Chapter 2

Re-capitulation of the Political History of the Colonizer after Independence

We, human beings, are considered as social animals. Being social animals we never prefer to live an isolated life, but a life in a cluster or mass. However, to have ascendancy on others is again a universal human propensity. The novels of Chinua Achebe and J. M. Coetzee are remarkable, stimulating and appealing at the same time because they never traverse the realm of reality and never intend to take the reader to the *Forest of Eden*. Instead they deal with such human tendencies which are universal and the effects of which reverberate for centuries in next generations. As the representative authors of the *Nations* (i.e. Nigeria and South Africa respectively), Achebe and Coetzee have resourcefully sustained to transmit a message that affiliation of the past and present is required for building future of the *Nation*. This past is bound to be an encyclopaedia of the chronological events and the present is bound to be affected by the past, no matter whether it was pleasing and gratifying or ghastly and outrageous. Not to gear oneself up from that knowledge will be a ludicrous mistake and a colossal stumbling block for the *Nation* in the path of progress. We need to bear in mind that history carries the records of not only dates and events, but also the story of the dominator and the dominated – literary speaking, the colonizer and the colonized. The political history of South Africa and Nigeria also enchant the atrocious colonial epoch.

- **Political History of South Africa:**

  South Africa was subjugated for its being a rich source of the natural resources. It carries a long history of exploitation and wars. The coastline of South Africa was for the first time explored by a Portuguese mariner Bartholomew Dias in
1488 to find a new sea route to India. But the Dutch were the first European settlers in South Africa, who established the Dutch East India Company at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. The descendants of these Dutch speaking settlers were considered as the Boer in South Africa. They lacked the dexterity and power of administration. Eventually, their maladministration and exploitation of the native resulted in clash between them. They lost their power in the battle of Muizenberg, fought in 1795 and the British got the control of the Cape of Good Hope. They regained the power in 1804, but for a short time as in 1806 in the Battle of Blaauwberg the British won domination for the next 100 years. The British had hegemony over most of the colonies of South Africa. They imposed the system of amalgamation on the region and other uitlanders. The following are the strong factors that made the British hegemony possible in South Africa.

I. The search for a new trade route to India

II. The discovery of diamonds by Erasmus Jacobs at Kimberley in 1866 on the joint borders of the South African Republic (the Transvaal), the Orange Free State and the Cape Colony

III. The discovery of gold in 1886 by an Australian in Witwatersrand in the Transvaal – (This made the Transvaal the richest country in South Africa, but it lacked the manpower and the industrial base to develop the resource. This eventually gave an opportunity to the number of uitlanders to seek their destinies in that region.)

IV. The protest of the native race at other European colonial power.

The internal crisis between the native and the Boer, and the Boer and the British actually invented the first Boer War which was fought between the United Kingdom and the Transvaal from 16 December 1880 to 23 March 1881. It ended with
a great loss of the British and with a peace treaty which gave the Boers self-government in the Transvaal. In fact, the seed of the apartheid, the inextricable component of the South African history was sowed here at the end of the Boer War.

However, as if, imperialism was a congenital characteristic of the British, they could not bear the hegemony of the Boer Republic. They wanted the complete control of the gold mining industry and diamond trade, which was actually claimed and owned by the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Therefore, they continuously impeded with the administration and attacked at the pre-eminence of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State until the outbreak of the Second Boer War. It was fought from 11 October 1899 to 31 May 1902. It ended with the victory of the British and consolidation of the two republics with the British dominance. It cost about 75000 lives in all and about 20000 black Africans lost their lives. By the end of the 19th century, the British Empire comprised nearly one-quarter of the world’s land surface and more than one-quarter of its total population (British Empire).

In 1910 the Cape Colony, the Natal Colony, the Transvaal Colony and the Orange Free State Colony were unified under the title the Union of South Africa. Everything was under the British control. All Boers could not compromise with the British Supremacy. Many of them were reluctant to accept the Union of South Africa in 1910. They waited for the pertinent opportunity. And during the World War I, they opposed to fight for Britain against German, when the British force intended to control the German colonies in Africa. The British Government continued to stop these anti-British Boer activities. They were imprisoned, but when they were released, they formed South African National Party in 1911 and coaxed the Afrikaner (i.e. the Boer) to seek independence from Britain. J.B.M. Hertzog, the founder of the National Party, sought mainly two things (National Party):
I. To emancipate South Africa from the British imperial control

II. To provide greater “protection” for the whites from the black Africans and for the Afrikaners from the British

In 1914, the Britain declared the First World War against Germany on behalf of the entire empire, the dominions and the colonies, but in 1918, “the dominions signed the peace treaties for themselves and joined the newly formed League of Nations as independent States equal to Britain” (British Empire).

Previously the British Government had certain ill-defined powers, and ultimately overriding authority, over legislation passed by the Dominions – Canada, Australia, New-Zealand and South Africa. Things began to change after the First World War, in which the sacrifices of Canada and other Dominions on European battlefields had stirred feelings of nationhood, and desires for greater autonomy from the mother country. (Hillmer)

This feeling of nationhood and desire for emancipation, progressively took birth also in the throbbing hearts of black South Africans. But antithesis to this emancipation, the South African National Party was established in 1911 to infringe the political rights of the native. It ruled South Africa from 1911 to 1924 and “laid the foundation of apartheid” (South African Party). Louis Botha and Jan Smuts were the prime ministers of South Africa from 1910 to 1919 and from 1919 to 1924 respectively. They “advocated complete racial segregation” (South African Party). During this period the following atrocious Acts were passed.

1. **Natives Land Act no. 27 of 1913:**

This Act is also known as the Bantu Land Act and Union Land Act. O’Malley Archives states that it allocated 7.3% of the total South African land area as reserves to accommodate the Native population. It restricted the ‘Natives’ to buy and /or own
land outside the reserves. As they could not own the land, they would have to work as labourers at mines. Thus, the white “had begun to use land as a tool to limit African political participation” (Native). Boddy-Evans writes that the reserves which were allotted to the natives were “not only amounted to just 7-8% of South Africa’s land, but were also less fertile than lands set aside for white owners” (Pre-Apartheid). This Act defined natives as “any person, male or female, who is a member of an aboriginal race or tribe of Africa; and shall further include any company or other body of persons, corporate or unincorporate, if the persons who have a controlling interest therein are natives” (Native). But the effect of this Act is well defined by Plaatje, who writes,

Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African Native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth. The 4,500,000 black South Africans are domiciled as follows: One and three-quarter millions in Locations and Reserves, over half a million within municipalities or in urban areas, and nearly a million as squatters on farms owned by Europeans. The remainder are employed either on the public roads or railway line, or as servants by European formers, qualifying, that is by hard work and saving to start farming on their own account.

This is how, all of a sudden, without any kind of warning, the life of the native was changed, sacrificed on the altar. With this stormy change the white South Africans slept peacefully in their houses.

2. Native Affairs Act No. 23 of 1920:

O’Malley Archives states, “This established a native affairs commission; provided for a system of local councils in the reserves and authorized the administration to convene conferences of chiefs, councillors and ‘prominent Natives’
with a view ‘to the ascertainment of the sentiments of the Natives population’ . . . [It] was a shoddy device to side-track the African demand for the right to sit in parliament.’ (Simons & Simons 1969:251).

It ‘set up separate tribal councils for the administration of the reserves and advisory councils for Africans in urban area . . . all under the aegis of the Native Affairs Department Minister’ (Worden 1994:74).

Together with the NATIVES ADMINISTRATION ACT of 1927, this was a ‘part of a process of transferring power over the regulation of African life from Parliament to the executive’” (Dyzenhaus 1991:37).

Thus, judicial system of the native was flung. The tribal councils actually betrayed the tribes as no verdict was in their favour and for their welfare. Their lives were completely dominated by the men in power, who were only white South Africans.

3. Native Urban Area Act No. 21 of 1923:

According to O’Malley Archives this Act was required to the “urban authorities to establish separate residence locations for ‘Natives’, and to exercise control over ‘Native’ immigration into these areas. It also ‘empowered local authorities to grant trading license to African location residents’ (Davenport 1987:551f). Moreover, it ‘forbade the further granting of freehold property rights to Africans on the grounds that they were not permanent urban residents and should only be permitted within municipal areas in so far and for so long as their presence is demanded by the wants of the white population’ (Worden 1994:43)”.

