

## Power and Politics in Africa, the Nigerian perspective: A Reexamination of Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*

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### Abstract

After more than half a century of political independence, majority of African Countries are still saddled with the same challenging political leadership interrogations and difficulties. Careful analytical studies attribute this misfortune to her successive leaders or stakeholders at all levels. This one political malady or anathema which has continually kept Africa in a state of perpetual retrogression, is believed to have been birthed from its pragmatism, the illegitimate use of power and the egocentric styles of her political leaders characterized by pocket or belly-leadership as opposed to a people-oriented leadership, coupled with the menace of prevalent ethnic and/or sectional loyalty. Nevertheless, several authors, critics and political analysts have attempted to proffer some form of explanations to these perennial challenges of power and politics in Africa, nay Nigeria. One of such exponents is Chinua Achebe. This paper tends therefore to reexamine the sociopolitical and economic predicaments of power, politics and other related challenges that have greatly shattered the foundation of Nigerian Polity in Chinua Achebe's novel *Anthills of the Savannah*. The method employed in the study is critical analysis. It also intends to advocate for a systemic ideology that could bring about possible and desirable pattern changes for a virtuous progressive leadership. **Key words:** *Power, Politics, Africa, Leadership, Practicability and Literality.*

### Le Pouvoir et la Politique en Afrique, le Perspectif Nigérian : Une Interrogation sur *Anthills of the Savannah* de Chinua Achebe

#### Résumé :

Après plus d'un demi-siècle d'indépendance politique, la majorité des pays africains font encore face aux mêmes provocantes interrogations et difficultés de gestion politique. De véritables études analytiques imputent la responsabilité aux leaders ou aux acteurs successifs à tous les niveaux politiques. Cette endémie ou anathème politique qui continue à assujettir l'Afrique à un état de rétrogression perpétuée, semble être issue de son pragmatisme, son emploi illégitime de pouvoir et des styles égoïstes de ses leaders politiques caractérisés par un leadership qui ne s'intéresse qu'à sa poche et à ses proches, au détriment d'un leadership axé sur le bien-être du peuple. Il y a aussi, la menace prédominante de loyauté ethnique ou sectionnelle. Pourtant, plusieurs auteurs, critiques et analystes politiques ont tenté de présenter des explications à ce défi perpétuel au maniement de pouvoir et de politique en Afrique. Au nombre de ceux-ci figure Chinua Achebe. Cet article tente de réexaminer les difficiles situations socio-politiques et économiques dues au pouvoir, à la politique et aux autres défis relatifs qui ont beaucoup bouleversé le fondement de la politique de l'Afrique, voire le Nigéria dans *Anthills of the Savannah* de Chinua Achebe. La méthodologie adoptée pour cette étude est celle d'une analyse critique. Elle se propose aussi de préconiser une idéologie systémique qui saurait provoquer des changements de structure possible et désirable pour un leadership vertueux et progressif.

**Mots clés :** *Pouvoir, Politique, Afrique, Leadership, Praticité et Littéarité.*

## INTRODUCTION:

When a man is endowed with natural and intellectual capabilities but he is literally still being spoon-fed even at a fully mature age of 62, then there is something imaginably wrong that needs adequate and immediate attention. Such is the case with most African nations, in this instance, Nigeria. It is rather obvious that over the years, Nigeria and indeed, some of her continental siblings still appear as entities with composite problems ranging from political competitions, prevalent politics of ethnic and sectional allegiance and the apparent problem of high value on control of state power which simply, is synonymous to wrong wealth amassing syndrome, nay stealing. It is very obvious that politics in Africa is counter-productive. It is characterized by greed; overwhelmed by outright corruption at all levels of the polity; it revolves around partisanship, tribalism, cliques and so many other demeaning issues. It is also true that in the present Nigerian polity, political power or politicking is likened to the easiest, consolidated and established means or technique to wealth acquisition. And according to H. Alakpiki (2001:46), “anything that has to do with political power, particularly the control of state power, inevitably elicits a violent struggle that often leads to systemic breakdown”.

There is also, this widespread question that centers on ethnicity. This reflects the antagonistic competition between ethnic groups which also, is associated with the framing of politics in the mold of ethnic coalitions for exclusive political claims. Thus, there is nothing in Nigeria’s political history that captures her problem of national integration more graphically than this volatile word “Tribe”. Despite all conscious and cautious efforts to quenching this life-threatening and fire-flaring word over the years, it has rather become more pronounced thereby casting negative influence on the Nigerian polity. In the words of C. Achebe (1983:6) “There is plenty of word for tribe. Our threatening gestures against it have been premature, half-hearted or plain deceitful”.

