



THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PROBLEMS OF POWER AND LEADERSHIP IN THE EMERGENT NATION AS REFLECTED IN ACHEBE'S A MAN OF THE PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

In the post-independence period, Africa faced numerous challenges of power and leadership due to numerous reasons. Here we can cite lack of experiences in leadership which entailed low self-governance and corruption, lack of self-resilience and other forms of worse leadership. In this respect, Chinua Achebe's novel, *A Man of the People*, reflect the lives of Africans in that period. This study therefore set out to find out the post-independence problems of power and leadership in the emergent nation. The study analyzed different issues happened in that period through Achebe's *A Man of the People*. In *A Man of the People*, there are two contrasting groups of people from a political and social aspect based in West Africa. The groups are the old and the new generations of politics and two characters represent them. Odili, the narrator, represents the new intellectual generation, while Chief Nanga, Odili's former teacher, represents the old style of bush politicians. The conflict between the old and new ways is portrayed through the two characters as they not only disagree and quarrel over political views but also women. The story ends with a military coup that foreshadows the Nigerian Revolution of 1966. "Chinua Achebe proved to be a better prophet than any of the political scientists"(K.W.J. Post, xiii). Achebe captures the inside reality of the lives of the contrasting characters as he demonstrates energy and brightness as well as violence and corruption. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used and a variety of methods including documentary analysis were employed to ensure triangulation and the quality of data collected and analyzed. The study revealed causes of African leaders' failure, which provoked numerous problems in the aftermath of colonization observed till now. This had been of major interest to both African society and those that are in leadership positions presently or are aspiring to positions of governorship. On the other hand, it helped people especially new leaders to overcome those various problems. This is of much importance since history is one of the keys to understand the future.



0.1. INTRODUCTION

In the late nineteenth century, the European imperial powers engaged in a major territorial scramble and occupied most of the continent, creating many colonial territories. The African continent in general experienced colonialism from the end of 19th century to the 1960s. From their exploitations, oppressions and many other evils towards Africans, white men were considered as the source of all problems. Africans were disappointed because they expected that white men's departure would bring their happiness. They have been betrayed by their own leaders who continued the white men's system.

New leaders promised people to establish and consolidate peace, justice and equality. But, after taking power, they alienated themselves from the ruled. Instead, their powers were characterized by corruption, injustice and violence. From this environment, over the last three decades African committed writers so as to dare or to speak against this system. In this respect, Chinua Achebe with his famous work *A Man of the People* is one of them.

Achebe's *A Man of the People* is a prophetic novel predicting problems new states would undergo after the white men's departure. Achebe raises the problem of individualism, society struck between collective religion observances and individual monetary pursuits. It is every man for himself in acquiring as large a piece of the national financial cake as possible and by whatever means produce the best results. Therefore, *A Man of the People* is good example of how literature is a reflection and mirror of society not forgetting the role of being a vehicle of social change.

0.2. Chinua Achebe and his works

Chinua Achebe, a strong voice for African literature, was born in 1930 in Ogidi, Nigeria. His father was a Christian evangelist and teacher. Achebe's full name is Albert Chinua Iumogu Achebe. He studied broadcasting with the BBC and received a BA in 1953. Over the course of his life he has written nearly 300 books and has become a powerful influence in the Nigerian politics. His writings are aimed toward a select group of people in Africa, not only those who can read, but those educated above the basic level, who have enough money to purchase the book. "Paradoxically enough, his writings are probably better known outside his own country than in it." (K.W.J. Post, v) This idea of an "aimed audience" implies that Achebe wants countries with power and a say in the world to understand the lives of the people from his part of the world, West Africa.

Achebe has written extensively throughout his adult life. His numerous articles, novels, short stories, essays, and children's books have earned prestigious awards. He has been the dominant figure in African writing since the publication of his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, in 1958. Achebe's other novels, *No longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) are equally respected.

0.3. Statement of the problem

Naturally, all new states undergo many challenges in their emergence due to different circumstances such as lack of experience, hardships resulting from change, or some misunderstanding among new leaders, not forgetting stress which can make people more alert. This shows a decrease in functioning over time, even though a person may believe that he is at the height of his powers.

This is the case of African countries in their post-colonization period. All the new nations faced severe problems, for political independence did not automatically bring them prosperity and happiness. They were seldom free of external influences but they were still bound to structures developed earlier by the colonial powers.

However, in *A man of the People*, Achebe focuses more on the politics of West African communities. He shows the switching of power between the old and new styles of politicians and how the old style inspired them. Achebe evokes an atmosphere where the government is informed by deceit, duplicity, and greed. In addition, He shows how a society that places little value on religious beliefs is susceptible to unrestrained acquisitiveness and unchecked political corruption.

Finally, this study seeks to identify causes of African leaders' failure, which provoked numerous problems in the aftermath of colonization observed till now. This will be of major interest to both African society and those that are in leadership positions presently or are aspiring to positions of governorship. On the other hand, it will help people especially new leaders to overcome those various problems. This would be of much importance since history is one of the keys to understand the future.

0.4. Purpose of the study

In this research, I will explore Chinua Achebe's, *A Man of the People*. I will consider each character's deeds and messages conveyed especially in Chief Nanga and Odili Samalu, antagonist and protagonist respectively. On one side, Odili Samalu, a teacher turned politician, who takes on his former teacher, a now-corrupt member of the cabinet. He represents the new intellectual generation, while Chief

Nanga, Odili's former teacher, represents the old style of bush politicians. The conflict between the old and new ways is portrayed through the two characters as they not only disagree and quarrel over political views but also over women.

Therefore, this will be of much importance in highlighting the life of a post-colonial African politician, who is part of the new elite that has replaced the former colonial masters. Just like the pigs in "*Animal Farm* by George Orwell", these political elites create a good life for themselves at the expense of the masses.

In fact, this research has the following objectives:

-Identification of various forms of power misuses.

-The way of escaping from those betrayals.

-which lessons people have to get from Achebe's *A Man of the People*

0.5. Literature review

Many researches have been conducted to this topic but they did not tackle it clearly. Therefore, I cannot confirm that this research is the only one about Achebe's *A Man of the People*. But I found it right to conduct my research on this novel without ignoring the previous researches.

Some people like Bizimana Ndaruhutse in his memoir "Struggle for peace as reflected in George Orwell's *Animal farm* and Chinua Achebe's *A man of the People*." tried to notice some challenges Africa underwent in the post –independence period. But his concern was not clearly stated because he combined two books whereas I choose one.

As far as I am concerned, my contribution will be to show in detail how emergent nations of Africa had met numerous problems of power ad leadership in the post-independence period. This will be fruitful for all people who will try to read it because it will go in deep what others did not talked about.

0.6. Research questions and research assumptions

0.6.1. Research questions

This study will be guided by these questions:

- a) How does Chinua Achebe state the problem of leadership and power in the emergent nation-state post-independent?
- b) What problems does he mention in his work?
- c) What are the principal causes of them? Which impacts have they on African people?

0.6.2. Research assumptions

This research will be around the following assumptions:

- a) That in the aftermath of colonization of Africa, there has been a question of leadership.
- b) That corruption done by leaders can decrease the development of any country.
- c) That good governance is the most basic key to the development especially for emergent nations.
- d) That all African societies –Rwandan included- have to learn something from Achebe's *A Man of the People*.

0.7. Justification and significance of the study

Generally, nobody can conduct a research without any motivation. Therefore, my research on Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* has various reasons. The most important is that I am very fond of African literature and I was motivated by it. I am interested in reading African writers' works especially Achebe's. The second reason is that Achebe develops the story in a powerful, humorous, witty and masterful way that clearly shows why he is one of the greatest novelists to have graced the African continent. He is one of my favorite writers.

Besides this, I cannot forget to mention how much I like history which is the basic element of literature. Therefore, as an African who is proud of being so, I have a great pleasure to know the African past so as to transform our world.

Henceforth, human communities are still ravaged by oppression, rape and many other social ills like the ones portrayed *A Man of the People*. Therefore, this work will help in urging people to fight for the good of their society without fear as Achebe did by attacking the evils committed by leaders of his country.

However, the fact that African countries underwent a number of problems of power and leadership in the post –colonial era and till resist now in some areas motivated me to conduct this research so that different societies gain something about leaders' behaviors after

their elections.

Finally, I am convinced that researching on Africa's problems of leadership and power in the emergent nation will help today's people to have a good view of the world as far as leadership and good governance are concerned.

0.8. Scope and limitation

As I have already mentioned, this research will focus on the post –independence problems of power and leadership in the emergent nation. The case study will be Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* particularly in Nigeria and Africa in general. This study will tackle all form of struggles for independence and will mention in detail leaders' behaviors after this struggle.

