E. Caseley-Hayford's 'African Personality' (a concept popularized by Nkrumah). The exponents of all these movements turn equally to traditional African societies to seek an indigenous origin of existence that would provide a bridge between the Western culture adopted by the elite and their cultures in which they seek an identity. The relative inappropriateness of such movements, notably African Authenticity and Negritude, resides in the fact that they are remote from the everyday realities and needs of the people and they rely for their effectiveness not so much on a political programme as on a metaphysical philosophy based on racial emotionalism and cultural revivalism. On the other hand, African Personality or Pan-Africanism was, more often than not, a utopian dream which has never been realized. In political terms, its ideal has taken the form of a quest for the geo-political union of the African sovereign states in a continental government.

Concretely speaking, all these movements have appeared helpless to provide operative solutions to the problems besetting the continent on a national level. According to many African radicals, these ideologies lack a definite social, economic, cultural and political vision and they stand to represent vague and idealistic ideas. ‘‘Negritude neither feeds the hungry nor builds roads’’[31], says Sembene Ousmane, the Senegalese novelist and film maker. Echoing him, Taban Lo Liyong, the Ugandan poet and essayist, dismisses the promoters of ‘‘African Socialism, African Personality,…’’ as ‘‘African nonsensists’’[32].

What is to be emphasized is that Achebe’s concern is not so much to criticize the basic core of these ideologies as it is to question their moral sense of reliability. Accordingly, his disillusionment is in substantial measure that of the opportunistic use to which the very utopian and nationalist assumptions of those ideologies are put in contemporary African states. For the moment these ideologies become advocated by the young African nations, many of them, if not all, have lost the vital power which they had at their first statement, they lose their sense of philosophicity and they turn into pure labels of ideologies enlisted for the services of power. Within this decadent conception of ideology, the political philosophy of the leaders, espoused by a militant party organization, becomes a cause with which the entire population may identify itself. The whole social life is politicized, and the leader becomes a messiah – a man of the people, yet remote from them. Following these grounds of ideological calculation and exploitation, Nanga is only a model of such illusory ideologies. He has greedily used the traditional claims of ‘African Authenticity’ as a means to influence the political behaviour of the people and to legitimize the authority of corruption and misconduct. His masked power is unveiled only when he is challenged by Odili’s and Max’s opposition party which exposes his lies. At this stage, his corrupt ways become apparent for everyone. And to secure his position, Nanga tries to discourage Odili from being his rival in politics. He tells him that he is supported by British Amalgamated to emphasize his weakness. Because he fails in this attempt, he offers him a bribe and a scholarship to study overseas. Nanga does this because as he says : ‘‘I feel after all my years of service to my people I deserve to be elected unopposed so my detractors in Bori will know that I have people solidly behind me’’ (p.118). When

all this fails, Nanga puts pressure on the people of Odili's village, by cancelling a project to give the village pipe-borne water, in order to subdue them and secure their votes. All these acts of corruption bring into show the degraded picture of the dominant discourse of order and of the agent of power who uses the political system to his advantage.

Anthills of the Savannah and the Culture of Power's Terror

Anthills is in direct continuation to *A Man of the People*'s military Coup d'Etat which puts down a corrupt civilian government. It scrutinizes what the military in power in the new nations of Africa are making of their intervention to correct the political excesses and muddles of the civilian politicians. Having become accustomed to the perquisite privileges of power, the military leaders have changed from crusading messiahs to corrupt military politicians, stepping on the same path of materialism used by the civilian leaders. What distinguishes them, as Achebe notes, is that while the civilian politicians blatantly display their newly acquired wealth, the military in power resort to the subterfuge of using intermediary people to enrich themselves. Achebe makes it very evident that the military regime cannot provide any remedy to the state's socio-political anomy.

The novel opens with the military ruler of ''a backward West African state called Kangan''(p.138), disdainfully treating his civilian cabinet like misbehaved children. Here the more frequent episodes document the harsh realities of military rule : the public executions, the police searches, the sycophantic cabinet-meetings, the roadblocks, and finally the inevitable counter coup. It is at this documentary level that the diagnosis of power and its various manifestations begin. These scenes of pressure and terror under the military regime are often presented as exemplary data to support a character's generalisations about power and its abuse.

Through the novel Achebe provides a finely observed account of the instability and the self contradictions of the military rule. It begins with the President's unilateral refusal to visit what he calls 'one rebellious province', claiming definitely : ''I will not go to Abazon.Finish.''(p.1). In the same subsequent scene the cabinet acts out penitentially all the rituals of sycophancy, begging him to become their leader for life, and discreetly comparing him to Jesus, the Man of Destiny. Sam is the young army

commander who was invited two years before to become head of state after the most recent coup. As a military, Sam ‘‘came to power without any preparation for political leadership’’(p.12). He is a very good example of the experiment of power’s temptation and seduction. He was not a bad man to begin with, we are told. It was only after being installed as a dictator that he gradually developed an unquenchable thirst for power, renouncing old friends and sacking dissidents. In his person, Achebe shows how amazing what even one month in office can do to a man’s mind. As Sam manipulates his victims (his cabinet), Achebe writes, his Excellency ‘‘felt again that glow of quiet jubilation that had become a frequent companion especially when as now he was disposing with consumate ease of some of those troublesome people he had thought so formidable in his apprentice days in power’’(p.20). Through his friends’ memories of him before coming to power, we see Sam the disciplined and sensitive pure officer. Mad Medico, the British friend who is given the Ministry of Health, says : ‘‘This boy was such a charmer when I first met him. I’d never seen anyone so human, so cultured’’(p.56) . Chris also remembers that Sam was exemplary : ‘‘I tell you he was such a nice fellow in those days. He had a wholesome kind of innocence about him (…) he was morally and intellectually intact-a kind of virgin’’(p.55).

Sam’s first obsessions with power appear through his brutal reaction to the refusal of the drought-stricken province of Abazon to vote him President for life in the referendum, a context in which he also begins to reflect about what he thinks to be the unfaithfulness and jealousy of his friends on whom he starts to keep an eye. While Chris reminds him that he had never really wanted to be life-President, he replies : ‘‘I didn’t (…) and you know I didn’t but the moment it was decided upon you had a clear responsibility (…) to see it succeed ’’ (p.141). This seems to be the moment when he goes over the edge into a dream of power, believing implicitly and without question in the role he is acting. Sam’s attitude is reminiscent of Achebe’s protagonist in *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu the chief priest of the God Ulu who is constantly tempted to mingle his own wishes with those of his God and then assert his authority over the six villages by means of Ulu’s oracular power. The difference between the two, however, is that Ezeulu tries to defend his people’s religion against the alien colonizer system of power, an act which Sam does not have towards his people whom he hardly knows.

During his presidency, Sam's role is that of the army officer who strives to keep his power above everybody. He has aptly defined his role when he says : ''I am still a soldier, not a politician'' (p.4). The very expression of 'soldier' underlines the notions of successive orders, domination and subordination, which all require blind loyalty and passive obedience. It is these disciplined standards which Sam has directly transmitted to his new role of politics, as a basis for the security of 'his own state'. In this regard, Sam sums up his political theory in the one expression of 'Kabisa' which he has learnt from the old Nongo, the ''president-for –life''(p.49) and aged dictator in one African country. The word 'Kabisa' merely means to put a stop to all discussions and argumentations. The deep assumption of the expression constitutes at the same time Sam's fears and terrifying obsessions ; for his poor political background and the conditions through which he comes to power make him deeply anxious, trying thereby to manipulate his fears by founding a general theory of punishment against all the voices of criticism and opposition.

Sam's punishment-based system of government can best be seen and understood through what Foucault calls the 'Punitive Society'[33]. Foucault draws a line between the systems of punishment used before and after the eighteenth century Europe. He records that in the seventeenth century, the common forms of penalty – prison, dishonour, enslavement – were mainly linked to a renewal of moral perception and correction for the sake of social interest and protection. With the beginning of the materialism of the nineteenth century, penalty, however, becomes a history of body ; a history of discipline institutionalised through a system of relations between political power and bodies (population). The control of bodies, their subjectification, their grouping and isolation, is all a system exercised directly or indirectly through the development of state structures. This is achieved through putting into place a whole discipline of generalized and constant oversight ; everything must be observed, transmitted through a direct organization of a police force and institutions of systems of records. In *Anthills*, this system of punishment holds the general frame of Sam's theory in maintaining all his acts of the government and people control.

His Excellency sees the issue of governance in terms of personal ownership. The sovereignty of the country is summed up in Sam's totalitarian expression '*my*

government', a power which informs all the members of the cabinet and the country as a whole. Sam says, addressing one minister in an attacking tone : ‘‘You see if Entebbe happens here it's me the world will laugh at, isn't it ? (...) Yes, it is me, General Big mouth, they will say, and print my picture on the cover of Time magazine with a big mouth and a small head (…). It's not your funeral but mine (...). So I don't fool around. I take precautions’’ (p.14). In fact, Sam's precautions are the brute force of the army and secret police which he has placed in the heart of his political strategy to hold an absolute hegemony. As a totalitarian leader, Sam can best be studied under Arendt's distinguished study of totalitarian regime, an issue which she has thoroughly examined in her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1967). She argues that the rise to power affects deeply the nature of any revolutionary group or individual. For through the everyday business of government and possession of real power, many systems of order would gradually lose their revolutionary momentum and utopian character. Under this betrayal, the utopian power is to become only a totalitarian domination. This latter through its machines of secret police and concentration camps, aims at abolishing freedom, and even at eliminating human spontaneity in general. Arendt shows that a Nazi or a Bolshevik will not be shaken in his conviction by crimes against people who do not belong to their totalitarian movement or are even hostile to it. In fact, Totalitarianism, stresses Arendt, strives not towards despotic rule over men, but towards a system in which men are superfluous, kept in controlled spaces which lack all normal social relationships. Arendt features the system in this passage :

> (It) is a lawless government where power is wielded by one man . Arbitrary power, unrestricted by law, wielded in the interest of the ruler and hostile to the interests of the governed , on one hand , fear as the principle of action , namely fear of the people by the ruler and fear of the ruler by the people, on the other - these have been the hall- marks of tyranny throughout our tradition .[34]

If one keeps in mind Arendt's study of the issue, Sam's form of governance just re-enacts definitely established features of totalitarianism - secret police and concentration camps, repression of social and cultural expression, and most essentially the people's place in the whole system and the relation of fear that governs the general atmosphere. All these aspects, that are to be examined in succession, weave primarily

a state of complicated psychological manifestations which reveal the leader's destructive obsessions of power manipulation and its effects on his victims .

By comparing Sam's order of terror and tension with Nanga's bodyguards' violence, one sees that the situation is more alarming in the dictatorship of Sam. Annie Gagiano is justified in calling *Anthills* ''a study of power by terror'' [35]. The whole regime is a machine of terror ''where un-confirmed rumours of unrest, secret trials and executions in the barraks''(p.13) manifest the experiments of the state, and where a policeman can pronounce most easily, addressing an ordinary man, ''If I kill you, I kill a dog ''(p.44). The cold-blooded killing of Ikem and Chris on two separate incidents, and the attempt to cover up the murder of Ikem, exemplify the level of degradation of the government and its security agents. In the same context, Achebe exposes the depravity of a police sergeant who attempts to rape a school girl in broad daylight and in the presence of scores of witnesses. Such a scene reveals not so much a society that could condone such bestiality as it does reveal the power of those in the regime who force people to admit such a violation in a most scornful and insensitive way under the threat of the police force which only interprets His Excellency's attitude regarding power. The bloody acts perpetrated by government security agencies, from the horrific shooting of striking railway-workers and demonstrating students to the clamping into 'Solitary Confinement at Bassa Maximum Security Prison' of innocent old men, have become a very urgent occurence to gratify Sam's thirst for a concrete action of power.

In studying this psychology of repression, an aspect which many historical and political theorists see as a dubious form of post-independence progress, Ngugi assumes that the excessive use of power has its history of force in the process of colonization which was based on the power of repression. Like Mbembe's perspective on the issue, he states that : ''their (the post-independence leaders) image of power derives from the colonial past and their exercise of power is therefore modelled on colonial practices. During the colonial period there was no democracy, there was only repression''. And he goes on to explain : ''So the notion these neo-colonial leaders have of power comes straight from the very womb from which they emerged as a class''[36]. In this policy of repression, however, Ngugi has much more in mind the

colonial cultural repression which is blindly embraced by the post-independence leaders. He emphasizes that this culture of silence which many African leaders, if not all, tend to apply is a tactic which is also inherited from the colonial power structure whose imperative was based on non-communication and denial of the linguistic act. Following the same path, the African leaders force ‘‘a culture of silence and fear (…) directed from police cells and torture chambers’’[37] to shut all sources of threat to their rule. In Fanon’s theories of national culture, whose influence on Achebe’s later works cannot be understimated, the function of culture in a colonial situation is to realize human freedom through the liberation of the nation. For Fanon, ‘‘(S)e battre pour la culture nationale, c’est d’abord se battre pour la libération de la nation, matrice matéreille à partir de laquelle la culture devient possible’’[38]. However, the subsequent realities of the post-independence state have put Fanon’s views on cultural liberation into complicated interrogations : the new nation has failed to transform the lost space of its colonized history into a realm of national existence ; on the contrary, the new nation has become only another instrument of repressing cultural identity and of promoting, in one way or the other, the cultural values of the colonizer.

In fact, Achebe’s *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* present this state of cultural repression through articulate scenes of power manipulation. In both novels, public information is officially channeled and moulded to allow leadership to maintain absolute power over all the details of social lives. Lack of information or misleading information keeps the populace ignorant and therefore disempowered ; it denies them the awareness of political realities necessary for their social transformation. In *A Man*, the press is as corrupt as the regime it stands for. Nanga who bribes a journalist says : ‘‘If I don’t give him something now, tomorrow he will go and write rubbish about me. They say it is the freedom of the press. But to me it is nothing short of the freedom to crucify innocent men and assassinate their character’’(p.66). In *Anthills*, the psychology of silence plays the whole section of power. Ikem Osodi as a literary artist and editor of the *National Gazette* is killed by the secret police of the government because he represents those who lay bare the lies of history by opposing Sam’s political totalitarianism. So, the disruption which Ikem tries to cause in the corrupt hegemony by a faithful transmission of information and

real facts of what is really there in the government leads the state to dictate an atmosphere of submission and silence in order to crush any opposition to its practices. The destruction of copies of the *National Gazette* by the students because of its distorted representation of Ikem's comment on the President is a recognition of the government's attempt to justify its repressive measures by inventing specious narratives for public consumption. In fact, every fact calls to mind just its opposite. For example, the plotters in Kangan and unpatriotic elements mentioned in the Special Announcement are just those who disclose the lies of the state. The copies of Chris's account of the actual events that led to Ikem's assassination are instead distributed by the president of the Students' Union, who is then immediately threatened by the state authorities in another effort to suppress threatening information .

On account of all this, Sam is by definition a Fanonian stereotype of the new black leaders. Being educated in British schools, Sam goes on to model his life and beliefs after their philosophy and life-style. Through his flawless English and his inability to understand his native proverbial language, Achebe subtly underscores his British background ; a background which only brings him superiority, while revealing the wide gap established by the British between the local government and the common people. So, unlike Nanga, Sam holds himself as far as possible from the people. In his view, it is only through this distance he can protect his mystique of power. As a leader, he displays his refusal to compromise and to meet the Abazonian delegation who come to request government assistance about the drought they suffer from. In fact, their suffering is made worse when the dictator has ordered all the water bore-holes which were dug in their area to be closed as a punishment for their voting against his longed-for life presidency. In refusing to visit the poor province or listening to their delegation, Sam displays contempt for people who simply require help from their president. Their peaceful demonstration gets mistaken for the storm of revolution to break upon the impregnable Presidential Palace. Through the use of the colonizer's expression 'multitudes' for people, Achebe wishes to show the enormous distance between the rulers and the ruled, and how dramatically, as Ikem notes, that ''the very words the white master had said in his times about the black race as a whole. Now we say them about the poor'' (p.37). So, instead of getting help, the delegation are

arrested and held in solitary confinement for only speaking out their poverty and suffering.

The whole episode of Abazon's delegation builds up the climax of the government's disowned responsibility towards its people. In questioning this lost responsibility, Chris utters in disillusionment : ''Security forces ! who or what were they securing ? Perhaps (…) to prevent the hungry desert from taking its begging bowl inside the secure borders of the South'' (p.201). The hungry desert's visit to the presidency palace is not a demonstration of historical struggle against its oppressors, as we read about IImorog's march in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*. It is instead an act of submission as the old man has put it : ''to say our own yes and perhaps (…) we will not all perish from the anger of the sun. We did not know before but we know now that yes does not cause trouble'' (pp.121-2). The scene plays an important role in the novel. Technically, it allows the author to present the dramatic contrast between the 'violent wave of heat' which the delegation brings with them into the comfortable 'alien climate of the council chamber' (p.8) in the palace of power. Politically, it conveys the starved situation which the government holds its people in.

Achebe foregrounds this request for help and image of power's oppression by sketching an apocalyptic scenario for the novel in one of the most central images and insights presented in Ikem's composed prose poem '*Pillar of Fire : Hymn to the Sun'*. Dominated by metaphors of death and suffering, the poem offers a horrifying picture of the nation's death and the catastrophe that has come over its people. The poem seeks a clear reason for the present suffering from the 'Almighty Single Eye' and wanders why all attempts at sacrifice and reconciliation have failed. The poem asks the Sun, the 'Great Messenger of the Creator', what abomination have they committed to deserve ''the roaring of holocaust of your vengance'' (p.28). The people are subjected to the unbridled power of the Sun, where everything that seeks to resist is silenced to death. Instructed by legend, the victimized people of the destroyed dead land, carrying death in their eyes, desert their waste land and travel by starlight to another region, they destroy their inhabitants and take their land and rename it Abazon. The time of drought has come round again for the people of Abazon but the legend of rebirth cannot be re-enacted because of the people's new subservience : '' So

they send instead a deputation of elders to the government who hold the yam today, and hold the knife, to seek help of them''(p.30). In speaking, thus, of the drought as a curse, and of the compounding of abominations, the novel establishes a narrative, albeit all in legend. At the end, it is the sense of transgression at both the personal and the collective levels, especially the collective, that adds poignancy to the experience of popular desperation. Symbolically, His Excellency's refusal to meet the delegation reveals his totalitarian standpoint which considers that the precepts of tradition are no longer a viable option today. The solution in legend is no longer possible. The lesson, then, is the reality of changing times, and the acknowledgement of the new face of power and moral authority.

Ikem's Hymn thus becomes an ode to a people's journey towards a possible space of regeneration. The modern victims are helpless in front of the horror of the present vengance of the Sun, i.e. Sam. More deeply, this analogy between the sun and Sam provides the novel with a clear vision of the psychological and political atmosphere in Nigeria, and Africa in general. The agression of nature on man stands for the agression of the post-independence African economic systems on some of its alienated poor regions. The image enables the writer to introduce further criticism of the native hegemony. Through a fictional transformation of the whole story of drought into a rebellion against the regime, Achebe aptly demonstrates the hypocrisy of the authority in hiding its failure to fill 'the begging bowl' of its poor and even follow it by oppressive practices.

To conclude the chapter, I propose to draw a brief parallel between the two novels in terms of the issue of nation and village as represented in the relationship between the government and the people. The dichotomy of nation and village appears in the alienated entities under the tribalism-based system of power. Under these conditions of alienation and disruption, the nation becomes, to use Soyinka's words, ''mostly a gambling space for the opportunism and adventurism of power''[39]. In *A Man of the People*, the physical and spiritual clash between the village and the nation is well revealed in the indecency of the shopkeeper Josiah who steals the stick of a blind man. The old man realizes that his stick has been exchanged for another and calls the whole village to come to his aid. The village reacts by boycotting Josiah's shop

and ostracizing him socially. In fact, the village understands that Josiah ‘‘has taken enough for the owner to notice’’, and, of course, the owner is the collective will of the whole village. But these moral considerations do not enter the affairs of the nation. The nation as a whole entity has no general moral tradition to be based on. The proof is that the same Josiah comes to climb on the election platform of Nanga and to receive the cheers of the same villagers. This significant scene shows Achebe’s crucial observation that the culture of moral power which unites the village does not unite the nation.

In *Anthills*, Achebe takes the issue to its extremes. As a physical existence, the rebellious region of Abazon does not appear in all the novel’s sections. Achebe dramatizes this absence when the leader refuses to visit the area then denies their delegation any form of negociation, and even goes on to punish their act of speaking out their poverty. It is only the spiritual world of Abazon that we can see through the moralistic teaching of its son Ikem and the traditional wisdom of the old man. However, their efforts to bring their ideals into the large sphere of the nation are confronted by a solid wall of destructive power. At the end of the novel, Achebe makes us feel anxious to reach the imaginary region through Chris’s journey to the area, but only to deceive us by the latter’s death before arriving there. At this stage, Achebe makes it clear that Chris’s death by the hands of the ‘police’ is only another act of power to maintain that wide gulf existing between the nation and the village .

This state of spaces’ ambivalence and confusion is aptly depicted through a complex use of the linguistic medium. English between its standard mode and its mixture with the traditional aphorisms shows the vacuum inherited within the general framework of the nation. Terry Eagleton writes in this connection :

> Language that most innocent and spontaneous of common currencies, is in reality a terrain scarred , fissured and divided by the cataclysms of political history, strewn with relics of imperialist, regionalist and class combat . The linguistic is always at base the politico-Linguistic, a sphere within which the struggles of imperialistic conqueror with subjugated state, *nation-state, region with nation, class with class are fought out*. Literature is an agent as well as an effect of such struggles , a crucial mechanism by which the language and ideology of an imperialist class imposes its hegemony, or by which a sub-ordinate state , *class or region* , preserves and perpetuates , at the ideological level, an historical identity, shattered or eroded at ‘the political’ [40].(Italics mine)

In the first novel Achebe shows how using different varieties of the English language becomes a political device and even a persuasive device. Chief Nanga finds that speaking to different people with their level usage earns him popularity and, so, this is how his opportunism functions. With the American he speaks American English, with Odili and his colleagues he speaks a type of familiar Pidgin and with the villagers he uses a proverbial style. Nanga has reduced all the linguistic gaps into a political strategy which assures him position in all the struggling classes. This power's strategy of 'politico-linguistic' is held fast in the struggle imposed by the 'sub-ordinate hegemony' of Sam over the poor regions in *Anthills*. Sam, the leader of the ruling class, speaks English better than the British officers do, but he does not even understand his people's proverbial style: ''I don't quite get you, Professor. Please cut out the proverbs''(p.19), says Sam. The context is dramatically tragic. It reveals not only the irresponsibility of such a leader, but, also, the moral chaos which assures the absence of the people as an important linguistic entity in the affairs of the country.

Starting from this problematic of the nation / people dichotomy, we will endeavour to show, in the second chapter, Achebe's counter-act against the present hegemony. More specifically, our study will focus on how Achebe tries to resolve this struggle through making his protagonists, notably intellectuals, embrace a counter-hegemony against the oppressing one for an act of decolonization and repudiation of the imaginary distance set up between the nation and the village, and, so, symbolically between the ruler and the ruled. Along this hegemonic struggle, we will see more essentially how power tries to play its psychology of temptation upon the intellectuals' ideals to kill all their attempts of correction in the core of the native hegemony.

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5-Chinua Achebe .*The Trouble With Nigeria.O*p.cit. , p.1.