Boddy-Evans writes that this Act divided South Africa into ‘prescribed’ (urban) and ‘non-prescribed’ (rural) areas. It controlled the movement of Black males between the two. ‘Native advisory boards’ were set up to regulate the inflow of Black
workers and to order the removal of ‘surplus’ Blacks. Towns became almost exclusively white, as a result the only Blacks allowed to live in town, were domestic workers. (Pre-apartheid…Urban Act)

4. **Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950:**

This Act made compulsory for the people of South Africa to be “identified and registered from birth as one of four distinct racial groups: White, Coloured, Bantu (Black African), and other. It was one of the ‘pillars’ of Apartheid. Race was reflected in the individual’s Identity Number” (Boddy, Apartheid). He quotes the wording of the Racial Classification Act in the following ways.

- “A White person is one who is in appearance obviously white-and not generally accepted as Coloured-or who is generally accepted as White-and is not obviously Non-White, provided that a person shall not be classified as a White person if one of his natural parents has been classified as a Coloured person or a Bantu…”
- “A Bantu is a person who is, or is generally accepted as, a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa . . .”
- “A Coloured is a person who is not a White person or a Bantu . . .”

Thus, this Act divided all South Africans into two classes: white, which was of white South Africans, who were in minority and Bantu, which was of Black South Africans, who were in majority. Apart from these, two more classes were there; colored, which was of the mixed races and Indian and Pakistani living in South Africa formed another class. This abysmal segregation sanctioned political and economical discrimination against non-whites.
5. **The Group Areas Act of 1950:**

It established residential and business sections in urban areas for each race, and members of other races were barred from living, operating business or owning land in the area other than the area allotted to them. Between the passage of the Group Areas Acts of 1950 and 1986, about 1.5 million Africans were forcibly removed from cities to rural reservations (Apartheid, Columbia).

Apart from these Acts the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the Immorality Act (1950) prohibited interracial marriage. In 1951, the government introduced the Bantu Authorities Act and re-established tribal organizations for black Africans. In 1959, with the Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act the government created 10 African homelands which have been given names Bantustans and the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970 made every black South African a citizen of one of the Bantustans and in this way they indirectly excluded blacks from the South African body politic. Bantustans were rooted in Land Acts defined a number of scattered areas as “native reserves” for blacks. However, all the Bantustans remained politically and economically dependent on South Africa. This is how these “laws forbade most social contacts between the races, authorized segregated public facilities, established separate educational standards, restricted each race to certain types of jobs, curtailed non-white labour unions, and denied non-white participation (through white representative) in the national government” (Apartheid).

Thus, the exploitation of the native continued in various ways with the contraption of a series of new Acts from 1913. On the one hand Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland and Newfoundland got the complete legislative independence by the Statute of Westminster on 11th December 1931(Today in History), while on the other hand the racial segregation was taking a very awful shape
in South Africa. This Statute actually brought a revolutionary change in the iconic identity of the British Empire because it declared “autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nation” (Statute of Westminster). It marks the end of the hegemony of the parliament of the U.K. However, the independence in South Africa remained questionable. The eternal suffering of the native continued its existence because the power yet remained in the hand of the South African Government ran by the white, who were well equipped with their handy policy of ‘Divide and Rule’, in other words ‘apartheid’.

Apartheid means apartness. It is an atrocious racial segregation. It confines the people to certain circumscribed area of residence or separate institutions, like schools, churches, and facilities, like parks, playgrounds, restaurants, restrooms etc. on the basis of race or alleged race. It provides a means to maintain the economic advantages and superior social status to the politically dominant group. It has been practiced all over the world where there are multiracial communities. But as legal segregation, it is practiced as an occasional social discrimination except in the Southern states of the U.S. In South Africa it was employed by white populations to maintain their ascendancy over other groups by means of legal and social colour bars. Binary opposition is universal. Encyc. Britannica Online marks the year 1948 as the beginning and the year 1994 as the end of apartheid officially, but unofficially it has continued as it is deeply entrenched in the psyche of the white South Africans.

Marissa K. Evans opines that although the apartheid policy began officially in 1948, the practice of racial discrimination had deep roots in South African society since 1788, when the Dutch colonizers began establishing laws and regulations that
separated white settlers and native Africans. These laws and regulations continued after the British occupation in 1795, and soon led to the channelling of Africans into specific areas that would later constitute their so-called homelands. By the year 1910, there were nearly 300 reserves for natives throughout the country, when the Union of South Africa was formed. Thus, the apartheid has its roots in the colonial period. The colonizers went away but their handy policy of divide and rule has been practiced in almost all independent countries which were once upon a time colonized. The history of suffering continues before and after independence, as well.

Angela Thompsell mentions two types of apartheid: one is the Petty Apartheid which “was the segregation of facilities based on race”, the another is Grand Apartheid, which limited “black South Africans access to land and political rights”. It prohibited them to live in the same area where white South Africans were living. They were deprived from their political and economical rights. The Pass Laws “regulated the movement of black people in and out of European colonial settlements” and they “were intended to keep black Africans out of cities and other spaces, with the exception of laborers” (Grand). The natives were not allowed to enter in certain areas without their passes. At the same time they could not stay in a city for more than 72 hours, if they were not born and employed in that city.

The purpose of apartheid was separation of the race not only of whites from non-whites, but also of non-whites from each other, and among the Africans (called Bantu in South Africa), of one group from another (Apartheid, Columbia). According to Thompsell the method of determination of the person’s race was humiliating and shocking. If the classification of the race of any person was challenged by other, then that person had to go to certain unofficial tests, like the ‘pencil test’, examination of
the colour of genital or any other part of the body that could be accepted as a clear mark of the race by the official (Racial).

*Life in Apartheid: Revelations-An Initial Journey* depicts that apartheid had destructed the social life from the beginning. The child never got camaraderie of his parents together, as male members of the family had to go to work at farm or mine far away from the village. This made their place vacant for a long duration. Envisage a village having only women and children. Perpetual slavery was a part of Afrikaners life as the law restricted them to own the land. Life was shaped by culture, tradition and taboos. English education given to the native had uprooted the person from his own native culture. At the age of sixteen he would be given a passbook stating his race, name, gender, date of birth, residence, fingerprints, place of work and study, photograph, marital status, etc. This would remain with him till his last breath like his shadow, as without it, he would not be allowed to enter in certain areas allotted to white South Africans. The ‘Black’ would become a permanent adjective, for instance, black job, black establishments, black hospitals, black public toilets, doctors, and schools, etc.

Posel observes that the apartheid state created a mechanism for investing all facets of existence with racial significance. Everything could be treated as evidence of race; therefore, race was an inherent and overriding feature of all facets of life in the society. She further writes, “The vigour with which racial barricades were built was an indication of the intensity of white discomfort at the prospect of racial proximity” (73).

This situation of South Africa during pre/post apartheid was continuously challenged by the South African Native National Congress (ANC). Cecil John Rhodes, who drafted the Glen Grey Act, claimed that the Africans were citizens who
were still children and the government protected their land, thus “they had no right to claim a vote on it” (Native). Land and race were used as triggers by the South African government to control the native. But ANC claimed for everything that belonged to the native. It aimed at the voting rights of Coloureds and black South Africans and fought to eliminate apartheid. Though it was banned from 1960 to 1990 by the white South African Government, it continued its dignified skirmish during these three decades underground and outside South African territory. It conducted many non-violent protests, strikes, boycotts and marches against the apartheid. It opposed the “pass” law and other government policies. Thus, it demanded for the complete, transparent and legal freedom and equality. It claimed for all kinds of rights that a citizen of a Nation deserves. But Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd— the primary architect of apartheid, was ambitious to change South Africa from a monarchy to a republic. On other hand the ANC became ambitious for the rights and freedom of the native. Boddy-Evans quotes Mandela’s defence statement during the Treason Trial of 1961, “We are not anti-white, we are against white supremacy . . . we have condemned racialism no matter by whom it is professed” (Quotes). Thus, Mandela’s fight was for the rights of the black against the white supremacy.