0.9. Methodology

The interpretation of this novel consists of a combination of both historical and sociological approaches. These see a literary work chiefly, if not as a reflection of its author's life and times or the life and time of the characters in the work. Thus, the meaning of a literary work is perceived through either its milieu or that of its author or in some cases, within the author himself. Therefore, to better understand Achebe's *A Man of the People*, social and historical approaches are helpful.

0.10. Structure of the study

Apart from the general introduction and conclusion, this work is divided into three chapters, each of which has its subdivisions. The first chapter is the historical background of Africa: Its leadership during the pre-colonial and colonial period, a long struggle for power. Afterwards, this paper will proceed by proper study with the second chapter which explores all problems of power and leadership in the emergent post-independent nation as it is portrayed in Achebe's *A Man of the People*. Finally, the third and last chapter deals with some experiences every people have to learn from Achebe's ideas so as to maintain good governance in this continent.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AFRICA: A LONG STRUGGLE FOR POWER

1.1. Introduction

We cannot begin with political history of Africa without having an idea on some key terms of this work. Therefore, this part concerns firstly the definitions of leadership, power, not forgetting the emergent nation. Besides, it will proceed with the overview of African history: its pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period.

1.2. Definition of keywords

1.2.1. LEADERSHIP

According to the Wikipedia, Leadership is the "process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task." Many definitions have been also emerged by some scholars such as Alan Keith ¹of Genentech who stated that "Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen." On the other hand, Tom DeMarco² says that leadership needs to be distinguished from posturing. It remains one of the most relevant aspects of the organizational context.

However, defining leadership has been challenging and definitions can vary depending on the situation. According to Ann Marie E. McSwain, Assistant Professor at Lincoln University, "leadership is about capacity: the capacity of leaders to listen and observe, to use their expertise as a starting point to encourage dialogue between all levels of decision-making, to establish processes and transparency in decision-making, to articulate their own value and visions clearly but not impose them. Therefore, leadership is about setting, identifying problems, and initiating change that make for substantial improvement rather than managing change."

1.2.1.1. Theories of leadership

Studies on leadership have produced theories involving traits which try to describe the characteristics associated with effective leadership. In addition to this, we have the situational interaction which says that what an individual actually does when acting as a leader is

¹ALAN KEITH (2003). *Living leadership*.London:BBC

²[TOM DeMARCO](#) (1997).*The Deadline*.Washington:Dorset house publishing

in large part dependent upon characteristics of the situation in which he functions. Other theories are function, behavior, power, vision and values, charisma, and intelligence among others.

1.2.1.2. Leadership styles

There are three leadership styles:

The authoritarian leadership style. It is approved in periods of crisis but fails to win the "hearts and minds" of their followers in the day-to-day management.

The *democratic leadership style* is more adequate in situations that require consensus building.

Finally, the *laissez faire leadership style* is appreciated by the degree of freedom it provides, but as the leader does not "take charge", he can be perceived as a failure in protracted or thorny organizational problems.

1.2.2. POWER

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Power is defined as the ability to control people and events. It is the amount of political control a person or group has in a country. Philosophically, power is a measure of an entity's ability to control the environment around itself, including the behavior of other entities. The term authority is often used for power, perceived as legitimate by the social structure.

Power can be seen as evil or unjust, but the exercise of power is accepted as endemic to humans as social beings. Often, the study of power in a society is referred to as politics. The use of power need not involve coercion (force or the threat of force). Much of the recent sociological debate on power revolves around the issue of the enabling nature of power.

Power may be held through many sources such as

- Delegated authority (for example in the democratic process)
 - Social class (material wealth can equal power)
 - Personal or group charisma (a special power which some people possess naturally which makes them able to influence other people and attract their attention and admiration)
 - Expertise (ability, skills). For example, the power of medicine to bring about health; another famous example would be "in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king"
 - Persuasion (direct, indirect, or subliminal=not recognized or understood by the conscious mind, but still having an influence on it)
 - Knowledge (granted or withheld, shared or kept secret)
 - Celebrity
 - Force (violence, military might, coercion).
 - Moral persuasion (including religion)
 - Operation of group dynamics (such as public relations)
 - Social influence of tradition (compare ascribed power)
- In relationships; domination/submissiveness

1.2.3. EMERGENT NATION

From a verb "to emerge" which means to become known, especially as a result of examination or questioning, emergent means starting to exist or the process of appearing. Therefore the emergent nation or state is the action of a new nation which begins to appear. It is the birth of unification of a new state. The emergence of African countries in the post-independence is a good example.

1.3. THE PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

1.3.1. PRE-COLONIAL AFRICA

1.3.1.1. Early civilizations

About 3300 BC, the historical record opens in Northern Africa with the rise of literacy in the Pharaonic civilization of Ancient Egypt. One of the world's earliest and longest-lasting civilizations, the Egyptian state continued, with varying levels of influence over other areas, until 343 BC. The Egyptian influence reached deep into modern-day Libya, north to Crete and Canaan, and south to the kingdoms of Aksum and Nubia. An independent centre of civilisation with trading links to Phoenicia was established on the north-west African coast at Carthage.

The European exploration of Africa began with Ancient Greeks and Romans. In 332 BC, Alexander the Great was welcomed as a liberator in Persian-occupied Egypt. He founded Alexandria in Egypt, which would become the prosperous capital of the Ptolemaic dynasty after his death. Following the conquest of North Africa's Mediterranean coastline by the Roman Empire, the area was integrated economically and culturally into the Roman system. Roman settlement occurred in modern Tunisia and elsewhere along the coast. Christianity spread across these areas from Palestine via Egypt, also passing south, beyond the borders of the Roman world into Nubia and by at least the 6th century into Ethiopia.

In early 7th century, the newly formed Arabian Islamic Caliphate expanded into Egypt, and then into North Africa. In a short while the local Berber elite had been integrated into Muslim Arab tribes. When the Ummayyad capital Damascus fell in the eighth century, the Islamic center of the Mediterranean shifted from Syria to Qayrawan in North Africa. Islamic North Africa had become diverse, and a hub for mystics, scholars, jurists and philosophers. During the above mentioned period, Islam spread to sub-Saharan Africa, mainly through trade routes and migration.

1.3.1.1. In the 9th–18th century

Pre-colonial Africa possessed perhaps as many as 10,000 different states characterized by many different sorts of political organization and rule. These included small family groups of hunter-gatherers such as the San people of southern Africa; larger, more structured groups such as the family clan groupings of the Bantu-speaking people of central and southern Africa, heavily structured clan groups in the Horn of Africa, the large Sahelian kingdoms, and autonomous city-states and kingdoms such as those of the Yoruba and Igbo people in West Africa, and the Swahili coastal trading towns of East Africa.

By the 9th century AD a string of dynastic states, including the earliest Hausa states, stretched across the sub-saharan savannah from the western regions to central Sudan. The most powerful of these states were Ghana, Gao, and the Kanem-Bornu Empire. Ghana declined in the 11th century but was succeeded by the Mali Empire which consolidated much of western Sudan in the 13th century. Kanem accepted Islam in the 11th century.

In the forest regions of the West African coast, independent kingdoms grew up with little influence from the Muslim from the North. Ife, historically the first of these Yoruba city-states or kingdoms, established government under a priestly oba, (oba means 'king' or 'ruler' in the Yoruba language), called the *Ooni of Ife*. Ife was noted as a major religious and cultural centre in Africa, and for its unique naturalistic tradition of bronze sculpture. The Ife model of government was adapted at Oyo, where its obas or kings, called the *Alaafins of Oyo* once controlled a large number of other Yoruba and non-Yoruba city states

To sum up, this period was characterized by ancient kingdoms and empires where the king was the principle leader. Power was transmitted from father to his son and the monarchy was the system of administration where all powers were in the king's hands.

1.3.2. COLONIAL PERIOD

1.3.2.1. Colonialism and the "Scramble for Africa"

Until the closing years of the eighteenth century, contacts between Europe and Africans south of the Sahara were limited for the most part to the operation of slaves –West Africa was the source of the human cargo transported in the hundreds of thousands to the Caribbean Islands and North America– to the cursory development of trade, and the activities of missionaries along the coastal areas. There had been some exploring expeditions, principally along the great rivers –the Congo, the Niger and the Benue– but knowledge of the

way of life of the inhabitants of the African interior was cursory.

