

I. Achebe, Africanism and *A Man of the People*

Albert Chinualmogu Achebe, African novelist, poet and critic, is considered as one of the most accomplished African authors writing in English. Born on November 16, 1930 in Eastern Nigeria in Ogidi, Achebe attended Church Mission Society School where he also learnt Bible. He attended Government College in Umuahia from 1944 to 1947. He joined the Ibadan University and took his Bachelor's degree. He went to London and studied broadcasting at the British Broadcasting Corporation. Later on he was appointed as talk's producer in Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, Lagos, from 1958 to 1961 and as a director from 1961 to 1966.

Achebe is regarded as the finest Nigerian novelist of the 20th century and his literary criticism and sociological essays also have won praise. Achebe's writing has relevance beyond the anthropological, sociological and political concerns of post-colonial Africa. Achebe's literature is also deals with the universal qualities of human nature. As Achebe himself says:

I am a political writer. My politics is concerned with Universal human communication across racial and cultural boundaries as a means of fostering respect for all people. Such respect can issue only from understanding. So my primary concern is with clearing the channels of communication in my own neighborhood by backing away at the thickets that choke them.

Africa's meeting with Europe must be accounted a terrible disaster in this matter of human understanding and respects. The nature of meeting precluded any warmth of friendship. First Europe was an enslaver: then a colonizer. In either role or appreciate Africa; indeed she easily convinced herself that there was nothing there to justify the

effort. Today our world is still bedeviled by the consequences of that cataclysmic encounter. (qtd. in Henderson 7)

Chinua Achebe is a prolific writer and is considered one of the most original literary artists writing in English. Achebe has always taken as a primary concern understanding and accurately depicting the African people. He represents a particular reality of modern Africa which is rich in variety of ethnic and cultural identities, but it is complicated by the impact of European colonialism. His works are intended to challenge stereotypes of African as primitive, savages and present the complexities of African societies, with their alternative sets of tradition, ideals, values, and behaviors. Achebe is even dismayed, however, to Africans themselves internalizing these stereotypes and turn away from their cultures to interpret the African past from an Africans past from an African's point of view. He wrote short stories and novels illuminating the experiences of traditional Africans perused by the stresses of modern society.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* gained world acceptance, not just as African set pieces but as representative of the best in contemporary world literature. He successfully corrects the imperialist myth of African primitivism and savagery by recreating the Igbo culture of the Eastern Region of Nigeria; its daily routines, its rituals, its customs, and especially its people dealing with one another in a highly civilized fashion within a complex society. The interpretation necessitated, as well as, a look at the invading culture; Achebe tilted the balance in the African's favour by depicting individuals in the British administration as prejudiced, imperceptive, unnecessarily bureaucratic, and emotionally impotent. Achebe has emerged from these spiritual contests with a deeper and more comprehensive sense of what it means to inhabit the alternate worlds of post colonialism, worlds that are at once aristocratic

and democratic, heroic and ironic, ancient and contemporary. We are all of us the heirs of Achebe's prophetic vision, grappling with the problems and promises of a globalized modernity, working our way through its diverse sceneries, its different endings.

Achebe's *A Man of the People*, seems rather lightweight in comparison with the two historical novels. It takes place not in Nigeria but in an imaginary African country, a few years after independence. The novel focuses on the tribulations of a Nigerian teacher who joins a political group working to remove a corrupt bureaucrat from office. It is set in the postcolonial period in an unnamed independent African country. The quality of the leadership and the response of the people are the central theme. There is neither collective voice at the people nor responsible leadership.

A Man of the People was published in January 1966 and coincided almost with the first military coup intervention. The novel is narrated in the first person narration by Odili. The main purposes of the story are revealed in the relations between Odili and Nanga, their various political activities and the confrontations between them, which culminate in a national economic crisis and scandal, a rigged election, and finally military intervention. The main characters are Chief Nanga, the minister of culture and the schoolmaster, Odili Samalu. The two men occupy opposite ends of the political spectrum. Nanga, the politician in power, occupies the prominent place in politics. His morality is unconcerned with the theory of politics. On the other hand, Odili's motive for running against Chief Nanga in the election is to seek revenge and to provide that he is closer to the common man than Nanga. Odili is upset and jealous of Chief Nanga as he wins out both the girls Odili attempts to have relations with. Then Nanga wants to prove that no matter how old he is, his political power, money, and charming good looks will always win over the younger and less powerful

intellectuals. The dedicated intellectual, Odili, is drawn not as the hero come to redeem his people, but as an arrogant and incompetent fool. His ideas are far more remote from the people than Nanga's. 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 intellectual, who represents a more European style of living and thinking.

By representing his country after colonialism, Achebe has the incentive to stay as far away from the European style of life and politics as possible. As Odili explains the story, however Chief Nanga only tells the people what they want to hear about defend their culture and way of thinking and Nanga only acts in a voracious way to obtain what he wants in his personal life, money, power and women. Chief Nanga's corrupt way of leading the people by telling one thing and doing another is what eventually brings his reign to a system. The worsening situation of Africa especially of Nigeria has been keenly observed by David Carrol:

In *A Man of the People*, conflict between different values is delineated by means of central dramatic relationship far more vital and convincing than the dismemberment of Obi Okonkwo. The main characters are Chief Nanga, the minister of culture, and the schoolmaster, Odili Samalu. The two men occupy opposite ends of the political spectrum, and their relationship defines the basic problems of political morality. Odili has a fastidious theoretical view of public morality derived from his European type of education, and we find him at the beginning of the novel thoroughly disillusioned with political affairs in his own country. He has rejected all the political allegiances – “primitive loyalties” he calls them – and refuses to acknowledge that

there might have value for other people. From his detached, alienated point of view he condemns the corruption he sees around him and remain aloof. (119)

Achebe has written about the trouble with Nigeria. The novel tries to depict the Africa and its own history, a religion, a civilization and a culture, which was distorted, manipulated and misinterpreted by colonialist writers. Achebe tried to reconstruct this civilization and displayed it to challenge the stereotypes. 'The man' in *A Man of the People* is Nanga, a brutally corrupt politician who nevertheless manages to remain both popular and successful. Achebe's writing clearly depicts the picture of political disorder and the document of harsh realities of military rule. African writers are expressing their vision in a foreign language through alien conventions. As Achebe has commented, " [s]uch a novelist often finds himself describing situations or modes of thought which have no direct equivalent in the English way of life" (Carroll 23).

Achebe prefers the role of novelist as a teacher. Novelist can best get his people on their feet through writing about real problems which people are facing. The only thing is to write about the past and to make them aware. To spread this message publicity is necessary. Westerns know the existence of the African culture and its values. They provide most valuable lessons too. The native people should understand those values of their life and society. Achebe in *Morning Yet on Creation Day* argues:

The writer cannot excuse from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done I for one would not wish to be excused. I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than just teach my readers that their past with all its imperfections- was not one long night of savagery from which the Europeans acting on god's behalf delivered them. (17)

Achebe primarily focuses on the problems that are uppermost in Odili's mind, such as his sexual frustration, but his refusal to play up the sordid element in his environment leads to an insufficiency in the representation of that against which the ire of the idealistic young politician ought to stir. Because there could be no more apt way for a chronicler of the contemporary African experience to provide a deep analysis of the social malaise afflicting the continent than by giving a mirror image of the social environment, an assignment that Achebe refuses to carry out, he makes a fatal mistake in employing the metaphor of the military coup (which he uses at the close of the novel) as a central symbol to universalize his story.

Achebe is one of the best African writers in the West, whose works explore the impact of European intrusion on African society. He deliberately writes in English language. He argues that for most African societies, which have been through colonialism, English is a national language. It helps the diverse ethnic communities to speak to one another. Achebe opines that national literature of Nigeria will be written in English. In his essay "The African Writers and the English Language" he argues:

English language gave them a language with which to talk to one another. If it failed to give them a song, at least gave them a tongue, for sighing. There are not many countries in Africa today where you could abolish the language of the erstwhile colonial powers and still retain the facility for mutual communication. Therefore those African writers who have chosen to write in English or French are not unpatriotic smart alecks with an eye on the main chance –outside their own countries. They are by - products of the process that made the new nation states of Africa. (26)

His purpose is to drive out the colonial myth of the primitive Africa and to establish a true picture of the people and their culture. His effort consists of two ways. On the one hand, he tries to make western readers know that Africa has its own myth prior to colonial myth. On the other hand, he wants to remove the feeling of inferiority from African's mind created by colonizers. As well, in his writing we also find the dilemmas of contemporary society. Achebe's effort is to tell the Europe that Africa has a history, a religion and a civilization.