6-Chinua Achebe. *Morning Yet on Creation Day : Selected Essays.*(London : Heinemann ,1975),p.99.
7-Abraham .Quoted in Kwasi Wiredu . ‘‘Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional politics : A Plea for a Non-party Polity’’, in *Post-colonial African Philosophy : A Critical Reader*.ed .Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze. (Oxford : Blackwell ,1997), p.306.
8-Ibid. , p.308.In this connection, we cannot fail to consider that Wiredu’s assumption of ‘Consensus’ does not imply that all pre-colonial African countries had relied on ideals of democracy for its social order. Wiredu himself, in his book *Philosophy and an African Culture,* has argued that the African traditional societies were deeply authoritarian. In justifying this view, he explains that their social arrangements were shot through and through with the principle of unquestioning obedience to superiors, which often meant elders. Still, what forms the complexities of the philosophical thinking of these societies, as Wiredu has noticed, is that this authoritarian code of conduct does not prevent its people from developing a traditional sense of communal fellowship and responsibility. In this meaning, Wiredu emphasizes that :‘‘Paradoxically …authoritarianism …is closely connected with one of the strongest points of our culture, namely, the great value it places on what we might call communal belonging. To my mind one of the greatest problems facing anyone who would like to see a judicious adaptation of our traditional culture to modern conditions is how to preserve this feature while eliminating …authoritarianism …which seems to be interwined with it’’.Kwasi Wiredu. *Philosophy and an African Culture.* (New York : Cambridge U.P.,1980),p.5.
9-It is important here to draw a distinction between ‘post-colonialism’ (with a hyphen) and ‘postcolonialism’ (without the hyphen). In an article titled ‘‘Post-Colonialism and Language’’, Kwaku Larbi Korang and Stephen Slemon have made the useful analytical distinction between the two terms. They argue that ‘‘the term ‘‘post-colonialism’’(with a hyphen) is being used to denote the historical period in a former colony that comes after the period of direct colonialist control. And the term ‘‘postcolonialism’’ (without the hyphen) is being used to denote the many analytical strategies and interpretive positions which attempt to read exactly what it is that takes place in culture, politics, and history within and between the many and varied encounters of Europe with its colonial Others’’. *Writing and Africa*. eds. Mpalive-Hangson Msiska & Paul Hyland. (England: Longman Limited, 1997),p.248. Mbembe defines the concept of ‘postcolonialism’ or ‘postcolony’ with great clarity : ‘‘I define the postcolony as a timespace characterized by proliferation and multiplicity. As a temporal formation, the postcolony is definitely an era of dispersed entanglements, the unity of which is produced out of differences. From a spacial point of view, it is an overlapping of different, intersected and entwined threads in tension with one another ’’. More clearly, he adds : ‘‘the ‘post’ in ‘postcolony’ does not refer at all to the idea of a regulated transition from one form to another form or duration .We cannot think in terms of a mechanical succession of ages. But in our attempt to create an impression of continuity, we cannot refer to the present and to its actors as simply shadow puppets….In my mind, the notion of the ‘postcolony’ refers to a timescape which is simultaneously in the process of being formed and of being dissolved through a movement that brings both the ‘being formed’ and the ‘being dissolved’ into collision.…Because of the entanglement of these multiple temporalities, Africa is evolving in multiple and overlapping directions simultaneously’’. Interview with Achille Mbembe, by Christian Hoeller (Editor of *Springerin Magazine,* Austria) . <http://www.mltiworld.org/m_ versity/articles/achille- htm
10-Achille Mbembe. *On the Postcolony. (* Berkeley :University of California Press ,2001),p.15.
11-Ibid . , p.43.
12-Ibid . , p.32.
13-Edward Said. *Culture and Imperialism* . (London : Vintage Books ,1994),p.95.
14-You see ‘‘ La conception gramscienne de L’élargissement de L’Etat intégral’’, p.114, in Christine Buci–Glucksmann. *Gramsci Et L’Etat, Pour une Théorie Materialiste De La Philosophie.* (Paris: Librarie Arthème Fayard, 1975) .
15-Antonio Gramsci .*Cahiers de Prison (Cahiers 1,2,3,4,5).* Trans. Monique Aymard &Françoise Bovillot . (France : Gallimard ,1996) ,p.497.
16-Raymond Williams . *Marxism and Literature* .(Oxford : Oxford University Press ,1977),p.110.
17-To be noted is Foucault’s ambivalence towards the idea that accounts for the passage from knowledge to power via ideology. Foucault’s notion of power focuses on the possibility of making intelligible the strategies and techniques of local operations of power without relying on the dialectic of ideology and the consciousness of subjects, or on the assumption that power operates globally and

homogeneously. Alternatively, with Foucault's theory, power operates within the assumption that all actions (whether submission or resistance) of the individual subjects are the result of specific acts of will.

18-Michel Foucault . P*ower : Selected Interviews and Other Writings ,1954 -1984.* ed , James D. Faubion . (London : Penguin, 2002),p.324.It is important to stress that Foucault does not aim to produce 'a' politics any more than 'a' history. If his work has political significance, it does not offer a politics as such. That was not its function, a point which he argued emphatically : ''I have never tried to analyse anything whatsoever from the point of view of politics, but always to ask politics what it had to say about the problems with which it was confronted. I question it about the positions it takes and the reasons it gives for this ; I don't ask it to determine the theory of what I do….I question it about what it has to say about experiences that ask questions of it''. An interview with Foucault, in *The Foucault Reader*. ed. Paul Rabinow. (Harmondsworth : Penguin ,1994(1986)), p.385.

19-Foucault's genealogy means that by asking a question, posing a problem, you set up a generality against which you constitute events and arrange them in a series. The question enables the tactical use of historical knowledge in contemporary political situations which necessitate the posing of the question with which genealogy begins. Such politics stress the local or the specific without assuming that they constitute the starting point for a global hegemony into which they will be subsumed. Foucault defines genealogy in these terms : '' I would call genealogy …a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history ''. Michel Foucault. Quoted in, Robert Young. *White Mythologies : Writing History and the West.* (Routledge, 2001),p.81.

20- Foucault explains that 'Bio-power' ''brought life and its mechanims into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of the transformation of human life ….Modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question'' . *The History of Sextuality.* Vol ,1. (New York : Pantheon ,1978),p.143 .

21-Michel Foucault. Quoted in Paul Rabinow, ed. *The Foucault Reader : An Introduction to Foucault Thought* . (London : Penguin ,1991(1984)), p.17.

22-Frantz Fanon. *Les Damnés de la Terre . (* Algiers : Réghaia ,1978 (Paris : Maspero, 1961)), p.157.

23-Chinua Achebe . '' The Role of Writer in a New Nation'', in *African Writers on African Writings.*ed . G.D. Killam .(London : Heinemann ,1973),p.11.

24-Interview with Achille Mbembe. Op.cit.

25- Chinua Achebe. Quoted in, *South Asian Responses to Chinua Achebe.* Op.cit ., p.171.

26-Terry Eagleton . *Marxism and Literary Criticism* .(London : Methuen ,1976),pp.16-17.

27-Louis Althusser . *Critical Theory Since 1965.* ed. Hazard Adams & Leroy Searle. (U.S.A : University Press of Florida ,1990),p.241.

28-Felix Oppenheim . ''Ideology and Objectivity'' in, *Ideology and Politics* . eds. Maurice Cranston & Peter Mair. (Italie : European University Institute ,1980),p.144.

29-Achille Mbembe. *On the Postcolony* .Op.cit., p.20.

30-V.Y. Mudimbe . *The Idea of Africa* . (U.S.A : Indiana University Press ,1994),pp.42-3.

31-Sembene Ousmane. 'The Writers Speak', in *African Writers on African Writing.* Ed, G.D. Killam. (London: Heinemann, 1973), p.150.

32-Taban Lo Liyong. *The Last Word: Cultural Synthesism*. (Nairobi: Modern African Library, 1969), p.66.

33-Michel Foucault. *Ethics, Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984.* Vol ,1. (London : Penguin, 2000(1994)), pp23-37.

34- Hannah Arendt . *The Origins of Totalitarianism* .(New York : Brace & World , 1967),p.461.

35-Annie Gagiano . *Achebe, Head, Marechera on Power and Change in Africa* .(U.S.A : Lynne Rienner , INC , 2001), p.100.

36-Ngugi Wa Thiongo . *Moving the Center : Struggle for Cultural Freedoms.* (Portsmouth : Heinemann,1993), p.85.

37-Ibid , .p.71.

38-Frantz Fanon .Op.cit ., p.204.

39-Wole Soyinka. *The Open Sore of A Continent : A Personal Narrative of the Nigerian Crisis.*(U.S.A :Oxford U.P , 1996),p.121. In the process of elucidating the Nigerian crisis of

governance, Soyinka opens readers to the broader questions of nationhood, identity, and the general state of African culture and politics at the end of the twentieth century. He takes the example of Ogoniland as the model space for the actualization of a totalitarian onslaught on the more politically liberated sections of the Nigerian polity, which have dared expose and confront the power obsession of the military-civilian hegemony. Ogoni (like Abazon in *Anthills*) is an oil-producing area that has suffered much ecological damage which has received world publicity largely due to the efforts of a passionate writer named Ken Saro-Wiwa, himself an Ogoni. As a leader of the Movement for the Salvation of the Ogoni People, he exposed the plight of Ogoni to the United Nations Minorities Councel. He agitated for compensation for the general destruction of what was once an organic economic existence of his people. Soyinka records that two or three years later, Ken Saro-Wiwa is held in chains in a hidden prison, sentenced to death by hanging, and executed on November 10th, 1995. Ogoni's people have taken to the surrounding forests to survive. Those who remain in townships and villages are subjected to arbitrary displacement, expropriation of their property, violence on their persons, and the rape of their womanhood. The government also incited ethnic animosity between the Ogoni and their neighbors, thus instigating an uncreasing round of bloodletting. This situation, Soyinka explains, serves the purposes of Abacha's government to settle their internal strife in the most public and brutal manner. In fact, the agony of these people is a model excercise toward the far more thorough subjugation that is planned for other parts of Nigeria. Soyinka stresses that ''the purpose of Abacha's bloody provocations was straightforward : to make it impossible for the victims of oil exploration to present a united front in their demands for reparations for their polluted land, a fair share in the resources of their land, and a voice in the control of their own development.''p.151.

40-Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology : A Study in the Marxist Literary Theory.* (London : N.L.B,1976) , pp.54-55. Quoted in : Arab, S. A . *Politics and the Novel in Africa* . Algiers : O.U.P , 1982) ,pp.9-10.

What makes *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* so daring and so thought-provoking is their capacity to take a deep insight into the working thoughts of African intellectuals as confronted by the very tempting world of power which their former ideals despise and deride. In other words, the two novels can be approached as books about the dichotomy of power and intellectuals. They unveil and testify to long and complicated contacts which range between experiences of submission and compromise and others of opposition and struggle. They are strongly biased since the writer never hesitates to criticize and expose the corruption and misrule of the African leaders on the one side and the anger he levels at the intellectuals on the other side. The novels show no sympathy or self-pity to the type of intellectuality which stands sometimes ambivalent in its position towards the oppressive hegemony, an intellectuality which, according to Achebe, will not change many things as it itself represents some aspects of that hegemony, as it is alienated from the lived realities of its people. For Achebe, by ignoring authentic traditional roots and idioms, and adopting protest for moralistic use of power within parlimentary representation and violent corrupt elections instead of active and shared resistance supported by the people's political consciousness, African intellectuals will produce only another vain discourse of power which would fall apart within its first real confrontation with the real lives of the poor excluded people.

Achebe's trouble in these novels is to find a redemptive way in which power and intellectuals can be juxtaposed without fears of corruption and misrule which only the poor and the powerless would suffer from. Between being members of the hegemony and then dissidents against the same hegemony, Achebe's intellectuals are to undergo progressive stages of degeneration and regeneration. In *A Man,* Odili the school teacher who aspires to a London diploma, and in *Anthills*, Chris the Minister for Information , Ikem the editor of the *National Gazette* and Beatrice the Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, who are all London University products, are somewhat at a distance from the people and insulated in their privileges . With the exception of Ikem, they are attracted to power, and seem to have a bourgeois mentality. They change only when serious events force them to leave the closed world

of power to reach the ‘other’ world of the people. In their attempt to reconcile the two spaces, Achebe exposes their dilemma in constituting a balanced identity between their notions of the self, the community and their social responsibility. The dilemma is, in effect, one of both experience and knowledge : how can intellectuals extend their experiences to those excluded from the power of representation and privileges ushered in by independence and how can they develop a fundamental knowledge about the conditions of a population so different from them ?

Within this issue, one has to set the position of Achebe’s intellectuals in the ladder of power and record the fact that they often stand powerless in the face of misused and abused power. More essentially, the crucial interest is to find out how they escape all those constraints to develop a culture of opposition and dissidence against that power. The point here is to discuss Achebe’s intellectuals’ attempt to found a solid counter-hegemony / counter power, initiated by symbolic signs of national power that would ‘re-establish vital inner links’ between leaders and led. For developing this issue, the thoughts of Gramsci, Said and Fanon, concerning the social responsibility of the intellectuals, would be much fitting in analyzing the ability of those intellectuals to raise challenges to redeem the ills of the new African nation.

Within his assumption of the political and civil society, Gramsci emphasizes that the incorporation of the two societies into a larger entity of socio-political existence can depend only on a social group of intellectuals that can ensure a homogeneous relationship between all social elements, with its history / tradition and the state of polity. In his interrogations about the cause of the dramatic failure of the Italian proletarian movements against fascism, Gramsci accuses them of their alienation from a concrete knowledge of their masses, that is, of their failure to form a real ideological tradition of the masses. For Gramsci, an element in the overcoming of this disconnection is the formation of ‘the organic intellectual’’. As opposed to the ‘traditional intellectuals’ who work and compromise with the ruling hegemonic class, ‘the organic intellectuals’ commit themselves to legitimizing the hegemony of a particular class. In this case they perform an organic function, i.e. they serve the interests of the class to which they belong ; the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. And as a proletarian leader, Gramsci encourages the implication that the organic intellectuals

have to constitute a group which situates itself in the heart of its society, absorbs the suffering of its people and struggles to bring social transformation. Gramsci emphasizes this resolution : ‘‘Aujourd’hui, ce sont les intellectuels comme masse et non comme individus qui nous intéressent ….Il est aussi important et utile que s’opère dans la masse des intellectuels une rupture de caractère organique, historiquement déterminée’’[1].

Gramsci’s recommendations on the function of intellectuals are relevant and germane to a study of post-independence African states where the government tends to represent a most alien element in the social life in general, and where the minority educated class elects itself as the definite ruling class of the illiterate masses. On this issue, Said, in his book *Des Intellectuels et du Pouvoir (1993)*, defines the intellectual as the ‘‘auteur d’un langage qui tente de parler vrai au pouvoir’’[2]. For Said, the relationship between true / lay intellectuals and power is that of antagonism. This case of antagonism is justified by the fact that true / lay intellectuals are representatives of the interests of the majority of the less represented in power and of the powerless. In this respect, according to Said, the authenticity or credibility of the intellectuals is neither the consequence of singing political slogans and programmes, nor the result of their alliance with unworthy utopian and unpractical programmes, but it is particularly an identification with fair and defensible interests. Taken in this way, and like Gramsci’s organic-intellectuals who strive to raise the political consciousness of the social class they defend up to a changed hegemony, Said’s intellectuals act with self-consciousness and commit themselves unhesitantly to the collective good of the poor and powerless people. Not very far from Said’s claims, Fanon emphasizes a permanent socio-political contact with ‘the wretched of the earth’. In his strong revolutionary tone, he stresses that the role of the intellectual after independence is to take the responsibility in maintaining a true sense of national liberation by being on the side of the people and by defending their interests. Fanon states clearly that ‘‘la chose la plus urgente pour l’intellectuel Africain est la construction de sa nation’’[3]. Politically speaking, constructing a nation in Fanon’s terms is to hold a culture of ‘national politics’ which has to be achieved through educating the people to the realities of the everyday lives of their country. In this regard, Fanon writes that ‘‘politiser les masses,

c'est rendre la nation globale présente à chaque citoyen. C'est faire de l'expérience de la nation, l'expérience de chaque citoyen ''[4]. And to construct this sense of national politics, Fanon explains that ''politiser les masses ce n'est pas, ce ne peut pas être faire un discours politique. C'est s'acharner avec rage à faire comprendre aux masses que tout depend d'elles, que si nous stagnons c'est de leur faute et que si nous avançons c'est aussi de leur faute ''[5].

Following first the Gramscian concepts of 'organic intellectuals', we will argue that Achebe's Western educated intellectuals (Odili, Ikem, Chris and Beatrice) who are trained to become 'traditional intellectuals' in their country have been convinced by their direct confrontation with the outside marginalized world of power to become 'organic intellectuals', carrying Achebe's over- all programme of social guidance and education. They are organic intellectuals in the sense that they become heavily engaged in understanding and also reacting to the hegemonic practices of their corrupt government. On the same issue, Achebe joins Said's and Fanon's opinion which is the faith in the positive role the educated class can play in the core of social progress and change. His intellectuals have sacrificed their comfortable positions, as representatives of the leading group, for the larger and just cause of the less represented in power and of the powerless, and to act as a guiding conscience of the masses.

Within this framework, Achebe attempts a process of incorporation, that is, to stage a type of Gramscian 'top-down', one that operates through the appropriation of popular elements by an elite to form one large homogeneous state. He forces his intellectuals to bring into work a general project of nation-building, a project that seeks to search for a flexible ideological framework which contains the entity of the whole nation, within its past and present socio-historical dimensions. This project can show that the practices of participation could evoke a new unity of consciousness, a new morality of common purpose in the service of new society that could transform local objectives into wider ones of building a multi-ethnic conception of interests. The Achebean organic society, however, has not to be understood in terms of the Marxist materialistic social cleavage between the bourgeoisie and the workers ; it requires, rather, the ratification of the basic human socio-political relations through what Fanon calls 'national politics' manifested in a good amount of political experience that can

offer suitable alternatives of government if the existing power fails to play its role towards the governed.

For a more critical study of the interrelation of power / dissidence, represented by the intellectuals, we will depend significantly on Williams' conception of 'counter-hegemony' and Foucault's system of 'power / resistance or dissidence'. In these terms, we will carry on the dialectical study of power which our first chapter has initiated, where we have dealt with hegemony and power.

For Williams, hegemony, as a process of systems and concrete experiences and relations of domination and subordination, manifests itself in a dual form. As a process, according to him, it is always 'renewed' and 'defended' but again 'resisted' and 'challenged'. Here, Williams shows that :

> A lived hegemony is always a process. It is not, except analytically, a system or a structure . It is a realized complex of experiences , relationships , and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits. In practice, that is, hegemony can 'never'be singular …. It does not just passively exist as form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated , defended , and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own . We have to add to the concept of hegemony the concept of counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony [6].

So, as Williams explains, hegemony can never achieve its total or exclusive domination because forms of alternatives or initiations of oppositions as other elements of politics or culture are always present to provide another hegemony, or a counter-hegemony. In this context, the hegemonic process is confronted with an alternative process which it has to work to control, to transform or even to incorporate it if it is significant to its survival as a hegemony. But, still along its struggle with those forms of alternatives and in its attempt to constitute them into its original specific process, hegemony proves that it cannot ensure ' a priori totality ' .

Not very far from Williams' concept of counter-hegemony, Foucault sees the relation of opposition or dissidence as an inevitable reaction in the system of power. He claims that ''no matter how terrifying a given system may be, there is always the possibility of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional grouping''[7]. Foucault's account of power is thus difficult to the degree to which he argues that the exercise and resistance of power work in a disruptive rather than a dialectical relation to each other,

suggesting that points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. In effect, according to Foucault, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a set of modification that does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon subject's actions, an action upon an action, for it can exist only through an active confrontation with the subject. So, following this relationship of responses and reactions, Foucault defines dissidence as '' the art of not to be governed here, in this way, by this people''[8], and the dissident as ''the person who is in global disagreement with the system''[9]. Here, Foucault identifies three types of resistance: against forms of domination, against forms of exploitation that separate individuals from what they produce, and against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others. But, still, all these types of struggle represent opposition against deformation and mystifying representations imposed on people, and which make them subjects.

In reading the two novels, we see that all the three types of struggle come to celebrate the very details of the state daily scenes. They are struggles which question the status of the ordinary man in his state, where tribal differentiations and segregation is the measuring standard of the country's leader himself ; struggles that attack everything which tears community life, as the 'have-nots' are left in the periphery deprived of their very right of saying 'no' to oppression and exploitation. In effect, they are struggles against the mechanisms of power which take the privileges of knowledge, competence and qualification as justification to take everything under its wing, to be the global overseer and the principal agent of the whole regulation of power relationship.

What is to be suggested immediately about the Foucauldian theory of power is the absence of a systematic framework of resistance. The latter has not the working strategies which power provides for its statistic activities of control and manipulation. Resistance is simply the production, more closely, the modification of another discourse, that is, the production of another form of power. In justifying this absence, Foucault states :

> I have absolutely no desire to play the role of a prescriber of solutions. I think that the role of the intellectual today is not to obtain , to recommend solutions , to prophesy , because in that function he can only contribute to the functioning of a particular power situation that … must be criticized . I reject the intellectual's functioning as the political party's alter ego, double , and alibi .[10]

To follow these words, Foucault refuses to play the role of the Marxist intellectual. His concern is to show how power functions and operates rather than to prescribe how it should be opposed and resisted. Robert Young[11] has aptly remarked that resistance in the Foucauldian system of power is centered on the individual subject, the same helpless subject of the dominating power, as a sovereign agent and not like the Marxist revolution which amounts to a collective class struggle.

In the same way, Achebe's dissidents correspond to the same Foucauldian tradition of power / resistance ; they are the same subjects of power who can flee its closed controlled spaces, and develop an ability for counter-power. However, what distinguishes Achebe's dissidents is that while Foucauldian dissidents make their own little plans to maintain autonomy, Achebe's dissidents develop their own hegemony and counter-power to free themselves and by the same token the completely subjugated people. Odili's, Ikem's, Chris's and Beatrice's dissidence stems from their own beliefs in, and convictions of, a useful redemption and moralization of the corrupt power as represented by its agents, the leaders, and accepted by its subjcts, the people.

In both novels, dissidence can be viewed as a threat to the existing foundations of power and hegemony and to the unity and stability it pretends to protect and preserve for the welfare of the country. This view has its roots in the very near history of the African one-party system of independence which had embraced its illusions of nationalism ; the genuine theory of the one voice of the government and the people for a general policy of exploitation and political dictatorship. Most often, the narrowest interpretation of the term 'opposition' has been the guiding principle for the opposition party both inside and outside parliament. The advocates of the one-party system maintain that too often the colonial power stages a comeback through the opposition party. Hence the elimination of the opposition is supposed to prevent neo-colonialism and a reconstruction of the new nation. Some maintain that an opposition too often can not distinguish between party and national matters, and that it has tended to undermine the stability of the new nation. Nkrumah, the Ghanaian leader of his independent state's one-party system, has remarked that the opposition party in Africa moves away from its designed political convention as a conscience of the ruling party. He explains

that in the context of the Western countries, the legal opposition is not a source of social instability or disunity as it is the case in Africa. For, on the contrary, it promotes social cohesion, subjects those in power to constant criticism to force them to run the country more effeciently through administrating real justice to all regions. Drawing this contrast, Nkrumah sees opposition in Africa only as a means used by those regional groups which are deprived of popular support to break the national unity and call for separatism. He emphasizes that the castigation of the cabinet is, to them, an end in itself rather than an instrument for securing better conditions for the people[12]. Senghor, an autocrat of his country, also distrusts all forms of opposition. For him, ‘‘the opposition is tempted to place itself, under the pretext of ideology, at the service of the foreigner…, the opposition parties are teleguided from the outside, from certain African and European states’’[13].

In contrast to Nkrumah’s and Senghor’s dictatorial charges, Achebe’s conception of dissidence is a call for a moralistic use of power within a nationalist framework : to develop a sense of responsibility and a new image of power through a broader support base –in general to widen the scope of political participation. In this regard, the dissidence of Achebe’s intellectuals is to be read as a spiritual and physical journey in an attempt to bridge the gap that power has built between government and people, and between the latter and intellectuals. To reach this meeting point, Achebe focuses more upon the manner in which to learn this lesson than upon the people his intellectuals must learn about, distinguishing, thus, the intellectual class as the dominant voice of the two novels. This mechanical working thought, however, leads many critics to question the faithfulness of Achebe’s populist approach and over the grounding of his social analysis. For the questions they ask here are : Where is the people Achebe speaks about ? And what role does he attribute to them beside the intellectuals’ leading mission ?

It should be clear that most of those critics, like Ngugi, Brown, Ngara, Ogede, who see weaknesses in Achebe’s social analysis, and, consequently, in his mode of representation, advocate a Marxist interpretation of his texts. For the Marxists, characterization is a crucial feature of representation. They do not see the imagined characters as free moving individuals. On the contrary, the characters who stage the

writer's fictional world also belong to social classes. And since Marxists hold that the working masses are the true makers of history, the images of the masses contained in literature are crucial signals of a writer's political attitude and position. In criticizing the liberal humanist writers, and Achebe seems to adopt their position according to those critics, Georg Lukacs writes :

> The writers of today do write for the people and about popular events, but the people themselves play only a secondary role in their novels. They provide a counter for the artistic demonstration of humanist ideals, though these ideals are certainly closely connected with the important problems of popular life. Seen artistically, then, the people provide simply a stage for the principal action, which takes place on a different plane, not directly connected with popular life .[14]

With respect to this issue, both novels are extremely criticized in terms of the mode of presentation and social analysis, notably the masses. According to most of those critics, the masses do not consist any longer of real, living people with living aspirations ; mass action is no longer the intensified expression of popular life hitherto, but something autonomous, that is a historical symbol. In sum, for them, they are used mainly as an abstract means of illustration, as a stage background. In criticizing Achebe's anger towards both leadership and people, Ngugi states that Achebe is totally ambivalent in handling the whole issue of power. For him, Achebe's problematic is to be read in this sense: '' Which do you change first in a society its politico-economic base (…) or the morality of individual men and women''[15]. Ngugi appears most impatient with Achebe's attitude to those whom he can only label the poor. He writes that : ''The teacher accuses them of all complicity in the corruption that has beset our society .Your indifference and cynicism has given birth to and nurtured chief Nanga (and Sam) , he says''[16] . In the same context, Ngara simply argues that Achebe's vision of social responsibility and commitment has proved to be completely detached from those it aims to defend. Considering characterization he states that :'' The intelligentsia occupies the centre of the stage in Achebe's world, while the other classes are either pushed to the periphery or relegated to oblivion''.[17] For his part, Ogede goes on to see Odili's indifference to his people as only a reflection of the writer's indifference and insensitivity towards the real victims of society when denying themselves a voice and a physical presence of their own [18].