But about 1780, European interest in Africa changed dramatically. A number of related facts of history account for this change. The growth of industrial societies in Europe coincided, more or less, with the abolition of the slave trade. Legitimate trade replaced slavery as European countries competed for markets for their goods and sought, in return, supplies of raw materials for their manufacturing needs. A regular commerce between Europe and Africa developed quickly. Because the slave trade had been based in West Africa, it was natural that this is where the British should turn their attention and they began to consider possible ways in which Africa might be developed.

Missionary activity increased alongside the development of trade. An embryonic colonization took place. Coupled with these facts was the application of the social Darwinism of nineteenth century, the belief held by Europeans that they were at the top of the evolutionary scale, themselves and their societies superior to what they viewed as the primitive and anarchic cultures they encountered as they progressively penetrated the interior of continent.

Out of this belief in their superior status came the conviction on the part of Europeans that they had a moral duty to “civilize” and “enlighten” Africans, to take up what poet Rudyard Kipling³ termed “the white mans’ burden.”

The stereotypes about Africans and African societies embodied in these beliefs were used to justify colonial expansion in Africa. These patronizing sentiments were enunciated and consolidated in the principle of the “dual mandate”, a policy whereby the European powers would provide the benefits of civilization – education, commerce, medical services, the construction of roads and railways– in exchange for full rights to exploit the potential of the continent for trade.

So competition among European powers for territories in Africa escalated as the nineteenth century progressed and it became a matter of national pride to have territory in Africa. The intense rivalry among European powers – principally Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal – as it played out in Africa reached the point where it was feared that hostile engagements in Africa would prompt wars in Europe.

1.3.2.2. The conference of Berlin

To forestall this possibility –indeed likelihood –the German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarch, organized the Conference of Berlin for the purpose of reconciling national differences and antagonisms. The conference opened in Berlin on November 15, 1884. Nations represented were Germany, Great Britain, Portugal, Austria-Hungary, the Netherlands, Italy, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Turkey, and the United States.

The conference lasted for three months, ending on February 26m, 1885. The conference brought to a formal end what had come to be known as “the scramble for Africa” and put in its place the partition of Africa. The conference produced the Treaty of Berlin. Under the terms of the treaty, almost 90 percent of Africa came under European control. Only Freetown in Sierra Leone and Liberia, established as heavens for repatriated slaves at the close of eighteenth century, were exempted from the process of partition. No Africans were consulted about this European action.

Through this process of annexation, Great Britain was ceded Egypt, the Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, what came to be known as Zambia, and South and Southern Africa-Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Botswana on the East Coast of Africa, and the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Nigeria in West Africa.

1.3.2.3. Colonial systems

From 1885, the formal colonization of Africa began in earnest – countries were created, cutting across ethnic, social, political, and linguistic barriers.

The two principal ways in which colonization proceeded were by striking treaties with the chiefs and/or elders of African nations and communities, and when this failed, by use of superior military force, for example, the infamous “punitive expeditions” of the British.

Colonization was consolidated by 1914 and once territories were secured, various forms of government were implemented by the European powers: Direct rule, indirect rule, Assimilation, or combination of more than one system in one country.

³Rudyard Kipling was one of the most popular poets of his day, an ardent supporter of imperialism and a firm believer in the humanitarian potential of British expansion overseas.

For the indirect rule, all decisions would be taken by colonizers whereas for the indirect one, Africans were given opportunities to lead their people but being controlled by colonizers.

The British introduced a system of "indirect rule" into their colonial administration. This meant that colonial administrators ruled, as much as possible, through existing African political institutions. The policy assumed that African governing systems were hierarchical. The gradual introduction of political self-government, progressing from self-rule at the village and district level to the creation of colonial legislatures with elected majorities and increasing autonomous powers, and ending with the choice of a native cabinet from among the freely elected parliamentarians. When this was so, indirect rule worked reasonably well. When this was not so, as was often the case, the policy bred division that had not hitherto existed. It is in this atmosphere where different African writers tried to show the disastrous consequences of imposing indirect rule on communities not based on hierarchical practices. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are good examples.

Taking the example of Nigeria, Lugard⁴ thought that the direct rule was a waste of money. To deal with this seemingly impossible situation, British administration chose to use the system of indirect rule where some indigenous chiefs were given their traditional power but controlled by colonizers. The warrant chiefs were exceedingly unpopular with people and were backed by traditional authorities that were also corrupt. This was stemmed from Lugard failure to devise a satisfactory version of indirect rule for the small societies of Eastern Nigeria.

Apart from these, the system of assimilation dealt with transforming Africans into Europeans. From this, they applied their constitutions for indigenous Africans as for Europeans (e.g. France in Algeria). The French practice was different. For many years, France denied the possibility of adaptation and autonomous development for its colonies and insisted on the full assimilation of colonial inhabitants and their territory into the French cultural and political system. There was no local self-government. The administration was controlled centrally from Paris, and the educational policy was designed to train a small elite of colonial subjects as good Frenchmen.

1.3.2.4. Independence movements

Independence movements in Africa gained momentum following World War II, which left the major European powers weakened. In 1951, Libya, a former Italian colony, was independent. In 1956, Tunisia and Morocco won their independence from France. Colonial government, trade, and commerce remained intact in British possessions until 1957 when the Gold Coast, renamed Ghana was granted independence. The decolonization process proceeded swiftly after that and the right to self-determination was granted to the rest of Britain's colonies. By 1963, this decolonization process was complete in British territories.

Most of the rest of the continent became independent over the next decade, most often through relatively peaceful means, though in some countries, notably Algeria; it came only after a violent struggle. Portugal's overseas presence in Sub-Saharan Africa (most notably in Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe) lasted from the 16th century to 1975, after the Estado Novo regime was overthrown in a military coup in Lisbon. Though South Africa was one of the first African countries to gain independence, it remained under the rule of its white settler population, in a policy known as Apartheid, until 1994.

Therefore, this transfer of colonial power to individual African countries had so many influences to the development of African literature in English. Given this political context, it seems natural that African literature in English is a wide and varied response to the general social, political, and cultural needs of the peoples of the countries of Africa.

The first concern of African writers was to examine the consequences of colonial rule, to choose what was useful from the years of colonial control and governance, years during which established political institutions were altered and new political systems derived from Europe were imposed. In considering the legacy of the colonial experience, African writers ask a basic question: what can be taken from this experience and made useful in the independence period? Writing thus has an educative as well as artistic purpose. The primary purpose of writing for African writers is to help African people to retrieve what they had lost because of years of foreign rule. This means reexamining all aspect of their culture-political, social, economic, and religious. -with a view to reconstituting African communities and nations so that their peoples may regain and assert a sense of individual and collective dignity.

Achebe, who became the major exponent of this educative purpose of writing, sums up this need:

"I had to tell Europe that the arrogance on which she sought to excuse her pillage of Africa, i.e. that Africa was a Primordial Void was sheer humbug; that Africa had a history, a religion and civilization. We reconstructed this history and civilization to challenge the stereotype and the

⁴Lugard Frederick was the most important chief among British officials in Nigeria who used the indigenous authorities, the emirs and other chiefs in what became known as indirect rule

cliché. Actually is not Europe alone that I spoke to, I spoke also to that part of ourselves that had come to accept Europe's opinion of us (*Achebe 1964, 160*)."

1.3.3. POWER STRUGGLE IN THE POST-INDEPENDENT AFRICA

Today, Africa contains 54 sovereign countries, most of which still have the borders drawn during the era of European colonialism. Since colonialism, African states have frequently been hampered by instability, corruption, violence, and authoritarianism.

The vast majority of African states are republics that operate under some form of the presidential system of rule. However, few of them have been able to sustain democratic governments on a permanent basis, and many have instead cycled through a series of coups, producing military dictatorships.

A number of Africa's post-colonial political leaders were military generals who were poorly educated and ignorant on matters of governance. Great instability, however, was mainly the result of marginalization of ethnic groups, and graft under these leaders. For political gain, many leaders fanned ethnic conflicts that had been exacerbated, or even created, by colonial rule.

Taking an example of Nigeria, military rule was usually seen as a rescue operation necessary to save the country from the civilian ineptitude. Military rule was not expected to last long, once the rescue operation was complete, the military should return to the barracks where they belonged and leave the government to the civilian politicians.

Crowder (1973:314)⁵ remarked that the 1966 coup first looked as though it might put up an end to the corruption of the civilian regime and the ethnic tensions which the politicians had fired in order to maintain themselves in power.

In many countries, the military was perceived as being the only group that could effectively maintain order, and it ruled many nations in Africa during the 1970s and early 1980s. During the period from the early 1960s to the late 1980s, Africa had more than 70 coups and 13 presidential assassinations. Border and territorial disputes were also common, with the European-imposed borders of many nations being widely contested through armed conflicts.