Yet, another biggest most recurrent and most bothersome problem of Nigeria’s politics history is leadership. In every organization, be it secular or spiritual, leadership is very crucial. Leaders determine the pace and focus of a people they lead. Leadership is the one vital matter that has belied the stability and progress of most African countries. And this has been on a perpetual nose-diving graph for a while now. Most of the nation’s past and present leaders are known for their pursuit of selfish and special goals to the disadvantage of a mutual national interest and goals. Any nation without the right leadership is a retrogressive and moribund nation. In the words of J.

Gardner (2001: 133), "... no society can function well with fools, rascals or non-leaders in leadership position". As a matter of fact, good leaders are mindful that the needs and realistic expectations of others in the societies in which they operate must be satisfied if their own needs and realistic expectations are to be met. But the Nigerian political leadership is consumed by the "politics of unreasoning" where leaders do not care a dime about the welfare of the people they govern.

### **1.1 Literarity, Chinua Achebe and Anthills of the Savannah.**

In the words of R. Jakobson, the term literarity is a concept which classifies a given work as a literary work. Thus, literature being an art, also doubles as an instrument for averting division and establishing a link, between the inner world of men and their outer reality. It is a direct reflection of man and his relationship with his environs and its main function is to praise or criticize man and his social institutions with a view of bringing about or fostering constructive changes in society. As N. Teknikio (2021:151) posits, in literature, there is this deliberate effort by writers geared towards improving various aspects of human society. Thus, as an imitation of human society, literature reflects the society and also serves as a mirror for man to x-ray oneself and see the need for positive transformation. The novelist's goal, on the other hand, is to penetrate the laws governing objective reality, and to uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated and not immediately perceptible network of relationship that makes a society.

Chinua Achebe is such a novelist with a difference. He is renowned and celebrated for recreating the African culture, especially the culture of his native Igboland. He writes with great beauty and with the aim of restoring the African history and culture removed from Africa by her colonizers and also to change or counter the views and derogatory portrayals of Africa by writers like J. Conrad (1902), J. Cary (1936) and other European intruders and invaders. His works are woven around the culture of his people, women issues such as feminism and gender equality, politics, social injustice, poverty, tribalism and ethnicity, corruption, underdevelopment and colonialism. As a writer, critic, humanist cum traditionalist, Chinua Achebe (1930-2013), today 10 years after his demise, is still recognized for his awesome contributions to the global literary landscape.

*Anthills of the Savannah* can be classified as political novel principally because it deals with issues of leadership. The novel reflects the activities of both the civilian and military in power in the post-colonial era in African countries with special bias to Nigeria. It reflects the throes and

mess of leadership to the despair and disappointment of the poor masses. *Anthills* reveals the author's concealed frustration about Nigeria preaches the need for salvation and fervidly condemns the incessant killing of her prospective political messiahs in Africa and particularly in Nigeria.

## **1.2 Power and Politics**

Power is one of the most basic human instincts. At its fundamental level, power is simply an ability, the ability to make things happen. This is a derivative of the French word "pouvoir" which could further be translated to mean: "to be able". Power is a tool that carries no innate moral value. What matters is the reason behind using that tool. Power becomes constructive when it is dedicated to causes that may well improve the world and mankind: Mohandas Gandhi convinced Great Britain to leave India, Nelson Mandela used power to end apartheid, Martin Luther Jr. was powerful enough to change the rules and end segregation. In this case, power connotes freedom. On the other hand, power becomes destructive when it is sought out for its own sake; when it is viewed not as a tool but as an end in itself. And when power is sought just for power's sake, it becomes risky and tempting, as Henry Kissinger puts it: "power is the great aphrodisiac", it enhances or induces the desire for more power.