Similarly on Onoge's view, the masses are said to be depicted as steeped in bourgeois filth and corruption[19]. This is what in the novels Ikem terms ''a diseased tolerance''(p.25), and Odili says when describing his people as ''silly, ignorant …cynical''(p.2). By such portrayal, for Onoge, the novels constitute a real structural weakness and ideological ambivalence. This world of diseased tolerance is superseded, according to Brown, by the so-called elitism in Achebe's philosophy of reform. Brown argues that Achebe's politics of reform, rather than revolution, is unacceptabe because it is based on imprecise and undefined concepts of human nature, adding that Achebe's populist ideology is contradicted by the logic of the mode of characterization he employs, and by so doing, Achebe ends up advocating not populism but an enlightened dictatorship of the elite. Brown asks what kind of vital inner-links with the poor precisely can be envisaged and how they might be re-established .

In fact, all this criticism and line of reasoning are beside the points Achebe wishes to advocate, they owe nothing to, and are contradicted by, the social vision which is assumed by Achebe in the two works. The masses are not as innocent as the Marxists pretend them to be. Achebe's society functions in its entirety, and no one is free of blame. Within this context, Dubem Okafor writes back to those Marxists' marring criticism of Achebe's realism and populism. Okafor argues that the people in Nigeria are not as innocent or angelic as those critics describe them (here, he addresses Onoge). He states that if Achebe is guilty of anything, '' he may well have been guilty of excess sympathy with the long oppressed''[20]. In a sense, what is to be emphasized is the failure of those critics to recognize the significance and the importance which Achebe instills his people with, their failure also to see how Achebe makes his intellectual characters fight and even die for the right and just cause of those powerless and voiceless people. In populating his stage with the intelligentsia, Achebe's end is not to preach what Brown terms 'an enlightened dictatorship of the elite'[21], but rather to utter and expose their failure in the mission they are entitled to hold towards ''the wretched of the earth….(the) largely silent and invisible''[22], and, significantly, to describe their struggle for self and social reconciliation and redemption .

Significant enough to our issue, Achebe's words are notably addressed to the oppressed themselves who turn a blind eye to their own oppressors' exploitation and corruption. Achebe shows no hesitation in bringing into show that apparent willingness of the oppressed to deride their government's arrogance and daylight crimes, and even to suffer with good humour the endless abuse of power ; ''An insistence'', as one character says in *Anthills*, ''by the oppressed that his oppression be performed in style''(p.113). It is precisely this terrifying insensitivity which completely disillusions Odili at the end of the novel, and which angers Ikem. He declares most sadly : ''But it wasn't Authority that worried me, it never does. It wasn't those officious footlings, either (…). It was the thousands who laughed so blatantly at their own humiliation and murder''(p.37). What forms the rationale of our argument is that Chris, Beatrice and to a very significant extent Odili and Ikem are representatives of many African intellectuals who soon after independence find themselves caught in a sphere of social alienation and a deep sense of confusion and struggle for social identification. What distinguishes them, however, from all other fictional African intellectuals, as we read about Soyinka's and Armah's disillusioned and passive alienated intellectuals, is their strong passion not only to criticize the system but essentially to seek out a way to challenge and to change its diseased structures. In other words, they strive to find a third meaning out of the gulf that exists between the oppressive hegemony and the oppressed excluded people.

The Circle of Power and Intellectuals in *A Man of the People*

A review of the critical reception of the novel and notably its protagonist, Odili, since its publication reveals marked divergences and mostly harsh attacks. The state of combining his quality of integrity with his consciousness of moral and social justice, a consciousness that is the motivating force behind his political involvement in his revenge action against Nanga at a personal level, has made some critics condemn him and even Achebe. According to Eustace Palmer, ''Odili, probably ranks as one of Achebe's most unpleasent characters. He is lecherous, egotistic, vulgar, shallow-minded''[23]. Similarly, Gerald More says that Odili '' is in many respects a potential Nanga'' and '' has a cheap desire to revenge himself on Nanga''[24]. Also, Adrian Roscoe accuses Odili of inveighing 'fickleness' on others ''while showing moral

weakness himself ''[25]. In fact, such criticism is beside the deep complicated insights Achebe wishes to address through the ambivalent identity of Odili. His confusion and sometimes limitations of action are primarily a reflection of the political mess he strives with difficulty to portray and criticize. He tries to collect the shatters and fragmentations of his society into a well-defined picture of possible awareness and understanding. In supporting this argument, Simon Gikandi rightly points out that ''Achebe was writing in a historical situation which was still incoherent ; the form and ideology of his novel was bound to carry the contradictions and confusions of the times, and if he fails to carry the message, it is precisely because the message is still forming as Achebe writes''[26].

In many ways, Odili stands, I believe, as a marked stereotype of the post-independence intellectual. The point, nevertheless, is not to accept the simplified classification that Fanon, Ngugi or Cabral have drawn about assimilation or commitment. The issue here is that Odili cannot be easily defined or classified in terms of that ladder, he transcends all those limits that will place him in a fixed and static posture. Through his introspective way of analyzing his actions and all other situations, we feel his strong desire to seek a state of self-awareness and consciousness. Odili himself calls the reader to witness the complexity of his character as he recognizes and reveals the confusion of his political and personal motives. This recognition has to be seen as a crucial stage because it helps him understand his own implications in the whole affairs of the country. Odili tells us : ''I had to ask myself one question. How important was my political activity in its own right ? It was difficult to say ; things seemed so mixed up''(p.108). Important is that this statement and all he says and does is a coherent move towards a better understanding. His statements and actions are all reflections of his internalization of the mechanical strategies which power uses to ensure its hegemony. Commenting about Odili's self-analysis, his creator, Achebe, says that '' as a somebody who puts his own feelings under the microscope and analyses them honestly, seeing where he's behaving badly and so on, I think such a person is worthy of respect ''[27].

Odili Samalu is a university graduate and secondary school teacher who aspires to take a post-graduate diploma from London and be accepted in a European society. His

political views are shown to be inseparable from his character. He is cold-minded, egocentric and alienated, seeking to get a certain autonomy. His alienation dates from the moment of his birth. His mother died when he was born and his father was a district interpreter for the colonizer. Despite all this alienation, Odili possesses idealism and a desire to participate in the creation of a better country. He has a fastidious theoretical view of public morality derived from his European type of education, a basis which we see him using at the beginning of the novel to judge the thoroughgoing corruption of the country as a whole. His ambition is to bring about a new era of cleanliness in the politics of the country. What upsets Odili, in fact, is the absence of any basis for general moral values which can tie all the sections of society, leaders and led. In this situation where there is no morality either in public conduct or private life, the people scramble to gather up crumbs from under the leaders' tables, waiting for opportunities, wishing each one, to be as successful as Nanga and never mind the price in morality or the damage to the public interests. Confronting this mess, Odili's Western idealism stands ambivalent about how to ''tell the poor contemptible people one or two truths''(p.2). But in the context of those ''ignorant and cynical'', as Odili describes them, there is nothing to be told, for ''tell-them that this man had used his position to enrich himself and they would ask you –as my father did- if you thought that a sensible man would spit out the juicy morcel that good fortune placed in his mouth''(p.2). It is this cesspool of corruption which Odili would strive to change and struggle against .

Under these conditions, Odili's idealism is tempered by an awareness of practical realities and a capacity for decisive action, if not always serviceable action. After his meeting and then association with power, Odili is to become nearly overwhelmed by Nanga's charisma and seduced by his opportunistic way of thinking and acting. What interests us as readers, is that the experience helps to clarify the discourse of power which the protagonist has to undergo. Each event and development in Odili's contact with Nanga show how the mechanical process of power works, and, so, how the whole process of subjugation is developed in all the details of that contact. It is worth mentioning that the whole experience does not require a long time to hold

Odili as a power's subject in its closed spaces of control, yet a process which would be, also, rapidly broken by the subject's rational awareness of its traps.

Following Foucault's theorization of 'discourse' we come to realize that Odili constitutes an important figure. He doesn't stand only to observe, survey or interiorize power strategies, but, rather to lay bare the intricacies of that power and even to fight it. Below are some instances of power's discourse as can be observed in this novel. We will discuss Odili's first meeting with power, Nanga. The meeting -it must be stressed- is a moment of threshold and rupture *par excellence*. It paves the way for a possible contact with Odili the idealist who can be taken as an enemy to the power which Nanga voices. As we will show, also, there are many possible ways to learn / to initiate the imposition of power during that peculiar meeting which is followed by other confrontations through that association.

During the first confrontation between Odili and Nanga (power) in the village celebrating homage of its Chief, Odili's usual disapproval and criticism stand rightly on the defensive. He expresses all his contempt for the Minister's mannerisms and pretentions. But when Nanga recognizes him and then hugs him, his need for affection and popularity makes him secretly delighted. As being recognized by his old teacher and the fact of being called by his old nickname ''Odili, the Great''(p.8), Odili learns what is to be singled out by 'a man of the people' for praise and attention. Describing the overwhelming influence, Odili says : ''I became a hero in the eyes of the crowd. I was dazed. Everything around me became suddenly *unreal* (…). I knew I ought to be angry with myself but I wasn't ''(p.9). In front of all the audience, Nanga addresses Odili loudly: ''*Don't you know that minister means servant ? Busy or not busy he must see his master* ''(p.9). And very quickly, Nanga seizes the occasion to invite Odili to stay at his house in the capital, Bori, and offers him assistance in terms of a scholarship to study in England .

All these events within its verbal linguistic statements announce the 'emergence of one discursive formation'. This early stage is called by Foucault 'Positivity' because the statements which cross this stage are theoretically free from any restraints or hideous meaning or intention. The objective of these statements in the large scale of power is to set the subject at ease, preparing him for a full appreciation of this early

stage of power. The influence of this stage is very apparent in Odili who has not to be blinded by power's ill intention if it is balanced by his former criticism and contempt of Nanga. On the contrary, he shows his acknowledgement towards Nanga's spontaneous and effective speech to his so-called 'family reunion', and, thus, unable to recognize that the speech is simply one of the strategies of power relations that are imbued, through and through, with calculations and series of aims.

Odili accepts the minister's invitation and makes his way to the capital, determined to use the opportunity offered to him to continue his relation with his past girl-friend. At this stage, Odili abandons his job as a village teacher to sample the opportunities of the big city. The first steps into Nanga's palace introduce Odili into a more developed stage of subjugation. And, here comes the second stage of the formation, 'epistemologization'. The hot welcome that Odili has received from the whole familly in his arrival, and, most particularly, Mrs Nanga's immediate orders to take a bath and to set for lunch help to build the formation more and more, for now Odili is set to enter the closed space of power. Here, the cast of 'Epistemologization' is with the purpose of codifying discourse, putting on an early step towards the intended 'non-discursive formation' plan of power.

Within this closed space, the process leaves the way to the third stage, 'Scientificity'. The stage is ensured in the visit which Nanga and Odili pay to Chief Koko, for the scholarship Nanga has promised Odili. In this stage, Nanga appears anxious to maintain his power over his subject. In the first evening of the visit, Nanga wishes to show Odili his seriousness and his so-called role of the servant to his people. The objective behind is to give the political discipline an impression of total disinterestedness and practicability in all its structures and actions. So, Odili who dreams of a high degree in western education has never to doubt the sincerity and seriousness of Nanga's offers. The fact that Odili uncritically trusts what is given and offered to him suggests an already complicated step added towards a non-discursive formation.

Up to this point, Odili is ready to enter the last stage of the formation, 'Formalization'. It is the stage when the discursive formations are in their climax of codification. This can be seen in the well-sophisticated room in which Odili as a

subject is installed. At this stage, all the old values and comments are totally undercut by his fascination with the luxurious comfort of the room ; each corner and detail produce tempting statements which further the process of the formation. In his words, Odili says : ‘‘All I can say is that on that first night there was no norm in my mind for criticism. I was simply hypnotised by the luxury of the great smite assigned to me (…). I had to confess that if I were at that moment made a minister I would be most anxious to remain one forever’’ (p.37). By taking this position, Odili is perfectly prepared to defend the minister against his critics (who presumably at one time included himself). Gradually, but surely, Odili begins to share the minister’s point of view and even behaviour. He also comes to share the point of view of the crowds, he had once detested, and to endorse their cynicism. We see him, for example, enjoying the deference and respect accorded to him when he turns up at the hospital in the minister’s chauffeur-driven Cadillac, and exploiting it for his interests. In justifying the influence of all these ‘Nangarian’ charisma, Odili goes on to identify poverty as a cause which prepares an easy temptation of the new men in power, an argument which lowers him to the rank of the corrupt politicians whom he criticizes. He says that : ‘‘(a) man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors all the time’’. (p.37)

In crossing all the stages of discursive formation to non-discursive formation, the experiment is complete and power is rightly held and set. Odili, the subject, is now caught ready to receive dictation from power, thus contrasting his ideals with the honor of privilege offered to him by this association with power. At this time, Odili joins the camp of the powerful against the powerless, of the ‘haves’ against the ‘have nots’. Odili’s own corruption by the unearned benefits of association with power is registered in his resembling Nanga both socially and sexually ; at his open–eyed justification of Nanga’s corrupt practices and in his lazy , indulgent lifestyle. His helplessness is revealed by the effect that the shock of his girl-friend’s seduction by Nanga has on him. All he can do is to pack his clothes and exit from the power’s palace. During this state of shock and final break with the traps of power, Odili experiences a phase of enlightenment and awareness. When he was being driven around Bori at night sightseeing and embarrassed at the exposure of his country’s

inadequancies, he begins to identify with ‘‘beggars sleeping under the eaves of luxurious department stores’’ (p.71). His noticing such social outcasts clearly recalls the central image of contrasting those inside the shelter of power and those excluded from it. This moment of insight is confirmed by his statement : ‘‘My head began to clear a little and I saw Bori’’(p.71).

Odili’s experience in Nanga’s palace -it must be stressed- plays a central role in the development of his ideas, a stage in which he undergoes a period of real confrontation with all the matters he was only criticizing. His disapproval of the politicians and the problems of government undermine a clear cut view as he comes near to their filthy practices and vain thoughts. His earlier ideals begin to look rather attenuated in the midst of this confused political world. He wonders if it is unrealistic ‘‘ to bring into politics niceties and delicate refinements that belonged elsewhere’’(p.11), realizing thus that the world of ideals and the world of power are irreconcilable. Significantly enough, Odili comes to discover the paradox that detachment implies lack of understanding, while involvement preludes objectivity and an awareness that philosophies and principles have to be prioritised. At this particular moment, Odili begins to plan his revenge against Nanga. He joins the political party led by his friend Max, People Conventional Party, a group of professional intellectuals, and moves on to contest Nanga’s seat in the village and seek out his intended parlour-wife (Edna). However, along all the disillusionment which he sees around him, his thirst for vengeance grows rapidly into something much more real and worthy. As a member of Max’s populist social party, Odili is chosen to contest the seat held by Nanga. In one way, the party is concerned with the plight of their country and prepared to organize themselves in order to change the power structure which denies people their rights. They are the only group that appears at the beginning of the novel, according to Odili, to hold true promises for the country’s sake, because unlike others, they are under no illusions of naive or unreal ideals. Max knows from the very beginning that they can not hope to win the election. The odds are too heavy against them beside Nanga’s wealth and British Amalgamated supports. The ambiguity of the party, however, is within its very name. The People’s Conventional Party, as Odili has noticed, is only a group of intellectuals who are completely detached from the people they seek to

represent and defend. Odili who criticizes this aspect is not to be excluded from the same judgement . Simon Gikandi sees Odili's 'incompleteness' in his 'egotism' and 'failure to extend himself to others'. And, in the same way, the same words can be said about the party. Gikandi adds that his / their ''failure is also symptomatic of a large breakdown between the self's relation to the other, whether this is a community or shared body of values. As a postcolonial subject Odili exists in a complex in which there is no shared and certain (…) system of values or thought into which he can extend himself and achieve fulfilment''[28]. What Gikandi, in fact, stresses in this respect, is the absence of a general social code which can unite and hold all the social members into one communal system of moralistic behaviour and mannerisms .

This dramatic vacuum is shown through the cynical and passive reaction of the people towards Odili's and Max's words and actions during their whole process of the struggle against their 'one chief, Nanga'. During Max's talk to the village about the government swindling and corruption, the audience find the words really amazing and many of them laughed. ''But it was'', the narrator says, ''the laughter of resignation to misfortune. No one among them swore vengeance ; no one shook with rage or showed any sign of fight. They understood what was being said, they had seen it with their own eyes''(pp.123-24). In the same way, Odili has no form of influence on the people. At the inaugural meeting of his constituency, Nanga's hirelings make a fool of him to the great delight of the crowd, and then he is threatened by Edna's father first with a machet and then with an allegory : ''My in-law is like a bull…, and your challenge is like the challenge of a tick to a bull. The tick fills its belly with blood from the back of the bull and the bull doesn't even know it's there''(p.106). In addition and in quick succession, he is sacked by his headmaster, abused by Mrs Nanga and intimidated by Nanga's supporters. These sad incidents make him come to a point of self-awareness and self-discovery. He discovers that his relation with Edna transcends all that vain sense of revenge, it becomes, rather, a strong emotion of love which gives his political action another orientation. At this point, Odili turns to study his whole political experience and motives, to question the significance of his political activity. He says : ''How important was my political activity in its own right ? It was difficult to say ; things seemed so mixed up ; my revenge, my new political ambition and the girl. And

perhaps it was just as well that my motives should entangle and reinforce one another'' (p.108). Following his capacity for self-analysis, it can be assumed that there is a possibility of the renewal of Odili the idealist. His love for Edna can be seen, I believe, as an initiation for a more developed social relationship with others as Edna represents the poor class of the village. Only now, his political ambition is at last recognized as a genuine desire to destroy Nanga and all the corruption he does stand for . He is not so much planning to win the election as he aims to expose him as much as possible. In effect, his ends have become '' more than another squabble for political office ; it rose suddenly to the heights of symbolic action, a shining, monumental gesture untained by hopes of success or reward ''(p.130).

The political scene portrays a clash between a deep rooted corrupt power and a moralistically-based ideal of dissidence, a clash which terrifies the weak foundations of the former, and challenges the ability and passion of the latter to stand secure from the inevitable temptations. Odili's idealism appears to be difficult to keep untarnished during the election compaign. He finds himself forced to produce the same discourses used by Nanga and his ministerial gang, the discourse of violence, by having armed bodyguards , and even bribery, by bribing important officials. In this regard, his guard has aptly explained the rules of that dirty political discourse : ''Look my friend I done tell you say if you no wan serious for this business make you go rest for house, I done see say you want play too much gentleman for this matter (…) Dem tell you say no gentlemanity de give other people minister (…) ?''(p.144). His father too, convinced as he is ''that the mainspring of political action was material gain ''(p.114), expects some material advantage from his son's political career. Everything around him forms a preoccupation at work on his mind. In the first place, Odili rejects the scholarship and the sum of money with which Nanga tries to bribe him into silence and keep him from seeking a parliamentery seat. Odili's rejection comes in spite of the fact that his father is the local chief of Nanga's party in the village, and in spite of the fact that Nanga informs him that Max has accepted a large bribe from Chief Koko and agreed to step down for him. These sweet temptations crumble before the force of Odili's moral stand and vision.

In effect, Odili's disillusionment is deepened by Max's acceptance of the bribe. When Max argues that he has no genuine intention to step for Chief Koko, that the party needs the money to fight its cause, that the public money is the money of everybody and that one cannot ''fight such a dirty war without soiling your hands a little''(p.126), Odili remains deeply shocked by Max's answers and justifications. What disturbs Odili is Max's venture into a further realm of dishonesty by accepting a bribe and then refusing to honour the agreement. Through Max's act, the very essence of their struggle , according to Odili -''I thought we wanted our fight to be clean''(p.126)- is jeopardised by a behaviour which will cause Max's death at the end, caused by Chief Koko .Odili says that : ''The real point surely was that Max's action had jeopardised our moral position , our ability to inspire that kind of terror which I had seen so clearly in Nanga's eyes despite all his grandiloquent bluff, and which in the end was our society's only hope of salvation'' (p.128).

Significantly enough for the struggle, Odili stands out in his pursuit of public morality despite the overwhelming spread of corruption. To borrow Adrian Roscoe's words, Odili has been endowed with ''righteousness and indignation towards a hopelessly corrupt political elite and a cynical people who recognize evil yet will not revolt against it''[29]. The triumph of Odili's moralistic politics consists in the very terror and fear he has seen in Nanga's eyes whom we see throughout all the sections of the novel running behind Odili, carrying all forms of seduction and temptation to silence those morals which threaten his position and the governing discourse of the country's politics of self-interest. At the end of the novel, however, Odili is finally physically incapacitated and prevented from carrying on the election, he remains nonetheless faithful to his moral convictions .

What upsets Odili and also the reader in the course of the events is the blind passivity and indifference of the people which facilitate the practices of all the prevalent politics. To bring the scene of the boycott of Josiah the trader into the last scene of Max's death by Chief Koko and his revenge by his fiancée Eunice in front of witnesses, one finds more than an ambiguity in the whole culture of politics which generates all the social behaviours and notions. The issue here is that of the failure of the struggle and of Odili himself to carry that local tradition of collective

consciousness of holding resistance against exploitation and greed to the wider sphere of the national resistance against that vain bloody struggle which surrounds the election. Odili suggests at the end of the novel that only the individual can act against those who are beyond the control of the community. Max is revenged not by the will of the people but by the honesty of his fiancée , which is only another value the government lacks and does not even understand .

The Complex Process of Nation-State Building in *Anthills of the Savannah*

What comes immediately to bridge the two novels is the project of nation-building which Max and Odili have failed to understand and initiate along their struggle ; a failure which stems partly from the dramatic corruption that forms the general basis of both the government and the people, and partly from the immature and incompetant grounding of the dissidents themselves. In *Anthills*, we will see the project in the making, initiated and also brought into possible existence by intellectuals who could learn how to associate their notions of the self and the lessons of the 'others', i.e. the people and the sense of social community .

Politically speaking, the concept of 'nation-state' enters the scene of history when the people had acquired a consciousness of themselves as crucial elements in the whole sphere of social and political relations. This transition took place after the French revolution which comes to release the ordinary man from the tyranny of the kings. The revolution means that if the citizens of a state no longer approved of the political arrangements of their society, they had the right and the power to replace them by others more satisfactory. Within this new conception, the nation-state emerged as a containor of both popular representation and national sovereignty. And as a new foundation of government, it substitutes the parliamonial and absolutist state which was required to rule a feudal system of social relations and productions under the sovereignty of the Monarch. It extends the limited absolutist body of the old system to contain all its belonging physical territory and population, and structured and organized within new capitalist productive processes on the one hand, and the old net works of the absolutist administration, on the other hand. This state of juxtaposition of both the old and the new is balanced by a unifying assumption

conceived in a national identity defined in : shared cultural and historical entities ; continued blood-relations ; a spatial continuity of territory ; and linguistic commonality. This new active sovereignty is recorded in Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt's compelling study, *Empire*. They write :

> (T)he construction of national identity guarantees a continually reinforced legitimation, and the right and power of a sacrosanct and irrepressible unity. This is a decisive shift in the concept of sovereignty . Married to the concepts of nation and people, the modern concept of sovereignty shifts its epicenter from the mediation of conflicts crisis to the unitary experience of a nation-subject and its imagined community .[30]

In his political booklet *The Trouble With Nigeria*, Achebe deals with the Nigerian dream of nationalism – 'Pan –Nigerian vision' – which was destroyed, he says, by ''our corruption, gross iniquities, our noisy vulgarity, our selfishness''.[31] Achebe writes in this respect that : '' Perhaps it was an unrealistic dream at the best of times, but some young, educated men and women of our generation did dream it''[32]. In fact, Nigeria which ceases to exist as a nation in reality appears to trace some possible signs of realization in Achebe's fiction, a dream which Ikem, and then Chris and Beatrice come to realize by abdicating their high positions in power for the sake of the nobler cause of struggle on the side of the people.