Cold War conflicts between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as the policies of the International Monetary Fund, also played a role in instability. When a country became independent for the first time, it was often expected to align with one of the two superpowers. Many countries in Northern Africa received Soviet military aid, while many in Central and Southern Africa were supported by the United States, France or both. The 1970s saw an escalation, as newly independent Angola and Mozambique aligned themselves with the Soviet Union, and the West and South Africa sought to contain Soviet influence by funding insurgency movements. There was a major famine in Ethiopia, when hundreds of thousands of people starved. Some claimed that Marxist/Soviet polices made the situation worse.

The most devastating military conflict in modern independent Africa has been the Second Congo War. By 2008, this conflict and its aftermath had killed 5.4 million people. Since 2003 there has been an ongoing conflict in Darfur which has become a humanitarian disaster. AIDS has also been a prevalent issue in post-colonial Africa.

To sum up Colonialism has played a major role in the underdevelopment of the African continent. The numerous conflicts and endemic poverty in Africa can be safely laid at the door steps of the colonizers. Of course there is "leadership failure" on the continent. All these ills that plague Africa today are a direct result of that unfortunate encounter with the imperialist in Africa's history.

1.4. CONCLUSION

In fact, corrupt leaders destroyed Africa. The inherited infrastructure (roads, bridges, schools, universities, hospitals, telephones, and even the civil service machinery) are now in shambles"

What did colonial governments do in the interest Africans? Supposedly, they built railroads, schools, hospitals, and the like. The sum total of these services was amazingly very small. In drawing up a balance sheet of colonialism, the bad outweighed the good. Colonialism left African states highly underdeveloped. The two major colonizing powers committed very little in terms of investment in infrastructure.

⁵Crowder, M. (1973).The story of Nigeria. London: Faber and Faber

After going back in time to find out what has happened in Africa that makes its countries now economically, but also politically unstable, we can conclude saying that Africa has been dominated by various military coups and long military imposed transition programs to civilian rule. Henceforth, apart from military dictatorship, Africa has also been ruled by ineffective civilian leaders whose authority was based on tribalism, social injustice and corruption.

MISUSE OF POWER AND LEADERSHIP IN THE POST- INDEPENDENCE PERIOD AS REFLECTED IN *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE*

2.1. Introduction

Independence brought great joy to the people of each country in Africa that gained independence. There was great optimism that after decades of foreign rule political freedom and independence would provide a voice for all citizens in the political process. Moreover, there was wide-spread belief that with independence, the new African governments would be able to use political and economic resources to provide their citizens with basic social and economic services: education, health care, housing, employment. In this euphoria that came with independence, so much was promised by "nationalist" but all these ended in broken hopes.

Among promises that figured in the post-independence economic plans were commitment to equal opportunities and greater equality in the standard of living, development of opportunities in education, health, and employment. But when it came to fulfilling these promises things took another turn and the hopes collapsed at the expense of disappointment.

Upon reading an advance copy of the novel, Achebe's friend, the Nigerian poet and playwright John Pepper Clark⁶ declared: "Chinua, I know you are a prophet. Everything in this book has happened except a military coup!" Because Achebe's novel mirrored the coup that came shortly after the novel's publication, military personnel suspected him of having foreknowledge of the coup. Achebe evacuated his pregnant wife, Christie, and their children, to Port Harcourt⁷

In *A Man of the People*, a novel that foreshadows the military coup that would figure largely in Nigerian politics in the coming years, Achebe said "we know where that money is coming continued Nanga. Don't think we don't know we will deal with them after the election. They think they can come here and give money to irresponsible people to overthrow a duly constituted government" (133). Achebe continued showing the government already overthrown:

Our host simply refused to believe that he had lost a chief and Minister as son-in law... But the army obliged us by stating a coup at that point and locking up every member of the government. The rampaging bands of election thugs have caused so much unrest and dislocation that our young army officers seized the opportunity to take over (*A Man of the People*: 165).

This is in line with what happened in most post-colonial countries in Africa. Power and leadership were characterized by political corruption, lack of respect for rule of law, human rights violations which had been the principal causes of Africa's problems. Besides these, Achebe overlooked other causes: colonial states were weak and lacked capacity. With limited capacity, it was very difficult for the first independent governments in Africa to meet the huge social and economic needs of their countries. The inability of governments to meet the legitimate needs of their citizens is a key cause of political dissatisfaction. In addition, colonial states were not democratic and had little respect for human rights. It is difficult, but not impossible, to develop democratic institutions and practices on a "political foundation" that is un-democratic.

Moreover, as African leaders faced opposition, partially because of their inability to meet the needs of their citizens, it was easy for them to fall back on the un-democratic examples of the colonial states. Many post-colonial governments resorted to the same undemocratic practices like to control and deal with opposition. In *A Man of the People*, Achebe reaffirms this in the following passage:

I only agreed to this most reluctantly after many acts of violence were staged against us, like the unprovoked attack by some hoodlums and thugs calling themselves Nanga's Youth Vanguard or Nangavanga, for short.....
They declared aim was to 'annihilate all enemies of progress' and 'to project true Nangaism'. (*A Man of the People*: 126)

This shows how oppositions against bad leaders were various and underwent different oppressions which sometimes lead to death for some antagonists.

In a few words, the novel *A Man of the People* is the mirror of the post-independent African society and shade more light on all problems of power and leadership. This chapter explores in detail all forms of power and leadership misuse as reflected in *A Man of the People*.

⁶Clark J.P. (1970). *Casualties*. London: Heinemann.

⁷Port Harcourt is the capital city of Rivers State, Nigeria. It lies along the Bonny River and is located in the Niger Delta.

2.2. Forms of Power and leadership misuses in the emergent nation

2.2.1. Political corruption

Political corruption is the use of legislated powers by government officials for illegitimate private gain. This has different forms including bribery, cronyism, nepotism and embezzlement.

2.2.1.1. Embezzlement

It is defined as an outright theft of entrusted funds. It is a misappropriation of property, for example, when a director of a public enterprise employs company workers to build or renovate his own house.

In *A Man of the People*, Chief Nanga is referred to by the narrator, Odili, as a man of the people, and the most approachable politician in the country. He is the minister of culture and his speeches to the public represent everything that a politician should do and be. But as Odili tells the story, it becomes clear that Chief Nanga does not practice what he preaches.

The first thing critics tell you about our ministers' official residences is that each has seven bathrooms and seven bed rooms, one for every day of the week.... I was hypnotized by the luxury of the great suite 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 for ever....

A man who had just come in from 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 (*A Man of the People:41-42*)

The money that is supposed to go towards helping his community he uses instead to build four-story buildings, which he rents out for his own profit.

2.2.1.2. Nepotism and Cronyism

Favoring relatives (nepotism) or personal friends (cronyism) of an official is a form of illegitimate private gain. This may be combined with bribery, for example demanding that a business should employ a relative of official controlling regulations affecting the business.

Like Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*⁸, A man of the People with chief Nanga and Chief Koko, bears the image of "eating" politics. This is found where Odili is invited to the civil service as a job in order to share the national cake:

'My private secretary has B.A. from Oxford', he said. 'He should have come with me on this tour but I had some office work for him to do. By the way, Odili, I think you are wasting your talent here. I want you to come to the capital and take up a strategic post in the civil service. We shouldn't leave everything to the highland tribes. My secretary is from there, our people must press for their fair share of the national cake.' (*A Man of the People: 13*).

Besides this, the misunderstanding between the minister of transport and Nanga about building one road from Anata to Giligili, is a kind of corruption. One wanted to develop his region whereas the other one refused:

'That was Hon. T. C. Kobino. Very stupid man. The Cabinet has approved the completion of the road between Giligili and Anata since January but this foolish man has been dallying and dallying, because it is not in his constituency. If it was in his constituency he would not listen to experts. You see why I say that our people are too selfish and too jealous...' (*A Man of the People: 48*)

This was not for helping people of this region but Chief Nanga had two good reasons of wanting the road tarred: next elections and the arrival of his buses. These buses were a gift from the British Amalgamated but he considered them like his property.

2.2.1.3. Electoral fraud

In *The Trouble with Nigeria*⁹, on the first page, Achebe says bluntly: "the Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility and to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership."

⁸Ngugi wa thiong'o. (1977). *Petals of Blood*. London: Heinemann. pp.293-4

⁹ Achebe. (1983). *The trouble with Nigeria*. Nairobi: Heinemann

Electoral fraud is illegal interference with the process of an election. Acts of fraud affect vote counts to bring about an election result, whether by increasing the vote share of the favored candidate, depressing the vote share of the rival candidates, or both. Also called voter fraud, the mechanisms involved include illegal voter registration, intimidation at polls, and improper vote counting.