Thus, when power is used in the social context, the emanating thought is that of a specific kind of ability; this could explain the ability to make others do what another person wants them to do. Thus, a man may be able to get others do what he wants them to do, because he has the gift of the gab, or because the others trust him for his wisdom or his integrity, or because he holds the strength to make things unpleasant for them if they refuse. All the above scenarios have a place in the exercise of political power, but the last of the four is especially prominent in situations of conflict. Thus, the last is coercive power which involves using threat of superior force to make others do what naturally; they will not want to do. For a very long time, the attention of academics and practitioners has been drawn to the concept of power and politics. Although different people see it differently, it is generally opined that the act of building and exercising power is purely a basic human instinct. However, the fact remains that politics revolves around power. To R. Pious (1986: 15), "power is the capacity of an actor to get others to what he wants them to do by means of subtle or overt pressures or even the use of force". To Thomas Bottomore (1972: 29), "it is the ability of an individual or a social group to pursue a course of action, if necessary, against the opposition of other individuals and groups". However, the exercise of power can limit the choices that are open to any individual or groups, and can also be imposed by the will of the one who

exercises it. This is a case where the possession, exercise or application of power spells a sanction or a reward. For example, imprisonment is a form of sanction whereas the allocation of goods or cash gifts can be a form of reward. It suffices also to note that political power is not evenly distributed in any given political system. For instance, the rich possess more power than the poor because they (the rich) have easy access to the political corridors and resources.

Politics is central to all human affairs. In fact, it deals with the behavior of men in the society and its practice has an overwhelming impact on the daily lives of the people in diverse ways. However, in spite of the apparent centrality of politics in all human affairs, the concept of power remains vague. And that sometimes leads to its abuse with despicable resultant effects or social vices namely: deceit, fraud, corruption and thuggery, among others. Of course, this misconception of politics often stems from the corrupt and dishonest behavior of politicians who see their apparent call to national service as a buccaneering expedition for personal or group enrichment, aggrandizement and protection.

The political system in Nigeria is implicit in the character of the Nigerian economy, the state and dominant class; and this character makes politics essentially a competition without rules and references. Power and Politics are dominant issues in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*. And politics has different levels of meaning in *Anthills of the Savannah*. First, there is a high level of scheming by those who seek personal power, position or status. This includes His Excellency the President and his Commissioners. For them, politics is simply power, influence and authority. It is the only way to interact with others in order to influence and change their behavior, attitudes and ideas. It is also worthy of note that Achebe didn't just credit power to only the male folks in his novel but to the female as well. Agreed that power connotes control, dominance and influence but primarily, it translates ability, energy and strength which could bring about achievements and competence. Two central female characters Beatrice and Elewa possess the knack that commands this power. This includes: Education, Patriotism. Self-definition and self-control in the case of Beatrice, and in the case of Elewa, it is the ability to relate with the elite and the ordinary people, the ability to express her beliefs and the perfection of motherhood. These as a matter of fact, do not diminish her ability but promote its growth and permanence.

Ordinarily, man by nature is always power hungry. And he deploys every means in search for it. And when he acquires one, he goes for more. Moreover, it is generally and practically believed that nothing is permanent except change. So, it is with power. It is dynamic and the

dynamics of power is seen from the point of power in politics. First, it can be used to influence the behavior of others with or without resistance, to structure, restructure or destructure existing status quo. Michael Rozeff (1984) summarizes the nature of politics in relation to power dynamics in the following four inferences thus: Politics leads to theft, it nurtures the growth of power, begets competition for power and also nurtures centralization of power.

Where politics is seen as leading to thievery stems from the opinion that in the course of politicking, some individuals gain while some lose. This happens because power gives to some, the ability to obtain or allot to themselves goods from others without permission and without a voluntary exchange or contract being concluded. Because politics involves getting and using power, it creates, encourages and leads to taking by manipulating political power to one's advantage using every available means which is synonymous to stealing.

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Sam, the military President employs this means to perpetuate himself in power, acquire more wealth and redistribute same to his cronies. Thus, power makes it possible for politics to be seen as a process of taking from some and giving to others.

The nurture of growth of power reminds one of the French Philosopher and Politician, Charles Louis Montesquieu (1689-1755) who said that: "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely". This proves that those who have power seek more power. Thus, power is a good used to obtain other goods, and men in power, desire and seek for more. This in a way, emphasizes that politics begets competition in that power is a good in high demand so, will undoubtedly bring about competition to acquire power and still remain in power. This has been the result of coups and counter coups in African polity. *Anthills of the Savannah* is a confirmation of this assertion. The army struck in a coup to scrutinize the body politic but on assumption of power, the shy professional soldier Sam, turned Head of States, realized suddenly that he could do many things with the powers at his disposal, so courts competition from others thus making coup become the alternative to effect change in power.