Before 31 May, 1961, Mandela, the Director of the All-In African National Action Council, wrote a letter to Verwoerd on 20 May, 1961, stating that his government could not take a decision of changing South Africa into a Republic nation “without first seeking the views and obtaining the express consent of the African people”. He demanded “a non-racial and democratic Constitution” to avert the worst situation of the Nation and a call for the convention before 31 May 1961. He warned him that if he failed to do so, the Africans would refuse to co-operate him and they would go for a country-wide demonstrations “in a disciplined and peaceful manner”
on the eve of the Republic (Doc. 9). But the Government did not pay attention to the caution. ANC called a General Strike on the 29th, 30th and 31st of May 1961, and staged country-wide demonstration to protest against the White Republic forcibly imposed on them. The government arrested more than ten thousand innocent Africans and their activities were banned throughout the country. In the second letter Nelson Mandela made this point very clear to the Government that they would “never cease to fight against repression and injustice” (Document 11). Very audaciously, Mandela wrote,

. . .the result of the last strike has proved no power on earth can stop an oppressed people, determined to win their freedom. History punishes those who resort to force and fraud to suppress the claims and legitimate aspirations of the majority of the country’s citizens. (Document 11)

This demand made the Government more brutal. Many leaders were arrested in order to annihilate the anti-apartheid activities. On 31 May 1961, Verwoerd, the primary architect of apartheid, finally succeeded in changing South Africa from a monarchy to a republic. In 1964 Mandela and other ANC leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment by the Rivonia Trial (African), but they proved themselves by not relinquishing their fight for their rights.

On 2 Feb. 1990, the President F.W.de Klerk promised to repeal all apartheid laws and negotiate a new non-racial constitution with anti-apartheid groups in order to bring reformation in South Africa. He released Mandela after 27 years of imprisonment, unbanned ANC and released its all leaders. He repealed the Separate Amenities Act, the Group Area Act and the Land Acts. On 1 Feb. 1991, he eliminated the laws of the registration of people by colour, of housing segregation and of race restrictions on land ownership. On the very next day, he addressed to the South
Africa’s racially segregated Parliament that now there is neither time nor room for turning back. There is only one road and that is ahead. And on 17 June 1991, he repealed the Population Registration Act – the last of the pillars of apartheid. The apartheid became history and South Africans became free from that four decade experiment in racial separation. And in 1994 a general election took place. Nelson Mandela became the first non-white president of South Africa which marked the end of the apartheid legally; however, it continued its existence as it was deeply entrenched in the society and psyche of the white South African. Posel writes,

After decades of apartheid’s racial reasoning, the idea that South African society comprises four distinct races – ‘Whites’, ‘Coloureds’, ‘Indians’ and ‘Africans’ – has become a habit of thought and experience, a facet of popular ‘common sense’ still widely in evidence. (What’s 56)

In the post-apartheid epoch, South African has continued to face steep challenges: rising crime rates, ethnic tensions, great disparities in housing and educational opportunities, and the AIDS pandemic (South Africa). Moreover, poverty is an issue that cannot be met with. Modise and Mtshisela opine, “Black Africans who were disadvantaged during the colonial and apartheid regimes continue to be predominantly poor in post-apartheid South Africa. In our view, they are poor, by and large, partly due to the loss of land”. While Aliber studies this issue from the angle of chronic poverty. He conceptualizes it as inter-generational poverty, “meaning that children from poor households are likely to become poor adults, whose children will in turn risk remaining in poverty, and so on.” and “Almost all poverty was inter-generational, because colonialism and apartheid left little room for it to be otherwise (Intro. 2). Thus, poverty and suffering have become inextricable issues of South Africans.
• **Political History of Nigeria:**

Like India, Nigeria too has a rich heritage of ethnic groups. Such an attribute of a *Nation* is positive and negative, as well, as it comprises strength and weakness of the *Nation*. It is a responsible factor for the progression and deterioration of the *Nation*. After studying Furnivall’s book, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* and Stavenhagen’s paper, *The Ethnic Question: Some Theoretical Issues*, Ojie writes that ethnic “diversity or pluralism usually inclines to confliction and coercive political behaviour in a society” and it is “usually a conflict between minorities and dominant majorities, where the majority controls access to the power and resources of the state and the minorities, often without going into open confrontation with the dominant group, question the state structure as a whole and act violently when the society and the state are unable to suggest any mechanisms for regulating and resolving these contradictions” (Ethnic 7, 8). It is irrefutable that rich ethnic heritage is strength but only when ethnic groups have harmony and fraternity among themselves. Otherwise, conflict between them is hazardous for the *Nation*, for instance Nigeria. The Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba and the Igbo are considered to be the major ethnic groups of Nigeria. The Hausa belong to the Northern part, the Yoruba belong to the south-western Nigeria and the Igbo belong to the Eastern part of Nigeria.

The Hausaland and the Yarubaland had monarchical system based on city-states and nucleated villages. The Igboland earlier followed federal system in which the elders and aged people of the village would oversee the governmental affairs and later followed the monarchical system. Deji authentically proves that before the arrival of Whiteman in Nigeria, there was a well organized government in Nigeria without any written constitution. He writes, “In the northern and south – west of the
country, it could be seen that in spite of the inter-tribal wars and conflicts among the people, the centralized but monarchical kingdom of Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani kingdom of autocratic system and that of Republican in the Eastern part were orderly” (Historical 87). In spite of animosity among themselves over agricultural land and the control of trade and trade route, a methodical order was unquestionably prevailing there. But the arrival of the Portuguese in 15th century disturbed it. They encouraged the slave trade and inflamed communal rivalries, economic and political restless and forced migration of the people from their root. During 17th and 18th century, they took the slave trade at the verge of detonation. In the beginning of 19th century, Usman dan Fodia, the fervent believer of Islam, led a group of Muslim intellectuals in the Hausaland to spread Islam. It was accepted by the rulers of the area, but they allowed the practice of Islam to be mixed with the traditional religion. Eventually, Usman prepared this group for the war and in 1804 he called on all lovers of true Islam to rise up and overthrow the unjust rulers. He also appealed to the masses of slaves to join the jihad (Nigeria, encyc. Igboland). Usman was resolute at the implementation of strict adherence to the Maliki code of laws. After his death, his son Muhammad took the charge and with the passage of time the entire area had a single politico-religious system, i.e. Islam, and the old Seyfawa dynasty was eventually replaced by Shehu Muhammad at Kanami. In 1851 the British decisively intervened in a dynastic dispute in Lagos and ten years later, in 1861, the British took absolute possession of the island as a colony (Oduwobi). This jihad followed by the collapse of the Oyo Empire and a series of Yoruba wars in 1886. The British brought an end of the slave trade and utilized that energy for the trade of palm oil in the Niger delta states. And a new propensity of using slaves as all in one (i.e. as soldiers, producers of food to feed
soldiers and as producers of palm oil to trade for European dane guns and other goods (Nigeria, encyc. Igboland)) came into existence. Oduwobi writes,

…there was an awakened interest in tropical African products, such as dyes, gums, and vegetable oils. A significant position came to be occupied by palm oil, which served a variety of purposes including lubrication, lighting, and soap manufacture. The chief supply-source of this commodity in West Africa was the Nigerian coast. This economic development provided the enabling circumstances for the abolition of the slave trade. (From Conquest 19)

He further writes that, inspired by the progress of the British in the Niger, other European power “sought geo-political control to protect its commercial interest” (20) in Nigeria. The power appetite British company brought out them and established the Royal Niger Company in 1886, in order to have the absolute hegemony over the trade and administration of the Niger in which they thrived with the passage of time. In spite of the confrontation of the Igbo, they started to control various areas of Nigeria “either through threat of force” or “a demonstration of force” (20) and succeeded to establish their colony.