Achebe's project is clearly to invent out of the post-independence confusions a tradition of nation-state which can hold everything in a more balanced totality. In *The Invention of Tradition* [33], Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger argue that nationalism and colonialism at the end of the nineteenth century both successfully invented traditions of thoughts and imagined theories that defined Africa before the supposed dawn of history. Similarly, the nostalgia underlying the negritude episteme is partially accountable for another ''invention''- one that conflates traditional Africa with both innocence and heroism. Achebe's invention of the nation, however, requires a Gramscian tradition of incorporation between the elite and the masses, and a unified space which would include both the village and the state. The task here is the completion of the whole social circle. In the novel, Chris thinks it is possible to create the nation-state from the top down, by starting with the idea of the state. He explains that Sam's institutions and laws of government are not based on the model of contemporary European nation-states of democracy, but, rather, on the ancient bloody-

tyrants of Moghul India and precolonial Africa. When Ikem is invited by Sam to help him build 'his nation-state' , he rejects the project because he believes that the true nation-state is not to be built, but, rather, it grows from below , starting from the nation and not from the state. It is in this respect that Ikem believes in a struggle that seeks to found a national construction which embraces all the society through a new different discourse whose story would be told by modern story-tellers, i.e. the intellectuals.

What makes *Anthills of the Savannah* most distinguishable in all of Achebe's works is its dependence on the art of story-telling as performed by its protagonists while telling the story of their struggle against the oppressive hegemony. The writer presents this relation between history and narration through the significant role of story-teller as presented to us by the elder from Abazon. In *A Man of the People*, Odili, the story-teller of the novel's struggle, stands in front of a huge audience and tells Nanga : ''I come to *tell* your people that you are a liar''(p.140). In each utterance, Achebe advances the important role which story-telling can play in social change. Through *Anthills*, story-telling embodied in literature is not a mere exercise in creating , but an active expression of the daily struggle to 'survive' , to 'resist' and even act to create consciousness in those victimized people to resist power and to point out the legitimacy of their cause and their capacity to triumph. In most specific words, the story functions as one aspect of the people's political education *par excellence*. In Achebe's words : ''You have the story, you have the story-teller, so, it is an exploration of the story and the story-teller and the way in which those who commendeer power would wish to commendeer history and so would be afraid of story-tellers''[34]. According to the Abazon elder, story-telling takes primacy over other activities because it subverts the lies of history and opposes political misruling. Story-tellers are, in fact, special people because they tell of unrecorded, unmarked tales of struggle against oppression. In exemplification, the old man narrates the story of the tortoise and the leopard and likens the struggle of the people of Abazon against the dictator to the struggle between the puny tortoise and the strong leopard. The tortoise does not show any resistance, yet wishes to leave some signs which will 'tell' that he makes the struggle. It is the case with the Abazonians who vainly fight the oppressor, ''perhaps to no purpose except with the hope that those who come after us will be able

to say: True, our fathers were defeated but they tried''(p.123). For telling their story of the struggle against the military oppressor, the old man and his delegation are arrested and held in solitary confinement. In narrating the old man's story of the leopard and the tortoise to Bassa University students, Ikem calls attention to the threat which story-tellers present for those in power : ''Because story-tellers threaten all champions of control, they frighten usurpers of the right-to-freedom of the human spirit''(p.146).

From these perspectives, the stories of the struggle are told not by an old story-teller but by modern intellectual story-tellers who follow the example of traditional story-telling –dialectic and didactic relationship with the audience – to inform their audience and readers of their corrupt state in which they are directly involved. In a sense, they are more than mere tellers of the action, they are themselves the agents of the struggle they try to interpret, for they are not marginalized in the power systems they tell about. In Jameson's view : ''Every individual interpretation must include an interpretation of its own existence, must show its own credentials and justify itself''.[35] Subsequently, ''the argue to please'', which was the mark of traditional story-telling , now gives way to disturb the audience's consciousness and force them to reflect upon their notions and thoughts. In trying to draw out defined spaces for the nation along the stories they tell, these intellectuals have to interrogate their past and the near present, to revise their meanings in order to explain the choices they have made as intellectuals alienated from their people. Through their different attitudes and views, Achebe questions the contradictions and differences that invoked the national voice. The old man, in speaking about the story, argues that all the stories and the ideologies they support have a dialogic character, ''for what is true comes in different robes''(p.118). Here, it is the contrast between the earlier nationalist narratives that had assumed that the nation spoke one truth in one voice and the post-independence narration which comes to terms with different voices which function in the new society. This sphere of representation can be confronted more limpidly under the tradition of hermeneutics as it is represented in the hermeneutical circle which requires interpretation and understanding. David Hoy has argued that the hermeneutical circle is '' a fundamental principle of man's understanding of his own nature and situation. Understanding, and with it the hermeneutical circle, becomes a condition for the possibility of human

experience and inquiry''[36]. On the other hand, by telling the story from the different perspectives of the three main characters, Achebe contrasts the nationalist longing for a homogenized form and culture with the fragmentation and contradictions which inform the post-independence situation. Mbembe's distinguished analysis of the post-independence era has aptly described this state of fragmentation and tension. In defining the 'postcolony' and in articulating the entanglement of its multiple and overlapping temporalities, he explains in particular :

> I define the postcolony as a timespace characterized by proliferation and multiplicity. As a temporal formation, the postcolony is definitely an era of dispersed entanglements, the unity of which is produced out of differences. From a spatial point of view, it is an overlapping of different, intersected and entwined threads in tension with one another.[37]

Achebe captures that timespace of multiplicities and differences in the language of narration which advocates different voices and narratives. Through each narration, Achebe is trying to present paradigms and ideologies that define a given conflicting perspective of the whole era. As Bakhtin has noted, ''(T)he speaking person in the novel is always , to one degree or another , an ideologue and his words are always ideologemes . A particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world, one that survives for a social significance ''.[38]

As we will see, Ikem's, Chris's and Beatrice's narratives of their struggle are motivated by the need to overcome anxieties about their own position in the history of the nation. Their striving for social significance is futile without a clear recognition of the relationship between self and other. For the common understanding of this problematic of the post-independence condition, varied ideological strategies of thoughts offer different modalities as to the reconstruction of the new national frame. About this frame, Edward Said has asserted that ''(o)ne way of getting hold of the commonest post-colonial debate is to analyze not its context , but its form , not what is said as how it is said, by whom, where, and for whom''[39]. This issue of form is what Chris has in mind when he tells Beatrice that ''there is nothing concrete on which Ikem and I quarrel. What divides us is style not substance. And that is absolutely unbridgeable''(p.112). But, it is this unbridgeable state which the dissidents of the national struggle strive to overcome in their attempt for a unified co-existence. For

whatever their differences as intellectuals they never doubt or question the veracity of their project of nation-building and their faith in representing the voiceless of the embittered African history. In what follows, we will see how the three protagonists are transformed from detached witnesses and story-tellers into active participants and, more specifically, how they begin to acknowledge the reality of the other world when they are forced out of their positions as the political crisis develops. In sum, I am going to examine the way Achebe makes them undergo a forced education through a series of revelations, conversions and startling insights on which the circles of leaders and led , elite and people , past and present are brought into possible meeting grounds.

Ikem can best be described as Achebe's voice heralding a post-independence intellectual project. His dilemma of self as intellectual and notions of community and social responsibility are made apparent when witnessing ''the stubborn sense of community''(p.135) that binds Elewa, his market girl-friend, and the taxi driver. The scene interrogates his position as an editor of the government newspaper and as a literary artist in the society he has to belong to and defend. Reflecting on his isolation, Ikem finds the whole issue of social commitment conditioned by many interrogations : ''What about renouncing my own experience, needs and knowledge ? but could I ? I could renounce needs perhaps, but experience and knowledge, how ?''(p.136). The one thing that Ikem knows for certain is that he can help everyone who crosses his path. He decides that he cannot renounce his experience and knowledge to become like the poor : ''What I know, I know for good or ill – so for good or ill I shall remain myself ; but with deliberate readiness now to help and be helped''(p.136). As an example of the Gramscian organic intellectuals, and also as a realization of Said's and Fanon's calls upon the African post-independence elite, Ikem is well drawn in his role as editor of the *National Gazette.* As conceived by Sam, Ikem's job involves broadcasting the President's messages to the people, manipulating facts and truths as the government pleased to. Ikem, however, believes in the freedom of the press, and wants to close the circle of communication between the people and the institutions of the state. He himself ''had always felt a yearning without very clear definition to connect his essence with earth and earth's people''(p.134). In a very eloquent image, Ikem describes how to reconcile the two separated worlds : ''I have arms that reach

out in all directions – a helping hand (…) with one I shall touch the earth and leave another free to wave to the skies''(p.136). Along this image is his dream of a utopian existence in which the devices of nation and self might meet, a dream which requires him to turn his writing to the realities that lie between him and ''the final goal of his search''(p.134).

Through Ikem, Achebe advances his call upon the artists' responsibility as intellectuals to bear a social vision above any sense of cowardice or withdrawal under the threats of power. Ikem is shown to be willing to pursue politics with selfless passion and to undergo deprivation rather than foresake his principles of social reformation. To his immediate boss' exhortation for editorial restraint, Ikem replies : ''As for my editorials, as long as I remain editor of the *Gazette* I shall not seek anybody's permission for what I write (…) If you don't like it you know what to do ?''(p.40). In Chris's opinion, Ikem lacks political pragmatism, he is a romantic writer who has no solid contact with the ordinary people he writes about. Chris goes on to identify him with the Don Quixote type of fictional character and with utopian dreams of heroism and visionary yearnings of changing the world. Still, Achebe who does not share this view advances many incidents which show Ikem's concrete commitment to the issues of his society. Witnessing the incident of the public execution of armed robbers, Ikem opens debates about the issue and writes in criticism of the government laws which permit those outrageous and revolting performances, an act which leads to the issuing of the public Executions Amendment Decree.

His struggle undergoes a great reinforcement after his meeting with the old man of Abazon, and the visit to his home by the two taxi-drivers whom he had bullied in the traffic. The old man had urged him to reiterate the story of their struggle against the governing hegemony of the country, and, on the other side, the taxi-driver had come to thank him for his commitment as editor to their uplift. In one way, the two taxi-drivers' visit illustrates the social effect of the press upon the ordinary people. One of them, though uneducated, shows a marked appreciation of the effectiveness of Ikem's editorials : ''But na for we small people he de write everytime. I no sabi book but I sabi say na for this oga de fight, not for himself. He na big man. Nobody fit do fuckall to him. So he fit stay for house, shop him (…) and forget we. But he no do

like that. So we come salute am''(pp.129-30). The passage underlines strongly Ikem's deep touch with those ordinary people. The taxi-driver's analysis of the remedial outcome of Ikem's editorial on the striking 'Central Taxi Park for Slaughter Road', shows how he articulates some of his society's needs.

Ikem's most effective role appears through the old man of Abazon, his native region. Faithful to his native people, he stands as their political guide in the conflicting issues of the country. For example, the silence of Ikem in the issue of His Excellency's referendum is a message for them to refuse his election. The old man echoes the taxi-driver's words and stresses : ''I have never read what they say he writes because I do not know ABC. But I have heard of all the fight he has fought for the poor people in this land''(p.117). Through the words of those selfless individuals, Ikem can prove that the press, when represented by responsible intellectuals, can do the job of social enlightenment even in the minds of the most excluded from all kinds of political and ideological debates.

To escape the traps the government tries to hold over his reformist writings, Ikem abandons his position as editor, and goes on to speak out more boldly his ideas of reform and change. Through his lecture of reformist analysis of power and all the societal ills it causes, one can see clearly Achebe's over-all project for modifying the conflicting resolutions and tensions that shape the post-independence state. During the lecture, he speaks extensively, passionately and uncompromisingly against the real enemies of the people. Achebe believes that the solution to the complexities of the present state ought not to be seen at the level of systems or ideological doctrines, whatever they are. Ikem states that the various ''simplistic remedies touted by all manner of salesmen (…) will always fail because of man's stubborn antibody called surprise''(p.94). Here Ikem hints most essentially at the vulnerability of those revolutionary theories when confronted with the realities of action and the demands they require. In Ikem's views, the reformism whether 'bourgeois' or 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat', which many of the new African countries advocate, is doomed to failure. In explaining the issue, he says that it is because any manner of reform could only be meaningful and viable if it is built around the existing local core of social values and unique historical conditions which will not easily adopt alien

theories of struggle and social traditions. In these terms, Achebe rejects the Marxist centralist notion of oppression, for, according to him, ‘‘there is no universal conglomerate of the oppressed (…) (they) inhabit each their own hell’’(p.94). The solution to change the system totally, Achebe says, would only bring the whole machine to disaster. Ikem analyses and projects this view by saying that : ‘‘The most we can hope to do with a problematic individual psyche is to reform it (…) not around an intellectual abstraction’’(p.95). Ikem sees this mode of reform as the most promising solution, rather than a revolution which can only change the labels of oppressors and oppressed .

On the same issue, Ikem comments on the theory of class and class struggle, and calls to question some of the fundamental notions of historical Marxism, including the idea of millennium and the writers’ function in society. Through Ikem’s dialectic analysis, Achebe suggests that social Marxism is not a realistic approach to society and politics but a rather sentimental utopian vision of the world and a simplistic remedy to the issue of oppression. For his part, Achebe does not believe that once a socialist and communist revolution has taken place, all the social ills are bound to disappear. In Ikem’s voice, Achebe speaks challengingly : ‘‘The sweeping, majestic visions of people raising victorious like a tidal wave against their oppressors and transforming their world with theories and slogans into a new heaven and a new earth of brotherhood, justice and freedom are at best grand illusions’’(p.94). Still with Marxism, Ikem addresses the all important question of the writer’s role in the social struggle. Achebe appears to deride all the materialistic ready-made solutions which the theory demands from writers. For him, the writer does not provide ‘solutions’ to problems , he argues ; a writer does not give ‘answers’, but asks questions ; he does not give prescriptions, he gives headaches. In effect, writers shake people’s thoughts to reflect upon their conditions of lives to arise a general consciousness of all their wrongs and failures. At this stage, Achebe writes back and answers the Marxist ‘what next / then’ question in these terms: ‘‘No I can not give you the answer you are clamouring for (…) I can not decree your (…) text book revolution. I want instead to excite general enlightenment by forcing all the people to examine the condition of their lives’’ (p.151). This view is well-emphasized in one of his dialogues where he

defines the role of the writer / novelist as a 'teacher'. He says that : ''a good teacher never prescribes, he draws out, (…) drawing out of what is there, leading out (…) the pupil to discover, to explore''[40]. And it is just this mission which Achebe calls upon the African intellectuals to play towards their people to face the confusion of the time.

Ikem's over-all political discourse in the whole analysis stands as a highlight for his main desire ''to reestablish vital inner links with the poor and dispossessed of this country, with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation's being''(p.135). He believes that no meaningful political progress could be made without including a real participation of the people, for they are the only source which legitimizes the existence of any government. In this connection, Ikem does not belittle the role of any small social element ''in putting this nation finally on the road to self-redemption''(p.153). Instead, his speech to the students puts all the social classes into political balance, putting faith in a society which investigates the forces of all its members – peasants, workers, intellectuals, women - in building a government for everybody, based on a discourse of 'purgery' and 'cleanliness', for, in Ikem's words, '' you cannot do that unless you first set about to purge yourselves, to clean up your act''(p.153). His public proclamation of his intent to marry an ordinary illiterate petty-trader's daughter, like his preference for his old and battered car to being chauffeur-driven in a company-car, pledges his faith in a society not governed by class and status. It is this faith that galvanises not only Chris, but also the student leader to see beyond his death his vision of tomorrow in which power is used rightly for the benefit of 'All '.

By looking challengingly at the corruption in power and by laying bare its history of lies, Ikem is accused of influencing the students and of masterminding a plot to overthrow the government. He is taken by the secret police in custody and is fatally wounded. Ikem is killed but he has fulfilled his role of precursor to make straight the way for ''other anthills'' to struggle and to tell the story of the drought.

Chris Oriko, Commissioner for Information through whose eyes we see the government, is presented as evidence of the impossibility of living the detached life in a world of unchecked power. Ikem puts it in most proverbial wisdom : ''Power is like marrying across the Niger ; you soon find yourself paddling by night''(p.41). From the

very beginning of the novel, Chris hints at the corrupting influence of power. And still, his direct involvement in the process of government prevents him from perceiving the signs of misrule and abuse that Ikem is able to interpret accurately and even to criticize and die for. Chris says : ‘‘I have thought of all this as a game that began innocently enough and went suddenly strange and poisonous’’(p.1). Chris stands only as a witness who comments on the practices of power. On the one hand, he aknowledges his complicity in advising the new head of state on his succession to power and all the wrong appointments he has for his cabinet, and wishes sometimes to rationalize Sam’s act, notably against Ikem’s writings. On the other hand, he himself is becoming increasingly disillusioned with the ‘‘corridors of power’’. This cynical and powerless perspective coming from a man who is in charge of national communication speaks most dramatically for the disenfranchised populace of his country. In fact, Chris appears as much responsible for Sam’s unchecked obsessions with power as the others in the cabinet do. He explains to us his silence as ‘detached clinical interest’. Like Odili, Chris adopts the policy of appeasement towards the ruler, and shows no feeling of guilt over his moral deterioration; he says : ‘‘It meant nothing at all to me – no inconvenience whatever – and yet everything to him’’(p.1). He rationalizes his lack of integrity by saying that he has despaired of fighting the dictator, and has no energy left to resign from cabinet or to go into political exile. All his so-called reasonableness and considerateness are clearly ploys adopted to enable him to stay in power.

Chris comes to embrace the role of organic intellectual only when Sam turns nasty and Ikem is killed ; subsequently he resigns his post and goes into hiding. After his own resignation, he, too, like Ikem, begins to internalize the value of the poor and the oppressed, presented in the figures of the drivers, students and all the friends who support him in hiding. Only then, does his mind start putting the same interrogations which Ikem first tries to resolve. In this respect, he asks in a condemning tone: ‘‘Why did we not cultivate such young men before now ? Why, we did not even know they existed if the truth must be told ? We ? Who are we ? The trinity who thought they owned Kangan’’(p.183). Symbolically enough, Chris comes to learn the lesson of the ‘people’ and to identify with them when he is forced to flee the threatening death of the killing hegemony, by disguising as a poor motor mechanic in the company of

Immanuel, the student leader, and Braimoh, the taxi-driver. His journey to Abazon can be seen as a holy pilgrimage in which he undergoes a process of self-examination and, more essentially, a possibility of a re-birth. As a journey of deep self-analysis, Chris, like Odili, revises his assessment of himself as an intellectual and a holder of hegemony. He realizes two significant truths : on the one hand, he acknowledges that the nation belongs to the people, not to those presumed talented elite who think that they own the land ; on the other hand, he realizes when dressed as a poor mechanic but unable to behave like one as nearly discovered by the soldier on the checkpoint, the difficulty and inability of the power group to reduce the distance between themselves and the people of the earth. What Chris stresses here, is the pragmatic resolution of the difficulty of passing what he calls 'Poor Man Elementary Certificate'. But what he knows most is that : ''I no know before today say to pass for small man you need to go special college'' and ''to succeed as small man no be small thing''(p.186). In his rediscovery of these social realities, Chris can free himself from the weak and artificial stands of power position; he can go along symbolic moments of regeneration in a new image formed by both his experience as an elite member and his most decisive act of dying to defend a poor school-girl from her ravisher, a police officer who only interprets the meanest practices of that hegemony.

What one may envisage in Chris's journey from Bassa to Abazon is a dramatic allegory of the failure of Ikem's dream of the nation-state. During this course of the Great North Road journey, Chris reflects on the country's contradictions that are aptly drawn and interpreted in the physical phases of the landscape as the bus 'Luxurious' moves from the green forests of the South into the desert dead lands of the North. In a sad apocalyptic transformation, the cocktail-circuit of the city is contrasted to the impoverished rural areas, the forest is contrasted to the savannah, and the car itself, through the writing it has on its back – ''What a man commits (…) follows him?''(p.194) - carries the death and threats which power preserves for its victims and challengers everywhere they escape. The allegory in one important way stresses the country's economic and political inequality and neglect which constitute some of its heavy odds in the failure of all the attempts to realize the national dream which Ikem dies for and which Chris has sadly witnessed moments before his death.

With the third witness and story-teller, Beatrice, Achebe's project of social and political unity and incorporation is completed. Through her story of herself as it is linked to the overall count of the country, Achebe suggests that in both power and gender politics, the dominant or the hegemonic group must learn to bridge the distance with the subordinate group and respect the latter's dignity. As a subordinate member in a hegemony of male power, Beatrice's autobiographical account stems from an attempt to trace her own weaknesses as a woman and check allegations made by people who see her as a power-hungry woman manipulating the men in power. Her task of bringing together as many broken pieces of this tragic history as she can is not an attempt to romanticize her past but to come to grips with the present and tell the story herself rather than having it told to her by others, notably men. She is friendly with the president, has a sisterly relationship with Ikem, and is the girl-friend of Chris. In a significant way, Beatrice is able to articulate the socio-historical contradictions that feature the post-independence arena. When she is invited to His Excellency's important and personal party, her initial speculation is that she is being called upon by the head of state to play a mediatory role in the conflicts of the men in power. At the party, however, she discovers that this is not quite the case, and instead she has been invited in recognition of her qualification, as Sam describes her, 'one of the brilliant daughters of this country', a woman who has a first-honours degree not from a local university but from Queen Mary's College. During the party, Beatrice witnesses how the masks of power and the militarized versions of Sam's politics are stripped by Miss Cranford, the American journalist girl who has become too familiar with the government and even with the president himself. She sees also the political elite's appalling misbehaviour, particularly the eagerness with which they court the approving eyes of Westerners. Beatrice can hardly tolerate the fact that the unknown American journalist has been given easy access to many of the country's sacred symbols, including the government with its leaders, while the local citizens are completely locked out of that space. The visiting American shows that she is far less concerned about the interests of the country to which she has come ostensibly as an advisor on foreign affairs than she is with protecting Western interests in the area. The whole scene is an echo to Nkrumah's criticism of the African neo-colonialist states

which have stood as easy targets for the greedy plans of Western imperialism. Disgusted with the whole atmosphere, Beatrice is bold enough to accost the head of state who normally reduces his ministers to the status of mere boys : ‘‘If I went to America today, to Washington DC, would I, could I, walk into a White House private dinner and take the American president hostage. And his Defence Chief and his Director of CIA’’(p.76).

In an attempt to defend her people and to rescue what she describes as ‘the sacred symbol of my nation’s pride’, Beatrice tries to seduce Sam and save him from the hands of the American seducing journalist: ‘‘I cheapened myself. God ! I did it to your glory like the dancer in Hindu temple (…) for my long-suffering people’’(p.76). But the American imperial temptations are much stronger and more decisive in taking the country’s treasury, for ‘‘(T)he kings treasury was broken into last night and his property carried away –his crown, his scepter and all ’’ (p.103).

In spite of her influential role in the state, Beatrice is aware of her marginalization because of her gender. Her role starts at the very strategic traditional moment when the men are all dead and only the women are left, like the proverbial anthills, to witness the past of drought and destruction. She starts from the immediate moment when Ikem and then Chris are silenced, and looks forward to carrying on the struggle. In writing the story of this struggle, she comes to realize the inseparable line between the story of the country and her personal experience as an oppressed social element, i.e. woman. Thus, her recollections of her father and his insistence on the subordinated position of females in the household foretell her future marginalization in the political culture of her country. What is of direct interest for our issue of nation-building is that like Ikem and Chris, Beatrice is made to hold an incorporation project, a process which proves a strong and deep-rooted union between an intellectual modern woman and an almost poor alienated group of simple ordinary working women. Her initial distance from the common people is conveyed in her arrogant relationship with her housemaid, Agatha. Beatrice displays rudeness and meanness towards Agatha who in turn retaliates by showing a slave’s sullen disobedience, sulking or tears. It is only after the death of Ikem and after she has taken Elewa, Ikem’s intented wife, into her flat that she changes her behaviour towards Agatha and even gives her apologies. This

experience is reinforced by all the events which follow Ikem's death and Chris's escape then death, and also her own escape from death. For during this crisis, Beatrice remains in Bassa helping the fugitives and forming a community with all the oppressed victims of the violent government, an experience which encourages her to learn about the life of the poor urban workers and even attending to their wounds and ills by spending a night with Chris, before his death, in one of the houses of those poor.