Politics motivates or attempts to centralize power in as few hands as possible. This according to Michael Rozeff (1984) is because within the government, the drive is towards the president ruling the other branches of government. And in the world, the drive is towards one state ruling all other states. In the limit, the drive is toward one-man wanting power over every other man. Most often, this results into dictatorship with a presidency having and wielding such a centralized power.

It is worthy to note that politics, mostly at the macro or state level, can be abused and one of the causes of such abuse is the simple fact that political power is so highly valued, hence the struggle for it. And one important reason political power is so highly valued is due to the economic weak-mindedness or mindlessness of the political class. This could be traced to the ever-lingering colonial experience and the dependency of the Nigerian economy on a not so sound or defined economic foundation. Thus, individual or groups use political power to control state power, and to amass wealth in an attempt to consolidate their material base. They turned political power as an established way to wealth making. Those who win state power can acquire all the wealth they want even without working, while those who lose in the struggle for state power cannot have security for the wealth they have even gotten through hard work. Therefore, the capture of state power inevitably becomes a matter of life and death and this is one reason politics is so intense, anarchic and violent.

Chinua Achebe as stated earlier is a political novelist. *Anthills of the Savannah*, *A Man of the People* and *The Trouble with Nigeria* are political novels about Nigeria, they are clinical reports of the author's disenchantment with the way power and politics is preached and practiced in Nigeria. The novels attempt at offering prescriptions for curing the nation's socio-political malady and for restoring her economic and political wellbeing. Our focus in this present paper is on *Anthills* but it will interest us to know that *Anthills* is also a continuation of *A Man of the People*. While the former explores the activities of the military in general, the latter dwells on the civilian rulers in Africa and particularly in Nigeria. *Anthills* explores the issues of indiscipline in leadership, the chaotic conditions at the State level and the clear self-centeredness, greed, tribalism, intimidation of opponents and general corruption at both local, state and national levels. Though we are looking at a social problem, but the solution isn't really societal but governmental based.

Achebe is emphasizing that leaders should critically redefine their role, re-examine themselves and map out a well-defined and authentic socio-economic program in line with a specified pattern. Because leaders are the brain behind political and economic salvation of the nation and so, they should not embark on combining and compounding their lawlessness with power.

*Anthills* as at its first publication in 1987 spot-lighted the defective African leadership system since the independence. It is appalling to note that well over half a century after political independence, leadership is still a fundamental and teething problem in most African states. It is

equally detrimental to note that African leadership ever since and until now, is characterized by neo-colonialism, economic mismanagement, tribalism, corruption and other social ills. These are among the basic sickening issues that constitute major setbacks to the speedy developments of most African societies that the author tries at exposing or considering in the novel. It gives its readers an insight into the fictional world of the novel side by side the real world with the reality that the prevailing issue is nothing but a leadership disaster.

*Anthills* is about the history of a country presented through the life of three friends namely: Chris Oriko (The Information Commissioner), Ikem Osodi (The Poet, News Paper editor of the National Gazette) and Sam (The Military President). Through these characters, the author analyses the trouble with leadership in Africa and more particularly in Nigeria although the setting is in an imaginary State called Kangan. The novel digs into the problem of rulership, witnesses the ousting of a corrupt Civil Government and discovers that the military rulership is no better than the civilian misrule and concludes that a substituting government is not adequate for Africa. The novel identifies two types of military personnel: the strong and the would-be-strong: while the former is a group of magnificent and good naturedly soldiers with power and authority, the latter is a group of swanks. It is this group that the novel satirizes and attacks. This group according to E. Emenyonu (1990) represents terrors disguised as saviors. They are eccentric and shameless looters of national coffers with sheer boldness and reckless abandon, walking with exaggerated swagger of cowards who equate human life to that of a mere dog to be cajoled or castigated at will. The first group of soldiers, the ones at the top, represents the care-free presidents for life who see themselves as gods, and are so insensitive to the wishes and plights of commoners in the society.

Meanwhile, the roles of the artist: musician, dancer, critic writer etc. in post-independence African societies are also clearly depicted in *Anthills*. The author criticizes Chris Oriko's political philosophy of accepting to be influenced by privileges and power which in the long run, stopped him from being responsive to the woes of the nation, and becoming inactive and unwilling to resist corruption and abuse of power that beclouded him and the society. In contrast, the author portrays Ikem as an imaginative reformist, as a significant part of the general political transformation preacher. Through the character of Chris, one sees the indictment of the educated class who inherited corruptive powers from the corrupt colonial administrators. Although this is attributive to the violent materialistic nature of the society and the influence of privileges and power, we must



also agree that the intelligentsias have been dormant at confronting and arresting the situation in the society.