To prevent any united opposition to its authority, the British adopted a divide-and-rule policy, keeping Nigerian groups separate from one another as much as possible. (Nigeria, encyc. Nigeria)

The study of the political history of Nigeria encourages the reader to investigate the key factors which made the colonialism possible in Africa. Ocheni and Nwankwo consider imperialism as the concomitant ally of colonialism which had began with the industrial revolution. They observe that the present primary role of African states in the international world economy as the dominant sources of raw materials and major consumers of manufactured products are the result of long years
of colonial dominance, exploitation and imperialism. They mention the following key reasons that made colonialists take full control of the African economy, political administration and government machinery.

I. The colonialist needed the raw materials for their industries. But they were irresolute for the steady supply. If they had not taken full control of African economy, the natives might have produced yams which were in high demand in the local economy.

II. Due to industrial revolution in Europe the urban population increased and it was not possible for the rural area to produce enough food for the increasing urban population. Thus, the colonialists needed the full control of African economy not only for the raw material but also for the food to sustain the increasing population of Europe.

III. The slave trade had by that time fulfilled its basic function of providing the primitive capital. The quest for the investment of the accumulated capital led them to the colonization of Africa.

IV. The colonialist needed a market to dispose the European manufactured goods; otherwise most of the industries in Europe would be compelled to close down without the consumers of their products. And they found Africa as a proper site to make her a consumer nation.

V. The colonialist needed full control to change the work attitude of the natives without revolt, to move them to seek the job in the newly developed industries with the exported capital.

To execute their plan to have direct and full control, the colonizers applied several strategies, like conquest, forced labour, taxation, monetization of the economy, and payment of low wages. They first conquered various African states
politically, economically, culturally and socially. By proclaiming the law, they confiscated land and thus, the natives were left to accept labour with no any other option to survive. The poor natives remained ignorant about premeditated shifting of their potency from slave trade to the forced labour in mines, sugar plantations and industries to which the colonizer considered the legitimate trade. The African economy was based on barter system. But the colonialists imposed taxation which the natives had to pay in the colonial currency. Consequently, they were compelled to work either in the colonial civil services or in the industries and plantation in order to earn the colonial currency. They monetized the African economy by introducing their own currency and became richer by selling their own manufactured goods at high rate, while the Africans became poorer, as their raw materials and agricultural products were sold at low rate. They sneakily gave low wage to the employee so that he could not feed his family and the family members would be indirectly compelled to join the labour services.

To bring a complete end to the European domination, the Nigerian National Democratic Party was established in 1923. The anti-colonial movement began to which “soldiers who had served in World War II, the media, restless youth, market women, educated people, and farmers” (Nigeria, encyc. Nigeria) etc joined. In 1944 the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons was established to escort all these movements. The “search for an identity began, first as Northern and Southern Nigeria and then with eventual amalgamation” (Nigeria, encyc. Igboland). Oduwobi mentions the following reasons for the growth of the feeling of nationalism.

I. White supremacy and their policy of separateness which was maintained in all spheres of social life
II. The missionaries’ endeavour to denationalize the African with a notion that
Africa had little worthy heritage

III. Economic exploitation — where the profit of the European companies was
transferred to their home countries

IV. European notion that Nigerian businessmen had little access to the capital market

V. Government’s reluctance in promoting qualitative and quantitative higher
education and premeditated hurdles laid in the educational growth so that the
illiteracy and ignorance of the native could be exploited in the worst possible manner

VI. Little opportunity to the native for the participation in the political affairs

VII. The World War Second

The British retorted this activity by establishing more representational colonial system. However, due to the international pressure and increased nationalist agitation they had to grant independence to Nigeria on 1st October 1960.

Soon after independence the legacy of political and military dominance of Nigeria was a burning issue and allege, as well, of many political parties (Atifarati). Finally on 1st October 1963, Nigeria became republic (i.e. 1st republic); opted federal government; Azikiwe became the first President and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa became the first Prime Minister. They divided Nigeria into four parts (Northern, Western, Midwestern and Eastern), and the richest one among them was the South-east, the heartland of the Igbo. It was thought that its oil reserves would be key elements in the development of the whole African continent (Cooper). But the Federal Government was taking a new form. They misused the power and constitution to do unconstitutional things. Kirk-Green agrees with the opinion of the columnists like
Peter Pan and Tai Solarin that the fault was not with the stars of the Nigerians, but with their leaders who distorted the very fundamental aspect (i.e. equality) of the Federal System by making it lopsided. The Hausa-Fulani of the North were given the first and maximum priorities in all working fields. This act of *Northernization* expanded the regional and ethnic breaches. Their effort for the unification in the administration proved to be futile. In 1966, Balewa was assassinated and marking the end of the first republic, Major General Johnson Aguyi-Ironsi came to power who was assassinated by Gen. Yakubu Gowon. This sequence of coup and counter-coup plagued the independence of Nigeria. The way “the First Republic was toppled showed how rotten its structures were: it had only to be shaken for it to fall” (Kirk).

Many Igbos migrated to the North Nigeria in search of livelihood. But in September 1967 many of them were killed. Uzoigwe reported death of about 30000 Igbos in four successive genocides i.e. May 29, July 29, September 29 and October 29, 1966 respectively. Ogede says, “...because of internal divisions within their ranks, throughout the period of European invasion, the Igbo could not present a monolithic and unified resistance.” The Igbo felt that they would not be able to progress and survive within Nigeria and so they claimed for the Republic of Biafra for the detach settlement (Biafra). Thus the Igbo started a coherent revolution. For the students at school *Nation* didn’t mean Nigeria but their own Biafra. This can be seen in the following poem taught to them (Uchendu).

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Eastern Region stands for truth and justice nothing more
We shall never be enslaved nor shall we bow to North
Whatever the result, we shall stand [and] defend the East
Solidarity forever . . .
For our Region must survive
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If the East is invaded
We shall roll it over them . . .
If they dare to cross our borders
We shall roll it over them . . .

Gowon fell short to meet the internal communal crisis and to settle the constitutional future of Nigeria due to ethnic massacres. Consequently, Gen. Odumegwu Ojukwu came to power with an authority to establish the second republic in January 1967. On 30th May 1967, the secession of the three states of the eastern region was declared the Republic of Biafra. Kirk quotes Ojukwu’s words, “Biafra did not secede. Biafra was pushed out.”

In the wake of a political transition, on the name of national unity, the Civil War between army of Biafra and the Federal Military Government of Nigeria began on 6th July 1967 and ended on 15th January 1970. The latter first controlled the oil reserves—the main power of the Biafra and then imposed the blockade which resulted into severe famine. This three years Civilian war against the Biafra secession is considered as one of the most devastating civil wars in the post World War II era which resulted in about two million deaths from starvation and diseases (Fearon). At the time of its surrender, Biafra was greatly reduced in size; its inhabitants were starving and its leader, Ojukwu, fled the country (Biafra). Thus, it plagued the independence of the Nation. Adinuba says, in spite “of the fact that it ended officially in January 1970, the federal soldiers billeting at the different towns of the war torn enclave took to rapping, killing and decimating the population with the result that the number of people killed in the six months post-war peace period nearly equalled those who died as the conflict raged.” Gen. Gowon failed to handle the situation and in
1975, he was dethroned by Murtala Ramat Mohammed, who was in turn, assassinated by Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo.

Obasanjo assured to establish the second republic. Various political parties aimed to reform educational standard, social services and economic condition of the Nation and promised for the drastic changes in Nigeria. On 1st October 1979, Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria won the election and established the second republic. But the power was misused to gain access to public treasuries and distribute privileges to their followers (Nigeria, encyc. Independent). This resulted into dissatisfaction of the people and decline of the economic condition of the Nation. Gen. Muhammad Buhari got opportunity to ascertain his military power in 1983, but his reputation declined after the War Against Indiscipline. As a result, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida came to power. However, people’s awareness regarding the forged image of Babangida of being an amorous and solicitous leader demanded for the civilian government. In spite of numerous impediments election took place and it was “free, fair, and peaceful” (Nigeria, encyc. Military).

MKO Abiola became the president of the third republic of Nigeria on 12th June 1993, but for a short duration as on 17th November 1993, Sani Abacha imprisoned him until his death in 1998. He used violence as a weapon against its opponents and critics. Power was again distorted as an instrument for the personal gain. He also died in the same year and Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar took the charge who promised for the re-establishment of the Civilian rule. He tried to resettle the political problems.