It is most suitable to conclude the chapter by drawing a line between the political struggle portrayed in the two novels and the distinguished role which Achebe confers on his female characters to take part part in it. In many ways, his political standpoint transcends all the social concerns of the oppressed, notably women. Through the scenes of struggle of both novels, Achebe wishes to show that 'woman is really something', believing that she can assume the same responsibilities men have, and even to take the initiative to change if the latter prove their failure and powerlessness. Eunice in *A Man of the People* and Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* are just in the heart of the struggle, exploring together with man all the tensions and conflicts of their state. They are involved in the same venture in different roles. Their political standing is interesting because they stand out as virtually the most selfless female characters among all others whose activities and reactions are not inspired by ulterior motives. They are self-sufficient and, to use Kenneth Little's words, they are without any doubt ''persons in their own right''[41], proving their ability to understand and even to react to the most terrifying scenes of murder.

In the first novel, Eunice is a lawyer. She is the fiancée of Max and has her part in the foundation of their socialist party that opposes Chief Nanga. When Max is shot by the thugs of Chief Koko, Eunice takes decisive and revolutionary action by shooting Max's murderer. About this strong act, Achebe writes pointedly : ''Only then (does) she fall down on Max's body and begin to weep like a woman (…). A very strange girl, people said''(p.143). In a story of the total breakdown of law and order, where looting, arson and political killing have become rife, a single act of retaliation by an injured girl is considered 'strange'. Her shooting of Chief Koko can be viewed in two ways, one of which is that, it is a political act that catalysed reaction against

corrupt and irresponsible government. In its more symbolic interpretation, Odili reflects on the moralistic dimension of the act, on how selflessly Eunice avenges the death of Max, concluding that ‘‘(i)n such a regime you died a good death if your life had inspired someone to come forward and shoot your murderer in the chest without asking to be paid’’(p.149).

In *Anthills*, Beatrice projects Achebe’s new vision of women’s roles and clarifies Ikem’s hazy thoughts on the issue. Ikem accepts that his former attitude towards women has been too respectful, too idealistic, looking at the female subject on the margin of the periphery, where she is ‘‘just irrelevant to the practical decisions of running the world as she was in the old days’’(p.93). It is Beatrice who gives Ikem an insight into a feminist concept of womanhood, challenging him over the inadequacy of his political thinking. She holds the view that ‘‘giving woman today the same role which traditional society gave them of intervening only when everything else has failed is not enough’’(p.87), and she sees this as a weakness in his original political position , a fact which blurs his vision as a writer. It is her discussions with him on questions such as these that lead him to respond suddenly later by undergoing a complete conversion to her views and formulate his new theory on women as another oppressed social group, and claiming that he owes his insight on the feminist concept to Beatrice.

As a politically active wowan, Beatrice is articulate, independent and self-realized, showing her vision in re-evaluating woman’s position by asserting that ‘‘(i)t is not enough that women should be the court of last resort because the last resort is a damn sight too far and too late’’(p.87). In Beatrice, Achebe strives to complete his overall project of social incorporation, striving also to affirm the moral strength and intellectual integrity of African woman, especially since the social conditions which have kept women down in the past are now largely absent. Urbanization and education have combined to broaden women’s horizons of participation. Therefore, Ikem tells Beatrice : ‘‘I can’t tell you what the new role for woman will be, I don’t know. I should never presume to know .You have to tell us’’(p.93). In fact, Achebe’s newly envisioned female roles are to be expounded, articulated, and secured by woman herself ; and Beatrice is doing just that when telling the story of the struggle herself

and in addressing the most tellingly historical meanings of the mythical past of which the Goddess is the manipulator and organiser of the community's power as it is explored by men and women together. And Beatrice as a juxtaposition of both the modern intellectual woman and the Igbo mythical Goddess is one important point for our last chapter about tradition and the present crisis of power.

Through the three witnesses and tellers of the hegemonic struggle, one may assume that Achebe's intellectuals prove to present some of the strongest cases against the oppressing hegemony of the ruling government of which they were members at the beginning of the novels. It is so because, in their sense of social construction and remedy , the destiny of the people , conceived of as a unit , is held above the particular interests of particular classes. Even though the novels draw to a close on which everything hegemonic remains as threatening as before and the dissident attempts could not succeed, still the various actions of personal and sometimes popular protests remain a significant stimulus for a hopeful transformation, and pose a serious threat to the present hegemony. In fact, the outcome here is not necessarily the formation of a better society when judged in terms of the equitable distribution of material wealth or social status, but in their ultimate noble purpose of the struggle, which is the preservation of the seed, the eternal wish for the path to remain open and most particularly, as Max puts it in *A Man of the People*, to ''get something going''(p.80) that some day might bring a better tomorrow.

Notes and References :

1-Antonio Gramsci. Quoted in Christine Buciglucksmann. *Gramsci et L'Etat : Pour une Théorie Materialiste de la Philosophie.*(Paris : Librarie Arthème Fayard,1975),p.42.
2-Edward Said. *Des Intellectuels et du Pouvoir*. (Alger : Marinoor,2001 (1993)),p.12.
3-Frantz Fanon. *Les damnés de la Terre*. (Algiers : Réghaia , 1978(Paris : Maspero, 1961)), p.219.
4-Ibid., p.173.
5-Ibid ., p.171.
6-Raymond Williams . *Marxism and Literature* .(Oxford : Oxford University Press ,1975) ,pp.112-13.
7-Poul Rabinow . ed. *The Foucault Reader* . (London : Penguin ,1994 (1986)),p.245.
8-Michel Foucault . *Power : Selected Interviews and Other Writings. (1954-1984*). ed.James D. Faubion . (London : Penguin ,2002), p.xxxviii.
9-Ibid ., p.xxxvii.
10-Ibid., p.288.
11-Robert Young . *White Mythologies : Writing History And The West* . (Routledge ,2001),p.86.
12-Nkrumah has strongly defended the one-party system which governed the African new nations after independence. Speaking and supporting Nyerere's view on the issue, he says : ''I am reminded of the words of Julius Nyerere when he spoke of the overwhelming support of the nationalist movement

by the people of Tanganyika : 'The nationalist movement which fights for and achieves independence inevitably forms the government of the new state. It would surely be ridiculous to expect that a country should voluntarily divide itself for the sake of conforming to particular expression of democracy , and to do so during a struggle which calls for the complete unity of its people''. Kwame Nkrumah . ''Freedom First''. *Africa Must Unite* , in G.C.M.Mutiso & S.W.Rohio , eds. *Readings in African Poltical Thought* .(London : Heinemann, 1975) ,p.208.

13-Senghor .L.S. ''A prerequisite : Cultural Independence'' , in G.C.M.Mutiso & S.W.Rohio. Op.cit., p.434.

14-Georg Lukacs . *The Historical Novel* . (Harmondsworth : Penguin Books , 1969),p.341.

15-Wa Thiongo Ngugi . *Homecoming* .(London : Heinemann, 1972),p.54.

16-Ibid . , p.52.

17-Emmanuel Ngara . ''Achebe as Artist .The Place and Significance of Anthills of the Savannah'' , in : K.Holst-Petersen & Anna Rutherford ,eds. *Chinua Achebe : A Celebration* .(London: Heinemann, 1991),p.122.

18-Ode Ogede. *Achebe and the Politics of Representation* . (New Jersey : African World Press, 2001), p.78.

19-Onoge, quoted in Georg M. Gugelberger. *Marxism and African Literature* .(New Jersey : African World Press, 1985), p.62.

20-David A. Maugham Brown. ''Anthills of the Savannah : Achebe's Solutions to the 'Troubles With Nigeria' ''. *Matatu,N ,8.Critical Approaches to Anthills of the Savannah.*(Amsterdam: Rodopi,1991).

21-Dubem Okafor .rev & ed. ''Over-Determined Contradictions : History and Ideology in Achebe's A Man of the People'', *Meditation on African Literature.*(U.S.A : Liberary of Congress Cataloging , 2001),p.98.

22-Chinua Achebe . *The Trouble With Nigeria.* (London: Heinemann ,1983),p.24.

23-Eustace Palmer . *An Introduction to the African Novel* .(London: Heinemann ,1972),p.79.

24-Gerald Moore. *The Chosen Tongue : English Writing in the Tropical World.*(London: Congans, 1969),pp.194-95.

25-Adrian Roscoe . *Mother Is Gold : A Study in West African Literature.* (Cambgidge : Cambridge. U.P, 1971),pp.129-30.

26-Simon Gikandi. *Reading Chinua Achebe: Language and Ideology in Fiction* .(London: James Currey , 1991),p.105.

27-Chinua Achebe, in Jane Wilkinson . *Talking With African Writers* .(Oxford , 2002),p.51.

28-Simon Gikandi .Op.cit.,p.120.

29-Adrian Roscoe . Op.cit . , p.130.

30-Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri. *Empire* .(Harvard UP ,2001),p.105. In the same issue of nation's development, Homi K.Bhabha, in his book *Nation and Narration,* emphasizes the particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation.He explains that ''nations, like narrative, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye. Such an image of the nation – or narration- might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west. An idea whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force''. At the same time, Benedict Anderson, in his book *Imagined Communities,* expresses the nation's ambivalent emergence with great clarity. He argues that : ''If nation states are widely considered to be 'new' and 'historical', the nation states to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past and…glide into a limitless future. What I am proposing is that 'Nationalism' has to be understood, by aligning it not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against which – it come into being''. Randy Bass. '' 'The Nation' as an Ambivalent Construction: Some Definitions of 'A Nation'''. < http://www.thecore.nus.edu.sg/ landdow/post/poldiscource/nationalism/ nationconstr.html

31-Chinua Achebe . *The Trouble With Nigeria. O*p.cit., p.2.

32-Ibid., pp.5-6.

33-Eric Hobsbawm &Terence Ranger, revs & eds. *The Invention of Tradition* .(Cambridge .U.P, 1983).

34-Chinua Achebe . Quoted in Gikandi .Op.cit. , p. 131.

35-Frederic Jameson . Quoted in Gikandi . Ibid. , p.129.

36-David Couzens Hoy. *The Critical Circle: Literature, History, and Philosophical Hermeneutics.* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1982), p.vii.
37-Christian Hoeller. Interview with Achille Mbembe.<http:// www.mltiworld.org/m- versity/articles/ achille.htm
38-Mikhail Bakhtin . *The Dialogic Imagination* .ed . Michael Holquist & Caryl Emerson. (Austin : University of Texas Press ,1981), p.333.
39-Edward Said . Quoted in Gikandi .Op.cit . , p. 139.
40-Chinua Achebe, in Jane Wilkinson . Op.cit.,p.47.
41-Kenneth Little . *The Sociology of Urban Women's Image in African Literature* .(Hampshire : Palgrave,2001), p.152.

In the previous chapter on struggle and dissidence there has been an elucidation of how the novelist's preoccupation with history is directed towards the objective of creating one enduring national space for modern Nigeria and Africa. After scenes of direct confrontation between the moralistic-based approaches of his dissident protagonists and the psychology of power in *A Man of the People* and that terrifying murdering hegemony of *Anthills of the Savannah*, and after the break down of class and gender barrier, Achebe's quest, as it will be shown in this part of the study, is to find an articulate and most viable basis for the substitute power he suggests in the closing chapters of *Anthills*. In one general sense, one of his preoccupations at this level is how, as Abiola Irele says, ''to work out a new spiritual coherence out of the historical disconnection between the African heritage and their modern experience''[1]. Achebe's search for substitute governance is not by way of clichés from 'the grand illusions' of other histories and struggles, but in the image of concrete visions drawn from its own local traditions. But can the modern nation (whether Kangan or Nigeria-Africa) interpret and deal with its present confusion and conceptualize a new existence, and move into, as Beatrice puts it, ''subverting the very sounds and legends of day-break to make straight the way''(p.104) ? This view is just echoing Ikem's idea that humanity has to be reformed around what lies within it ; that, where 'times' will always ''come around again out of story-land''(p.30), contrary to Marxist systems because, in them , ''roots have already been dug up and branches hacked away''(p.132). The importance Achebe attaches to roots and branches is shown in the organic imagery he employs, revealing his pronounced reference to what has grown , as an implication of traditional historical continuation, to what has been made, as an implication of the new cultural emergent principles that are alienated from the past tradition .''(T)he young tree planted by David Diop on the edge of the primeval desert''(p.133) represents the indigenous accumulated wisdom of the African people rooted in experience and history. This alone, not the borrowed and half-baked theories of leftist African radicals, can, for Achebe, provide direction for the future growth of African nations and societies. The heritage of the nation is embedded not so much in abstract conscious intellectuality as in the subconscious rooted knowledge of an

alienated past, a task which strongly pushes Ikem to ‘‘(go) far, far back in his subconscious mind waiting like a dormant seed in the dry season soil for the green – fingered magician, the first rain’’(p.134).

This chapter will show how through the temporal conjunction between traditional past and modern present, Achebe could deal with two of his primary ideological concerns - the need to reinterpret the past to understand the present and his determination to break outside the frozen time of the past into new possibilities of renewal in the present. Focusing initially on Achebe’s influence by his people’s tradition, the chapter will then move to examine how he has challenged the political and ideological claims of the African post-independence governments and thinkers by suggesting a different radical theory of power ; a theory which strives to mediate all the contradictions of the time by constituting a social and gender conciliation and a rational meeting point between traditional past and modern present. Following on from this, the final section of the chapter considers Achebe’s argument that women are the new source that will complete the socio-political construction of the new African states. In these terms, by focusing on the plight of the modern intellectual woman who embraces her traditional origins, it will be shown that Achebe has helped to redefine the critical terms and the future goals of the nation under the union of all social classes. In the final section of the chapter, I will argue that Achebe’s re-reading of tradition strives, to a great degree, to demonstrate the continuing importance of traditional implications to the social and political crisis of the modern era .

In one way or another, Achebe’s quest is what Michael M.J. Fisher calls ‘‘revelations of traditions, re-collections of disseminated identities and of the divine sparks from the breaking of the vessels’’ that would allow him ‘‘to gain a vision for the future’’ and to be used as a measure of judgement ‘‘of several contemporary rhetorics of domination’’[2]. In his essay ‘‘What Has Literature Got To Do With It’’, in *Hopes and Impediments* (1989), Achebe refers approvingly to the example of Japan as a society whose great success in technological advances has occured and has been facilitated because the society has always been systematically building its grounds of power and development on its solid traditional mode of cultural expression and beliefs. Achebe explains how this developed country has adapted every small detail of its past

civilization into the most remarkably advanced techniques of production which have taken the monopoly over all the world markets. So, following the Achebean perspective, any route to a nation-building must first be re-connected with the past, a past code of conduct which has been violated without people taking the trouble to found and embrace a suitable one that would fill the unbearable cultural vacuum of the present. The crisis is very complicated and serious, it is what Achebe calls 'a crisis in the soul', a distressing and warning ill which affects all the new African nations, notably Nigeria. Explaining this point, Achebe says regretfully : ''We have been subjected –we have subjected ourselves too- to this period during which we have accepted everything alien as good and practically everything local or native as inferior''[3]. At the heart of this loss, Achebe feels himself naturally obliged to help his people regain their dignity, to make them understand ''what happened to them , what they lost'', and ''to tell (them) where the rain began to beat them''[4]. Correspondingly, Achebe decides ''to oscillate between the past –the immediate past and the present''[5], an act which requires to deal with the predicament ''not only for the enlightenment of our detractors'', Achebe says, ''but even for our own education''.[6]

Achebe's particular angle on this issue of tradition may be classified along with those African (and some Western) thinkers who advocate a ''return to the tradition'' ; or a ''return to the source'' as we read in the thoughts of the ''African Socialism''of Senghor and Nyerere's ''Ujamaa''. It is an attempt to rediscover in the African precolonial past resilient frames of social and political order that, with appropriate reworking, would lead some African countries out of their current self-destructive patterns of political existence. With strong qualifications, the Achebean political philosophy of indigenous past sources is, in one sense, an articulation of Davidson's solutions to what he calls the ''curse of the nation-state''[7]. As the title of his book reads, *The Search For Africa : History in the Making (1994)*, Basil Davidson tries to construct a historical project where the acute disjunction between past and present is ended. To this end, he calls for a genuine examination of those principles, attitudes and moralities of power control and of power shaping in the traditional community. He emphasizes that ''the problems and solutions of today have to be envisaged within a historical framework, an indigenous historical framework, no matter what

contributions an external world may have made''[8]. Following this tradition, Achebe's search is directed to go further back into the past, to the point where tradition had not yet deviated from its pure sources. He strongly believes in the possibility of making traditional wisdom and contemporary time fit together into a convinced association, an association whose traditional ethical foundation would allow no corrupt power to be built on it. In fact, for him, the people who could make out of the wild nature and harsh climate of their land a higher tradition should also be able to use this latter to reform and rescue its world. In an interview, Achebe says :

> I am saying that we should not behave like politicians who think that (…) the change only began when they arrived on the scene. We must recognize (…) that different people through the ages played a role according to their light and their ability(…). We must take use of all this to give us momentum. If you don't have a long history you won't have any momentum, you 'll be starting again everyday .[9]

The passage explains how Achebe strives to push his people to look back and find out in their history and tradition the momentum that would enable them to face and redeem their present ills. In *Anthills*, he brings forward the Igbo wisdom he has used in *Things Fall Apart* and makes his heroine ''feel like Chielo in the novel, the priestess and prophetess of the Hills and the Caves''(p.103). Here, Achebe associates a contemporary figure with Chielo, the Igbo priestess who makes pronouncements on major power issues. At the same time, the Goddess Idemili that struggles for power in his novel *Arrow of God*, is made here to call for a moralistic use of power in the modern state. He is more conscious of the need to put this traditional ground in tune with trends in contemporary life, to rearrange and select its materials to allow him to get across some of the ideas that will appeal to modern society. As Mutiso says about the issue, in relation to Okara's *The Voice* : ''The writer makes it clear (…) that the leaders and the chiefs, by acting in a corrupt way, are really going against tradition''[10]. The moralistic tone in Achebe's vision could therefore be said to be in tune with traditional modes of thought and wisdom .

The ''return to the source'' model represented in Achebe's critical perceptions of history and tradition is quite different from the route taken by many post-independence African countries that seek to invent some democratic ideals of order through movements whose historical standards are rooted in the modern European traditions of

state organization. It is against this context of political negativity and sterility that Achebe's thoughts move towards the quite appealing issue of tradition. In this connection, however, Achebe's vision of tradition is not to be understood as a mere repetition or a blind worship of the past , but , rather, as a challenging attempt that seeks to study it critically without utopian illusions of perfection in order to see what lessons can be drawn from it. It is from this consideration that Achebe suggests that the new paradigms of the present social order have to depend not only on a radical rethinking of the past traditions, but also on a reconstruction of the frames in which the whole tradition is to be represented. In *Anthills'* last chapter, one can notice how Achebe manipulates some traditional conventions with those of modern times. The traditional ceremony of naming Ikem's child is held under centrally modified details, where Beatrice as a woman takes the responsibility to name the child, breaking thereby the original custom which requires the father or a male relative to take this role. This reveals most symbolically Achebe's orientation towards the notions of the 'good use of tradition' and the 'act of selection' within the grounds of tradition. At this stage, the study of tradition between the conceptions of repetition, originality, or utopianism is helpful for a more workable understanding of Achebe's implications and grounds in the issue.

Generally speaking, Tradition ''is used to designate a mode of thought and a praxis proper to a certain kind of society known as tribe or clan, and is conceived in opposition to modernity''[11]. From here, tradition is identified as an unchanging corpus of representations that are handed over by the ancestors of a given community to its subsequent generations. In his article ''Of the Good Use of Tradition'', Jean-Marie Makang attacks this way of approaching tradition. He views human traditions as processes, and as historical phenomena which occur everywhere and in all stages of societal development. Correspondingly, traditions are not frozen in time, according to Makang, but are in a continual development, adapting themselves to new historical circumstances. In his attempt to prevent a blurred perspective of tradition, he resorts to addressing the question of the 'good' and 'bad' use of tradition, as the title of his article reads. For him, the view of reducing African traditions to a fixed past and a mere nostalgia for a lost paradise will not affect the ordering of things in the present.

They are incapable of helping present generations of Africans in their striving for control over their own lives. It is against this negativity that Makang calls for a 'living tradition', as he calls it, a tradition which can be at the service of the people instead of people being subjected to it. At this level, Makang comes to recognize the living tradition as a 'regulating utopia' and as an 'ideology of society' ; that is a utopian model of action and a mobilizing ideal which call for a radical criticism of society as a whole. As such, tradition, for Makang, constitutes the conscience that can enlighten the dark sphere of people's lives. Following this perception, Makang elaborates his notion of tradition :

> Tradition as ideology of society or as a utopia aims at enlightening African people in their striving for adaptation to new material conditions of the present world , with their self - determination and a better quality of their humanity as their common purpose (…) to make use of this praxis and wisdom as interpretive tools to enlighten present generations of Africans .[12]

Not very far from Makang's conception of tradition, Raymond Williams, in his book *Marxism and Literature (1977),* defines tradition in terms of selection. He argues that some given features and elements of the past can be revived, and so incorporated with the pre-shaped present, in the sense that certain meanings and practices are selected for emphasis and others are neglected or excluded. Williams writes that

> (T)radition is in practice the most evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits. It is always more than an inert historicized segment ; indeed it is the most practical means of incorporation .What we have to see is not just 'a tradition' but a selective tradition : an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present , which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification .[13]

Here, under this process of selection, Williams explains that tradition comes to be identified as a significant aspect of contemporary social and cultural organization. It is a version of the past which seeks to connect with, and ratify, the present in a continuing line. More significantly, however, is the relation that Williams draws between 'tradition' and 'hegemony', on the one side, and between 'tradition' and 'counter-hegemony' on the other. Explaining the equation of tradition and hegemony, he argues that all the selected features, either through the affirmation of traditional elements, or the isolation and exclusion of other elements, are particularly in the

interest of the dominance of a specific class. On the other side, he explains that counter-hegemony bases its struggle against the dominant hegemony on this process of selection. Its challenge and threat are derived from how it judges the contemporary selection made by the latter; that is, judging its power and invulnerability to provide vital points of connection between past and present, and so offer possible directions for the future.

Both Makang's conception of the ''good use of tradition'' and Williams' notion of tradition in terms of ''selection'' find an echo in Terence Ranger's study of tradition in colonial Africa, in his book *The Invention of Tradition* (edited by him and Eric Hobsbawm). In giving assent to this argument, Ranger, in a chapter titled ''The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa'', points out that tradition in Africa as an institution itself is controlled by cultural and social forces which may seek to propose some specific practices of tradition as natural and objective to conceal personal argues. He emphasizes that codified and reified custom was manipulated by such vested interests as a means of asserting or increasing control. This happened, Ranger explains, in four particular situations :

> Elders tended to appeal to ''tradition'' in order to defend their dominance of the rural means of production against challenge by the young. Men tended to appeal to ''tradition'' in order to ensure that the increasing role which women played in production in the rural areas did not result in any diminition of male control over women …. Paramount chiefs and ruling-aristocracies in politics which included members of ethnic and social groupings appealed to ''tradition'' in order to maintain or extend their control over their subjects . Indigenous populations appealed to ''tradition'' in order to ensure that the migrants ….did not achieve political or economic right ''.[14]

In reading *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, one can see how Achebe works out the position and weight of tradition in the modern foundations of the African states. In both novels, all the selected and affirmed features of tradition, on the one hand, and those excluded or isolated, on the other, move towards the perpetuation of the dominant government's exploitation. In the first novel, as we have seen in the first chapter, we read about Chief Nanga's pretence of authenticity and traditionalism. His claim to be serviceable to his people draws essentially on the traditional morals of generosity and help of the indigenous chiefs to their community and tribe, which is a most Machiavelian stratagem which really enables him to hold

power over them. On the contrary, in the second novel, we have seen Sam exterminating all the existing signs of tradition, failing himself as a leader to rise into the traditional conception of modest power and social communalism.