However, in all intents and purposes, the military governance was not better than the civilian team that was removed from power. In fact, the military is adjudged for being the worst in that it is perfect in torture, intimidation and bloodletting as a means to suppress any rivalry or opposition. The military believes it is accountable to no one. The possession of the gun gives it the brute strength of military leadership which it considers as being for personal, rather than national interest, thereby spurring it to cling to power for as long as it can. However, one of the primary reasons for military interventions is to correct the ills of the civilian rule, but this has been swept aside in pursuit of vested interest for power. In clear terms, His Excellency the military President sees leadership in this light and as such, anyone that tries to go against his policies is considered envious and thereby, automatically becomes an enemy. Suffice to also opine here that the role of the intellectuals becomes necessary because, they could steer the President out of danger by letting his Excellency glimpse a little light now and again through the chinks. But instead, the intellectuals avoid this and resort to flattery, bootlicking and backbiting in order to curry little favors from those in power. The author in this way exposes the master-servant relationship between Sam and his cabinet. The mere sight of him from afar sends the cabinet scampering into their various holes like frightened animals. This reveals that our intellectuals who are entrusted with leadership are incapable of performing their task. The specified function of the intellectuals in every society is to help provide solutions to existing problems. This is so mostly because; they have been schooled in various professional fields. But they reject or jettison their assigned role for the lures of privileges and positions and so, distanced themselves from the immediate problems of the common masses. This class is typified by the likes of the Commissioner for Justice and Attorney General Prof. Okong who is usually dressed to impress the military in power. “He wears khaki safari suit with complete epaulettes... the intellectual envying the man of action” (4).

These sycophancy and errand seeking attitudes are what the author condemns as presaging dangers for any government. This is the case of the Attorney-General and the bootlicking account earlier mentioned above. On the one hand, he claims his profession enjoins him to accept hardcore evidence and distrust personal feelings and mere suspicions, but proceeded to inform His Excellency that Chris is not hundred percent behind him (a mere personal feeling which his profession enjoins him to distrust). Indeed, African government today is filled with such court

jesters that help in retarding developments in any nation. These predominant issues of the government in this novel are characterized by intrigues, backbiting, terrorism, tribalism, corruption, etc. and Achebe illustrates these characteristic irregularities as reasons for the failure of most African Governments. Even Chris who is supposed not to fawn His Excellency's attention, having known him longer than most members of his cabinet, becomes insensitive to corruption and abuse of power all around him due to privilege and closeness to power. Thus, instead of challenging Sam with facts of his incompetence and be ready to bear the consequences, he tries to intellectually rationalize his inertia and cautions Ikem for his "fiery crusading editorials as creating stupid problems for everybody" (38). The educated elites have compromised with the desires of the leaders displaying nonchalant attitude towards the corrupt practices around them and pretending not to notice the abuse of power and the excesses of "the man of action". They have turned themselves to puppets in the hands of puppeteers.

*Anthills of the Savannah* dissects the excesses of the military in contemporary Africa which came into power mainly to curb the political excesses and muddles created by the civilian government. But the soldiers left these ills uncorrected or unresolved, instead, they plunged themselves head-on to perpetuate worse ills than those they try to expunge. We tend to agree with Achebe that what went wrong was not mediocrity in leadership nor the execution of the agenda but the soldier's exposure to the privileges of office, hence their greedy decision to remain in power for life rather than experiencing the uninteresting, cumbersome but regimented barracks life. Note that Sam's change of attitude towards his friends (Chris and Ikem), his aborted ambition of becoming a life-president, and then his refusal to recognize the will of the Abazonians, all typify the problems of African nations. We also note the excesses of the military through the creation of secret police units through which they stifle oppositions and criticisms: we read of rumors of unrest, secret trials and executions in the barracks (41). The murder of Chris and Ikem and the bid to cover it up, highlights the extent of deterioration of the government and its security apparatus. The military is so depraved, insensitive and inhuman in some of its approach to human issues of life. We note a particular scenario of a police Sergeant's beastly attempt at raping a girl in broad day light before many witnesses who did not even attempt to prevent or deter the policeman from such horrid and bastardy act. This however reflects the level of wickedness found in the society. Here are some of the remarks of Ikem to the nonchalant attitude of the populace:

It was not the authority that worried me: it never does, it was the thousands who laughed so blatantly at their own humiliation and murder... even if the crowd's mother was at that time held up by her legs and turned down the middle like a piece of rag, that crowd would have yelled with eye-watering laughter (41-42).