Finally in January-March 1999, election took place and on 29 May, Olusegun Obasanjo became president of the fourth republic. The messy state of the Nation continued. The communal crisis between the Muslims and the Christians increased.
People protested against the companies’ exploitation of their land for the petroleum business. Fidgety border was another problem for him to meet. He was subjected to the domestic and international criticism and in 2007 Umaru Yar’Adua was elected as the president of Nigeria who was followed by Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari in 2010 and 2015 respectively.

Thus, the study of political history of Nigeria is endeavoured here in three phases: the pre-colonial, the colonial and the postcolonial period. We find that if the colonial period was atrocious, the postcolonial period is not so bravura. The postcolonial Nigeria lacks a responsible leader who can lead the Nation to evolution and the citizen to harmony, peace and prosperity. It has become a standard laboratory to execute various political experiments. Coups and counter-coups, in other words, a series of transitions and civil war to presidential democracy have become the destiny of the postcolonial Nigeria. Thus, the political instability is a key factor for the decay and downfall of Nigeria after independence. This study shows how every time the Republic of Nigeria is challenged, defeated and surrogated by the military dictatorship which is always an obstacle to attain and maintain democracy and democratic value (Wilson and Ikunga).

Omotola considers political parties as indispensable institutions of democracy. To maintain democracy in true sense in an autonomous Nation, they are expected to take into contemplation the importance of the public opinion and interest, need of political education and national integration. But Nigerian parties, in his observation, actually raise more questions than answers to the problems of the country, especially the challenge of maintaining political stability (Political). In the same way Osaghae and Rotimi find that the postcolonial Nigeria materializes with the identity conflicts through innovative federalist practices and the identities for which the Nigerians
struggle, are enormously shaped by the colonial experience, which created a culturally artificial and divided Nigerian states, but did very little to nurture a unified Nigerian Nation. Thus, various ethnic groups of Nigeria were subjugated by the divide-and-rule policy of the colonialis and exploited by tyranny of the governing body before and after independence respectively.

According to Ocheni and Nwankwo in the postcolonial period the deep seated bribery in most African states and the egocentric behaviour of some of the political leaders are attributed to the effects of colonialism and imperialism. In their opinion if African states want to overcome their present social, economic, political, health, education woes, etc., they have urgent need for the people and the leadership to create their own indigenous identity, culture, technology, economy, education, religion, craft, etc. But power and conflict go simultaneously in democracy. In spite of these controversial elements democracy succeeds only when the political parties neutrally aim to respond people’s voice, achieve people’s interest and involve people in the task of their own welfare. Aleyomi notes the failure of political parties to achieve the elementary goal of democracy due to the intra-party conflicts and so Nigerians’ quest for a stable government is not satisfied in their autonomous Nation. Omotola considers political parties as the most complex and critical institutions of democracy. He denies the life of democracy in their absence. They work as the mediator between the elected and the electorate. But when the elected fail to achieve the goal in favour of people, in Omotola’s words, “the democracy project and the general system stand the risk of perversion and eventual breakdown” (Nigerian 614). He finds questionable political ideology in Nigerian parties as they aim at the national cake, so National framework becomes ancillary. In this pull and push forces they forget the “common good” (Political 128).
Poverty is another postcolonial problem that Nigeria has been facing even after fourth republic. It is really a great tragedy for Nigeria that in spite of her affluence in the natural resources, her children suffer from poverty, as Okoroafor and Chinweoke say, “Nigeria is a nation in paradox – wealthy nation, poor people” (105). They consider the poor attitude of the government towards human capital development the key reason for it. Apart from this, lack of meaningful, skill based, technical and quality education, unemployment, uneven and insufficient income to feed the family, failure of governmental program to viaduct the class differences and ethnic differences, political instability, etc., are also responsible factors for it.

Another challenging issue of the postcolonial Nigeria is to do away with the entrenched corruption which has made its permanent domicile in Nigeria since the First Republic. Ahmed finds “Corruption, fraud, violence, exploitation of the weak and innocent” as “rampant in every walk of life” (138). It is a worm that erodes the Nation without letting her that she is losing her very existence at a snail’s pace but steadily. Because of corruption of governing and non-governing political parties and their economic mismanagement the people of Nigeria live under the line of poverty. In Ogbeidi’s agonic words,

It is simply disheartening that Nigeria, a country blessed with natural resources and manpower is now doomed with uncertainty where abject poverty, high unemployment rate, unresolved assassinations, looting and squandering of public funds, etc., all as a consequence of corruption, have become the order of the day. (21)

Ogbeidi’s words mentioned above reveal the downfall of not only all the Republics of Nigeria, but the failure of independence as a whole. The exploitation of the indigenous has persisted even after independence. If there is any change at all it is
that of substitution. Earlier they were exploited by their colonizers and now after independence they are exploited by their own elected members. Hence, Nigeria is a country in crisis even after independence. The military dictatorships and civilian rulers are good for nothing. They have brought no change to the living standard of the natives. This reminds me Makinde’s appealing words:

Nigeria is going through a very critical period in its history and it requires the effort of everyone to address the problems faced by the country. The time to sit back and wish for a Messiah to come and resolve all the problems for us is gone. None but ourselves can emancipate ourselves from years of corruption and misrule. We should not let our situation be like the famous story about four people Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody’s job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody would not do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done. (Nigeria)

After independence the Federal character principle was desired to work out the ethnic conflicts regarding their common rights, to ensure the proper distribution of amenities and government projects in the country, to face the challenges of National problems, to maintain the National integrity, to achieve representative bureaucracy, etc., but it did not succeed as in all federal and government sectors only the Hausa-Fulani from the Northern and the Yoruba from the South-western part of Nigeria were given the first priorities while the Igbo from South-eastern part were neglected from their all fundamental rights (Chris). This is how the people of South Africa and
Nigeria were/are exploited. Independence has brought no change to their present and the past. In the works of Achebe and Coetzee we find such recapitulation of the political history of the colonizer after independence.

*Things Fall Apart* (1958), the first novel of Achebe, as a whole, is the story of an enormous collapse of Okonkwo from the summit of name, fame and success and colonial impact on the native life is the key reason for this devastation. He was exiled for accidentally killing Ezeudu’s sixteen year old son. But this exile was like a landmark as his absence gave an opportunity to the colonialists for “an easy entry and cozy shelter in Umuofia” (Ahmed 51). During his exile he lived in Mbanta and learnt how the white men were fanatical in promulgating their religion. He ceased his relation with his eldest son Nwoye who accepted the Christianity vigorously. When he returned Umuofia, after the exile of seven years, he found his people mesmerised by a new “lunatic religion” (Things 168).

Okonkwo’s return to his native actually disappointed him. Mr Brown had established a church and it led many astray. He always took care that no situation took place that might provoke the wrath of the clan. Thus, he trod softly on its faith and developed friendly relation with some of the great men of the clan. Achebe writes, “In this way Mr Brown learnt a good deal about the religion of the clan and he came to the conclusion that a frontal attack on it would not succeed” (Things 170). This reminds me Desmond’s words, “When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said ‘Let us pray.’ We closed our eyes. When we opened them we had the Bible and they had the land.” Thus, native religion was used to confiscate the native land. Brown built a school and little hospital in Umuofia. He egged on and allured the people for the new religion by giving them the gifts of singlets and towels. He scheduled their lives. In the morning they worked at their
farms and in the afternoon they studied at Mr Brown’s school. He prophesied, that “the leaders of the land in the future would be men and women who had learnt to read and write. If Umuofia failed to send her children to the school, strangers would come from other places to rule them” (Things 171). Actually here, Mr Brown and Mr Smith represent the Europeans who considered Africa as a Dark Continent; Africans as ignorant sub-humans governed by fear and superstitions rather than reason and logic; African religions, beliefs, traditions and customs as unscientific and out-dated and “themselves as givers of civilization to Africa” (Ahmed, pref.) who say to the natives, “We have been sent by this great God to ask you to leave your wicked ways and false gods and turn to Him so that you may be saved when you die” (Achebe, Things 137). Thus, the novel intends to bring the world into the light how ancient old African religion was affronted, assailed and affected by the missionary activities.