Achebe has acknowledged that a writer should also be involved with contemporary issues to explore in depth the human condition. He describes himself as a teacher. In Africa, Achebe says, society expects the writer to be its leader:

Here, then, is an adequate revolution for me to espouse – to help my society regain its belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of the denigration and self-abasement. And it is essentially a question of education, in the best sense of the world. Here, I think my aims and deepest aspirations of my society meet. For no thinking African can escape to be expecting to be excused from the task of reeducation and regeneration must be done. (qtd in Ogungbesan 70)

Achebe basically remains constant in his role as a social one. He sees his task as essentially that of restoring dignity to his own people. He helps his society to regain belief in itself. He seems to suggest in fact, that the public responsibility and communal tie are more essential than creative value for any African writer.

Achebe's motivation in writing is the restoration of pride in the African world. He does not advocate a return to the past or a rejection of western culture. His practical advice is to learn to cope with a changing world. He teaches the necessity of compromise. He is loyal to traditional Africans and suspicious to western materialism,

but open to western thought. In his attempt to reinterpret the African past, he does not paint a calm picture. He regrets the loss of mystery surrounding that past, but chooses knowledge, because he considers judgment clarity of vision, and tolerance. He locates virtues in his traditional society as a way out of confusion and corruption.

Achebe is not dealing simply with the collapse of African society, but with its transformation. He is examining from inside the historical evolution of African society at its moments of crisis, and the inevitable tensions attendant upon this process. The final analysis of his novels reveals the intimate circumstances of African Becoming.

II. Postcolonial Critique of Imperial Culture

The field of postcolonial studies has been gaining prominence since the 1970s. Some scholars would date its rise in the Western academy from the publication of Edward Said's influential critique of Western construction of the orient in his 1978 book, *Orientalism*. Postcolonialism deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. The term is used after the Second World War to refer the post-independence period. The prefix 'post' means 'after' colonialism. The term 'post-colonial state' has often been used by historians, economists and political theorists as a synonym for 'post-independence state'.

The term 'post-colonial' carries with it the implication that colonialism is now a matter of the past, undermining colonialism's economic, political, and cultural deformative traces in the present. The 'post-colonial' inadvertently glosses over the fact that global hegemony, even in the post cold war era, persists in forms other than overt colonial rule. The hegemonic structure and conceptual frame works generated over the last five hundred years cannot be vanquished by waving the magical wand of the 'post-colonial' discourse.

Although there is considerable debate over the precise parameters of the field and the definition of the term postcolonial, in a very general sense, it is the study of the interaction between European nations and the societies they colonized in the modern period. The sheer extent and duration of the European empire and its disintegration after the World War II have led to widespread interest in post colonial literature and criticism in our times. Elleke Boehmer defines colonial literature in his introduction to the *Colonial and Post Colonial Literature*:

It is more general term which can be taken to mean writing concerned with colonial perceptions and experiences, written mainly by

metropolitans, but also by Creoles and indigenous during colonial times. [. . .] Colonial literature therefore includes literature written in British as well as the rest of the Empire during the colonial period. (2)

So, colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people's land and goods. Colonialism is over now because their direct ruling over the land has come to an end. In the colonial period they invented a new type of literature, which is, however still continuing. So it is relevant to mention that type of literature here.

Edward Said says:

Colonialist literature in contrast was that which was specifically concerned with colonial expansion on the whole it was literature written by and for colonizing Europeans about non-Europeans lands dominated by them. It embodied the imperialist point of view.

Colonialist literature was informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire. (3)

But postcolonial literature came after the European empire ended. As a result postcolonial literature does not simply consist of writing that chronologically came after the independence. Rather, it is the result of interaction between imperial culture and the complex set of indigenous cultural practices. The resistance to imperial domination is through textual form because this mode of resistance does not need weapons, which are not easily available to the poor people of third world. Because of this tension of self-reflection and expression against Western domination, there we can see the exciting and the powerful mixture of imperial language and local experience, and the origin of postcolonial theory. Stephen Slemon has rightly expressed:

Postcolonialism, as it is now used in its various fields, describes a remarkably heterogeneous set of subjects, positions, professional fields, and enterprises. It has been used as a way of ordering a critique of totalizing forms of western historicism; as a portmanteau term for a retooled notion of 'class' as subject of both post modernism and post-structuralism. (45)

He has used the term for the conditional nativist's longing in post-independence national grouping. It also covers the inevitable underside of a fractured and ambivalent discourse of colonialist power.

The postcolonial literatures are the product of imperial and imperialized culture, society and indigenosity and their fundamental practices. Edward Said in introduction to his book *Culture and Imperialism* defines culture as "a concept that includes a refining and elevating, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought" (XII). He further says, "Imperialism means thinking about, setting on, controlling land that you do not possess that is distant, that is lined on the owned by others" (5). So, imperialism includes all activities not only controlling the land even to think about controlling comes under this umbrella term.

The otherness has played crucial role to invade other's culture, territory and even the sovereignty of the non-European people. In this light, Said's reference regarding invading and othering is:

The orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilization and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other. In addition the orient

has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. (20)

The formation of the colony through various mechanism of control and the various stages in the development of anti-colonial's nationalism interests in the field. By extension sometimes temporal considerations give way to spatial ones in that cultural productions and social formations of the colony long before colonization are used to better understand the experience of colonization. Moreover, the postcolonial countries that have not achieved independence, or people in First World countries who are minorities, or even independent colonies that now contend with neocolonial forms of subjugation through expanding capitalism and globalization. In all of these sense, the postcolonial, rather than indicating only a specific and materially historical event, seems to describe the second half of the twentieth-century in general as a period in the aftermath of the heyday of colonialism. Even more generally, the post colonial is used to signify a position against imperialism and Eurocentric Western ways of knowledge production and dissemination in the past and present then become object of study for those seeking alternative means of expression. In short, the term thus yokes a diverse range of experiences, culture and problems.

In the writings of postcolonial writers we find the expression being given to colonized experience. They have tried their best to under cut the discourse, which supported colonization. As a result, postcolonial writing is deeply marked by experiences of cultural exclusion and division under empire. It is a way to the reconstruction of indigenous literature. Political nature of language, of race, gender and class are significant studies of postcolonial writers. In this way we can say that postcolonial literature and theory have deconstructed the Euro-centric thought:

Postcolonial literatures have drawn valuable insight from Saussure's structuralism, Adorno's Marxism, Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia and carnivalesque, de Man's studies of grammar and rhetoric, Foucault's preconceptions with systems of knowledge/power, Barthes' textual decoding, Cixous' notion of subversive writing, Kristeva's analysis of male symbolic order, Derrida's deconstruction of a transcendental signified, and Spivak's focus on displacement. (Parker 1-2)

In postcolonial era many theorists have pointed out various issues, which are problematic for independent nation, both in short term and long term. African writers have reconstructed the literary, economic, psychological, social and cultural subject positions of their worlds. As an African writer, Frantz Fanon focuses on the realization of political liberation. He objectively studies the instabilities going on in African countries. He is radical in his opinion regarding the idea of colonization. Regarding the forms and functions of his writing, Michael Parker says, "Fanon has emphasized the inter connectedness and uniqueness of African literary and political discourse" (4).

He concedes the importance of valorizing pre-colonial histories and cultures that have been systematically disfigured and devalued by colonialism:

It was with the greatest delight that they discovered that there was nothing to be ashamed of in the past, but rather dignity, glory and solemnity. The claim to a national culture in the past does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture. In the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium it is responsible for an important change in the native. (Fanon 170)

Fanon studies the political clash between colonized and colonizer from the Marxist point of view. He favors decolonization and says it is revolutionary. It is a program of complete disorder and is a historical process. He says "It can't be understood, it can't become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content" (36).

Decolonization is painful because it demands the social structure being changed from the bottom up. He opines that it does not just overthrow the old colony but it follows the old suppression and people will be suffering as in colony. Old tradition will be replaced by new one which will be equally painful to bring into practice. We can equate it with the saying, 'The last shall be first and the first last'.

According to Fanon:

Decolonization is always a violent phenomenon. Decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain species of men by another species of men without any period of transition; there is a total, complete and absolute substitution. (35)

Imperial Legacies

In general sense, imperialism means the formation of an empire in which one nation has extended its domination over one or several neighbouring nations.