Following both examples of Nanga's improper use of tradition and Sam's total alienation from its claims, Achebe's identification with his people's traditions appears to be very significant. The two novels ensure close familiarity with Igbo fundamentals of life, customs and attitudes, and also with its social institutions and inner values which affect the general framework of the governing system in the community. In his detailed understanding of tradition, Achebe's main concern is to find in its grounds a 'regulating utopia' and an 'ideology of society' that would revise and judge the present practices, and so direct society towards the common good of 'all'. What is to be stressed at this stage, is that the present chapter will restrict its focus essentially to a study of *Anthills of the Savannah*, where Achebe's well-formed project of an African post-independence indigenous and modern nation-state is set into initiation and also development. The preoccupation of this chapter, therefore, is both to revise and to try to answer these major following questions : To what extent can the Achebean perspective of tradition succeed in realizing the author's yearning for a nation-state in an African world whose very own past history and identity have become somewhat estranged from the present realities ? Along with this estrangement can really an Achebean vision of a third meaning between the hegemonic culture of the colonizer and the repressed traditions of the colonized exist ? And can all these visions eliminate the tragic anomy generated by the present ruling system ? But before discussing this traditional alternative, we deem it important to approach the world of myth as conceived in the African tradition and re-enacted in the novel. Achebe argues that Igbo culture makes myth (and poetry) an appropriate form of thought to understand and co-exist with the demands of their lives, notably the spiritual existence. Stressing this conception of belief, he says that ''since Igbo people did not construct a rigid and closely argued system of thought to explain the metaphor of myth…anyone seeking an insight into their world must seek it along their own way''. Achebe goes on to explain that ''some of these ways are folk-tales, proverbs…rituals and festivals''[15]. In the

novel, Achebe follows this way of ritual and folk-tales of his Igbo mythology to seek a clear insight into their world of post-independence politics.

In *Anthills,* Achebe conveys the meaning of tradition through the world of fantasy of Igbo myths. One chapter in the novel is, in fact, enough for Achebe's creativity to merge the complicated mythical elements of the past with those confused and lost ones of the modern times. He is strongly aware that his 'ancestors', as he says, ''created their different politics with myths embodying their varying perceptions of reality''[16] ; myths which, he believes, have to be investigated and re-used for the redemption of the disordered modern African societies. Within this issue, Isidore Okpewho, in his compelling study of myth in African literature in his book *Myth in Africa (1983)* , emphasizes the need for the Africans to reclaim their ancient roots for their progress and self-understanding in the substances of myth. He goes on to argue that : ''If Africans are to achieve true self-apprehension , the resources for this must be sought not from archival history but from myth , the living patrimony of the race and the capsule of its cultural essence .[17]

As a combination of factual imagined actions, myth is considered as sacred history, and therefore is part of history because it refers always to real happenings which reveal exemplifying models of all the rites and the significant past activities. It is an extremely complex cultural reality which can be displayed and interpreted in multiple and complementary perspectives. As such, myth constitutes an indispensable function : it expresses and codifies the beliefs, safeguards the fundamental moral principles and imposes them on the group. In a sense, it is not an abstruse theory or a fixed image of the primordial times, it is an active reality which guarantees the efficiency of practical uses and essential spaces of wisdom. Related to this conception of 'myth', Roland Barthes writes that ''le sens du mythe a une valeur propre, il fait partie d'une histoire (…). Le sens est déja complet, il postule un savoir, un passé, une mémoire, un ordre comparatif de faits, d'idées, de décisions''[18]. In fact, what relates this statement to the African perception of myth is more than that sense of the past or memory, it is the 'ideas', 'decisions' and 'order' ; a 'political function' as Barthes comes to argue. For in this regard, he views myth as a ''parole dépolitisée.(…)

politique au sens profond , comme ensemble des rapports humains dans leur structure réelle , sociale dans leur pouvoir de fabrication du monde''.[19]

For Soyinka, African culture cannot be dissociated from its mythological origins. Myth and social behaviour are related. Taking as his example the Yoruba myths and world-view, he argues that it is through the legend of the Yoruba people and their mythic history that one can understand and judge their principles of life. Related to this framework, Soyinka suggests using the expression of 'World-view' rather than 'Religion', ''for the former expression'', according to him, '' is more evocative of fundamental cosmologic acceptances, especially for the African reality''[20]. Here, Soyinka wishes to stress that religion in the African context is far from its strict religious processes that define other societies, that is as a space-directed act of worship. In Africa, religion is performed, rather, as a human communal activity linked to cosmic totalism. In this respect, Soyinka writes that : ''the harmonisation of human functions, external phenomena and supernatural suppositions within individual consciousness emerges as a normal self-adjusting process in the African temper of mind''.[21]

Not very far from Soyinka's assumptions of myth, through Achebe's mythical world-view of the Igbo community, one can see that the line that separates the religious life from the secular world in the Igbo culture is tenuous. The relationship between man and God (embodiment of nature and cosmic principles) cannot be seen in any other terms but those of naturalness in which the past, present and future are merged in the present consciousness ; this consciousness itself contains manifestations of the ancestors, the living and the unborn. This relationship offers a cosmic and natural order that governs the moral and ethical structure of the society, influences and even guides its social laws. It is such an operative framework which Soyinka terms the ''metaphysics of the irreducible''[22]. To Achebe, the harmonious integration of the traditional society and the individual's place in that society is reflected in the relationship that exists between society in its entirety and the deities that preside over it.

Fundamental to this view of reality is the idea that nothing in religion, and therefore in politics and society, is absolute and eternal, and any attempt to prove the

contrary is doomed to failure. The Igbo are dependent on the gods but the gods need their worshippers ; the ‘‘Chi’’ (personal spirit) controls a man’s fate but no one can win judgement against the clan. It is a relation of dualism which is based on an acknowledgement of interdependence between man and the gods, individuals and the community. In regard to this religious debate which goes on in Achebe’s mind and which concerns the nature of religious meaning and its socially-reflected experience in the Igbo culture, there is a note on the poem ‘*Misunderstanding’* in the volume *Beware, Soul Brother* which reads as follows :

> The Igbo people have a firm belief in the duality of things . Nothing is by itself, nothing is absolute. ‘I am the way , the Truth and the life’ would be meaningless in Igbo theology. They say that a man may be right by Udo and yet be killed by Ogwugwu ; in other words he may worship one god to perfection and yet fall foul of another.
>
> Igbo proverbs bring out this duality of existence very well. Take any proverb which puts forward a point of view or a ‘truth’ and you can always find another that contradicts it or at least puts a limitation on the absolutness of its validity .[23]

An important point about this passage is the democratic basis of this traditional society which brings the contradictions of the individual and society together into a balancing co-existing duality. Every aspect of individual experience – actions, beliefs, thoughts- derives its realistic authority from its communal usage ; a shared vision of reality certified by custom. This is linked to the ancestors who are regarded as the custodians of traditional wisdom, and the carriers of the grounding foundations of the whole social order.

For example, a glimpse at the cosmology and world-view of *Arrow of God is* very useful to shed light on the issue of tradition. For more than in any other of his writings, it is in this novel that Achebe delineates the relation between the society and its gods, and significantly what emerges is an illustration of the reciprocity of this relationship. Through the novel, Achebe suggests that the gods are made an expression of the political unity or disunity of the people. Their history and order testify to their subjection to secular consciousness. For Ezeulu, the deity’s priest, the political world cannot be dissociated from the spiritual one, since a wrong decision would mean that the people of the village would be disregarding a god who had once saved them from annihilation. In this connection, the struggle between the two gods, Ulu and his rival

Idemili, is reflected in Ezeulu's struggle with Ezidemili, priest of Idemili. But Ezeulu's struggle is now against his people ; the clash would never have occured if Ulu had been left to settle scores with Idemili, and if Ezeulu had not decided to wreak personal revenge on his people. Here, Ezeulu is trying to do what the god ought to do, behaving like the god when he is, in fact, no more than an arrow in the bow of the god, and whose actions are only articulating and interpreting Ulu's will, while he mistakenly thinks that he was to make the decisions himself. So in the end, the people and their leaders can see the outcome of Ezeulu's behaviour. ''To them the issue was simple. Their god had taken sides with them against his headstrong ambitious priest and thus upheld the wisdom of their ancestors – that no man however great was greater than his people ; that no man ever won judgement against his clan''[24]. Achebe shows clearly that Ezeulu's abuse of the powers vested in him stems from arrogance and total disregard for the ultimate source of his power, i.e. the people. In fact, this is an example quite reminiscent of the post-independence predicament of power which has excluded the people from all the forms of social and political participation .

As we have seen, the context of Achebe's novel is that of a stagnant political situation and entrenched repressive regimes in Nigeria. Within this sphere, the novel provides a clear insight into the complexities of the post-independence crisis of communication between the state and its subjects in the context of entrenched power formations. In this space of dialogue repression, state narratives interpellate the subject as intimately connected to it in an effort to ease out potential dissent from the social formation. Their monologic forms do not easily offer the subject any space to articulate dissent in the form of dialogue. Historical context then makes myth an appropriate form at these specific times. Here, myth and fantasy narratives necessarily perform an act of dissent by displaying an alternative method of societal organization and narrative construction. Through Achebe's analysis of the issue, myth is referred to as a narrative, a term which would seem to bring it close to the realist narrative of the state. Isidore Okpewho explains that myths do have elements of narrative in that the stories they tell do narrate events sequentially, as do realist narratives, but it is the form and texture of myth that give it a paradigmatic quality, one which disrupts and shakes the pure logic of sequential narrative. The problem arises that we also have

little by way of definition to use in locating and identifying myths with regard to literature or realist narrative. Okpewho suggests that ‘‘we are free to call any narrative of the oral tradition a myth, so long as it gives due emphasis to fanciful play’’[25]. This statement, in fact, does pinpoint the difficulties faced when taking analyses of myth into areas of literature whose place in relation to the dominant order is by no means fixed. By this is meant that without some sense of composition and organization, it is difficult to place the way myths in novels are set negatively against the social and political order, unless it is assumed that myths themselves are set against the circumstances within which they are voiced. This cannot be assumed since the stories of myth are usually of a neutral nature, but once they are linked to some other element, at the level of plot or character, they can be transformed into narratives of dissent. We can then consider myths, as Richard Chase argues, as ‘‘literature and therefore a matter of aesthetic experience and imagination’’[26], and in a sense, as tales which tell of the origin of a given political group or culture and the cosmic narratives of deities.

In Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah*, the power of language and the ownership of language, all important aspects within the text, are drawn into the mosaic of mythological narrative. Monologue, dialogue, shifts in tenses, the Idemili myth told by the omniscient narrator, Beatrice’s ‘friendship with strange words’ add to the emotions experienced by the reader in a novel which, as often with Achebe, seems to offer itself as a straightforward tale told in the mode of realism. The novel begins in the present tense, normally signalling a shared dialogue, but here the present is controlled by the state president who dictates whose words he will ignore and whose he will reply to. Language is, in one sense, owned through power: ‘‘He owns all the words in this country - newspapers, radio and television stations’’(p.6). The possibility of true dialogue and communication is repressed and fractured in an atmosphere of fear and abuse of power, which contrasts sharply with Achebe’s wish for a common ownership and free exchange of language. The whole range of language needs to be displayed in order to tell the narrative of a nation and to articulate its experiences. When language is owned and repressed, history seems to have stopped, to have become unclear ; the novel therefore argues for the right to make sense of history and experience through the use of a language not contorted in an atmosphere of repression. This unified and

unrepressed language is symbolised through the language of myth which unifies through reference and linkage the major themes and concerns of the novel. Put simply in terms of context, the novel necessarily desires an alternative to the political impasse it satirises. At this stage, myth becomes not the alternative, but the location of this desire, almost unconsciously, since on the surface Achebe seems to be doing other things with myth, such as associating mythological figures with characters of elite status. Through this narrative method, Achebe locates an alternative already within the society but needing to be activated. The reading process of registering the function of myth, then, acts as a correlative to articulate an oppositional discourse. It provides the method wherein everybody's story can be told in a way that combines the personal and the communal, and therefore symbolises a unified nation in which all the social voices are heard. In this way, it symbolises a unified and non-repressed language in common ownership and, in the tale it tells, is a site where social justice can be enacted at the imaginary level.

There is, then, no separation of myth, history and the everyday lives ; all are linked. Accordingly, in exploring the traditional concept and function of authority through the myth of Idemili, Achebe's intention appears clearly both to satirise the use to which power is put in contemporary African nations, and to provide a source from which to rethink possible adaptations and adjustments. It is a point which Gikandi misreads when he paraphrases Achebe as saying that ''if we can not retain an original moral sense to counter the destructive effects of power, and if our attempts to hold divinity are condemned to fail, then the best we can do is narrate about our failures (hence ritualize the incongruity between moral intention and rampaging power) and to use metaphorical representations as substitutes for a dispersed divinity''[27]. In fact, this line of reasoning owes nothing to the socio-historical vision which is advocated by Achebe in appealing to the issue of tradition and modern experiences of power. Within this frame of metaphorical representations, Achebe's narrative serves precisely to work out a possible spiritual coherence out of the historical disconnection between the original moral sense of the traditional ethos of conduct, as conceived in the world of myth and divinity, and the confused space of contemporary power.

Just in four pages in the novel, Achebe recovers the narrative voice of tradition as embodied in the myths of power and morality. From the very beginning, the balance between secular power and moral authority is imperiled by problems which are quite central to Achebe's discourse of power. Idemili's devotees have increased and spread all over the country. The more they spread the more they face the problem of controlling and retaining the original balance between morality and authority : ''How could they carry to the farthest limits of their dispersal adequate memories of the majesty of the Pillar of Water (the Pillar of Water is the meaning of 'Idemili') standing in the dark lake ?''(p.98). Attempts to recover the original basis of power are hence bound to fail. The tale carries on and tells of the Almighty sending his daughter to temper masculine power by ritualising men's access to power, symbolised by entry to the powerful fourth and greatest hierarchy of ozo. In the novel, the president has the support of three provinces but not of the fourth, he has three titles but lacks the fourth. According to tradition, any man wanting the 'ozo' title must attend the shrine of Idemili with either his daughter or the daughter of a kinsman, who arranges seven sticks of chalk on the ground. The man must sit on these so lightly that none breaks. Idemili does not immediately give any sign that she has accepted to grant the title to the candidate ; the only sign ever given is that the man is still alive after three years. In the novel the president dies, having overstepped the mark in the way he uses power, emphasizing Achebe's point that problems lie with the quality of leadership. It is just this lack of modesty, and the inability of the possessors of power to recognize the obligatory ''moral nature of authority'' coupled with their ''unquenchable thirst to sit in authority on (their) fellows''(p.99) that Idemili holds them in contempt. The narration of the myth is given status through the use of an omniscient narrator in contrast to the first-person narrator used elsewhere. As will be apparent, the myth is also central to Achebe's engagement with gender and the empowering of women, particularly organised around the figure of Beatrice.

What appears symbolic in this mythical tale is the very expression : ''but a daughter it must be''. The significance of all this will become more obvious when we realize that in Igbo religion 'Chukwu', the great God of Creation is Agbala, a term which is also used to mean 'woman' (*Things Fall Apart*). In fact, the female character

is not alien in Igbo cosmology. The complex web of morality and law, for example, that orders this segment of Igbo civilization is headed by Ani, the great mother goddess, ‘‘the earth goddess and source of fertility’’[28], ‘‘the owner of the land’’[29], and ‘‘the ultimate judge of morality and conduct’’[30]. In *Things Fall Apart* the Oracle of the Hills and Caves is male but served by a female, Chielo. For her part, Idemili, the Pillar of Water, the goddess who makes pronouncements on the issues of power, as expressed in *Arrow of God*, is female but the serving priest is male, a law which is broken in *Anthills,* for the male priest here is to be superseded by a female priest. The female nature of this potent presence points forward to the belief that ‘‘Nneka, the Mother is supreme’’[31]. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo’s uncle explains to us that ‘‘(a) man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness, he finds refuge in his motherhood .Your mother is there to protect you’’[32]. The issue here seems to be complicated. For what does Achebe exactly intend to suggest through all these initiations and signs of gender bounds ? Does he wish to make his female heroine, and African woman in general, ‘know herself’ through the legends of tradition and also know that in Igbo society ‘woman is something’? But if so, can she play the same role and save her world from loss ? And can she be the last resort that will offer a secure refuge to the last survivors of the modern struggle ? These are important questions which Beatrice will try to answer for herself and also for us, answers which so far ought to enable the Igbo and African woman in general to find and know herself in the sphere of power in which the African males fail to complete their task of its redemption. But cannot this solution be another articulation of the view that only ‘‘as the world crashes around Man’s ears ’’ that ‘‘woman in her supremacy will descend and sweep the shards together’’(p.93) ?

The position of woman in Igbo society has never been a weakness in their traditional foundations, according to Achebe’s reconstruction of history through his writings. Achebe expresses that clearly in the activities of the women in *Things Fall Apart*, where the various forms of women’s council are firmly in charge of all kinds of power in the community, from watching over the crops and farming to other religious and family responsibilities. In her study of the Igbo politics under the title *Igbo Political Culture* (1974), E.N. Njaka presents the working political system of the

Igbos on which women, like men, share many spheres of the communal powers. Njaka notices that the Igbo women had their own clubs, age group associations that complemented those of men. They controlled certain spheres of social life, just as men controlled others. One of the most important women's associations, as Njaka records, was Umuada. It acts as a pressure group in political matters that are often grave, such as the issues of war or peace, imposing even fines on men and women who disturbed the peace of the market place. Its leaders attended the meetings of the councils of chiefs and elders and participated in discussions affecting the welfare of the citizens. In these terms, Njaka writes that '' the organization of the Umuada cuts across the units of any one level of the political structure of the state and extends upward through the hierarchy ''.[33] Having this position, Njaka explains that ''certainly the elders will go to great lengths to avoid a confrontation with Umuada, and in this way the women do, indirectly, exert a strong influence on affairs of state''[34]. This power of political action and social participation was revealed through the well-known Aba women's Riot of 1929 when the Igbo women had decided to act against the heavy taxations imposed by the British colonizer [35].

However, given the intensely patriachal nature of traditional African societies, African feminism cannot be considered radical. For Western feminism has predicated itself on ending gender discrimination and demanding equal job opportunities and voting with the same property rights. For African women, feminist ideology reflects specificities of race, class and culture. It is for this reason that the former has failed to make any lasting appeal to the African woman. Partly because African women do not wish to alienate men and the bulk of their tradition-based sisterhood, and partly because many traditional African customs and mores are worth preserving, most African feminists espouse womanism which sets itself as a philosophy that celebrates black roots, the ideals of black life ; aiming at the dynamism of wholeness and self-healing. Following this contrast in his essay ''Historicity and the Un-Eve-ing of the African Woman: Achebe's Novels'', Chimalum Nwankwo distinguishes between the negative Western female claims and the positive African philosophy of woman. He argues that ''(i)f a feminist program for the rectification of gender and problems in the West begins with Eve and the pejorative echo of treachery and inferiority ; an African

feminist program could possibly justify its existence by initiating its own quest in the general character of traditional Igbo society ''[36]. This distinction between the African woman in particular (or the third world woman), and the Western woman finds an echo in Gayatri Spivak's studies of Western feminism. By rethinking the Marxist concepts of class struggle and class consciousness through the critical lenses of deconstruction and feminism, Spivak has produced a more flexible and nuanced account of political struggle, which takes the experiences and histories of third world women into account. In her essay ''French Feminism in an International Frame'', in particular, she challenges the universal claims of feminism to speak for all women. Such a rethinking has challenged the assumption that all women are the same, and emphasized the importance of respecting differences in race, class, religion and culture between women. Spivak describes how feminism was ''the best of a collection of scenarios''.[37] Yet despite this general leaning towards Western feminism, Spivak has questioned the 'lie' of a global sisterhood between 'first world' and 'third world' women, pointing instead to the complicity of Western feminism and imperialism. In this way, Spivak expands and complicates the critical terms and political objectives of feminism in a way that is more sensitive to questions of difference. Indeed, Spivak contends that Western feminism has itself fallen prey to its own work by claiming to speak for all women, when it often excludes the experiences of third world women. Such an approach would clearly ask the following questions, as Spivak puts them : ''Not merely who am I ? But who is the other woman ? How am I naming her ? How does she name me ?''[38]

Following this distinction between the African and the Western woman, Achebe advances the implication that the liberation of women in Nigeria (Africa) can best be achieved not through attempting a Western feminist way of revolution and militancy – for example by being aggressively ambitious and by placing her career before any social bounds – but through re-formation built in accordance with the realities of her own land and society. In the two novels, neither Edna's and Mrs Nanga's (in *A Man of the People*) and Elewa's (in *Anthills*) passive traditional submission to their men, nor Eunice's, in the first novel, and Beatrice's, in the second novel, active Western intellection will help female liberation. The new role of the African woman has to be

found in the local culture and traditional values which have organized many generations in the past. A sample of the new role for the Nigerian woman, and therefore African, is provided by Beatrice's state of juxtaposition of both the mythical and modern worlds. Within this context, Achebe claims that : ''I think women should organize themselves to speak, from a real understanding of our situation and not just from a copying of European fashions (…) but out of our traditions to work out a new role for themselves. This is the challenge I throw both to the men and to the women, but particularly to the women ''[39]. Along this issue, the men themselves are called to change their attitude towards women, and to remove their complex of male domination. By the time we meet Odili, Ikem and Chris, we are no longer in doubt about the maturation of Achebe's male characters. Odili who begins his role in the story as a seeker for revenge, evolves through incidents principally related to his involvement with Edna and concludes with a sense of responsibility that enables him to recognize that 'woman is something'. More tellingly, Ikem finds no complex in his relation with a poor uneducated woman. For Achebe, it does not matter that he is educated and intellectual, and the woman, Elewa, is not. Symbolically, Chris finds himself constantly responding to the power of the priestess that Beatrice Nwanyibuife exhibits. He returns to her everytime for spiritual renewal. Indeed, speaking through these characters, Achebe is to a great extent echoing Ali .H. Mazrui's assumption on the issue. Mazrui stresses the opinion ''that the strategy of redemption needs to go beyond liberation and beyond centering and move towards genuine power-sharing between the two halves of the black world, male and female ''.[40]

Beatrice, as a female, represents a typical Achebean project for a different philosophy of post-independence African states. Through her character, Achebe strives to recover the lost ideals of the past communal mythology and to re-establish its vision as the nation's common frame of reference. In this way, Achebe endeavours to make Beatrice, as a modern female and as an intellectual, understand and interpret the post-independence experiences through a framework that does include not only the immediate realities, but also the continuities and the inseparability of all the historical spheres such as past, present, future and the dead and the living. This yearning, nevertheless, is not easy to overcome in a confused time which loses all its ways of

rebirth. About this dramatic gap that exists between traditional past and modern present, Gikandi articulates Achebe's challenges : ''It is significant that Beatrice, who is a modern representative of Idemili, exists in a world which has repressed the rituals and practices of her divinity (…). Achebe's narrative'', he adds, ''serves precisely to expose the gap between what exists and is unknown and the « grandeur of divinity » that might have allowed us to taper power ''[41]. Symbolically, Beatrice's character offers a kind of meeting point for the post-independence differences, reconciling, thus, all the contradictions that Ikem's political struggling thoughts attempt vainly to solve. In the disarray of her bleeding country, Beatrice stands as the modern version of Idemili's myth that comes to protect her throne from the corruption and scandal of contemporary power. Despite her personal ignorance and lack of awareness of her roots because of her Western education, she is nevertheless conscious of the role native legends have played in subverting the myths of colonial history that justified their oppressive rule. As in the scene of the bird trilling outside her window, the questioning of the king's property has to be continually repeated in order ''to bear witness to the moral nature of authority ''(p.97). In the same way, Beatrice as an intellectual female will continue the political struggle which Ikem and Chris have initiated for a moral use of power. Through this character, it will be argued that Achebe's engagement with gender then symbolises a possible process of broadening out of power framework, that is a more unified space which would include both female and male groups. This is shown particularly in the sense that the male voice grows less dominant as the novel progresses. In the first half of the novel, men own words, and women are intuitive muses, symbolic goddesses. At its end, the novel describes expanded possibilities for women's gaining access to power, symbolised by their ability to narrate a story, to give voice to an experience, and to name.

Although, in the immediate context of the novel, Ikem is the one outstanding character, it is Beatrice who will be the ultimate modern prophet who is given the role to voice Achebe's political vision of post-independence Africa. In a passage conflating ritual, the discarded pages of her first draft seemed to her ''like a necessary ritual or a sacrifice to whoever had to be appeased for this audacity of rushing, in where sensible angels would fear to tread ''(pp.78-9). Beatrice is the new (and improbable) mythical

female prophet. She had been brought up, as she recalls, ‘‘completely wrapped up in her own little world (…) inside the close-fitting world of our mission house, itself enclosed snugly within the world of the Anglican church compound’’(p.80). Her living space answered the magical world of the external history, as chanted in Biblical refrain: ‘‘World inside a world inside a world, without end. Uwa-t’uwa in our language’’(p.80), a refrain with which she would make and mould all kinds of thoughts and visions of the time.