Achebe was not against Christianity. What he opposed was the way it was imposed and articulated to colonize Africa and psyche of the Africans. Every civilization or culture has its own importance. One cannot claim one’s own as the best. The clan, depicted here, had its own judicial system which aimed to give impartial verdict. For instance, Okonkwo, the man of title, was warned by the clan in the meeting for his misbehaviour towards Osungo for calling him a woman. He was even fined for infringing the law of the clan by beating his wife during Week of Peace and exiled for killing a clansman.

Achebe criticizes the Igbo’s beliefs regarding the osu (the outcast), the birth of twins, the death of child, various disease, suicide, etc. and considers them as dark side of the African custom, which encouraged the missionary activities during the colonial period. The victims, who were humiliated and outcaste by their own people and phony social norms, were heartily welcomed by and got respect and shelter in the
Christian religion. For instance, the converts wanted to drive the osu out when they saw them in the church. But Mr Kiaga greeted them heartily. He told them, “Before God . . . there is no slave or free. We are all children of God and we must receive these our brothers” (Achebe, Things 147). They considered women equivalent to men and gave due respect to them. They started rescuing the twins from the evil forest. This fascinated the victims, so they willingly accepted the Christianity.

Achebe believes that illiteracy is one of the reasons for the subjugation of Africans which made them incapable to twig encroachment of the uitlanders. This is how the colonialists thrived in their mission. Here, it was Mr Brown. Gradually the number of proselytized increased. The worth men with honourable titles also join the Christianity. He taught the people that, there is only one supreme God called Chukwu who has made heaven and earth and all others are false. Mesmerized by the preaching of Mr Brown, People doubted their own custom. In Things Fall Apart, Achebe expresses his anxiety in the following words:

But he says that our customs are bad; and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart. (166)

The white men also brought a government and built a court. The District Commissioner judged cases obliviously. The court messengers used to bring men to the DC for trial. They were foreigners and very “arrogant and high-handed” (Things 164). They had their own way to guard the prison and the prisoners, many of whom
were men of title. Okonkwo was disappointed on seeing his fellowmen abiding their exploitation. He believed that they should give a fight and drive them out. Okonkwo and other five men of his clan were arrested for their warning to Mr Smith to stay away from their custom for which they were taken to the court. The DC gave verdict that they would be released only when they paid the fine of two hundred bags of cowries. By the end of the session he told the court messengers to treat them with respect as they were the leaders of Umuofia. No sooner did the DC leave the court than the court messengers shaved off their heads and didn’t give anything to them to eat or drink for two days. They informed the people of Umuofia that their leaders would be released only when they paid a fine of two hundred and fifty bags of cowries otherwise they would be hanged. That means fifty bags of cowries would go to their pocket. After his release, Okonkwo realized that the native religion was at stake. It was the high time for him to revolt against the supremacy of the white man. His heart was not ready to accept the reality that those days had gone when “men were men” (Achebe, Things 190) in Umuofia. In a flash, people gathered outside Okonkwo’s house, and all the six prisoners also gathered there. Okika addressed the crowd:

This is a great gathering. No clan can boast of greater numbers or greater valour. But are we all here? I ask you: Are all the sons of Umuofia with us here? . . . They are not. They have broken the clan and gone their several ways. We who are here this morning have remained true to our fathers, but our brothers have deserted us and joined a stranger to soil their fatherland. If we fight the stranger we shall hit our brothers and perhaps shed the blood of a clansman. But we must do it . . . . We must root out this evil. And if our brothers take the side of evil we must root them out too. And we must do it
now. We must bale this water now that it is only ankle-deep . . . (Achebe, Things 193).

Okonkwo killed one of the messengers came there to terminate the meeting. But his effort to awake his clan went in vain as they had let the other messengers to escape. “They had broken into tumult instead of action” (Achebe, Things 194). The DC came to arrest Okonkwo and found his body dangling with a tree. He met his death because he was an individualist and “Those characters who are purely individualistic in African literature,” as Mutiso writes, “no matter how much good they are doing, always end in tragedy. In depicting the characters in this fashion, African writers are intending to point out that the tradition of the communal ethic is all pervasive, and that those who defy it do so at their own risk” (85). His death marks the “beginning of a war between the colonial forces and Achebe-hero who is more matured now” and reveals “the crumbling of Igbo traditional culture as a result of its encounter with the British colonialism” (Ahmed 63, 61). Friesen considers his suicide as “an affirmative act”—a “last attempt to remind the Igbo people of their culture and values in the face of impending colonisation” (1). The great wrestler’s body would not receive burial from his own clan as suicide is considered an abomination in Igbo society. But, yes, the DC had got an interesting narration for his historical book, The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger. Okonkwo’s collapse, in Stratton’s opinion, is due not solely or even primarily to British military superiority, but also to an internal disorder that includes the clan’s failure to maintain a balance between masculine and feminine values (33).

Arrow of God (1964), the third novel of Achebe, on its surface ground, seems to be a narration of Ezeulu and his insecurity for losing the power over his clan, but its literary interpretation goes beyond such narrow territory and demands to explore the
layers within layers where the policy of divide and rule, appetite for power, sadistic struggle to acquire and sustain the power and the British meddling in and manipulation on the native cultural and traditional life cradle. The novel is vital because it is here that Achebe has given genuine reasons for why the domination of Africa was feasible by the uitlanders.

Umuaro and Okperi are two imaginary regions where the story is set. Ezeulu and Ezidemili are the priests of Ulu and Idemili, gods of both the regions respectively. The people of these regions have developed hostility among themselves and in flashback, in the very beginning of the novel we have been told about the war between them over land to which Ezeulu didn’t errand. Ezeulu’s father said to him, “when our village first came here to live the land belonged to Okperi. It was Okperi who gave us a piece of their land to live in. They also gave us their deities. . . .” (Achebe, Arrow 16). Such internal crisis invited the intrusion of Captain T. K. Winterbottom, a British colonial officer, who took the favour of Okperi by destroying the weapons of Umuaro. This intrusion of the colonial administration intensified the breach between Ezeulu and his people. The life in Umuaro ensued with this bitter past and with a feeling of dissatisfaction between the priest and his people. Ezeulu, fascinated by the mannerism of the white man, approved to Winterbottom to send Oduche, one of his sons to him. He says,

The world is changing . . . I do not like it. But I am like the bird Eneke-nti-obama. When his friends asked him why he was always on the wing he replied: “Men of today have learnt to shoot without missing and so I have learnt to fly without perchmg.” I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eye there. If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something there you will bring home my share. The world is like a Mask
dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying had we known tomorrow. (Achebe, Arrow 47)

Eneke-nti-obá has a great significance in Igbo culture. It is a bird that flies endlessly. Ezeulu wanted to be like it thinking for his security and superiority, as well. Being the chief priest of Ulu, he had power; but he was very much aware about the immensity of his power, which was not more than the power of a child over a goat that was said to be his. As long as the goat was alive it could be his; he would find it food and took care of it. But the day it was slaughtered he would know soon enough who the real owner was. His insecurity and inferiority regarding his own power did not limit to his people from whom he expected respect, but also to the white man. That is why he always cautioned his people not to defy the white man. In his subconscious mind he had accepted this fact that he was not as powerful as the white man was. He reminded Oduche of the importance of knowing what the white man knew. He said,

I have sent you to be my eyes there. Do not listen to what people say – people who do not know their right from their left. . . . If anyone asks you why you should be sent to learn these new things tell him that a man must dance the dance prevalent in his time . . . . When I was in Okperi I saw a young white man who was able to write his book with the left hand. From his actions I could see that he had very little sense. But he had power; he could shout in my face; he could do what he liked. Why? Because he could write with his left hand. That is why I have called you. I want you to learn and master this man’s knowledge so much that if you are suddenly woken up from sleep and asked what it is you will reply. You must learn it until you
can write it with your left hand. That is all I want to tell you. (Achebe, Arrow 191)

Oduche did not want to ape the mannerism of the white man, but it was for the first time that his father talked to him so friendly. So he went to learn the secrets of the white man’s magic. Here, Ahmed finds Ezeulu making “sincere attempts to grow enough strong before entering into the real combat with the colonial forces” (96). The words mentioned above open a new window for the reader’s imagination. They draw the reader’s attention not on the white man’s ability of doing work with left hand, but on mesmerized Ezeulu in particular and the natives in general by the etiquette of the white man. With the passage of time Ezeulu realized that he was losing his power on his family and on the people of his six villages. His wife could dare to argue and oppose him. He could not abide Oduche as now he was absolutely liquefied in the Christian missionary activities. Now his and his people’s opinion repulsed more than earlier. The frustration of the people can be seen in the following words of Ofoka.