Colonialism and imperialism are to some extent similar. Colonialism is a direct form of exploitation of the native land and people. It is a process of exploiting the foreign land through direct rule and invasion, making the inhabitants of the invaded land the subject people and treating them as cheap labours and slaves, whereas imperialism rules the distant land through economic exploitation. It is an attitude constituted by the west about a distant land which it governs through economic and political dominance. As Said says:

‘Imperialism’ means the practice, the theory and the attitude of the dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory: ‘colonialism’, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 46)

Imperialism is indirect rule over the distant countries especially the countries of Third World, by the European power whereas colonialism is the outcome of the imperialism which consists of implanting settlements on the distant territory for direct exploitation of both nature and human beings.

When the imperialists entered in the land of non-imperialists or native people obviously they show their own legacies. Among them, some are still left as Western trademark invading or displacing the indigenous educational system, culture and intellectuals at the same time by using previously globalized English. The fact of mission worked in a great deal to displace the language, education system and teaching of language from school to university and later the mission entered in daily life of people. The mission of imperialist was to create their legacy on colonized country in order to create the market for buying and selling of English.

In this connection, Kwame Anthony Appiah says, the broad use of comprador intelligentsia is to elaborate in mission:

Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia of a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained, group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both

through the west they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other and for Africa. (62-3)

The notion of a comprador class assumes the existence of a clear hierarchical structure of cultural and material relations in all the aspects of colonized world. It is clear that no one in a colonized society can ever fully avoid the effects of colonial and neo-colonial cultural power. In postcolonial society the bourgeoisie have gained control over the aspects of indigenous people's life. In this regard, Philip G. Altbach remarks:

Reliance on foreign models was dictated in part by the colonial government. Indigenous educational patterns were destroyed either by design or as the inadvertent result of policies which ignored local needs the traditions. Colonial powers seldom set up adequate educational opportunity and, in a sense, hindered modernization. In addition, existing facilities reflected the needs of the metropolitan power, and not of the indigenous population. The inadequacies of the modern educational system, outmoded trends in curriculum, and the orientation of the schools toward building up an administrative cadre rather than technically trained and socially aware individuals needed for social and economic development can be linked in many countries to the colonial experience. (453)

Even the metropolitan language and elitism still existed with the colonial fossil.

Emergence of elite group stressed on achieving western education and highly Westernized by the Western education and ideology. Again, in this connection

Altbach comments:

Colonial educational policies were generally elitist. In India, British educational elitism assumed the title of 'downward filtration' – a system by which a small group of Indians with a British style education supposedly spread enlightenment to the masses. (453)

Universities remained as the centers of imparting English Education in the colonized countries. Here, talking about the same notion John Docker views:

In terms of University teaching, the anglocentric assumption implies that 'standards' can only be formed by studying the great tradition of English literature, from Chaucer on....This assumption is enforced by university hierarchy (the god-professor); by the system of recruitment of staff (appointing people, English, American or Australian, whose primary teaching interests are expected to lie in English literature); and by the use of tenure to enforce anglocentric stability and continuity. (444)

It is true to say that independence has brought moral compensation to colonized people and has established their dignity. But they have not yet had time to elaborate a society and to build up and affirm values. The warming situation where citizens develop and enrich their experience unboundedly does not yet exist. Such situation is the result that local elites are always ready and wishing to have good relation with them so they could run their rule easily. According to Fanon, "The native intellectual accepted the cogency of these ideas, and deep down in his brain you could always find a vigilant sentinel ready to defend the Greco-Latin pedestal"(46). Fanon further writes:

Individualism is the first to disappear. The native intellectual had learnt from his master that the individual ought to express himself

fully. The colonialist bourgeoisie had hammered into the native's mind the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his subjectivity, and whose only wealth is individual thought. (47)

Along with the individual mission the capitalism and labour mission was there with the Europeans. Europeans dislocated the Africans from the best lands, and settled in adjacent reverses. Such a process was facilitated by the creation of African Chiefs, contrary to the custom hitherto prevailing in most Kenyan communities. Land that was considered unused by Africans was appropriated after being defined as 'waste'. So lands that lay unused at a particular time were potentially available for future use, but the new order curbed their movements and confined them to specific areas. After acquiring land, colonists needed to recruit labour.

According to Ania Loomba, the imperial mission flourished the labour and master conception on land which kindled the labour division to keep split continuous on African people:

Thus the imperial mission based on a hierarchy of raises, coincided perfectly with the economic need of the colonists. In the process, as we have already noted, divisions between different African groups and tribes were also emphasized by creating particular sub-divisions and attributing particular kind of skills and short coming to them.

Capitalism therefore does not override and liquidate racial hierarchies but continues to depend upon, and intensify, them. (127)

The Western ideology of dividing the people kept on hierarching at the large extent depending on race. The notion fueled the capitalism in Africa and Asia at the same time. It comes to be clear that, in Loomba's opinion, "the South African labour system is the most efficient system for the capitalist exploitation of labour yet devised, resting

as it does on the three institutions of the rural reserve, the mining compound and the controlled urban location” (127).

Different institutions of colonialists played crucial role to grow capitalism in colonized countries. Institutions had an eminent impact on inviting clash between capitalist and laborers. She further writes:

Even in classic capitalism, labour is hardly free in any real sense, the essential point is that in the colonial situation, capitalism works differently, and that this difference needs to be accounted for by thinking more concretely about race and ethnicity. (127)

Imperialism had largely divided the world into metropolis and satellites, and relationship was marked by the unequal development of capitalism itself. The dialectical perspective helps to understand and analyze the capitalism's development and its unbound impact on exploiting the labour. Moreover, she writes:

A dialectical perspective helps us understand not just colonial history but the postcolonial world as well. The relations that are put into place during colonialism survive long after many of the economic structures underlying them have changed. The devaluation of African slaves still haunts their descendants in metropolitan societies, the inequalities of colonial rule still structure wages and opportunities for migrants from once colonized countries or communities, the racial stereotypes that we identified earlier still circulate, and contemporary global imbalances are built upon those inequities that were consolidated during the colonial era. A complex amalgam of economic and racial factors operates in anchoring the present to the colonial past. (129)

Arif Dirlik says postcolonial begins when Third World intellectuals have arrived in First World academe. For him, the ex-colonized cultural and intellectual position is structured by the in-between place:

Postcolonial critics have been silent on the relationship of the idea of postcolonialism to its context in contemporary capitalism; indeed, they have suppressed the necessity of considering such a possible relationship by repudiating a foundational role to capitalism in history. (295)

In “Durban Declaration of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, 2001,” the outcome of colonialism is defined in the following way:

Colonialism has lead to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and...Africans and people of African descent and people of Asian descent and indigenous people were victims of its consequences. (Ferguson xii)

Thus, colonialism was a cruel form of subjugation which only resulted in the discrimination of the indigenous people living mostly in Asia and Africa. They were and are still victimized by the impact of colonial rule. For instance, English language, the gift of the colonizers, replaced the native language and as most of the residents of the colonial countries converse in English, there is the growing extinction of native language. Colonialism was anti-humanist for it violated the rights of the people by making them the victims of poverty as the colonizers took economic advantage from its colonial possession.

Politico-Economic Influences

The most dominant ally of economic and political control had long been the business of 'knowing' other people because this knowing underpinned imperial dominance and became the mode by which Europeans were increasingly persuaded to know themselves that is, as subordinate to Europe. A consequence of this process of knowing became the export to the colonies in the form of European language, literature and learning as part of a civilizing mission which directly influenced the religion and culture of native people at a great length in colonial states. Religion and culture all together got affected by Christianity, English literature and language that came into use in daily lives of people. Achebe glorifies the native culture by describing his experiences of Igbo and English culture. He says:

We lived at the crossroads of cultures. We still do today; but when I was a boy one could see and sense the peculiar quality and atmosphere of it more clearly. I am not talking about all that rubbish we hear of the spiritual void and mental stresses that Africans are supposed to have, or the evil forces and irrational passions prowling through Africa's heart of darkness. We know the racist mystique behind a lot of that stuff and should merely point out that those who prefer to see Africa in those lurid terms have not insanity or more competence in coping with life. (190)

The native culture of African people is great in terms of its original practice because people think that the imported or guest culture is only the conspiracy against natives. It suppresses the native voice and the teaching of white people whether directly or indirectly is a pseudo practice which may cause to vanish the aboriginal if it is kept on practicing. Here Achebe focuses on to show imagination of English culture:

On one arm of the cross we sang hymns and read the Bible night and day. On the other my father's brother and his family, blinded by heathenism, offered food to idols. That was how it was supposed to be anyhow. But I knew without knowing why it was too simple a way to describe what was going on. Those idols and that food had a strange pull on me in spite of my being such a through little Christian that often at Sunday service at the height of the grandeur.... I would have dreams of mantle of gold falling on me while the choir of angles drowned our mortal song and the voice of God Himself thundering.