Still, Beatrice’s alienated and complicated background does not prevent her from involving herself in the stories of her land and people. When the novel mentions an ‘alienated history’, of ‘doomed voyagers’ on journeys that had been ‘carefully programmed in advance’, the reference is not to a Western-style pre-determination, of fate as bad destiny. In this context, the novel is referring us to the communal covenant which peoples make, each with their chosen ‘deity’, the god who does what he promises his people. It is in consideration of this double injunction – of individual and the communal duty – that the specificities of both traditional past and present time are framed together in the character of Beatrice. She is the prophetess not only because she survives the immersion in the mystery of a foreign world, i.e. the world of the people, which is supposed to be hers, but because the experience of that ‘other’ world actually brings her closer to her own language and her own real world of the motherland. Both Chris and Ikem have sensed the prophetic qualities in Beatrice. Chris calls her the ‘‘quiet demure damsel whose still waters nonetheless could conceal deep overpowering eddies of passion that always almost sucked him into fatal depths’’ (p.100). But it was Ikem who comes closest ‘‘to sensing the village priestess who will prophesy when her divinity rides her abandoning if need be her soup-pot on the fire, but returning again when the god departs to the domesticity of kitchen or the bargaining market-stool ’’(p.100).

Indeed, every detail in Beatrice is made pertinent to fit its counterpart detail in the patterns of the myth. Her name is Nwanyibuife, an Igbo name for the ‘‘female is also something’’. This name which she was given, and which she resented all her life, was an appropriately unheroic, and, as the end of the narrative makes clear, an appropriately ironic one. She is from the country between Omambala and Iguedo,

where the goddess Idemili has a stream flowing from her lake to Orimili, the Niger river. In many ways, she is the most ambitious creation in Achebe's philosophy of post-independence politics. She starts as a civil servant, to be turned through events into a ''prophetess'' who articulates the mythic pattern which emerges from the general confusion of the time. ''As a matter of fact '', Beatrice says, ''I do sometimes feel like Chielo in the novel (i.e. *Things Fall Apart*), the priestess and prophetess of the Hills and Caves'' (p.109). In this new role, Beatrice as a goddess foretells the struggle's concluding events: ''And I see trouble building up for us. It will get to Ikem first. No joking Chris. He will be the precursor to make straight the way. But after him it will be you. We are all in it, Ikem, you, me and even Him (Sam)'' (p.109). She is like Tuere in Okara's *The Voice*, Maanan in Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Nyakinyua in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*. What distinguishes Beatrice from all these female characters is her juxtaposition of both the experience of modern world politics and that of the old ancient myths, an outstanding position which all those characters lack. She is, in one significant sense, left to fit together myth and history into a convincing eschatology. This is the challenge Achebe has set for himself ; that is to create a valid meeting point between old and new meanings to form a balanced and a well-identified identity of post-independence African society.

Beatrice chooses her position to be in the forefront of the struggle. She breaks the boundaries of her marginality as a woman and enters the very centre of power, in the sense that she no longer considers herself as a ''modern'' woman functioning with Western paradigms. Spivak, when she speaks about her conception of feminism, says that

> By pointing attention to a feminist marginality , I have been attempting, not to win the center for ourselves, but to point at the irreducibility of the margin in all explanations that would not merely reverse but displace the distinction between margin and center . But in effect such pure innocence (pushing all guilt to the margins) is not possible, and, paradoxically, would put the very law of displacement and the irreducibility of the margin into question .The only way I can hope to suggest how the center itself is marginal is by not remaining outside in the margin and pointing my accusing finger at the center . I might do it rather by implicating myself in that center and sensing what politics make it marginal .[42]

In the novel, Beatrice goes much further and transcends these conceptions of margin and centre. She does not only point her accusing finger directly at the centre, but she goes on to involve herself in that centre to sense how its politics makes her marginal, and, essentially, to bridge the gap between the dominant centre and the subordinate margin. She challenges the male mishandling of power (Sam, Chris, Ikem) and rebukes Chris's complacency about his position in power as represented through the military leader, cabinet minister, literay artist. She earlier states that : ''The story of the country as far as you are concerned, is the story of the three of you'' (p.62), referring to the three male characters and emphasizing the narrow-mindedness of power. She does not only convince Ikem to change his political views on woman, as we have seen in the second chapter, but she goes much further in her ambition to articulate the stakes of the struggle and tell us about herself, as an oppressed marginal woman and then as a goddess, and about the new role of woman in the whole affairs of the state, a role which is concretely delineated in the last scenes of the novel. In this ancient / modern goddess, Achebe synthesises both Ikem's and Chris's dialectics and views about the nature of society they die for. The process is initiated by Ikem's myth of moralistic use of power which is carried on by Chris when he is forced into his inevitable destruction . A cryptic legend ''(w)hat a man commits'' painted on a bus – convinces Chris that ''whatever we see following a man , whatever fate comes to take revenge on him, can only be what that man in some way or another, in previous life if not in this, has committed ''(pp.194-5). This view is made quite explicit in Beatrice's thoughts following the deaths of Ikem and then Chris. Beatrice is not willing to accept explanations of their fate which rest on such terms as ''petty human calculation or personal accident''. She is rather disposed to adopt what is a more terrifying but more plausible theory of premeditation. ''Were they not in fact trailed travellers whose journeys from start to finish had been carefully programmed in advance by an alienated history ?''(p.211). Beatrice's phrasing is not naive philosophy. It is perfect for this conception of history which pervades the actions in the novel : history as a form of pre-determination, the fulfilment of a destiny on which narratives are records of segments of that history. Without a sense of an appropriate and pre-determined final personal purpose, destiny is not differentiable from chance, accident. Accordingly, the

fate of Ikem and Chris is a defining experience in the horrifying curse of power, and Achebe captures that moment in the language of ritual.

Now with Beatrice history is in the making. Through her, what was in Ikem's experience a ''rare human conduct across station and class''(p.130) has become realized in a possible association of the ''small community''(p.211) of survivors gathered around her. Under this symbolic 'captaincy', Achebe writes, ''(s)he was a captain whose leadership was sharpened more and more by sensitivity to the peculiar needs of her company ''(p.220). At the heart of this association, Beatrice is depicted as an unwilling instrument of Idemili sent to counter the male power which rampaged through the 'Kangan state'. In this mythical identification with Idemili, the Igbo goddess who links the sky and the earth, Beatrice stands also to perform the same role; collecting the shattered fragmentations of the struggle to build her holy kingdom that celebrates the morality and modesty rituals of the communal modern myth of power .

So, challengingly enough on Achebe's part, the burden of ''appeasing an embittered history'' is entrusted to Beatrice as the Almighty daughter and the woman who initiates her performing duties in the naming ceremony for Elewa's and Ikem's child. The ceremony brings into union all the different groups affected by the destructive machine of power, who gather to commemorate Ikem and Chris and to see the naming of Ikem's child. The communion presents a grouping that seems to represent an ideal community – a real democracy for Achebe's Nigeria and Africa. This union is the one which incorporates the taxi drivers, the market woman, the servant, the relatives from the hinterland and with the young intellectual- the student leader Emmanuel, the girl rescued by Chris from rape – headed by their Goddess in her holy shrine. They constitute a large unified community that transcends all the boundaries of the ethnic communities from which they come. In one important sense, this communion in this symbolic sphere, as gathering around Beatrice the goddess, holds more than a bond of consent, for it embraces divine foundations which can ensure a vision of just power relations. In fact, by means of this association, Achebe stresses the possibility of a wider scope of participation in the struggle against the lies and brutalities of power. The union is symbolized by Elewa's and Ikem's child, and the significant name she is given.

In one way or another, the ceremony tends to announce the beginning of the growth of the first branches of the nation as conceived in the very symbolic act of the naming rituals. Achebe, in commenting about it, says that ‘‘(t)he naming ceremony in *Anthills* is challenging’’[43]. It is indeed challenging in the sense that it makes the novel close the stage of power’s violence and bring into memory and work Ikem’s dialectic ideas of post-independence contradictions in a conciliating scene that revises the old past ritual conventions. Elewa’s child symbolizes Ikem’s faith and vision of nation-state, not only as the living proof of a union that cuts across social barriers, but, as Elewa’s uncle and the whole assembly acquiesced ‘‘the daughter of all of us’’(p.219). The baby is named Amaechina, an Igbo boy’s name meaning May-the-path-never-close- which is translated as the ‘‘Shining Path of Ikem’’(p.213). Here, Beatrice follows the example of Isiah himself, ‘‘that old Testament prophet’’ whom she refers to in her preamable as having named his son the remnant –shall return. Comparing the two metaphorical names, Beatrice believes that ‘‘they must have lived in times like this. We have a different metaphor, though ; we have our own version of hope that springs eternal. We shall call this child Amaechina: May-the-path-never-close’’(p.213), a specific analogy about the ‘national return’ and ‘the rebirth of the nation’ . In giving this indigenous name to the child, the celebrants establish a link with all the past precursors and roadmakers. It is a boy’s name which is given to a girl and not, as custom demands, by the father but by its several mothers. In fact, the act reveals a new major development. The world of *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* has been replaced by new social values in that, contrary to custom, the naming has been done collectively by young people. The old man, Elewa’s uncle, for example whose duty is to perform the task of naming, says amazingly : ‘‘I did not hear of bride price and you are telling me about naming a child’’(p.217). He has, in fact, a rather different understanding of the ‘consolation’ which this child’s unheralded coming will bring to his people. He knows that the times have changed, and so does not object to Beatrice assuming responsibility for the naming. He understands that a new generation of agents, new strategies for survival, have come into play : ‘‘(…) in you young people, our world has met its match. Yes! You have put the world where it should sit’’ (p.217). Realizing this change of times and values, the old man accepts and blesses

what the young people have done. Symbolically, in the first cries of the baby daughter one can only see the continuation of the struggle for justice and democracy, a seed of revolution Ikem Osodi has planted that shall grow again patiently, as he always believes and assumes, and obstinately until its fruit gradually acquires the bitter taste of liberty, as David Diop says in his symbolic poem which Achebe quotes as an epigraph at the beginning of chapter ten.

Following this path of struggle, it is easy to assume that those people we meet in the ceremony stand to illustrate and articulate the most telling example of organic imagery given in the title of the novel itself. The anthills, the uttering leaders of the story, which survive ‘‘to tell the new grass of the savannah about last year’s brush fires’’(p.28), are those of the communal union which gather at the end of the story ; they are in one sense the actual embodiments of the accumulated experience of the community who will absorb the wisdom of their race, as contained in the words of the Abazonian leader, to carry on the struggle and tell the story of that struggle. They have passed through painful experiences and faced dangers in their formidable confrontation with the corrupt mechanisms of power. They will survive the current crisis, too, to tell the coming generations – ‘the new grass’- about the coups and counter-coups, about power and dissidence, about themselves as heroes and martyrs for the well-being of the new grass which will offer possible signs of rebirth for the dead burnt nation.

Still, Achebe offers a sense of the possibility of revival. ‘‘What must a people do to appease an embittered history ?’’(p.211), asks Beatrice during her deep grief about Chris’s death. The answer was just there which everyone in the communion can see : they recognize in Beatrice’s act of articulation after hours of lost words and silence ‘‘the ending of an exile that the faces acknowledged’’, it is ‘‘the return of utterance to the sceptical priest struck dumb for season by the Almighty for presuming to set limits to his omnipotence’’(p.211). The passage is meaningless outside the framework of faith in destiny. Beatrice had failed in her trust in the redeeming power of her god. She had failed completely to trust the power of ‘the Almighty’. For that reason, and for that season only, she had been struck dumb, made incapable of utterance after the violent death of Ikem and then Chris. Her recovery of the power of

speech is the return of the grace of her god. With faith, she returns with the proper insight of a loyal priestess. She can now truly prophesy. Recovering from the depression of the loss of Chris and Ikem, she draws new courage from both her sense of calling as prophetess and her own understanding of the significance of recent history. Her articulation and revival are marked in the ‘‘slow thawing’’(p.219) of her frozen grief into the emollient tears of eventual understanding and appreciation of the ‘‘unbearably beautiful (message)’’(p.223) Chris sends to her and other surviving anthills moments before his death . That ‘‘coded message’’ or ‘‘insight (the last green)’’ (p.222) itself conveys the message that defeat must be transcended and a new beginning has to be traced. Chris’s death achieves the insight by making his friends overcome their pain and look forward to a possible sunny tomorrow. It is a reiteration of the point all three main characters - Ikem, Chris, Beatrice - had been learning, a reiteration which brushes aside the complexes of the imperial ‘I’ which all of them had embraced during their bounds with power, and which is now superseded by the social associated ‘We’, after learning the lesson of the ‘Other’ alienated world of the people. As Beatrice puts it : ‘‘Chris was sending us a message to beware. This world belongs to the people of the world not to any little caucus, no matter how talented’’(p.222). But the message is not only a warning, as Beatrice initially sees, but also an encouragement, for Chris ‘‘realized the truth at that moment and died smiling’’ (p.223). In fact, that moment of truth is, as Beatrice says, ‘unbearably beautiful’.Truth is beauty, Beatrice explains at the end of the novel ; it is the truth that lies in the last scene of Chris’s heroine death ; and the truth contained in the prominant image of the anthills holding their own truth of the past and also the present.

In its overall claim, *Anthills* advocates, through the ceremony, in conjunction with the incorporation of the female group, a system of government whose foundations would be rooted in the deep account of the different ethnic and religious diversities of the new African nations : ‘‘ Well, if a daughter of Allah could join his rival’s daughter in a holy dance, what is to stop the priestess of the unknown god from shaking a leg ?’’(p.215), Beatrice murmurs to herself. Her flat represents a symbolic sphere of national rebirth which brings into conciliation all the contradictions of the time. During the ceremony, even the disapproving grandparents who stand voiceless at the

young people's flexible use and performance of tradition eventually join in the final kolanut sharing, dedicated to ''the daughter of all of us''(p.219). One dominant thought that seems to generate the framing discourse of the traditional world of Achebe's novel, as Beatrice recalls of herself, is this notion of ''world inside a world inside a world''. Through this statement, Achebe seems to put the emphasis on the feature of dualism which Igbo society acknowledged and sought to accommodate within its own structures and mores. This emphasis is shown clearly in his essay ''Chi in Igbo Cosmology'', in which he defines the idea of duality and its centrality in the Igbo social world. One truth is always corrected by another in that Achebe has called typically Igbo dualistic mode of thought : ''Wherever Something Stands…Something Else will stand beside it''[44], ''nothing is absolute''[45]. A man lives here and his counter spiritual part, his 'chi', lives in the realm of the spirits. But, of course, the chi is not given complete power for that would be abhorrent in Igbo thought. It is with this idea also that Achebe traces the strong egalitarianism among the Igbo, deriving as it does from every man's feeling of original and absolute uniqueness. But, then again Achebe has to modify this statement by reminding us that in Igbo thinking nothing is totally anything, and so the individual cannot be allowed an absolutism which is denied even to his chi. Man's uniqueness is limited by the will of his community. As it balances each view against its alternative, Achebe's essay vividly demonstrates how all Igbo thoughts mistrust the notions of single-mindedness and absolutism. One can see here, once again, how Achebe's own tradition provides him with a subtly probing instrument which not only dismantles many western values, but also provides a living and tested alternative to deal with the confused post-independence philosophies which very often advocate extremist and absolutist thoughts.

In the novel, speaking about absolute oppression, Ikem considers ''those who see no blot of villainy in the beloved oppressed nor grant the faintest glimmer of humanity to the hated oppressor'' as ''partisans, patriots and party-liners''(p.95). The passage is important in the sense that it encourages tolerance, openness and curiosity in a world which can never become a closed system, but it also fosters scepticism of large claims and stoicism in the face of an uncertain reality. What we see in this novel, in fact, is a long patient tendency of Achebe to conceptualize an experience of

harmony ; a harmony between past and present, between intellectuals and poor ordinary people, between state and nation, and even between oppressor and oppressed. Indeed, in that last scene of the surviving fighters of the nation's struggle, Achebe has really attempted to create a real moment of independence, as conceived in the resolution of all the historical conflicts generated by both colonialism and the indigenous oppressive figures of the country. For example, the church and the mosque are seen not as versions of truth local to its champions, and their converts. Their apparent coming-together on the occasion of the naming ceremony prefigures a transcending of this localism ; or more exactly, an acknowledgement of their status as cultural, not divine, institutions. Elewa's uncle sums up this conciliation in the prayer for the new born baby : ''But we have no quarrel with church people ; we have no quarrel with mosque people. Their intentions are good, their mind on the right road. Only the hand fails to throw as straight as the eyes sees''(p.218). In such a prayer, the old man highlights also some of the major flaws which Achebe's writings have set to expose and negate as being principally culprit for the post-independence tensions of the African world of power, such as the ethnic and religious conflicts which stand as destroying features that plague numerous African societies – from Rwanda and Somalia to Sudan and Nigeria. At the same time, the prayer ''May these young people here when they make the plans for their world not forget her. And all other children''(p.219) reiterates Achebe's concern to expose the present malaise of the greedy politicians ''who make plans for themselves only and their families'' (p.219), forgetting , thus, the very poor people who legitimize their power. Following this criticism, Achebe's claim of ''wrapping around power's rude waist a loincloth of peace and modesty''(p.97) and using power with responsibility, advocates above all a moralistic holding of power which can ensure a well spread understanding of political experience under any given system or ideology of government. Hence the old man's prayer ends on the expanding circles of ''everybody's life !'', '' the life of Bassa'', and ''the life of Kangan'' (p.220). This last prayer is important in the sense that it articulates the quite appealing issue of nation-building which Achebe's narrative seeks to examine. All the salient experiences of the novel return us, not to the state (or country), but to the nation. The final debate in Harmony Hotel, for example, is not

about the future of the state, but the future of the people. The struggle which the elder speaks about is the struggle of the Abazon people ; and the path which will be kept open is not only the path to the redeeming ideas associated with Ikem, but the path to the future survival of Ikem's people in a world whose delimitation now includes the state of Kangan. There is no lament for Kangan at the end ; only a re-grouping for another start in Abazon which is the ultimate symbol of the people as a crucial group of power.

Notes and References :

1- Abiola Irele.Quoted in, Isidor Okpewho . *Myth in Africa.* (Cambridge .U.P. , 1983),p.160.
2-Michael M.J. Fisher . ''Ethnicity and the post-modernat arts of memory'', in *Writing Culture : The Poetics and Politics of Ethropology.*ed. James Clifford & George E.Marcus. (Berkeley : California. U.P., 1986),p.198.
3-Chinua Achebe , in Dennis Durden & Cosmo Pieterse .eds. *African Writers Talking* .(London : Heinemann , 1972),pp.7-8.
4-Chinua Achebe . '' The role of the African writer in a New Nation'', in G.D.Killam ,ed. *African Writers on African Writing* . (London : Heinemann, 1973), p.8.
5-Chinua Achebe , in *African Writers Talking* .Op.cit.,p.4.
6-Chinua Achebe, in *African Writers on African Writing* .*O*p.cit.,p.9.
7-Basil Davidson .*The Search for Africa: History in the Making.*(London: James Currey , 1994),p.249.
8-Ibid .,p .282.
9-Chinua Achebe , in Jane Wilkinson ,ed. *Talking With African Writers.*(Oxford , 2002 (1992)),p.54.
10-G.C.M.Mutiso. *Socio-Political Thought in African Literature* .(London : Macmillan ,1974),p.28.
11-Jean-Marie Makang . '' Of the Good Use of Tradition '', in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, ed. *Post-colonial African Philosophy : A Critical Reader* . (U.K : Blackwell Publishers ,1997),pp.324-5.
12-Ibid.,p.336.In fact , Makang notices the warning effects caused by the reduction of African traditions and identity to the mere concept of culture, for this latter is, he says, ''synonymous with folklore, and designates only artistic productions and external manifestations of Negro-Africans' emotional life, primarily in music, dances, and rituals''(ibid.,p.330). He views this vice of ethnological discourse as responsible for setting African traditions aside from the very African serious troubles of the time. Within the same issue of tradition, V.Y.Mudimbe stresses the inevitability of talking about tradition when mentioning history. He perceptively links tradition with history in the sense that both reflect ever-evolving diachronic patterns. According to him, the static binary opposition between tradition and modernity is not justified because tradition (traditio) means discontinuities through a dynamic continuation and possible conversion of tradita (legacies). From this perspective, tradition might be viewed as history in the making .It is, therefore, dangerously misleading to view it as static. On the contrary, tradition is in a state of flux, and it simply cannot be packaged like a museum piece. V.Y.Mudimbe .*The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge.* (Bloomington : Indiana U.P, 1988),p.189.
13-Raymond Williams . *Marxism and Literature.* (Oxford : Oxford U.P. ,1977), p.115.
14-Eric Hobsbawm &Terence Ranger, revs & eds. *The Invention of Tradition.* (United Kingdom : Cambridge .U.P. ,1983),p.254.
15-Chinua Achebe . *Morning Yet on Creation Day* . (London : Heinemann ,1975),p.94.
16-Chinua Achebe. *Hopes and Impediments : Selected Essays .(* New York : Doubleday ,1989(1988)), p.168.
17-Isidor Okpewho. *Myth in Africa. O*p.cit. ,p.243.
18-Roland Barthes. *Mythologies.* (Saint Amand : Imprimerie Bussière ,1970),p.202.
19-Ibid .,p.230.

20-Wole Soyinka . *Myth , Literature and the African World* .(Cambridge U.P., 1976),p.122.
21-Ibid.
22-Ibid.,p.53.
23-Chinua Achebe. *Beware, Soul Brother : Selected Poems.*(London: Heinemann, 1971),pp.65-6.
24-Chinua Achebe .*Arrow of God* .(Oxford : Heinemann ,1986 (1964)),p.230.
25-Isidore Okpewho .Op.cit. ,p.69. Under a chapter titled ''Myth and social reality: the poetic imperative'', Okpewho speaks at length about the subjects of African myth. He writes that ''this fancy concerns itself with the entire spectrum of the social universe: from issues which translate into experience in terms of more or less transcendent sense. On the one hand, the imagination focuses on actualities past or present and endeavours progressively to derive from them certain essences which liberate them from the bond of time; on the other hand, it grapples with mysteries by seeking to explain them in terms of observable reality without however destroying their supra-empirical quality. The mythic imagination is able to achieve this balance because it employs the medium of affectivity to dual effect: first, the fanciful characters of the tale are treated with human behavioural characteristics so that we are led to identify with their extraordinary objectives; and secondly, by virtue of both their supra-humanness and of the didactic messages which the narrator frequently draws from their actions we are made conscious of the essentially symbolic level toward which the drama of the tale strains''(p.114).
26-Richard Chase .Quoted in Okpewho.Op.cit.,p.71.
27-Simon Gikandi. *Reading Chinua Achebe :Language and Ideology in Fiction* .(London : James Currey ltd , 1991) ,pp.136 .
28-Chinua Achebe . *Things Fall Apart.* (Oxford : Heinemann ,1996 (1958)),p.26.
29-Ibid., p.13.
30-Ibid ., p.26.
31-Ibid . ,p.94.
32-Ibid., pp.94-5.
33-Njaka ,E.N. *Ibgo Political Culture.* (Evanston : Northwestern U.P. ,1974),p.124.
34-Ibid.
35-Don Ohadike. ''Igbo Culture and History''.p.xlvii., in the introduction of *Things Fall Apart.* Op.cit.
36-Chimalum Nwankwo . ''Historicity and the Un-Eve-ing of the African Woman : Achebe's Novels'', in Dubem Okafor, ed. *Meditation on African Literature* .(U.S.A : Library of Congress Cataloging –in- Publication Data , 2001),p.83.
37-Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. *In Other Worlds : Essays in Cultural Politics.* (New York : Routledge, 1988 (1987)), p.134.
38-Ibid., p.150.
39-Chinua Achebe , in Jane Wilkinson .Op.cit.,p.54.
40-Ali A. Mazrui . '' The Black Woman and the Problem of Gender : an African Perspective'', in *Research in African Literatures.*Vol.24, No.1 (Indiana U.P. , spring 1993),p.103.
41-Simon Gikandi .Op.cit ., p.136.
42-Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak .Op.cit. , p.107.
43-Chinua Achebe , in Jane Wilkinson .Op.cit.,p.52.
44-Chinua Achebe. *Morning Yet on Creation Day* . Op.cit.,p.99.
45-Ibid.,p.94.

CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, we have been following the drift of Achebe's underlying argument regarding the developing mechanisms of post-independence leadership and its conception of power and hegemony in two chosen novels of his, *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*. As we have been trying to argue, Achebe's standpoint of African leadership regarding the relationship between the two social notions of intellection and populace is distinguishable on many levels if it is to be compared with other African writers. His political visions are more rational than interested in pouring blame on the colonial or imperial powers, which some novelists like Ngugi and Ousmane take as the central issue of post-independence crisis of government and social underdevelopment. The two novels expand on social and political issues already treated in *No Longer at Ease ;* they nevertheless deepen the earlier questions of the cultural clash between traditional values and Western imported culture as presented through the confusing assumptions advocated by the governing order of the time. Perhaps more critical in these novels is the overwhelming focus on the problematic of power and its massive impact on the new men of politics and the pretentious intellectuals who find themselves after independence not leaders of the country's interests but personal owners of the whole national treasury and masters over the illiterate people. Caught in this anomy, Achebe's intellectuals, Odili, Ikem, Chris, and Beatrice, reflect somehow the complexes inherited from the past (colonial) tradition, and inevitably carry within themselves some elements of that hegemonic system. In some way, they act unconsciously according to the calculated classifications of centre and periphery, notably described by E.Said in his distinguished book C*ulture and Imperialism.* But the malaise they feel as a result is also accentuated by the misuse of the African tradition and personality, particularly in relation to power. Hence, their dissidence.

As the analysis of the two novels shows, Achebe stages the scenes of power abuses through conflicting confrontations between all the contradictions and multiplicities of the time. The leaders of the people, that is the new oppressors, are just those so-called nationalist revolutionaries who stand presuming to regain the lost dignity of the past under their make-believe lies of optimistic future. Achebe is keen

also to show us the deep dilemmas of the African intellectuals in defining a clear notion of interrelation between the self and the other, to show also their powerlessness to draw an articulate image of themselves as responsible representatives of the powerless class of their country. However, what stands unique and interesting in Achebe's position and analysis of the issue is his firm way of criticizing those passive masses which the Marxists only call the oppressed of the world. We have seen that in Achebe's world of social analysis, the people are sometimes shown to be steeped in the filth and the corruption by which the system of power is measured. They definitely adhere to the order of ''eat and let eat regime'' which facilitates the never-ending exploiting practices of power.

What final conclusions can be drawn from our analysis of *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah ?* First, we observe that Achebe has fed both satirical and grotesque elements into the two books, but not in the same proportions. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, satire is comparatively less important than in *A Man of the People* where the comic quality of the work is a prevalent feature. Indeed, Achebe's fourth novel is predominantly comic in form because concerned with a specifically dramatic period in Nigerian history (the series of political breakdowns of Coups d'Etat). *A Man of the People* transcends this confused vision of the country and goes on to describe the same realities of time and place wherein the main agents of the action are themselves the filthy politicians of the era confronted by a handful of intellectuals who can be labelled organic and committed social agents attending to the society's predicaments. Our conclusions about *Anthills* are basically similar to those we have drawn from our analysis of *A Man of the People.* The ideological claim remains the same, i.e. the post-independence state has completely moved away from the past traditional ethos of life and values that stood to organize the collective communal society of pre-colonial time. It is these violated essences that Achebe in *Anthills* sets out to rediscover by digging deeply in the rooted visions and wisdoms of the land, as conceived in the historical myths of the Igbo community.

Through the analysis of the two works, it appears pertinent to us that the identification of Achebe with the grounds of tradition and history he tells about in his novels is significant. It is significant in the sense that the world of the two novels

ensures close familiarity with the social structures of his people's lives and the hidden meanings of their traditional past. As in his previous works, his earlier contact with the village has remained a dominant factor. His understanding of traditional norms is very deep. But more important has been his appreciation of its verbal peculiarities and conventions which he recaptures with a degree of verisimilitude rarely to be seen in other African writers. The traditional dimension of the two novels is shown in the comparatively greater importance that they give to the orator. Our study permits us to observe that they are traditional in their artistic principles. Two of their dominant traits are irony, notably in *A Man of the People,* and allegory, in *Anthills of the Savannah,* which make the books read more like moral and didactic tales about the falling apart of the new nations . These devices, and others not mentioned, make the books assume a depth of empathy that leaves no room for the ironical distancing. Achebe is in one sense a traditional artist recounting his people's history to themselves first and other readers of Africa in order to teach them 'truths' about themselves. He is a traditional writer, as Lindfors describes him, ''because he knows what to do with the traditions he inherited''[1] and wants also his confused age to make use of it for a better understanding of the historical drift that advocates a discontinuous cultural production in the present. An important remark that we shall make is that if the two books devote ample space to the oral tradition, it is because the vision of historical and time frame they advocate in their mode of writing accomodates it . It is along this large dimension that Achebe's philosophical thoughts are developed and moulded within a harmonious framework of modernist techniques of narration and flexible use of oral tradition.

To remain true to this purpose, i.e. finding a valid juxtaposition of both traditional past and modern present, but at the same time expressing both his tragic sense at the fall of the traditional order and his premonitions about the failure of Nigerian independence, Achebe gives a flexible structure to his novels by using modernism (specifically in *Anthills*) while keeping historical realism the dominant mode of writing. On this account, Achebe has called upon the oral tradition as an authoritative model for the articulation of a modern artistic sensibility. This artistic completion creates that 'historical sense' which T.S. Eliot sees as being a prerequisite before qualifying an artist as being 'traditional'. Explaining the point, Eliot maintains

that the artist ‘‘is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living’’[2]. I refer to Eliot here in order to draw an analogy between his thoughts of past and modern times in twentieth century Europe and America and those of Achebe and post-independence Africa. In his modernist poem *The Waste Land*, Eliot has re-enacted the contradictions and the waste land world of the aftermath of the First World War through recreating the panoramic myths of the past by means of modern figures who deconstruct and mystify their original implications and meanings by turning their lyricals and charms of time and place into scenes of death and sterility. Contrasting the present void to those rich and great grounds of the past, Eliot presents images of human depravity and degradation wherein the relationship between man and woman has turned mechanical, and thus incapable of real senses of rebirth and regeneration. In this historical framework, Eliot is anxious to demonstrate that modern time could be interpreted and could gain depth of meaning only by being allied to some parallel patterns of human behaviour embodied in myth and legend.

In the same line of thought, Achebe is impressed not by a clash between ancient ritual and myth and modern behaviour, but by a sense of continuity in man’s search for social significance and commitment. However, Achebe’s use of tradition is not to be understood from the same groundings of despair and lamentation which Eliot’s literary creativity is bound up with. Achebe harks back to the oral tradition not in order to ‘stylize’ by tipping to ‘imitation’ of oral narratives, but in order to tap for myths and rituals that he will use as props for the construction of his plots and comments, and so to form an overall stand of the age from different critical perspectives that can offer not a waste land picture of the time, but a possible bridge between what was lost and what is there in a confused state. Hence, the underpinning of the plot structure of the novels with myths (*Anthills)* and old wise popular traditions (*A Man of the People)* becomes an ironical commentary on the sterility of the present state because of its renunciation of the traditional ethos for an imported way of life.

On one important side, Achebe’s end by using tradition in these novels is different from that in his previous works, i.e. *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. He

is more than concerned with his praiseful tone of the communal morality and wisdom of the lost tradition. What he seeks, indeed, is to recover, on behalf of his flexible weaving of modernist and traditional narratives, the tradition of the old age as conceived through his people's memories of previous periods of order in which the present society / government can find the standards against which their present performance is evaluated. Commenting on this issue, Simon Gikandi shows that ''Ikem becomes concerned with death and decay in an attempt to point out the absence of a community of spirit and a moral tradition ; he wonders whether the values that motivated the people in ''story-land' can be revitalized in the present moment'' [3]. But, unlike his protagonist, Achebe does not stand wondering at the efficiency of 'the values of his story-land', he is sure enough that there is some hidden vision in the old age that may carry a kind of enlightenment to the dark land of the present age. In one essay of his book *Morning Yet on Creation Day,* Achebe calls upon the African writers to look back and scrutinize what elements of the past are likely to redeem the modern diseased Africa. He writes : ''But there seems to me to be a genuine need for African writers to pause momentarily and consider whether anything in traditional African aesthetics will fit their contemporary condition''.[4]

The final remark that we shall make in terms of oral tradition is that of story-telling. Both novels are a case of modern form of story-telling, in the sense that they unabashedly display their indebtedness to the story-telling performance of the African oral tradition. The point of view from which the stories are told is the voice of the story-teller and his breaking into his story-telling through a formulaic style and didactic tone which is Achebe's way of making the two novels a 'shared experience' between the story-teller and the reader / listener. In his book, *Tradition as Truth and Communication* (1990) , Pascal Boyer, in writing about the changing implications of story-telling through times, stresses that : ''Now the fact that story-telling has changed in content and relevance does not mean that it is not traditional; conversely, the fact that it is traditional does not imply that it conveys the same representations and has the same effect on successive generations''[5]. Not very far from this view, we have argued in our analysis that the modern story-telling stands also to stay traditional in the sense that it does not happen in a cultural or historical vacuum ; the relevance of act

motifs depends, as in the traditional story-telling sessions, on the didactic and moralistic stance advocated. In this sense, orality makes *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* African enough to be able to contribute to the intellectual effort that Achebe makes in order to create an African episteme of governance .

Perhaps more relevant and objectively pertinent behind Achebe's distrust of the governing discourse of the time is its effects on the individual behaviour, specifically on the intellectuals, and the values which condition such behaviour. For Achebe, what does distinguish the intellectuals from the rest of the people in society is their capacity for taking an objective view of the state conditions as a whole. They are able to perceive with greater lucidity the real nature of the changes which are taking place in society, and push people to a possible understanding of themselves and the time. Equally important is the fact that they learn that the history of the time requires not only understanding or criticism but also involvement. Through their perception of social involvement and their bold challenge of the hegemonic polis, Achebe's project of post-independence power and intellection goes so far as to suggest an overall paradigm and social political vision of nation-state building. In *A Man of the People*, Achebe shows no hesitation in criticizing all the social classes' responsibility in the present corruption of the country. He makes it clear to us that his aim is not to solve the question of the African crisis of power, but to build a framework in which it is possible to address it as a significant question , as a matter for investigation. Odili's patience and capacity for action and, above all, his idealist vision of clean government stand utterly powerless before the materialist and the strategic practices owned by the hegemonic system. In the final analysis, Odili's vision tends to prove the limitations of both leaders and led, and it is 'corruption' and not 'idealism' which makes 'power' along the whole stage of the political struggle. Such powerlessness, as we happen to read, cannot be the result of unpragmatic idealism pervading the preaching of Odili, but rather of the overwhelming corruption which surrounds not only the ruling order, but also the ordinary people who stand ready, if possible, to replace their oppressors' seats and have their share of the national wealth.

Particularly with the character of Odili, Achebe describes the state of confusion in which the African intellectuals found themselves after independence. Odili, we

remember, tells us that he was not making any judgements when some things around him were happening because he was mesmerized by political ritual ; the insights he gained only had a kind of value much later when the whole picture was clear and yet insufficient to turn his knowledge and idealism into practical value. This case allows Achebe to both expose the corrupt world of politics, but also the limited knowledge of the intellectuals who take the responsibility to interpret this world. Along their political confrontations, Achebe wants to emphasize that Odili's attitude towards Nanga is not solely determined by personal interests or a lack of integrity, but is also the failure to develop an appropriate vision which can constitute a deep understanding and large representation of the 'other', that is the powerless people. Odili leaves no doubt as to his overall contempt of his people's traditional songs and dance, and above all their 'primitive' loyalty to their cynical corrupt chiefs. He never hesitates to describe their behaviours and even their traditions as primitive and ignorant. For him, matters are evidently crystal clear: the people are as cynical and arrogant as their leaders. Consequently, Odili ''functions as the vehicle of uncertainty and doubt '', as Gikandi comments, ''narrating from within the system of values and paradigms which his narrative is supposed to critique'', and so, ''he can not be the source of an alternative perspective''.[6]

The source of an alternative perspective is presented in *Anthills* where the quest for relevance calls for more than mere idealistic and illusory visions which strive vainly to condemn and expose the abuse of power. The attitude to this social criticism is also important, but it is crucial to be alert to the social ideological assumptions behind the made voices and evaluations. Achebe makes it clear that his choice of what is relevant for the country is conditioned not only by the strong social force which the intellectual class have to create, but by a wide-scope philosophy of national base which has to grow along meaningful perceptions of both the social conditions of the present era and the past traditions. For this reason and perhaps for others, *Anthills of the Savannah* constitutes both challenging questions and answers to post-independence crises of power. Achebe moves patiently to promise something new and different in terms of an alternative or solution ; a political purpose in an attempt to both articulate the reality of the dominant discourse and to displace its ''traditional'' attitudes.

So, as we have read, speaking through his protagonists, Achebe warns that the post-independence attempt to understand and solve its problems only in terms of conformity to European models or some vague invented theories which draw on the same repressive structures of the colonial power has been deeply destructive. At their best, the African leaders and thinkers come with a pre-established and, perhaps, a complete foreign imported world vision and try to adjust their reality to this alien world vision, where they should do just the opposite. Amilcar Cabral warns against succumbing to this uncritical way of applying an already ready-made theory into an unstudied, not fully understood reality. He believes that the reaching of conclusions without the taking of an appropriate action is self-frustrating or equal to a self-deception. In fact, I refer here to Cabral partly because he has the same position Achebe takes against all the labels of ideologies and theories. Cabral dislikes all doctrinal labels, he considers them as a probable source of error. In this respect, he argues that : ‘‘labels are your affairs (…). Just ask me ; please, what are you doing in the field ? Are we really liberating our people, the human beings in our country, from all forms of oppression ? Simply ask me this and draw your own conclusions’’[7]. What is important for him in the whole issue is that every theory of struggle has to arise as the consequence of an actual struggle of the land. For in every case, practice comes first and theory after. Following this ideological law, and speaking about the national fight, Cabral stresses that if the African countries really want to advance their struggle, they must make a critical assessment of the experience of others before applying their theories of struggle.

Achebe, of course, cannot choose to step out of ideology. As it is shown through the analysis of the two works, he believes that a meaningful national redemption goes beyond a mere change of masters and systems. For him, the point is not that the state would be altered if other figures wiser and more responsible were introduced into the government polis. What is at issue, according to Achebe, is the ‘‘basic human failing that may be alleviated by a good spread of general political experience, slow of growth and obstinately patient’’(p.133). What Achebe strives to establish as an intellectual, is a new and different reading of the paradigms of the era, in a sense, a reading which will not only draw on the same lines of the pre-established thoughts, or try a genuine

criticism of what is there, but which will reveal an ability to alter, and for the better for 'all'. Commenting on the same issue, Foucault addresses the intellectual's function in changing the governing discourse. He argues that :

> Le problème politique essentiel pour l'intellectuel, ce n'est pas de critiquer les contenus idéologiques qui seraient liés à la science, ou de faire en sorte que sa pratique scientifique soit accompagnée d'une idéologie juste, mais de savoir s'il est possible de constituer une nouvelle politique de la vérité. Le problème n'est pas de changer la « conscience » des gens ou ce qu'ils ont dans la tête; mais le régime politique, économique de production de la vérité .[8]

This quest for new truths and conceptions of politics is the mission Achebe instills his intellectuals with in *Anthills*. Through Ikem, Chris, Beatrice and all the other ordinary people who support them in their struggle against the mechanisms of the corrupt hegemony, Achebe's political project of post-independence government becomes one that brings all the conflicting contradictions and frustrating tensions of the time into a surface of critical and rational reflection. One important point, tradition, as our analysis has attempted to show, is narrativized into the logic of modern time. Achebe lets the traditional world speak – allowing the sub-consciousness of the past to find a conscious expression which will then inflect and produce the forms of political redemption which might bypass completely all kinds of alien forms of the nation-state government. It is this momentous project that produces a context for Achebe's final vision : the thin line between national consciousness and maintenance of the traditional ideology of the state must be kept clear in its intellectuals' and people's minds. In this immediate concern, Achebe's vision of the time implies that the rate of development will depend to a large degree upon the role played by the educated elites, that is upon the ability of their members to analyse and to draw the people's attention to the problems facing their country. The crucial point here for Achebe is that much will depend also upon the relationship that exists between the elites and the masses ; upon the extent to which the former can obtain, at least the aquiescence of the people in their leadership, at best their active support in the tasks of development .

But perhaps the strongest indicator of another item on Achebe's philosophical agenda of the government order – the implicit new idiom of his politics – is the explicit role he gives to African woman. Drawing on the deep roots of the mythical visions of traditional orders, Achebe speaks directly to the African woman. He makes

his female protagonist, Beatrice, in *Anthills of the Savannah* certainly aware that the Western themes of woman's norms cannot offer solutions to the African woman. Beatrice goes further back towards the past to trace her origins in the traditional world, to understand the legends of her people and to bring their substantial utterances, sometimes through adequate modifications, into a possible co-existence with the present modern world. Gaining this force, Beatrice receives power of utterance and, to use Spivak's terms, ''spoke of (her) marginality at the public session''[9]. She understands that her will to explain and to tell herself the story of the power struggle is the expression of her desire to have a self and a world ; an existence which is herself will set and define in regard to a larger sphere of social involvement. In fact, by drawing attention to the African woman's marginality in the world of power, Achebe, through his heroine, has attempted not to win the centre for women, but to establish more possibilities for gaining access to power on which all the social groups - male and female, intellectual and illiterate - would generate a framework which can operate directly within the preoccupations of memory, i.e. tradition, and the country's social existence. About this issue Achebe says :

> In mapping out in detail what woman's role is going to be, I am aware that radical new thinking is required. The quality of compassion and humaness which the woman brings to the world generally has not been given enough scope up till now to influence the way the world is run. We have created all kinds of myths to support the suppression of the woman , and what the group around Beatrice is saying is that the time has now come to put an end to that. I'am saying the woman herself will be in the forefront in designing what her new role is going to be, with the humble cooperation of men. The position of Beatrice as sensitive leader of that group is indicative of what I see as necessary in the transition to the kind of society which I think we should be aiming to create .[10]

It is not easy to measure the success of Achebe's ideological alternatives to the existing order of post-independence African governments, either in producing a sense of cohesion among the educated elite or in mobilizing the masses within a full corporation-based system. The values of traditional perceptions of power and governance stressed in his philosophy are those of, albeit idealized, social responsibility, ethically-based order of communal relations, and above all a moralistic use of power. But are these compatible with modernization which alters and often destroys the very essence of human dignity and virtues ? And if not so, is the modern

nation based upon traditional African values but a fantasy, incapable of realization ? Most certainly, Achebe's social and political visions in *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* have not been selected by economists designing institutions capable of ensuring rapid and effective development , nor have sociologists judged them consistent with the developing stage of the nation's history. As a man of letters, Achebe is not equipped 'a priori', to propose concrete solutions such as adequate political programmes, or laws which prevent corruption. But as a novelist whose concern is the plight of the people, he may be in a position to suggest a social vision, to inspire political awareness that may bring better changes. Jean Paul Sartre comments : ''L'ecrivain engagé sait que la parole est action : il sait que dévoiler, c'est changer et qu'on ne peut dévoiler qu'en projetant de changer''.[11]

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الملخّص العربي: **The Arabic abstract**

السلطة والمعارضة في روايتي *A Man of the people* و *Anthills of the Savannah* ليشنوا أشيبي.

في هذه الرسالة ننقاش موضوع أزمة الحكم ومفاهيمه للسلطة والقوة في افريقيا في فترة ما بعد الاستقلال من خلال روايتين للروائي النيجيري شينوا أشيبي. الروايتان هما على التوالي *Man of the people* و *Anthills of the Savannah*. القضية المركزية التي تطرحها الروايتين هي أن نمو الدول الإفريقية بعد الاستقلال كان مرهونا بأشكال وتناقضات معقدة قد خلقت معنى من المعضلات الشخصية والاجتماعية للمفاهيم والهويات. توسعت الروايتان في قضايا اجتماعية وسياسية عولجت سابقا في رواية *No longer at Ease*، ولكنها واصلت لتعمّق التساؤلات الماضية بشأن التصادم الثقافي بين القيم المعرفية الإفريقية والثقافة الغربية المستوردة ونتائجها السلبية على الدول الفتية.

أكثر نقدا في هذه الروايتين هو التركيز على قضية الحكم وتأثيرها المدمّر على رجال السياسة الجدد والمسمّاة بالطبقة المثقفة التي وجدت نفسها بعد الاستقلال الوريث الشرعي للمستعمر القامع. ظهر أشيبي مؤكدا لمفاهيم فرانس فانون وادوارد سعيد، مفاهيم تاريخية واجتماعية عميقة الدراسة تبيّن العجز الكبير للمثقفين الأفارقة في رسم هيكل واضح المعالم للتواصل بين الماضي العقائدي والحاضر العصري من جهة، وكذا عجزهم أيضا لوضع صورة مترابطة لأنفسهم كممثلي للناس الضعفاء من جهة أخرى. رواية أشيبي *A man of people* قدمت أسباب ونتائج أزمة السلطة. سمحت الوضعية لأشيبي إبراز فشل المثقفين في تأسيس رؤية نظام مناسبة تستطيع أن تضم فهم واضح للوجود الاجتماعي.

في إتباع نفس الأفكار، رواية *Anthills of the Savannah* جاءت كتصور لحل متكامل للقضية المطروحة سابقا. انتقلت الرواية بتحدي لتعد بشيء جديد ومختلف من حيث البديل لتستنطق وتعّوض في نفس الوقت الحوار الفاسد للنظام السائد. مشروع أشيبي يتمحور في خلق من فوضى الفترة معتقد الأمة الدولة الذي سوف يكافح لاسترجاع مقل الأعراف الشعبية الماضية الضائعة، وليؤسّس من هذه الرواية الأخيرة مرجعا أخلاقيا عاما للأمة. هذا النموذج في عمومه يتطلب مبدأ قرامشي للاندماج الاجتماعي الذي يدعو إلى نطاق واسع لفلسفة المشاركة الوطنية، والتي تصاغ عبر إدراك عميق ومحسوس للوضعية الاجتماعية للجماهير.

لإكمال مشروعه الكلي بناء الأمة، قدّم أشيبي ضرورة إمكانية تأكيد السند الأخلاقي والكمال الثقافي للمرأة الإفريقية. موقف بياتريس ككاهنة لإلاهة الأرض في أساطير ايبوا، وكمرأة مثقفة عصرية لخّص سعي أشيبي إلى وضع نظام لتفكير راديكالي جديد قائم لتشكيل قوة اجتماعية أكثر إتحادا، أين تقف المرأة كجزء أساسي في المجال الكلي للسلطة. إتقان مشروعه، قدّم أشيبي تضمنا بأن الحل لأزمة الحكم لفترة ما بعد الاستقلال في إفريقيا يمكن تحقيقه ليس عبر استيراد نظريات صراع ومقاومة غربية. لكن عبر إصلاح مبنى على انسجام مع وقائع وتاريخ الارض. إن محاولته لتقدم مخططا إفريقيا نموذجيا في *Anthills* عبر مثال أسطورة الحكم العقائدي لشعب ايبوا هي إشارة للأهمية المستمرة للإسهامات المعرفية للمجال الاجتماعي والسياسي للحكم السائد.

من خلال كل هذا، حاولنا برهان أن إسهامات أشيبي لقصص ما بعد الاستقلال للتاريخ الإفريقي قد اتخذت مجالا جديدا من أجل بداية تاريخية حقيقية. وجدنا أنّ وسائله للوعي والتحليل الذاتي في اقتفاء قصته لمجتمع ايبوا، ظهرت فعالة ونقدية بقوة. في هذا الصدد اقترح نظام أشيبي لبناء الأمة بأن الشريعة الجديدة عليها أن تعتمد ليس فقط على إعادة التفكير راديكالي للعقيدة ولكن أيضا على إعادة تخطيط للأشكال التي تقدم فيها الثقافات الإفريقية. جوهريا، العقيدة لم تخاطب من أجل الرجوع لوجود أسطوري ولكن أساس بهدف استنطاق فجواتها الثقافية والتاريخية وإيجاد تصورا مناسبا للتجاوب بين الماضي العقائدي والتحديات المعاصرة التي تواجه القارة السمراء.

في النهاية نحاول قراءة مشروع أشيبي الروائي كقالب ثقافي متكامل لرصد الحياة الاجتماعية والسياسية في إفريقيا ما بعد الاستقلال. طبعا لا يستطيع الأحد منا نقد وسائله في معالجة مثل هذه القضايا الواقعية المعزولة بسهولة. ربما لم يمنح أي مخططات سياسية كاملة أو وصفات نظرية من أجل بناء اجتماعي وإتحاد سياسي، ولكن كشف التأثيرات السلبية للسلطة الفاسدة على الجماعات الضعيفة. كروائي، أشيبي متلهف أساسا إلى إلهام وعي شامل يمكن من تحقيق الأحلام الإفريقية في الوحدة والكرامة الاجتماعية.