First you, Ezeulu, told us five years ago that it was foolish to defy the white man. We did not listen to you. We went out against him and he took our gun from us and broke it across his knee. So we know you were right. But just as we were beginning to learn our lesson you turn round and tell us to go and challenge the same white man. What did you expect us to do? (Achebe, Arrow 190).

The internal crises of family and village, colonial intrusion and the Christian influence on the native people, culture, tradition and religion were out of Ezeulu’s control. The assorted feeling of aggression and restlessness in the heart of the priest and the people affected the life of the two regions Achebe depicted. Here, Achebe writes,
It troubles me, he [Ezeulu] said, because it looks like the saying of our ancestors that when brothers fight to death a stranger inherits their father’s estate. (Arrow 222)

To seek his power, Ezeulu told the people that he could not eat the sacred yams during his imprisonment in Okperi so he would not announce the Feast of the New Yam. People thought that in that case they might lose their crop. There might be famine. Their family members might die of starvation. They thought that Ezeulu was taking revenge as in spite of his refutation, they had fought with Okperi. Achebe writes,

Now Mr Goodcountry saw in the present crisis over the New Yam Feast an opportunity for fruitful intervention. He had planned his church’s harvest service for the second Sunday in November the proceeds from which would go into the fund for building a place of worship more worthy of God and of Umuaro. His plan was quite simple. The New Yam Feast was the attempt of the misguided heathen to show gratitude to God, . . . This was God’s hour to save them from their error which was now threatening to ruin them. They must be told that if they made their thank-offering to God they could harvest their crops without fear of Ulu. (Arrow 217)

Thus, internal crisis gave opportunities to Goodcountry, the Christian catechist, to make money for the church and absorb the natives in Christianity. He told them that anyone who did not want to wait and see all his harvest ruined could take his offering to the Christian god who claimed to have power of protection from the anger of Ulu. They could offer not only yams, but any crop, livestock, money or anything they preferred. The novel ends with the final catastrophe of native culture, tradition and religion due to the internal crisis.
In his extremity many a man sent his son with a yam or two to offer to the new religion and to bring back the promised immunity. Thereafter any yam harvested in his fields was harvested in the name of the son. (Arrow 232)

Thus, the core ideas of the novels Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God are the fracture in the structure of African societies due to the domination of colonial forces and failure of the natives to protest their own identities. Here, Achebe criticizes the wrong notion of the Igbo society and tries to awake his fellowmen from their blind adherence of the foreign culture which has intended to annihilate the rich ethnic heritage of Africa.

In A Man of the People and Anthills of the Savannah Achebe has given kaleidoscopic picture of dirty politics and corruption of the postcolonial Nigeria. Many critics consider these novels as classics – ‘timeless and seemingly more relevant with the passage of years.’ A Man of the People (1966), the fourth novel of Achebe, is a political satire that obviously comments on the postcolonial situation in Nigeria and it is a serious novel that deals with the abuses of power by postcolonial political leaders (Booker, 138). It was for the first time published on 15\textsuperscript{th} January, 1966, but when we scrutinize the novel we find that it has actually foreshadowed the coups and counter-coups for which Nigeria is ordained. Karl Maier begins the Introduction of the novel in a very satirical manner.

The governor sat in his air-conditioned office in northern Nigeria and spoke confidently about how he would deal with that bane of the country’s political life: corruption. Government officials regularly taking commissions, percentages of the contracts their departments awarded to private companies to build a road or a school, was a time-honoured tradition in Nigeria, almost human nature, he admitted. But, the governor said adamantly, things were
going to change in his realm. He told his ministers and civil servants that they would be sacked immediately if he discovered they were taking money from a contractor before the contract was implemented. The problem was not the bribe itself, the governor explained, but the timing of its acceptance. If the bribe came after the contract, the particular project at least would have been completed. The governor himself had built up quite a personal fortune during his years as a civil servant in the central government. He proudly listed his assets: nine houses, seven farms, one rice threshing factory, one unspecified ‘enterprise’, two tractors, seven cars, and shares in two private companies. ‘All these things are the type of assistance that I consider I normally get from God Almighty’, he explained. (Man VII)

In the words mentioned above, the governor is found hypocritical who has no objection for taking bribe, but he emphasises on the proper timing and methodology for it. According to Karl, Mr Nanga, the chief protagonist, better to say antagonist – like Satan, embodies the attributes of the factual governor of year 2000, giving his speech in the way mentioned above. Like a chameleon, Nanga changes his look, his manners and speech according to his surroundings. He has developed several political skills and strategies to grip ignorant people in his well designed web. He represents dirty political pandemonium and proves “that the politician, who is usually less qualified than the bureaucrat-professional, dominates the post-independence political and social situation, while the bureaucrat-professional is co-opted as an ally by the politician for economic and prestige purposes” (Mutiso 35).

The situation of Nigeria and the Nigerians, who have become independent in 1960, is well premeditated by Achebe. He has observed the strategies that a politician uses to win election and acquire power and, how common good is put on the altar of
sacrifice in order to please Mammon once the power is achieved. Media and press are two powerful weapons in independent Nation to persist democracy unless they become the organ of any political party. But after independence they have failed to bring about revolutionary and reformative changes in the Nation and to maintain transparency between the elected and the electorate. Odili recalls the year 1960 when the People’s Organization Party (POP) was the governing party, Mr Nanga was a beginner, when election was round the corner and the Government was facing financial crisis. The Minister of Finance suggested cutting down the price paid to the coffee planters. The Prime Minister didn’t agree as he didn’t want to take any risk at the time of election. So finally the National Bank was targeted for fifteen million pounds. The very next day by evening he broadcast to the Nation and declared the dismissed ministers as conspirators and traitors who had teamed up with foreign saboteurs to destroy the new Nation. This is called the politics; one needs the skill to weave the web. To retain his power, the Prime Minister misrepresented his opponent to take the people in confidence. He said to the horde that the dismissed ministers were caught “red-handed in their nefarious plot to overthrow the Government of the people by the people and for the people with the help of enemies abroad” (Man 4). The editorial of the Daily Chronicle, an official organ of POP said,

Let us now and for all time extract from our body-politic as a dentist extracts a stinking tooth all those decadent stooges versed in text-book economics and aping the white man’s mannerisms and way of speaking. We are proud to be Africans. Our true leaders are not those intoxicated with their Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard degrees but those who speak the language of the people. Away with the damnable and expensive university education which

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only alienates an African from his rich and ancient culture and puts him
above his people . . . (Man 4).

Speech is always a very handy and powerful tool that the politician uses to
create his influential and long lasting image in the mind of the people. Addressing to
the people, the Prime Minister said,

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 potage . . . (Man 5).

During the colonial period the dandified look of the colonizers, especially the
English men, was always an influential thing for the natives. The natives were
fascinated by the way they dressed themselves, the way they used to have drink, their
table manners, their habits like using cannabis pipe (i.e. chillum) as a fashion, playing
cricket, chess and golf, hunting, fishing etc. They started aping the white man’s
mannerisms and way of speaking in order to uplift their living standard and social
status. During the colonial period labour work was not only imposed on them, but in
some of the cases it was accepted willingly as they needed money to satisfy their
luxurious needs and desires. Even native culture is also affected. For instance, native
dress code is replaced by shirt-pant, jacket, coat, tie, shoes, shocks, etc. Even during
native festivals and occasions like marriage, native customs are westernized.
Traditional and native dishes are replaced by the western food items. Native education
is westernized by introducing English as a compulsory subject and all other subjects
in the medium of English. An English speaking class is developing in almost all the
independent Nations which were once upon a time colonized. English is accepted as
an official language in most of countries. The parents prefer English medium
education for their children. Mr Nanga opposes the foreign language and insists for the native language, but he himself is pursuing the doctorate degree in Laws from U.S. His own children study in the convent school and are more accustomed to English than their native tongue. Many times Mr Nanga prefers to give his speech in English thinking about his own safe side as he has learnt from his own experience that speeches made in vernacular are distorted and misquoted in the press.