(191)

Appiah opines that no one can escape out of colonial and neocolonial cultural power in postcolonial society:

All aspects of contemporary African cultural life have been influenced by the transition of African societies through colonialism, but they are not all in the relevant sense postcolonial. For [...] in postcolonial [era]... Many areas of contemporary African cultural life are not [...] concerned with transcending, with going beyond, coloniality. (63)

The post independence literature is the postcolonial entity of colonial encounter that focuses on the role and function of postcolonial significance. The discourse on colonialism entered the mainstream of Western theory and criticism in second half of the 20th century. Published in 1978, Edward Said's *Orientalism* is a crucial text for what has become known as postcolonial theory. It dramatically heightened the consciousness of power and culture relations. Now it is an accepted academic theory. In *Orientalism*, Said comments:

European colonialism is a discourse, namely, as the project of representing, imagining, translating, containing and managing the intransigent and incomprehensible 'Orient' through textual codes and conventions. (Gandhi 143)

Edward Said thus defines the 'Orient' in his influential book *Orientalism*, as "The orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences....Orient has helped to define Europe" (1). Said further says that Orientalism was "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience"(1). Western society got orient as the source of its civilizations and languages and its cultural competitor. Said writes in his introduction to the *Orientalism*:

Any one who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient—and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist— either in its specific or its general aspect, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism. (2)

This broad aspect includes even that man who observes orient also as an Orientalist. In the past Orientalism discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the orient that means making statement about it and ruling over it. Orientalism is studied as a Western style for dominating, reconstructing, and having authority over the orient.

The study of Europe about East was believed as unquestionable authority. "European culture gained its strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self"(Said 3). Said, in his introduction further writes "To speak of Orientalism is to speak mainly of a British

and French culture enterprise, a project whose dimensions take in such disparate realms as the imagination itself, the whole of India"(3). Said explored both the range of Orientalism and the ways in which it authorizes and thereby controls the orient. Powerful European conceptions of the orient determine that "because of Orientalism the orient was not and is not a free subject of thought or action" (3). He highlighted the fact that cultural texts play a devastating role in the great game of colony and empire.

The movements of independence from colonial rule came across the Asian and African continents in 1950s. One of the common characteristics that influenced all independence movements was Europe. Various European states administered their colonies differently, and finally transmitted to their colonies an institutional legacy. Naturally, people believed that this colonial indolence would bring prosperity and self-government. However, newly 'free' people worked up to discover that their colonial masters had simply been replaced by local body.

Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak shows the problems in postcolonial studies. She urges local body (elite class) to reconsider the status of generalized margin especially women. Spivak theorizes the silence of the doubly oppressed subaltern woman. Her theorem on imperialism's epistemic violence extends to posting the native, male and female, as a historically muted subject. In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" she analytically studies an absolute power to the hegemonic discourse in constituting and disarticulating the native. She observes that:

In seeking to learn to speak to the historically muted subject of the subaltern woman, the post-colonial intellectual systematically unlearns female privilege. This systematic unlearning involves learning to

critique postcolonial discourse with the best tools it can provide and not simply substituting the lost figure of the colonized. (91)

Spivak seeks to develop a strategy of reading that will speak to the historically muted subject that is native people. In present situation, "There is no space from where the subaltern subject can speak" (103).

Moreover, she argues that for the purpose of administration and exploitation of resources, the marginalized natives are constructed by agents who are themselves of heterogeneous class origin and social status. They distribute the natives into differential position which work in the interest of foreign authority. She opines:

At the regional and local levels[the dominant indigenous groups]... if belonging to social strata hierarchically inferior to those of the dominant all- India groups still acted in the interests of the latter and not in conformity to interests corresponding truly to their own social being.(80)

In the process of independence, violence is in the centre of practice. It is Europe which has taught the violence and killing to the native people. Fanon comments, the colonizer himself is the "bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of native people" (38). It is through the bullets and bloodstained knives that Europeans formed the program of colonization. Now for the complete freedom, to subvert Europeans from the bottom, native people have adopted violence as the key weapon of their struggle; "The native who decides to put the program into practice, and to become its moving force, is ready for violence at all times" (37).

Initially colonizers killed the native peoples brutally and later on the natives used the same method against settlers to banish them from the land. After independence native peoples are not able to abandon the violence for the unity among

them. “The different tribes fight between themselves since they can't find the real enemy and [also] cannot count on colonial policy to keep up their enemy” (18) as Jean Paul Sartre says in his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth* by Fanon. This is a traumatic mental agony just like a hungry farmer, who comes back from the land being tired and doesn't find rice cooked, beats his wife and children. Such situation finds its expression in *A Man of the People* by Chinua Achebe.

Sartre further writes, “To shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time” (22). Native peoples are unaware about the fraction and the nectar which goes to settlers. Their feeling for each other is the reverse of the hatred they feel for colonizers. Brother is betraying his brother. This is the general feeling of native people. Native people are united and are running a campaign which is the downfall of colonizers. Colonizers are object of native people's speeches. Africa no longer remains dumb, speechless. It has stuff of past – ignored histories and stories. But the natives are still fighting to achieve sovereignty. Those who have attained complete freedom are also facing the constant menace of imperialist aggression.

In some cases imperialist did not give up easily; they divided the colony into pieces just like India and Pakistan and created a long lasting rivalry between each other. In this context Sartre commenting the idea of Fanon further writes:

In order to triumph, the national revolution must be socialist; if its career is cut short, if the native bourgeoisie takes over power, the new states, in spite of its formal sovereignty, remains in the hands of the imperialists. (11)

Frantz Fanon has negative attitude towards the cultural invasion by an imperial authority. Europeans exercised their ethics, values, language and religion with the

power of bullets on the colonized people. They could not come to terms with native culture side by side. At last, as native people became aware of the oppression, they returned the same cycle. Fanon further says:

During the period of decolonization, the native's reason is appealed to. He is offered definite values, he is told frequently that decolonization need not mean regression, and that he must put his trust in qualities, which are well tried, solid, and highly esteemed. But it so happens that when the native hears a speech about Western culture he pulls out his knife-or at least he makes sure it is within reach...the native laughs in mockery when western values are mentioned in front of him...In the period of decolonization, the colonized mass mock at these very values, insult them, and vomit them up. (43)

But the phenomenon is masked because certain colonized intellectuals have begun a dialogue with the colonizers and the natives are discerned only as an indistinct mass. After decolonization, the real condition of natives has been remained static. Fanon opines, “During the period of liberation, the colonialist bourgeoisie looks feverishly for contacts with the elite and it is with these elite that the familiar dialogue concerning values is carried on” (44).

The colonizers imposed cultural and political dominance through the help of Bible, sword, and the English language then the desire to dominate resulted in the formation of center and margin. The irreparable gulf between the ruler and the ruled came back into existence, English language became the lingua franca and England, the most appealing country to reside. Colonialism was a means of economic and political exploitation. The British Empire depicted itself as the enlightened imperial center. They introduced a new system within the colonized by creating an eclectic or

the so-called 'intermediate class', who were natives in regard to colour and blood yet different in taste and culture. Moreover, they treated their own people as inferior and became the instruments of the colonizers. The natives, despite being the true owner of the natural resources, were forced to remain as the spectator. Colonialism even usurped the cultural practices by imposing the Western culture and also by dominating and devaluing the indigenous culture.

III. Postcolonial Disillusionment in Achebe *A Man of the People*

Disorder and Fragmentation: Colonial Aftermath

A Man of the People is set in the postcolonial period in an unnamed independent African country. This country represents all the colonized countries in postcolonial freedom. It explores the postcolonial crisis, which these countries are facing. Political instability, insecurity, propaganda, rumor, corruption, anarchy, rulelessness, lawlessness, are general features of postcolonial self government. The governance of the country is nominally in the hands of the people. There is neither collective will in the people nor responsible leadership.