2.2.1.3.1. Electoral demagoguery

Demagoguery is a political strategy where a leader gains power by appealing to people's emotions, instincts, and prejudices in a way that is considered manipulative and dangerous. Likewise, in this novel, Chief Nanga wins support by exciting people's emotions rather than by having good ideas.

Therefore, the politicians in *A Man of the People* stand as an intermediary between the government and the common people but are portrayed by Achebe as the evil side. Chief Nanga learns to be greedy and learns how to win elections through the corrupt system of politics he was against in the first place.

This evil side of Nanga that no one ever sees due to his power and way of hiding the truth and having his way with women is seen by Odili as a powerful enough reason to run against him in the upcoming election:

Chief Nanga was a born politician; he could get away with almost anything he said or did. And as long as men as men are swayed by their hearts and stomachs and not their heads the Chief Nangas of this world will continue to get away with anything. He had that rare gift of making people feel—even while he was saying harsh things to them—that there was not a drop of ill will in his entire frame. This is of course a formidable weapon which is always guaranteed to save its wielder from the normal consequences of misconduct as well as from the humiliation and embarrassment of ignorance... (*A Man of the People: 73*)

This dark and empty side of Nanga motivates Odili to seek a friend he has not seen in quite some time, Max. Together they split away from the two political party systems in Nigeria that they see as corrupt and self-centered and they form their own political party that is meant to represent the common man.

...That first night I not only heard of a new political party about to be born but got myself enrolled as a foundation member. Max and some of his friends having watched with deepening disillusion the use of which our hard-won freedom was being put by corrupt, mediocre politicians had decided to come together and launch the Common People's Convention (*A Man of the People: 87*)

2.2.1.3.2. Violence and Oppression

Oppression is when people are governed in an unfair and cruel way and prevented from having opportunities and freedom. Violence describes a situation or event in which people are hurt or killed.

The argument Nanga uses against Odili is that Odili is an intellectual who has a European style of education and thus is farther away from the common man. This is a good argument, but coming from the mouth of Nanga, it is hypocritical and untrue.

Chief Nanga has motives to obtain as much power as possible and he uses violent and greedy methods to obtain this power:

...Then I heard the loudspeakers call out to the crowd to stop that man wearing a hat and dark glasses. I took off the hat. For a brief moment nothing happened and I struggled through a few more bodies. Then some tentative hands tried to stop me from behind but I shook them off and continued to push and shove.

'I said stop that thief trying to run away! Screamed the loudspeaker. The hands gained a little resolution and one vaguely-seen body stood firmly in my way. But I was not running any more then. I wanted to know who called me a thief.

'Odili the great,' saluted Chief Nanga. Then he took the microphone and said: 'My people, this is the boy who wants to take my seat.'... (*A Man of the People: 156*)

Henceforth, politicians fearing of being beaten during elections, practice all ways of anti-campaign towards their opponents: showing their negative sides. This is obvious in this passage with Chief Nanga's disrespectful behavior to Odili, a political disgrace.

I hear some people asking who is he: I will tell you. He was once my pupil. I taught him ABC and I called him to my house to arrange for him to go to England... He even tried to take a girl on whose head I had put the full bride-price and many other expenses... (*A Man of the People: 157*)

Besides this, violence, pressure and oppression are also great ways of mastering the opponent side. Therefore, this is the prime tool used by Chief Nanga for winning elections. Some of them were beaten, jailed and died. He arrests Odili's father at one point, bribes Max and eventually has Max killed, wins out the two girls Odili is after, tries to bribe Odili, and at the end tries to exploit Odili in front of the mass of people gathered to listen to his (Nanga's) campaign speech.

He pulled the microphone away smartly, set down, walked up to me and slapped my face. Immediately hands seized my arms, but I am happy that he got one fairly good kick from me. He slapped me again and again. The roar of the crowd was now like a thick forest all around (*A Man of the People: 157- 8*)

...The next day I asked again and if only to save himself from my pestering importunity he said yes, the thugs had ransacked my car, overturned it and set it on fire; then after I had been brought to hospital I was placed under arrest ostensibly for having weapons in my car but really to prevent my nomination paper (*A Man of the people: 159*)

...The same night Max was killed in Abaga but I didn't hear of it either, until two days after and then I wept all day that night, and the pressure inside my head returned and I hope I would die, but the doctor put me to sleep. (*A Man of the People: 160*)

2.2.1.3.3. Electoral cheating

Politicians sometimes use their power to influence the electoral commission in order to change the real result in favor of them. In *A Man of the People*, Chief Nanga sent some women to the polling station in order to steal electoral papers:

As I got the story later from Joe, the trade-unionist, Max had been informed by our party Chief Koko's resourceful wife was leading the women's Wing of the P.O.P. in an operation that one might describe as breast-feeding the ballot, i.e. smuggling into the polling booths wads of ballot paper concealed in their brassieres. Max immediately investigated. But as soon as he alighted from his car, one of Chief Koko's jeeps swept up from behind, knocked him over and killed him on the spot (*A Man of the People: 160*).

Nanga stuffs ballot boxes and does everything he can with the power he has to suppress Odili's attempt to overtake his position. Odili realizes that the country could be made so much better if the people just knew the facts, but in order for him to gain the faith of the people he must go up against the man known as "a man of the people."

2.2.1.3.4. Campaign contributions

In the political arena, it is difficult to see the act of corruption with your eyes. For this reason, there are often unproved rumors about many politicians, sometimes part of a smear campaign.

Politicians are placed in apparently compromising positions because of financial contributions to their campaign. If they then appear to be acting in the interests of those parties that funded them, this gives rise to talk of political corruption. Supporters may argue that this is coincidental. Cynics wonder why these organizations fund politicians at all, if they get nothing for their money.

Some politicians use money to spoil people in order to be believed. This is obvious where Achebe shows how this was a means of influencing people during election campaigns. Here, C.P.C's guards are asking for some money for spoiling paper for their case and terrorizing other people.

'We give three pounds ten to that policeman so that he go spoil the paper for our case. Then we give one-ten to Court Clerk because they say as the matter done reach him eye the policeman no kuku spoil am just like that. Then we give another two pound...

... 'This no be matter for joke; we wan the money to pay certain porsons wey gogo him house for night and burn him car (*A Man of the People: 128*).

One group paid money to the other one in order to resign. Here, Chief Koko gave some pounds to Max in order to cease what they had

started against him and his party. To mean that he would let Nanga be the unique candidate.

'Chief Koko offered me one thousand pounds,' he continued placidly. 'I consulted the other boys and we decided to accept. It paid for that minibus... 'I don't understand you, Max. Are you telling me that you have taken money and stepped down for P.O.P.? 'I am telling you nothing of the sort. The paper I signed has no legal force whatever and we need the money... ' (*A Man of the People: 141-2*)

In addition, Chief Nanga was helped by the British Amalgamated which paid money to P.O.P to fight election.

'Oh forget that. Do you know, Odili, that British Amalgamated has paid out four hundred thousand pounds to P.O.P to fight election? Yes, and we also know that the Americans have been even more generous, although we propose to fight such a dirty war without soiling your hands a little (*A Man of the people: 142*)

2.2.2. Social inequality

Social inequality refers to the ways in which socially-defined categories of persons (according to characteristics such as gender, age, 'class' and ethnicity) are differentially positioned with regard to access to a variety of social 'goods', such as the labour market and other sources of income, the education and healthcare systems, and forms of political representation and participation. These and other forms of social inequality are shaped by a range of structural factors, such as geographical location or citizenship status, and are often underpinned by cultural discourses and identities defining, for example, whether the poor are 'deserving' or 'undeserving'.

Thus, in post-independent Africa, the new states started with wrong foot: inequalities, living standards where the state of magnificence in which the elite live contrasts with the desperate poverty of the rest of the people. This creates not only dissatisfaction among the less privileged but it also generates in instability which in turn alerts the elite and obliges the m to establish measures to defend their privileges against the pressure of the underprivileged.

The black bourgeoisie have absorbed blindly Western bourgeois "form" without "content". They did not follow the natural evolution of Western bourgeois culture within the context of historical development of Western society. Therefore, it is not surprising to end up in failure since they absorbed the externals of bourgeois culture while missing its inner qualities.

In post-independent Africa, politicians had no independent wealth of their own. This entails temptations to fulfill their needs accompanied by some kind of injustice to someone or some group of people in the society. It is the incompatibility of not being rich and at the same time having the passion for high standard of living that explain why politicians are tempted to cling to power at all costs and this ends in endemic state crises and instabilities in the new states. Achebe illustrates it in *A Man of the People* when Odili says:

'Is this your sister?' I asked.