We equally note that the military like its civilian counterpart could not resist corruption and materialism. The military specialized in irresponsible extravagant squandering. The most important necessities like good health facilities, shelter and food are in high demand while the people's wealth is wantonly mismanaged at the expense of the poor and the oppressed. Hear what Ikem has to say concerning this:

The prime failure of this government began to take on a clearer meaning for me... it is the failure of our leaders to re-establish vital link with the poor and dispossessed of this country, with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation's wellbeing (141).

The government is totally alienated from the masses as Elewa's uncle remarks:

We have seen too much trouble in Kangan and since the white man left, because those who rule us make plans only for themselves and their families (228).

Moreso, Achebe considers the role of the press as the conscience of the society. This set of people should protect and support the underlying principles on which the society is built.

Ikem features as a character in this regard. The author believes we should seek freedom through expressing our thoughts and feelings not minding the risk we might face as we fulfill this role. So ikem's willingness to experience deprivation than renounce his belief, highlights the kind of selfless duties the writer should perform in service to the society. As an editor of a National Gazette, Ikem utilizes this avenue to redeem the society from oppression. Achebe believes that the role of a writer is such that should be acknowledged by the society and the writer should endeavor to perform the best for the society and not retracing steps when those in authority disagree with their views. The writer here represented by Ikem is a character who considers the problems affecting the masses in contrast to Chris who enjoys self-gratifying privilege powers at the expense

of the masses he claims to represent. This is typified in the conversation between the driver and the old man of Abazon concerning Ikem's patriotic and empathic moves:

Ah how I go begin count. The thing Oga write too plenty. But na for we small people he de write every time. I no sabi say na for we this Oga de fight, not for himself. He na big man. Nobody fit do fuck up to him. So, he fit stay for him house. Chop him oyibo chop, drink him cold beer, put him air conditioner and forget we. But he no be like that so, we come salute am (136)

For Achebe, the persistent problems of successive change in government and killings in any society cannot be blamed on the system but on the individuals and any reform should be based on the society's existing values. He sees the problem as lying with the people: the electorate and the elected, not the system. The author is of the view that no meaningful political progress could be made in any society without including the masses: the taxi drivers, market women, students and laborers, for they are the people that give meaning to the existence of any government. The writer's hope lies in a future society not governed by class and status. His vision of tomorrow is whereby power is used for the interest of the society; the vision which Chris realizes at his dying minute. He says to us to beware, "this world belongs to the people and not to any little caucus, no matter how talented (232). This vision is symbolized by the birth of Elewa's child (birth of a nation), the union that embraces other sects, tribes and gender equity sanctioned by Elewa's uncle and the assembly- the daughter of all. The new nation is not class and status specific but governed by collective effort of the masses.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *Anthills of the Savannah* is a post-colonial text and it is engaged in its context. It projects how power is used to dominate politics and how elites use politics to achieve and control power not for the people's benefit but for the narrow and selfish interest of the elites. It is a symbolic x-ray of the distortion of natural order and values where the National Guard Organ has jettisoned its original role and taken up the role of Civil Leadership by force. One can rightly draw the inference that both the civilian and the military have not fulfilled their specified obligations in the act of governance. This is perhaps, Achebe's disillusionment. While the civilian exerts their expertise in corruption, tribalism, and other social ills, the military has adequately perfected the

art of secret trails, torture and total elimination of opponents to remain in power. One can also rightly observe that over three decades after the publication of *Anthills of the Savannah*, the socio-political malaise has not changed for any better yet. The military has now changed its attire or regalia to that of the civilian and has in addition, improved more on its corruptive skills. Power and politics problems in Nigeria still manifest in the high value that politicians and leaders have placed on political power, and that has created a compulsive preoccupation which has in turn, greatly impeded our economic progress.

This paper therefore agrees with Achebe's vision on power and politics that leaders, especially of African extraction, should be sensitive to their course and calling of providing comfort and showing great concerns for the people, and by all means, bridge existing gaps between the led and its leaders.

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