The novel depicts an atmosphere of material acquisitiveness unrestrained by traditional religious concern in the midst of political corruption, where there is no national voice but only a confusion of competing village voices. The novel is a first person retrospective narrative by Odili and the purpose of the story is to reveal the relations between Odili and Nanga, various confrontations between them, which culminate in a national economic crisis, scandal, a rigged election and finally a military intervention. Odili, who tells the story, is a cynical and politically disaffected university graduate, who once had placed his faith in university-trained, public minded leaders who would ensure through their education and actions that a unified nation, economically viable and politically stable, would be developed in the post colonial period. But a political opportunist, Nanga, prominent among them, has caused high-minded, disinterested, well-educated leaders to be discredited in the name of Africanization.

The story of the novel opens up with encompassing different aspects to show African political muddleness by presenting the postcolonial independence and its straight impact on African life. As new approaches work on analyzing novels with

multifarious trends that the novel also is closest to these. The post independent disillusionment has been one of the daydreams of African people due to newly emerged leaders with ancestral trends. The novel carries the universal truth of colonized and postcolonial state of countries by offering analogies.

The opening of the novel portrays the influence of the great leader that inspires him to be an ideal leader to drive country towards prosperity but his dreams never come true due to lack of stability in the country. The fossils, left by colonial empire, work to invite turmoil in the country. In this light the lines express the ideology of Naga in Odilis words:

No one can deny that Chief the honourable M. A. Nanga, M. P., was the most approachable politician in the country. Whether you asked in the city or in his home village, Anata, they would tell you he was a man of the people. I have to admit this from the onset or else the story I'm going to tell will make no sense. (1)

In this connection, the admiration by the Odili can ensure that Nanga has been the one who is everywhere popular, respected and ideology of the people in the country. He has been 'man of the people' but the truth is beyond cognition for people because of postcolonial influence in the country. The bewilderment is prevailing indirectly in the presence of the leader by meek villagers:

As I stood in one corner of that vast tumult waiting for the arrival of the Minister I felt intense bitterness welling up in my mouth. Here were silly, ignorant villagers dancing them-selves lame and waiting to blow off their gunpowder in honour of one of those who had started the country off down the slopes of inflation. (2)

The silly and ignorant villagers have been the victims of pseudonym leader in the country. The villagers have had faith in the leaders as an emancipator. The faith seems to be quite understandable with the arrangement in the honor of the leader. Here, furthermore, the school teacher has also painted the painting of the leader. Odili says, “There was on one of the walls of the school a painting of a faultlessly handsome scoutmaster wearing an impeccable uniform. I am not sure that the art teacher who painted the picture had Mr Nanga in mind” (3).

In the light of these lines, again the fake promise of the prime minister heads with the words that can assure people to uphold newly obtained freedom in the country with new zeal:

You most remember that at that point no one had any reason to think there might be another side to the story. The prime minister was still talking. Then he made the now famous (or infamous) solemn declaration: “From today we must watch and guard our hard-won freedom jealously. Never again must we entrust our destiny and the destiny of Africa to the hybrid class of western-educated and snobbish intellectuals who will not hesitate to sell their mothers for a mess of portage.” (6)

In this regard, these lines are speaking on behalf of the so called patriotic leader who always blames others by using epithets Western-educated intellectuals regarding nationality. Cashing people for the sake of vote he abuses them as trivial and untrustworthy who can sell their mothers for a mess of portage. The cashing language and catch words of Nanga seem to have had a trick to entangle people after himself. No longer, his words seem real to promote people’s right rather stagnate by showing faults of others.

The act of othering intellectuals may be the strategy to install him as powerful and trustworthy in the authority. Understanding the hidden motif of the tradition Odili makes plan to desert the parliament to defend his own modern ideology in practical life and society along with the discard of kept mentality on parliamentarians and Odili says:

I had left parliament depressed and aggrieved, I had felt, like so many other educated citizens of our country that things were going seriously wrong without being able to say just how. We complained about our country's lack of dynamism and abdication of the leadership to which it was entitled in the continent, or so we thought. We listened to whispers of scandalous deals in high places-sometimes involving sums of money that I for one didn't believe existed in the country. However, I was not making these judgments at the time, or not strongly anyhow.

(40)

Odili had once placed his faith in university trained public minded leaders who believed that through their education and action, they would develop an economically viable and politically stable unified nation in the postcolonial period. But political opportunist, Nanga is a prominent example, has ensured that high-minded, disinterested, well-educated leaders are discredited in order to increase their personal fortunes at the expense of the public purse.

In this regard, Odili again has disillusionment of newly-independent situation of the country where he doubts that there is no future of the country due to lack of firmness and commitment of the leaders to drive nation towards the prosperity:

I saw beggars sleeping under the eaves of luxurious department stores and a lunatic sitting wide-awake by the basket of garbage he called his

possession. The first red buses running empty passed me and I watched the street lights go off finally around six. I drank in all these details with the early morning air. It was strange perhaps that a man who had so much on his mind should find time to pay attention to these small, inconsequential things; it was like the man in the proverb who was carrying the carcass of an elephant on his head and searching with his toes for a grasshopper. But that was how it happened. It seems that no thought-no matter how great-had the power to exclude all others. (72)

The dream of the people has been turned into vain because of corrupt mentality and tendency of the leaders. People have been stranded, tramp and homeless and fall into vicious circle of poverty and political anarchy. There seems no political stability and good governance to emancipate people and nation rather political motif has been characterized deception and the game for political leaders to be tycoon. Exclusion has gone up heavily on every walk of life even the intellectuals and educated are out of political mainstream due to political turmoil caused by traditional leaders. The state of the country is in critical phase that is shown as the worst one being impossible to retain while the commitment has displaced falling into the uncertain circle. In this connection the bleakness has been widespread in absence of national interest. Odili expresses his views upon independence:

Max and some of his friends having watched with deepening disillusion the use to which our hard-won freedom was being put by corrupt, mediocre politicians had decided to come together and lunch the common people's convention. (78)

The newly hard-won independence is being driven towards instability by the leaders. The illusion is deepening into division among leaders. The Leaders themselves put

into the disillusionment with the previous contribution of corruption. The clash among parties seems strong and unpredictable throughout the later part of the novel, which indicates that the newly established democracy is hurdled with party clash “I must say that I was immediately taken with the idea of the common people's convention. Apart from everything else it would add a second string to my bow when I came to deal with Nanga” (79).

The worst competition among parties has been going unruly in the country. The clash indicates that the hard-won democracy is on the verge of extinction with continuous fight for the sake of power for furthering corruption and anarchy at the same time. In this connection the state of the politics and the existing policy further invites chaos and fear in businessmen and professionals in the society so Odili says:

The country was on the verge of chaos. The Trade Unions and the Civil Service Union made loud noises and gave notice of nation-wide strikes. The shops closed for fear of looting. The Governor-General according to rumour called on the prime minister to resign which he finally got round to doing three weeks later. (101)

The anarchic rumour brought sensation on people for giving up day today affairs. The complete political system was paralyzed after post independence in Africa. The leaders are unquestionably thinking of continuing the tradition. The political imbroglio of the country caused inextinguishable situation to the all around the country.

The clever politician like Chief Nanga can easily win the public confidence. He can make people dance to his attendance while feeding fat from their resources. He seeks political allegiances and does not condemn the various forms of corruption he encounters. His public morality is one of survival in the midst of social and

political confusion and rapid transformation of social disorder: “Sit down,” he said to me, “We don't eat people” (118). Nanga has genuine concern and good relation with the people he represents. He accepts the people as they are and enjoys their traditional life style. He moves heaven and earth to please them as he exploits their naiveté simultaneously. Nanga further defends the corrupted motives in this way:

“We know where that money is coming from,” 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. We will show them. As

for you my brother you can eat what has entered your hand Your good friend Maxwell Kulamo has more sense than you. He has already

taken his money and agreed to step down for Chief Koko.” (119–20)

Chief Nanga cannot pretend to represent his people, the people, at this stage, do not have control over their leaders. He freely pursues his own self-interest rather than national politics. When he is accused of political corruption and bribery by the intellectual elite, he escapes by calling them disgruntled European stooges and promised to promote Africanization rapidly. The only language they understand is that of economic self-interest:

Max began by accusing the outgoing Government of all kinds of swindling and corruption. As he gave instance after instance of how some of our leaders who were ash-mouthed paupers five years ago had become near-millionaires under our very eyes, many in the audience laughed. But it was 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. But did anyone expect them to do? (125)

The corrupted nature of the politicians and their luxurious life is shown here. The country is not ruled or governed by the intellectual leader.