'Edna. No, she is our wife.'

'Your wife? How?'

She laughed. 'We are getting a second wife to help me'

When I lay down in the double bed that seemed to ride on cushion of air, and switched on that reading lamp and saw all the beautiful furniture a new from the lying down position and looked beyond the door to the gleaming bathroom and the towels as large as a lappa I do confess that if I were at that moment made a minister I would be most anxious to remain one forever....

We ignore man's basic nature if we say, as some critics do, that because a man like Nanga had risen overnight from poverty and insignificance to his present opulence he could be persuaded without much trouble to give it up again and return to his original state (*A Man of the People:41-42*)

This means that no one who likes to be in bad conditions when there is opportunity of living well. This is the example of politicians' behaviours in the post-independent period. Chief Nanga, risen from poverty, could not give up which could return him where he came from. That is why a number of politicians used all properties of the nation for their own interests. They call it "eating the national cake." In this situation, everyone is eager to put away safely his share and if possible to cut as much as he can, on the national cake, from the rainy day.

2.2.3. Dictatorship

2.2.3.1. Anti-intellectualism

Apart from the fact that political elite never want to let go of the reins and thus continue to maintain bourgeois standards at the expense of the ordinary people, they are also accused of being anti-intellectual. In fact a novelist like Achebe seems to attribute the political malaise of post-independence Africa in the politicians' tendency to consider intellectuals as a force hostile to their aspirations.

There are so many reasons why intellectuals are hated by politicians. First of all, any cheating of the goals assigned is noticed by the intellectual class and is revealed to the public either because they stand on the masses' side or because they want to get in and have their own share. It is an easy task for them since they mostly frequented the same school and they know one another.

Anti-intellectualism is shown openly in the case of Mr. Makinde, a PhD holder in Public Finance. Achebe is in fact straightforward with the issue. At the beginning of *A Man of the People*, he presents the reader with a government that faces a dangerous financial crisis. The solution to redress the situation is presented by the Minister of Finance and approved by two-third of the cabinet but the Prime Minister dismissed them because of fear of losing election.

Two-thirds of the Cabinet supported the Minister. The next morning the Prime Minister sacked them and in the evening, he broadcast to the nation. He said the dismissed ministers were traitors who had teamed up with foreign saboteurs to destroy the new nation.

That week his car had been destroyed by angry mobs and his house stoned. Another dismissed minister had been pulled out of his car, beaten insensible, and dragged along the road for fifty yards then tied hand and foot, gagged and left by the roadside (*A Man of the People*: 4-5).

In addition, Achebe shows the reader how no one can be a prophet in his house. Chief Nanga neglected Odili Samalu because he was his former teacher at Anata grammar school. From this he could not be involved in the next election against him, which he considered as betrayal.

I hear some people asking who is he; I will tell you. He was once my people. I taught him ABC to my house to arrange for him to go to England. Yes, I take blame; he did not just smell his hand one morning and go to my house— I called him. Anyone who wants to may blame '(*A Man of the People* 157)

2.2.3.2. Overpraised and Worshipped

Politicians are praised by all people especially ignorant ones who do not know the reality. These praises cause them to boast and be proud of themselves. Consequently, they consider themselves like gods. They get different names and some streets and houses get their names. In *A Man of the People*, Achebe shows how politicians acted in the post-independence period:

As I stood in one corner of that tumult waiting for the arrival of the Minister I felt intense bitterness welling up in my mouth. Here were silly, ignorant villagers dancing themselves lame and waiting to blow off their gun-powder in honour of who had started the country off down the slopes of inflation. They were not only ignorant but cynical (*A Man of the People*: 2).

The Prime Minister spoke three hours and every other word was applauded. He was called the Tiger, the Lion, the One and Only, the Sky, the Ocean and many other names of praise... (*A Man of the People*: 5)

Henceforth, the important thing for Chief Nanga is that the people trust him. He relates to them more, because he considers himself closer to the common man and far away from the intellectual, who represents a more European style of living and thinking. As Odili explains the story, however, Chief Nanga only tells the people what they want to hear about, defending their culture and way of thinking, and Nanga acts in a voracious way to obtain what he wants in his personal life: money, power, and women.

2.2.4. Freedom of Media in the Post-Independent Africa

In the post- independence period, all politicians need support especially in their competition to power. It is at this level of competition that the effective media is needed. In fact, the media is the tool the governments most need to manipulate the minds of uneducated masses. News is censored and managed to the point that what gets into print is little than government press releases.

Post-colonial dictatorship in Africa concerns itself with repression which means arrests, exile, execution or consistent harassment of dissident voices. In this case the general result of dictatorship is an atmosphere of fear, hate and humiliation.

Diverted to its prime role, which is to inform the people, both the radio/TV and the newspapers have become thus, propaganda vehicle, used to manipulate, organize and control. In repressive regimes, such as Nigeria in *A Man of the People*, public information is channeled according to the government orders. This is done as a way of keeping the populace ignorant, denying them the awareness of political realities necessary for social transformation. This is how the national radio was misused by Chief Nanga to announce the Minister's dismissal. He was not going to risk losing the election by cutting down the price paid to coffee planters at that critical moment.

The next morning the Prime Minister sacked them and, in the evening, he broadcast to the nation. He said the dismissed ministers were conspirators and traitors who had teamed up with foreign saboteurs to destroy the new nation. I remember this broadcast very well. Of course, no one knew the truth at that time. The newspapers and radio carried the Prime Minister's version of the story. We were very indignant. The *Daily Chronicle*, an official organ of the P.O.P., had pointed out in an editorial that the Miscreant Gang, as the dismissed ministers were now called, were all university people and highly educated professional men (*A Man of the People: 4*).

Another element showing how the press was manipulated by the government is how the journalist changed the speeches of opponents. Here, Dir. Makinde's speech was transformed by a journalist through the order of Chief Nanga, the Prime Minister.

Although Dr. Makinde read his speech, which was clearly prepared, the Hansard later carried a garbled version which made no sense at all. But why put into Dir. Makinde's mouth words that he could not have spoken? In short, the Hansard boys wrote a completely new speech suitable to the boastful villain the ex-minister had become (*A Man of the People: 7*).

Media was also used in electoral campaigns by politicians. This is used to manipulate people because politicians transform information and mislead people. Here, Odili mentions how radio was misused during the election period:

But once more I listened in vain. Instead they announced Chief Nanga's inaugural campaign which had not even taken place! It was to happen on Monday week in Anata (*A Man of the People: 148*).

Besides these, Achebe goes on showing the reader how media is the crucial instrument for politicians in electoral demagoguery and cheating. In *A Man of the People*, Chief Nanga used the National radio in his campaign against Odili and his fellows.

In the afternoon the radio, our national Crier, took up the message, amplified it and gave it in four languages including English. I listened to it, as I had listened to the rustic version, wearing my cynical smile. I couldn't say I blamed my village people for recoiling from the role of sacrificial ram... (*A Man of the People: 151*)

Apart from the above, with only a few exceptions, newspapers are actually edited and written by civil servants, not independent reporters, so that they contain all of good news and none of bad, concentrating on windy speeches made by officials. And if someone wants to issue a private newspaper, either he is refused access to information, if he refuses government offer he runs the risks of being imprisoned or he is forced to exile if he is not murdered.

In *A Man of the People*, one newspaper tried to criticize some politicians' bad actions including corruption, violence, etc.

...The *Daily Matchet* for instance carried a story which showed that Chief Nanga, who had himself held the portfolio of Foreign Trade until two years ago, had been guilty of the same practice and had built out of his gains three blocks of seven-storey luxury flats at three hundred thousand pounds each in the name of his wife and these flats were immediately leased by British Amalgamated at fourteen hundred a month each. At first this and other stories were told in innuendo, but by the second week all restraint and caution were cast to the four winds (*A Man of the People: 112*).

From this passage we get the idea of how critical writings on government can be very important. For illustration, after this message given by the *Daily Matchet*, the Trade unions and Civil Service Union made loud noises and gave notice of nation-wide strikes. Therefore, the Governor-General according to rumor called on the Prime Minister to resign, which he finally got round to doing three weeks later (*A Man of the People: 112*).

Coming back to the above mentioned, it is convenient to note that Achebe wanted to show all hindrance media undergoes in a repressive regime like the post-independent African emergent nation, in the aftermath of colonization. Dictators use the press as an instrument of misleading people and covering all their ills.