After independence people were expecting a prosperous nation. But the mythical independence of the country led by the corrupted leaders led to chaos, anarchy instead of political prosperity and welfare of the nation:

He saw two vultures fighting over what still remained of the carcass. In great anger he loaded his gun and shot the two dirty uneatable birds. You may say that he was foolish to waste his bullet on them but I say no. He was angry and he wanted to wipe out the dirty thieves fighting over another man's inheritance. That hunter is yourselves. Yes, you and you and you. And the two vultures – P. O. P. and P. A. P. (126)

Achebe has given us a faithful account of his characters as they have mirrored themselves in his mind. He seems to be showing that politicians are closer to the people than the so called educated intellectuals. But the situation is different. The village of Urua clearly shows the picture of instable politics:

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. (135)

The village is helpless in the sphere of national politics. It elects the leader but does not control. The village of Urua does not have sophisticated or well-developed

political machinery. The people participate in elections; they vote but do not share the control of national political affairs. The people of Urua are a naïve, unsophisticated people in the matter of political principles. Their decision has been made perhaps without opposition in the community that lacks intellectual sophistication and awareness:

The elders and councilors of Urua and whole people, he said, had decided that in the present political fight raging in the land they should make it known that they knew one man and one man alone-Chief Nanga. Every man and every woman in Urua and every child and every adult would throw his or paper for him on the day of election – as they had done in the past. (135)

The hoodwinked of leaders and their selfish motives deprives people from getting fundamental rights and it seems a great deal of lacking mandate in leaders towards people and nation at the same time due to the dream to be tycoon without toiling. The mercy of the politicians which is shown upon the villagers struck Odili and he further says, “ I thought: if the whole people had taken the decision why were they now being told of it?” (136). He feels sympathy rather than anger:

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 recoiling from the role of sacrificial ram, why should they lose their chance of getting good, clean water their share of the national cake? (136)

Odili is seeking for opportunity to revenge Nanga. The politicians may take over tribal and village trying to prove that their present roles are a continuation of

traditional ones. However, there is a disastrous fracture between the morality of the village and the political affairs of the nation. The narrator tries to point out to this, not as a sudden revelation but as a truth, which has now been experienced:

“I came to tell your people that you are a liar,” and he pulled the microphone away smartly, set it 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. Edna rushed forward crying and tried to get between us but he pushed her aside so violently that she landed on her buttocks on the wooden platform. The roar of the crowd was now like a thick forest all around. By this time blows were falling as fast as rain on my head and body until something heavier than the rest seemed to split my skull. The last thing I remembered was seeing all the policemen turn round and walk quietly away. (141)

Odili has met with tragedy. Two polarities are in great conflict here and they have forgotten the concept of national welfare and morality, Chief Nanga sees himself vindicated; he sees Odili's act as contumacious, malicious, ludicrous, and trivial. He can proudly say that the intellectual elites should leave politics to the professionals. Odili, on the other hand, comes to the summit, or rather the culmination of his ambition to infuse into politics some elements of decency, morality, honesty and integrity. His youthful idealism is now tempered by experience and he has been led by his idealism to perform his one selfless altruistic public act that is to expose the fault of Chief Nanga.

Odili is still recovering from a broken arm and a cracked skull from the fighting. The society slips into anarchy at the same time that Odili suffers from his casualties:

I remember the first time I woke up in the hospital and felt my head turbaned like an Alhaji. Everything seemed unreal and larger than life and I was sure I was dreaming. In the dream I saw Enda and my father and Mama standing around my bed. I also saw, through a gap in the screen, two policemen. But the only thing that was immediate and in focus was that pressure trapped inside the head pounding away in a panic effort to escape. I tried to feel my turban but the pain followed my thought to the arm-and I went off again. (141–42)

Odili, the narrator suffers bodily injuries on the hospital bed. This idea of political idealism is shattered beyond political redemptions and social amelioration in place where the only realities are personal affection or in a place where political expediency and pragmatism rule the day. When the coup overthrows the government, Odili refuses to attribute it to the will of the people as he recovers his consciousness:

No, the people had nothing to do with the fall of our government. What happened was simply that unruly mobs and private armies having tasted blood and power during the election had got out of hand and ruined their masters and employers. And they had no public reason whatever for doing it. Let's make no mistake about that. (145)

In a world, where the honest individual is isolated, life can be traumatic and baffling. No nation can survive without bribery, and corruption. No nation can survive without leaders of the mind, no nation can thrive in a land where ignorance is bliss, and anti-intellectualism dwells in the sense of the people. So the nation is needed to develop a

sense of fair play, honesty and integrity so that the few honest individuals may find a community within which to function effectively for the good of all. The members of the intelligentsia must do something to bridge the wide gulf between them and the mass of the people.

Odili, has also lost his moral aspect to cope with the situation of corruption. So he has taken money secretly. This situation shows that he is not a faithful leader and representative to reedmen the African people. As his acts shows:

I had already decided privately to borrow the money from C.P.C. funds still in my hands. They were not likely to be needed soon, especially as the military regime had just abolished all political parties in the country and announced they would remain abolished “Until the situation become stabilized once again”. They had at the same time announced the impending trial of all public servants who had enriched themselves by defrauding the state. (148)

Odili's disillusioned political idealism and his private alienation seem to have realigned themselves. In this world of moral anarchy and ethical powerlessness, there is a deep cleavage between village morality and the affair of the nation. The politicians cannot convince the people that what they are doing is a continuation of the traditional village and town values. But in truth private loyalties become the ultimate values in the absence of any iota of public morality and public values:

My father's words struck me because they were the very same words the villagers of Anata had spoken of Josiah, the abominated trader. The owner was the village, and the village had a mind; it could say no to sacrilege. But in the affair of the nation there was no owner, the laws of the village became powerless. (149)

The situation of newly independent country is worse. The nation is suffering from violence, malpractices, corruption and deception. In a corrupt society the honest man has a hard time and this is what the narrator tells us:

Max was avenged not by the people's collective will but by one solitary woman who loved him. Had his spirit waited for the people to demand redress it would have been waiting still, in the rain and out in the sun. (149)

With this new religion in power and the laws of the village powerless, justice has to be left to individuals acting alone. Max was avenged only way possible, by someone who loved him. Private loyalties become the ultimate values in the absence of public moral sanctions. This is how the Odili's disillusioned have realigned themselves by the end of the novel. But however much regalia is displayed, however many times the radio is called national Crier, there is a disastrous fracture between the morality of the village and the political affair of the nation. The narrator ends the novel by pointing to this, not as a sudden revelation, but as a truth, which has not been experienced:

And I don't mean it to shock or to sound clever. For I do honestly believe that in the fat-dripping, gummy, eat-and-let-eat regime just ended – a regime which inspired the common saying tat a man could only be sure of what he had put away safely in his gut or, in language ever more suited to the times: “you chop, me self if chop, palaver finish”; a regime in which you saw a fellow cursed in the morning for stealing a blind man's stick and later in the evening saw him again mounting the later of he new shrine in he presence of all the people to whisper into the ear of the Chief celebrant – in such a regime, is 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. (149–50)

The novel is concerned with the intelligentsia or the more educated among the citizens. The politicians are the villains of the novel, while the intelligentsias are the most frustrated of the personages of the novel. The people classified the intelligentsias as so small as to be almost insignificant. Because of the number they wield no influence in the politics of their land. They are disillusioned because they are unable to influence the trends of events. They get more frustrated as they see the corruption in the society wield all the necessary power and influence. Here Odili, personifies the intelligentsia, tells us that better education has created opportunities for higher position than the politicians:

I had gone to the University with the clear intention of coming out again after three years as a full member of the privileged class whose symbol was a car. So much did I think of it in fact that, as early as my second year, I had gone and taken out a drive's license and even made a mental note of the make of car I would buy. (110)

The intelligentsias are frustrated because they cannot attain their goal of life, such as possessing such status symbols as cars, flats, suits and educated wife. This intellectual group increases their temptation in a newly independent nation with sprawling economy. Thus when Odili enters his name to run an election against Chief Nanga, he exchanges brilliant verbal with Chief Nanga on one side and Odili and his father on the other. So, Chief Nanga comes to bribe Odili in order to press him to withdraw his candidature. Odili's temptation in this case knows no bounds.

Intellectuals and the Africanness

Postcolonial intellectuals in Africa, by contrast, are almost entirely depended for their support on two institutions: the African University, an institution whose intellectual life is overwhelmingly constituted as western and the Euro-American publisher and reader. The mass of the people is more concerned with the honor of celebrating the auspicious visit, a triumphal return of a son of the soil who has made a successful leap into political life. But Odili, the narrator and the intellectual elite, does not see the use of honoring a corrupt politician. To him this is a misplaced value and national affairs are related to a secondary position. For this reason that politics has become corrupt and big business, Odili would not have part of it. His dislike increased when, during his first visit to parliament. He was disillusioned of “the Minister of Finance at the time was a first rate economist with a Ph.D. in public finance (3-4)”. He feels that Chief Nanga is at the head of those who have condemned the minister and his colleagues who are accused of being un-African “decadent stooges versed in text book economics and aping the white man's mannerisms and way of speaking”(4). The quotation from the *Daily Chronicle*, an official organ of the P.O.P., the party organ, elaborates this attack:

Let us now and for all time extracts from our body. Politics as a dentist extracts a stinking tooth all decadents' stooges versed in textbook economics and aping the white man's mannerisms and way of speaking. We are 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. Away with the damnable and expensive university education which only alienates an African from his rich and ancient culture and puts him above his people. (4)

According to the narrator, “this cry was taken up on all sides. Other newspapers pointed out that even in Britain were the Miscreant Gang got its' so called education' a man need not be an economist to be Chancellor of the Exchequer or a Doctor to be minister of Health (4–5). Odili prefers parliamentary democracy even with all its trimmings of European education and cultural association, to a system based on economic self-interest masquerading as indigenization or Africanization.

Moreover, the politicians are closer to the people than intelligentsia; and in a nation that is not elitist, or in a country where people are often suspicious of the educated and those who speak big English, education can become a liability than an asset. Thus the politicians are closer to the people and serve as an intermediary between them and the intelligentsia. Also, the politicians claim to be intermediaries between the new government and the people. A man who had no access to the government is easily deceived by the empty promises. In some instances some of the promises are fulfilled, and this makes the politicians more popular among the electorate. Furthermore, there is sufficient evidence to show that the politicians are delivering improved services to their constituencies, such as paved roads, piped water supplies, better public transportation system, electricity, and better schools. In return, the people support their politician, and disregard their common failings. The following statements from an ex-politician illustrate the attitudes of the people towards their representatives “we know they are eating, but we are eating too, they are bringing us water and they promise to bring us electricity. We did not have those things before; that is why is say we are eating too” (125).

Thus what determines “goodness” in this situation is his ability, or rather willingness. This is appalling, as it seems to say that ill-gotten possession can be shared without becoming a serious infringement of moral law. At the same meeting

people seem to want to rotate politician from one group to another so that other communities may have a chance to share the benefits accruing from politics. The opponents of Chief Nanga have nothing against him. But they suggest that it is time a representative from another village should be elected. Odili sums up this attitude in this way:

“Let them eat” was the people's opinion,” after all when white men 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; if you do you will outlive your present annoyance. The great thing, as the old people have told us, is reminiscence; and only those who survive can have it. Besides, if you survive, who knows? It may be your turn to eat tomorrow. Your son may bring home your share. (145)

Attitudes such as found in this passage can drive a really educated man to insanity. The people would vote for the politician and the intellectual. In any political confrontation between the politician and the intellectual, the former is bound to win. The gulf between Odili and his father typifies the gulf between intelligentsia and the politicians. The politician is chosen by the people and speaks the language intelligible to them, namely, the language of the common people, the language of pragmatism, the language of economic self-interest, etc. On the other hand, the intelligentsias are often misunderstood; they have no handouts or claim to any influences over the government and have no money to dish out to the needy common people. Even Odili's father, who is the local chairman of the party in power, cannot support his educated son without from the party.

Having gone to the new-age people are still in dilemma due to the previous impact of colonial rulers and their corrupted culture more the leaders are not out of touch of the previous tendency. The influence of corrupted leaders and politicians has had the capitalistic impact. Indirect capitalism is still going on in each part on back of determinacy of the nation has not been out of capital rubrics.

Though the pseudonymic freedom is there but it is vague having silent intervention on each aspect on the nation. It is clear that still indirectly the capitalist crux is even in wearing and thinking of the leaders. In this connection, the wearing culture has had influence from capitalism:

His robes were made from some expensive-looking, European woolen material-which was not so very strange these days. But what surprised me was that the tailor had retained the cloth's thin, yellow border on which the manufacture advertised in endless and clear black type:
100% WOOL: MADE IN ENGLAND. (65)

The lureness seems strong in African leaders because of poverty. The poverty is prevailing so it is clear that the money has power to attract even the virgin national idealism of the leaders. Nanga's grace could only emancipate them from shortage of money. The money has played insurmountable role to drive leaders back to the capitalist influence. In this connection, the hope of people lies on the money, which they are about to get from capitalists:

Not that it mattered; I would still have refused if it had been ten thousand. The real point surely was that Max's action had jeopardized 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 only hope of salvation. (129)

The neo-capitalism still has the influence on decision making as well as determining the concrete policy of the government in Africa regarding export and import. The policy of government on import is influenced by the foreigners. In this light, the abrupt split in parties shows the real influence of the capitalist country in Africa:

As the whole world now knows, our minister of Foreign Trade, Alhaji Chief Senator Suleiman Wagada, announced on New Year's Day twenty percent rise in import duties on certain types of textile goods. On January 2nd the opposition progressive alliance party published detailed evidence to show that someone had told the firm of British Amalgamated of the Minister's plans as long ago as October and that they had taken steps to bring in three shiploads of the textiles by mid-December. The cabinet was split overnight into the savage warring camps of those who wanted the Government to resign and those, like Chief Nanga, who said that matter concerned the Minister of Foreign Trade alone and if it came to resigning he should resign by himself.

(100-01)

Along with the imperial capitalism people from African territory have the sense of resistance to preserve nativist cultural practices seem strong and deep-rooted. The sense of capitalist cultural intervention has had the influence though by being victims of capitalism Africans have gone through the way that is for cultural preservation, which is called "nativist" practices. Nativism is a term for the desire to return to indigenous practices and cultural forms, as they existed in pre-colonial society. Colonial discourse theorists such as Spivak and Bhabha argue strongly that such nativist reconstructions are inevitably subject to the process of cultural intermixing that colonialism promoted.

Resistance against the Imperial Legacies

On the other hand, the multicultural nature of most postcolonial societies make the issue of what constitutes the pre-colonial 'native' culture obviously problematic, especially where the current postcolonial nation-state defines itself in terms that favour a single dominant cultural group. Minority voices from such societies have argued that 'nativist' projects can militate against the recognition that colonial policies of transplantation such as slavery and indenture have resulted in racially mixed diasporic societies, where only a multi-cultural model of the postcolonial state can avoid bias and injustice to the descendants of such groups. Minorities from these areas have thus argued against the idea that the post-colonial oppressed form a homogenous group who can be decolonized and liberated by a nativist recovery of a pre-colonial culture.

In the household of Chief Nanga, European and African cultures meet. The Chief represents an effort to blend the African with the European. The cook represents tradition partly transformed. "I fit cook every European chop like steak and kidney pie, chicken puri, misk grill, cake omelette" (46). He can cook only European food; his wife prepares the African food he eats. He does not see how married men could go to the kitchen to cook, "how many way get family go begin enter kitchen for maker bitter leaf and equisi? Unless if the man no get shame" (46).

He lost the job because Chief Nanga preferred African foods. Here again Odili sympathizes with the disappointed cook while exposing him to subtle and biting humor. "But I must say the fellow had a point too. As long as a man confined himself to preparing foreign concoctions he could still maintain the comfortable illusion that he wasn't really doing such an unmanly thing as cooking" (47). The question boils down to two issues. The first is a real satire on men at large who claim that a wife

confers on them the right of never going back to the kitchen and that the woman's place is in the kitchen.