2.2.5. Issues and Dilemmas of Multi-Party Democracy in Africa

In the post-independence period, one instrument of getting power used by the elite was political parties. Politicians have found a board for this ideology to operate effectively. It is from these political parties that most of the elite get power through elections and after a long process of mass mobilization. In this case, all the people are supposed to be members of the movement whether they like it or not.

Therefore, those parties were various and different through their purposes. What is important here is not the difference between these organizations or how they are established but the ideology which is the essence of the party. Politicians therefore, in order to get successful results or in other words high benefits, must carefully prepare this ideology.

As an illustration of what is stated above, let us take an example of different parties mentioned in *A Man of the People*. We have the P.O.P (the People's Organization Party) which was strong, and the P.A.P (the Progressive Alliance Party), weak and disorganized. Besides these two, in the election period, a new party was born under the name of C.P.C (Common People Convention).

The party helps politicians to be famous whereas they were before unknown. This is the case of Chief Nanga. Supported by the P.O.P, he became a member of parliament after his job of teaching in a secondary school at Anata.

Nanga must have gone into politics soon afterwards and then won a seat in Parliament....

At that time Mr. Nanga was an unknown back-bencher in the governing P.O.P. A general election was imminent. The P.O.P was riding high in the country and there was no fear of its not being returned. Its opponent, the Progressive Alliance Party, was weak and disorganized (*A Man of the People: 3*)

Some politicians use their parties to marginalize and to oppress others. As illustrated in *A Man of the People*, one party can cause others great sufferings because of not having the same views. Chief Nanga and his party, the P.O.P oppressed other parties during elections period. People were singing praises to Nanga and he was cult (*A Man of the people: 1, 5, and 12*).

2.2.6. Leaders' behavior: an object of indiscipline

According to the *Encarta Dictionaries*, 'behavior' is defined as the way in which somebody behaves in a community or society. Achebe defines indiscipline as 'a failure or refusal to submit one's desires and actions to the restraints of orderly social conduct in recognition of the rights and desires of the others' (*The Trouble with Nigeria: 27*). From this definition, we can say that Nigerian, Post-independent African leaders in general, were undisciplined because they had no respect towards peasants and even among themselves.

Nigerian leaders were not respecting each other. One example is revealed through Chief Nanga's behaviour towards the members of the cabinet. Two-thirds of the Cabinet supported the Minister but the next morning he sacked them. So, this shows how he did not respect their decision, which shows the dictatorship used by politicians so as to be respected (*A Man of the People: 4*).

Another element reflecting the indiscipline of Chief Nanga is the way he used to interrupt the Minister of Finance when he wanted to express himself:

I remember the figure of Dir. Makinde the ex-Minister of Finance as he got up to speak-tall, calm, sorrowful and superior. I strained my ears to catch his words. The entire house, including Prime Minister tried to shout him down (*A Man of the People: 6*)...

Another embarrassing deed is the way Jolio, the writer who was launching his new book, was disgraced in front of the crowd because of his clothes. This happened when Chief Nanga was the honourable guest that day.

'Is that what you call national dress in your place? Pursued Chief Nanga mercilessly. 'I dress to please myself, sir,' said the writer becoming suddenly defiant. 'Let me telling you,' said Chief Nanga in a softened but firm tone. 'If you want me to attend any of your functions you must wear a proper dress. Either you wear a suit...or if you don't like it you can wear our national costume. That is correct protocol (*A Man of the People: 70*).

Henceforth, if a leader lacks discipline the effect is apt to spread automatically down to his followers. But the indiscipline of an ordinary citizen does not pose a fatal threat to society because it can be generally contained by his fellows.

2.3. Conclusion

As the Post- independent African was characterized by abuse of power and leadership, many writings had focused on it. In this respect, in *A Man of the People*, Achebe was attacking bad leadership, particularly characterized by leaders' alienation from the ruled people.

SOME EXPERIENCES PEOPLE HAVE TO LEARN FROM

ACHEBE'S *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE*

3.1. Introduction

As Ngugi said "we must find out where we are, in order to decide where we will go next. We cannot know where we are, without first finding out where we came from." (*Petals of Blood: 127-8*), *A Man of the People* shows this preoccupation with Nigerian history.

In one of its aspects, literature is believed to be timeless. That is, a writer, in his/her work may be addressing problems of his times. But at the same time, he/she may be addressing other generations. Literature is context bound and universal. As literature reflects a given society, some literary writings give a picture of some events that occurred in Africa in the aftermath of Independence struggles.

Therefore, the idea that Achebe's *A Man of the People* has lessons for African people is reasonable. This is because *A Man of the People* has a universal, timeless quality. It is situated in a particular time of history, but it has elements that pass the boundaries of time. These are about power and leadership issues, eliminating oppression, violence, etc.

This chapter deals with the importance of Achebe's *A Man of the People* to African people, especially leaders. Emphasis is on showing how Achebe's vision of good leadership must be achieved. Besides, Achebe gave a lesson on how media must work. He also focused on supporting unity between two classes (leaders and peasants), advocating communal life.

3.2. Experiences on power and leadership

Happiness and power usually link together. The issues that they raise are that happiness is often just a passing moment in time. What is basic for a person is the way that he / she conceptualizes happiness. The conception of power becomes the way to attain this happiness. Many people conceptualize happiness to be forms of wealth, sensuality, fame or family. Power is diverted into satisfying greed or sexual desire, or achieving status, or maintaining a nice family. This direction of power is that of materialistic idealism. But materialism can never deliver permanent happiness. Sooner or later pain and sorrow will divert the pursuit of happiness from wealth, sensuality, fame and family into non-materialistic idealisms (<http://socyberty.com/politics/power-is-corruption/>).

A Man of the People attacks irresponsibility in government. It is mostly about issues of leadership, especially about who has the responsibility for getting a country out of crises. Achebe's burden rests with the small group of intellectuals who have special responsibility in position of leadership.

Achebe points out some of the cancer that has infected post-colonial Africa: corruption, violence and unbridled greed, which created untold suffering and despair following the initial euphoria, high expectations and optimism for independence.

Achebe condemns leaders who profits from the masses 'cynicism and do whatever they want. Because of their weaknesses, the masses fail to condemn the leaders who openly steal their nation's treasury, what they call the national cake.

'Let them eat,' was the people's opinion, 'after all when White man used to do all the eating did we commit suicide?' Of course not. And where is the all-powerful white man today? He came, he ate and he went. But we are still around. The important thing then is to stay alive... Besides, if you survive, who knows? It may be your turn to eat tomorrow. Your son may bring home your share (*A Man of the People: 161-2*).

Here, Achebe does not share the same views with people who hold the idea mentioned in the above passage. For him, each citizen of a given nation must be involved in its social, economic and political well-being. It is the cooperation of leaders and the masses which brings the well-being of a nation. Therefore, all people 's reaction on their nation problems is very necessary. They can do these by bringing all problems out as forcefully as possible to draw attention on them.

For leaders, here are some pieces of advice: A good leader is someone who performs his tasks but not ignoring masses' criticism. It is leadership which entails changes or other transformation of people's ideas. Achebe comments on it:

The whole point of being a leader is that in spite of the cynicism or the despair of the masses, it is the leader's job to do something for them.

The masses don't have to deserve it because they are law-abiding, sensible and obedient. After all, whether they are or not, they are still brothers, sisters, fathers and mothers (*Achebe: Accountable to our Society: 27*)¹⁰.

Sometimes, people do not change but it does not mean that they should be left behind. They must be help by their leaders to handle that problem. So their unity is much needed. In this passage, Achebe proposes a paternalistic point of view for helpless and ignorant people. The masses must wake up in order to portray unity between them and their leaders. The last one must be admired, encouraged and respected for his good actions; but condemned for his bad deeds.

In *A Man of the People*, Achebe shows us how cynicism has some roots in African people's mind. The following paragraph gives us so more clarification:

And because they all knew, if I were to march up to the dais now and announce it they would simply laugh at me and say: What a fool! Whose son, is he? Was he not here when white men were eating; what did he do about it? Where was he when Chief Nanga fought and drove the white men away? Why is he envious now that the warrior is eating the reward of his courage? If he was Chief Nanga, would he not do much worse? (*A Man of the People: 155-6*)

In his novel *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi stated that this eat and let eat regime created by the post –independence politicians may lead to a national catastrophe. Again, it should be understood that if Ngugi portrays such strange behavior for those politicians, he probably means two things: first, he seems to mean that he is not ready to tolerate such weaknesses and betrayals for today's people with the pretext that it has been alike. Instead, he seems to underline everyone's responsibility in decision taking.