The second is a subtle satire on the narrator, whose group of intellectuals maintains that upon receiving European education they must live the colonial mentality of having a cook, a small, a driver, a gardener and laundry man, a luxury which many of them cannot maintain. The authors seem to imply that the imposition, without discrimination, of foreign categories upon a large continent, as a means of transforming it into a modern European-style state, with all its sophistication and over two-thousand years in the making is bad. The problem still is if the imposition of something not grafted in the traditional life-style will bring stability to the African environment. True, Africans like Europeans must continue to adapt themselves to changing environments and ecological realities. After Nanga's departure the guests are discussing the wooden figure of a god carved by a local artist as:

One of our leading artists had just made an enormous wooden figure of a god for a public square in Bori. I had not seen it yet but had read a lot about it. In fact it had attracted so much attention that it soon became fashionable to say it was bad or un-African. The Englishman was now saying that it lacked mouthing or other. (50)

The English man shows his superiority by adopting what he thinks is African criteria. The narrator's comment shows the difficulty of attributing correct motives in an alien culture and presumably alerts him to the simplifications of his own European-style assessment of Nanga.

An Englishman is convinced that it is 'bad or un-African'. He has seen an old woman shaking her fist in a rage in the public square. She is in a position to judge, not because she has been trained in European art schools, but because she 'most

probably worshipped this very god herself'. At this point, Odili experiences his flash of insight:

“Did you say she was shaking her fist?” I asked. “In that case you got her meaning all wrong. Shaking the fist in our society is a sign of great honour and respect; it means that you attribute power to the person or object.” Which of course is quite true. And if I may digress a little, I have, since this incident, come up against another critic who committed a crime in my view because he transferred to an alien culture the same meanings and interpretation that his own people attach to certain gestures and facial expression. (51)

From Odili's comments we may observe that it is very difficult to attribute correct motives in an alien culture and that it is no use projecting one's cultures into another. The author seems to be very much concerned about the role of cultural misunderstanding in the promotion of international peace and order.

In other episode, Odili, is alone with Jean, the American hostess. They dance the West African high life together and then we hear another lecture on cultural misunderstanding and misinterpretation:

I must say she had learned to do the highlife well except that like many another foreign enthusiast of African rhythm she tended to overdo the waist wiggle. I don't say I found it unpleasant – quite on the contrary; I only make a general point, which I think is interesting. It all goes back to what others have come to associate us with. And let it be said that we are not entirely blameless in this. (52)

Here Odili satirizes the habit of imposing cultural stereotypes on other people.

Cultural distortions are not created by foreigners alone. African artists and governmental agencies have their own share of guilt.

Odili now understands the difficulty of trying to interpret or judge any alien culture of area of experience in which one has not participated directly and intimately. So he sought to correct the most blatant errors of the Europeans, Odili has become increasingly protective and defensive about his own African society. In this regard he says:

I remember how we were outraged at the University to see a film of breast-throwing, hip-jerking, young women which a neighboring African state had made and was showing abroad as an African ballet. Jean probably saw it in America. (52)

Not only we find it necessary to impose stereotypes on other people; they in turn strengthen the stereotypes by acting, as we want them to act. Odili's education is really getting under way; his explanation is plausible to make a point.

Misunderstanding of motives leads Odili and Jean to sexual immorality. Jean takes him on a tour of the city and drives him home, "She certainly knew the city well, from the fresh-smelling modern water-front to the stinking, maggoty interior" (54). Soon in spite of their intimacy, Odili begins to mistrust Jean's motives. He begins "to wonder whether Jean actually enjoyed driving through these place as the claimed she did or whether some secret reason like wanting me to feel ashamed about my country's capital city?" (54–55). Odili laughs uncomfortably at the sights of corruption and social inequality in the capital of Bori. Earlier he had enjoyed these signs when he was alone. Now, as his suspicious and national pride is kindled, he can afford to say:

Who, the hell did she think was to laugh self-righteously. Wasn't there more than enough in her own country to keep her laughing all her day? Or crying if she preferred it. Why don't they call some streets after the main important names in your country's history or past events like your independence as they do in France and other countries? (55)

Achebe insists repeatedly in this social function in response to Western critics who tend to give priority to aesthetic values. He seems to suggest, in fact, that the communal responsibility and the communal ties are more fundamental than artistic merit for any writer, but certainly for the African writer and for himself personally at the present stage in African affairs. His purpose is to dispel the colonial myth of the primitive African and to establish a true image of the people and their culture. This message is intended, to some extent, for a Western audience, but especially for the Africans themselves, since they have come to believe the myth and have internalized their feeling

The situation of *A Man of the People* is more depressing. It reflects the terrible political deterioration. 'The man', is Nanga, a brutally corrupt, who manages to remain both popular and successful. The novel examines this disastrous paradox. The term 'a man of the people' seems to indicate an admirable figure. How can a crook be a man of the people? In an ending shattering pessimism, Achebe seems to accept that people as greedy and immoral as these people chose as 'a man of the people' who does nothing more than exploit their own similar values. The dedicated intellectual, Odili, is drawn not as a hero to redeem his people, but as an arrogant and incompetent fool. His ideas which are good but they are unable to change the mentality of the people because the people are impressed by Nanga's ideas even though they are corrupted. They merely wish to share in Nanga's deeds because they have deep-

rooted faith upon Nanga. Idealism seems absurd and irrelevant. Naively apolitical Odili is defeated and a dismal conclusion makes off with the funds committed to his election campaign, justifying his theft with typical intellectual rationalization. The nation falls into chaotic violence. And finally the military intervenes the government and does the coup to control the political conflict and worsening situation of the country. However, amid the adverse political situation of the nation, Achebe does not feel hesitate to see the new rays of hope.

IV. Conclusion

Achebe through *A Man of the People* wants to recreate or redefine the whole history of his country in postcolonial terms. Westerners want to justify colonization. But Achebe is trying to create a different history through writing. To defy colonial literature, he wants to forget the colonized period and wants to see the past in the future with a sense of returning back to the period before colonization when they were free and held power in their own hands. The victims of colonization aspire to live for themselves, to find or grab or hold some sweet experience by going back to the pre-colonized period, and to transcend the sufferings, pain and obstacles gifted by colonization.

Achebe has written about the trouble with Nigeria. But here he portrays the picture of lawlessness, anarchy, chaos, and pessimistic situation rather than the real independent prospering nation. Through the limited and bleak independence, neo-colonialist inclinations and nativist practices in post-independent African country, Achebe represents postcolonial disillusionment and shows the post-independence situation more as a myth than reality.

A Man of the People dramatizes political struggle among the Africans after independence. It shows the postcolonial resistance as well as effects of British and western economic, political and cultural influences. The novel shows the picture of newly independent country where the governance is nominally neither in the hand of the people nor powerful leaders to lead the nation towards prosperity. The conflict between the politicians and the member of intelligentsia is clearly shown in *A Man of the People*. The situation is highly gloomy and the honest individual is isolated. The mass people suffer a lot by the result of independence. The western world is spreading its wings like an eagle and the traditional African world is struggling to stem off the

tide of change. The traditional African world has managed to survive in spite of colonialism. The novel deals with the social and psychological impact of European imperialism on indigenous African societies, particularly with respect to a distinctly African consciousness in the twentieth century.

After colonial rule no nation can live independently and no leader can lead the nation towards prosperity. So independence becomes a myth to those nations and its people. Here Achebe points out the mythical independence through the corrupted Nanga and alienated intellectual Odili. The people of the nation have high hope and expectation from their rulers. But the situation is even worse than that of a colonial time. Internal politico-social conflict, economic crisis and external dominations are other aspects of the novel. The greedy and lusty native rulers cause the ruin of economic and cultural growth of the state. In this case the intellectual leader should bridge the gap between the people and the rulers.

The novel dramatizes political struggle among the Africans. The problem is properly portrayed in the polarities and between the protagonists, Chief Nanga and Odili. The people have been hoodwinked by the politicians. The only language they understand has become that of self-interest and economic self-interest. People judge their leaders in their own terms by the amounts of political goods he brings to them and people become the blind buyers of the politician's ill-gotten goods. So all the African post independence dreams are shattered and now they have realized that no freedom was given to them but it was always taken away.

The novel ends in a circular way. It does not suggest any concrete solution. It only ends where it starts. Achebe has portrayed the victims of colonialism properly. The novel explores colonialism as a vicious historical cycle, which goes on and on, and the people are mere victims of this system which is beyond their control. Hence,

Achebe seems subtle in the depiction of the failures and the ill-fate of the educated Nigerians, he still sounds hopeful that out of the failures and tragic conditions of his heroes, new possibilities are sure to come.

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