Kimeria, who made his fortune as a Home guard transporting bodies of Mau Mau killed by British, was still prosperous.... Kimeria, who had ruined my life and later humiliated me by making me sleep with him during our journey to the city... This same Kimeria was one of those who would benefit from new economic progress of Ilmorog. Why? Why? I ask myself? Why? Why? That's how on night I fully realized this law... Eat or you are eaten... It is the only way... No, I will never return to the herd of victims... Never... Never... (*Petals of Blood: 293-4*)

As far as the relationship between two sides is concerned, there is need of a firm cooperation between them. The best way to achieve this is that leaders should avoid falling into the sin of righteousness. No one is a hundred percent right in his every day practices. Therefore, it should be better to accept something from others. Leaders should accept criticism; from these they would learn many things. This is what Joseph Migambi¹¹ in his memoir commented on what Achebe was conveying in his book *Anthills of the Savannah*¹² about how leaders would behave towards other people.

Whatever you are is never enough, you must find a way to accept something however small from the other to make you whole and save you from the mortal sin of righteousness and extremism (*Anthills of the Savannah: 154*).

This goes hand in hand with the proverb which says that two heads are better than one. Leaders should consider and accept other people's ideas, even those who do not share the same views with them. A good leader is not one who behaves like Chief Nanga, who turns blind eyes and deaf ears to his rivals especially, Samalu odili. Contrary to Nanga, a good leader should meet the ruled and try to discuss the problems they are facing. But, Achebe in *Anthills of the Savannah* shows that this had been a burden for post-independence leaders. The following passage will show us reactions of the masses after seeing how leaders were not trying to solve their problems.

It is proper that a beggar should visit a king. When a rich man is sick a beggar goes to visit him and say sorry. When the beggar is sick, he waits to recover and then goes to tell the rich man that he has been sick. It is the place of the poor man to make a visit to the rich man who holds the yam and knife (*Anthills of the Savannah: 127*).

This is a sign of bad leadership, one which does not care about its people's needs and problems. Achebe gives a warning that bad leadership ends in disaster, which comes like a punishment to their bad doings. This is what happened to Nanga and his regime: he was arrested trying to escape by canoe, dressed like a fisherman (*A Man of the People: 165*). Imagine a honourable minister who was before praised like god, then dressing like a fisherman.

I say, 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 (*A Man of the People: 167*).

To sum up, in *A Man of the People*, Achebe provides all forms of power and leadership misuses done by African leaders after coloniza-

¹⁰ Emenyonu, E., and Emenyonu, P., (1972). *Achebe: Accountable to our society*. Africa report vol.5:27

¹¹ Migambi J. (2007). *Abuse of power in post-independent Africa: the case of Nigeria in Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah*. Unpublished. B.A. Research Essay.NUR.

¹² Achebe c. (1987). *Anthills of the Savannah*. London: Heinemann.

tion. He mentions different features for a bad leadership such as leaders alienating themselves from the ruled, enriching themselves and not providing basic needs to the masses. From the above mentioned, all Rwandans should get a lesson from this book about good leadership. In Rwanda also we had such a problem: the 1994 Tutsi's genocide which took away lives of a million of innocent people. We experienced the worst troubles resulting from bad leadership.

3.3. Media effects

It is through the persuasiveness of media such as television, radio and print media that messages reach their target audiences. These have been influential media as they have been largely responsible for structuring people's daily lives and routines. The media has a strong social and cultural impact upon society. This is predicated upon their ability to reach a wide audience with a strong and influential message. Marshall McLuhan¹³ uses the sentence "the medium is the message" as a means of explaining how the distribution of a message can often be more important than content of the message itself.

Mass media plays a crucial role in forming and reflecting public opinion, connecting the world to individuals and reproducing the self-image of society. Critiques in the early to mid-twentieth century suggested that media weaken or delimit the individual's capacity to act autonomously. The consequences and ramifications of the mass media relate not merely to the way newsworthy events are perceived (and which are reported at all), but also to a multitude of cultural influences that operate through the media.

How media influence public opinion?

As I have said above, the media have a huge impact on society and also on public opinion. They can shape the public opinion in different ways depending on what the objective is.

For example, after the attacks of September the 11th, the media gave a huge coverage of the event and exposed Osama guilty for the attack as they were told by the authorities. This shaped the public opinion to support the war on terrorism. The same happened with the war on Iraq. The problem is that if the media received inaccurate information then the public opinion supported a wrong cause, this is the power of public opinion influence.

In *A Man of the People*, Achebe offers criticism on mass media's behavior in Post-independence Africa. A good media should not be a dictatorship regime's tool to mislead people.

I remember this broadcast very well. Of course, no one knew the truth at that time. The newspapers and the radio carried the Prime Minister's version of the story. We were very indignant....

The Daily Chronicle, an official organ of the P.O.P., had pointed out in editorial that the Miscreant Gang, as the dismissed ministers were now called, were all university people and highly educated professional men. (I have preserved a cutting of that editorial.) (*A Man of the People*: 4)

In this passage, Chief Nanga used the national radio, not forgetting his own newspaper, as his instrument to influence people on his bad decisions and beliefs. Here, media have been manipulated by one person and his party. In this respect, The Daily Chronicle, as it was controlled by the P.O.P., wrote what the government wanted to be known for, because it was not independent. Whereas Berth Lindfords and Bola gave their views on the role Achebe gave to a social responsible writer.

Achebe's many and diverse statements about what constitutes an African writer's responsibilities all refer back to one overreaching purpose: the writer must restore dignity and self-respect to his people (*South Asian Responses to Chinua Achebe*: 82)

Therefore, a socially responsible writer should fictionalize and voice out the ills in his society. He or she must not be corrupted by politicians but show to people all power and leadership abuses done by those leaders.

Other ways to influence are with polls and trends, especially in political campaigns. The candidates that can pay money to the media which have more influence on public opinion can receive more votes. This ideology was used by Chief Nanga during his campaign. Both national radio and newspapers were behind him. Here, Odili mentions media's abuse by politicians during elections period:

Two nights later we heard the sound of the Crier's gong. His message was unusual. In the past the Crier had summoned the village to a meeting to deliberate over a weighty question, or else to some accustomed communal labour. His business was to serve notice of something that was to happen. But this night he did something new: he announced a decision already taken... Every man and every woman they should make it known that they knew one man and one man alone —Chief Nanga. Everyone would throw his or her paper for him on the day of election—as they had done in the past...

¹³Marshall McLuhan. (1967). *The Medium Is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*. Canada:Edmonton

In the afternoon the radio, our national radio Crier, took up the message, amplified it and gave it in four languages including English. I listened to it, as I had listened to the rustic version, wearing my cynical smile (*A Man of the People*: 151)

3.4. Conclusion

As it is mentioned in this chapter, the media have been manipulated by politicians abusing power and leadership. Radios, journals and all kinds of media were influenced by them as their instruments.

However, the influence of the mass media on our society is so big that it should work properly in order to help the development of our countries, as Achebe's *A Man of the People* raised various problems undergone by media in post-independent Africa.

What we need to be aware of is that most of our decisions, beliefs and values are based on what we know for a fact, our assumptions and our own experience. In our work we usually know what we have to do, basing on our experience and studies. However, in our daily lives we rely on the media to get the current news and facts about what is important and what we should be aware of.

We have put our trust on the media as an authority to give us news, entertainment and education. But we sometimes have to make analysis on what is written or broadcast because, for their intention of selling hot issues, the media can mislead people.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The post-independent period in Africa was an epoch of great hopes because it was the unique opportunity for Africans to build their future after a long struggle for independence. Unfortunately, the aftermath of national independence was no less painful: Independent African leaders failed to help their citizens to develop Africa. Therefore, many African writers have tried to portray the African world in the post-independence and commented on the betrayal that characterized leaders. It is in this respect that Achebe's *A Man of the People* is very much involved in.

This study has tried to reveal all intentions brought by Achebe in his book. Achebe's work is to be understood as a reflection of his dissatisfaction with the elite on power. After the white man's departure things did not march Africans expectation. They ended in broken hopes and despair as the early post-colonial leaders stepped into the white man's shoes. They went on oppressing their fellows which has been disillusionment.

Henceforth, *A Man of the people* is a weapon to eliminate all ills and evils that Africans experienced under their fellow Africans' leaders during the post-independent period. This work also contains some experiences people have to learn on power and leadership. It is a mirror through which any leader may assess leadership.

In addition, Achebe urges leaders to take on responsibility: he was asking them to let each citizen be involved in the socio-economic development of his nation and well-being. Power should not be concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. Leaders must leave out their own interests in favour of public interests.

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