Odili was enthralled by Mr Nanga, the Minister of Culture. Mr Nanga visited the same school after 15 years where he taught Odili in standard three who is now a teacher. Astonishingly he not only recognized but met Odili as if he had found his long-lost son. He told the principal and the staff that he used to tell the students of his class that one day Odili would become a great man and they would be answering him “sir, sir” (Man 8). It is apparent to be fascinated by such flattering words. Speech is always an influential dexterity and a weapon to win the power, friends and followers. And Achebe says that Mr Nanga had that rare gift of making people feel that there was not a drop of ill will in his entire frame, even while he was saying harsh things to them. The following dialogue shows how Mr Nanga utilized this dexterity to enlarge the catalogue of his friends and followers.

Why did you not tell me when you left the University? That’s very bad of you, you know.

Well, . . . I know how busy a minister . . .

Busy? Nonsense. Don’t you know that minister means servant? Busy or no busy he must see his master. (Man 8)

Mr Nanga’s words changed the attitude of all towards Odili all of a sudden. According to Achebe, “A common saying in the country after Independence was that it didn’t matter what you knew but who you knew” (Man 15). In the beginning Odili
conceitedly welcomed the favour of Nanga, but later they fell apart when Mr Nanga subjected Elsie, Odili’s girl friend, to fulfil his physical hunger. Odili befriended with Maxwell Kulamo, Nanga’s political opponent and thus, he shook hand with the enemies of his enemy which generally happens in politics. Odili aimed at two things: first to challenge and defeat Mr Nanga in the coming election and second to win Edna, would be second wife of Mr Nanga in order to take revenge. Max and Odili were forced to take money and withdraw their names from the election. Mr Nanga said to Odili,

I am only giving you this money because I feel that after all my years of service to my people I deserve to be elected unopposed so that my detractors in Bori will know that I have my people solidly behind me . . . I know those irresponsible boys have given you money. If you have any sense keep the money and train your father’s children with it or do something useful . . . We know where that money is coming from . . . 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 . . . Take your money and take your scholarship to go and learn more book; the country needs experts like you. And leave the dirty game of politics to us who know how to play it . . . (Achebe, Man 108-109).

This is how the work goes on before and after election. Achebe believes that the mainspring of political action is “personal gain” (Man 105). People are promised for many things, for instance, their social and economic progress. But after election
everything would be volatized from the mind of the power hungry politicians, except their own share from the national cake. Achebe finds “Primitive loyalty” (Man 7) among them and these “politicians are” as Mutiso believes, “a new tribe of their own creation in the new nations” (50). “Independence can never become a boon for a country with such a state of affairs” (Ahmed 130). How does a Nation progress if she is considered a national cake? The question is really thought provoking, Promethean. In Shelley’s Prometheus Unbound, Prometheus goes on asking to everyone the curse he gave to Jupiter for which he has been tormented since long. Everybody knows, but no one dare to answer. For vote, the politicians would give many temptations to the people and promise to conduct various projects, the road project, for instance, in the case of Nanga. Now the project file would do a long journey; pass through many tables, to reach its final destination. Each and every table would demand its own share i.e. commission from that national cake and the person with big belly would demand for a big share, for instance, Chief Nanga receives ten per cent on contracts. Finally, a grand project would be accomplished, but the quality would be compromised. The poor ignorant people, intoxicated with “NANGAISM” (Achebe, Man 103) remain indifferent to what happens to their Earth Mother. But Achebe’s anxiety for his motherland can be clearly noted in the following promising words of the citizen enchanted before independence.

I will return home to her – many centuries have I wandered –
And I will make my offering at the feet of my lovely Mother:

I will rebuild her house, the holy places they raped and plundered,
And I will make it fine with black wood, bronzes, and terracotta. (Man 73)

There was a time when the native agreed for a collective endeavour to fling away the colonialist to make their Mother free from the foreign rule. The Nationalism
emerged in Africa from the centuries old exploitation of the natives by the colonialists. At the cost of their lives they aimed to make their Mother free from the chain of the foreign rule. The promising words mentioned above show the readiness of the nationalist to protect the dignity and chastity of his lovely Mother. His keen desire and strong determination to rebuild the Nation in the form that can stand with dignity in the changing world and his enthusiasm in his vision for his Nation in future can be noted here. But the condition of the Nation and the psyche of the people after independence contrast to that revolutionary zeal of the freedom fighter. Achebe regrets on seeing the postcolonial Nigeria. It seems that people have forgotten the promises they had made to their black Mother. She is waiting with a hope that a day would certainly come when her infant son will grow up, comfort her and repay her for the years of shame and neglect. Achebe feels pity for the Mother pinning for the son who has turned to be a chief Nanga, under whose domination life is at stake; the Nation itself is at stake and there is nothing but chaos and anarchy wherever the eye reaches. The Nation is facing the unbeaten problem of depression on the one hand, while on the other hand the income of the politicians, like Nanga, goes on increasing by leaps and bounds. This situation demands for a collective venture to face the challenge of depression. Instead, these so-called ‘man of the people’ are busy in campaigning before election. The campaigning is but to bring forth the drawbacks and corruption of the opposite political parties and to take the people into confidence. They can go to any extend for the votes of the people. For instance, Max belongs to CPC party. In a campaign, addressing to the people, he says,

Whether it is POP or PAP they are the same . . . They want to share out the wealth of the country between them. That is why you must reject both; that is why we have now formed the CPC as a party of the ordinary people like
yourselves . . . Once upon a time a hunter killed some big-game at night. He searched for it in vain and at last he decided to go home and await daylight. At the first light of morning he returned to the forest full of expectation. And what do you think he found? 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 – POP and PAP . . . (Achebe, Man 115).

The most astounding part of Max’s speech is his concluding words:

We all know . . . what one dog said to another . . . “If I fall for you this time and you fall for me next time then I know it is play not fight.” . . . A goat does not eat into a hen’s stomach no matter how friendly the two may be. Ours is ours but mine is mine. (Achebe, Man 115)

This speech of Max actually carries reason for why the republics of Nigeria have failed every time within a very short duration. Not a single word of Max shows his concern for common man. It is articulated with a clear intention to blame the opposite parties and to claim the vote in his favour in the impending election. In order to do away with his opponents like POP and PAP, Max tells the people that they must be like that hunter who wipes out the dirty thieves fighting over another man’s inheritance. Last time the people of Anata enjoyed their share from the national cake and now, Max believes, they must make way for the people of Uruna. But the federal system demands annihilation of I and Mine and centralization of We and Our, which has never happened in the postcolonial Nigerian political history.
Odili’s nomination paper was seized by thugs before it reached at the Electoral Officer and he was hospitalized. At hospital he was kept under arrest ostensibly for having weapons in his car in order to prevent him from signing his nomination paper again. On the same night before election Max was killed by Chief Koko’s thugs and Koko was killed by Max’s girlfriend, Eunice. Thus, Mr Nanga won the election unopposed. After that victory he disbanded his private army who in turn revolted against him and started violence in the market. Other election thugs also formed their own bands of marauders and a reign of terror and violence began. Ultimately the military coup threw away Mr Nanga and came to power. This reminds me Dwivedi’s words who considers Odili an idealist experiencing the pain and suffering of his fellow citizens for their continuous exploitation in a new form and observing how the entire system supports corrupt politicians and the wealthy. In Dwivedi’s words, “The imperialists have been replaced by new rulers, and the general population has no choice but to suffer and wait for a new government” (3). But sometimes general population also plays a great role in the Federal System and in the democracy. Cynicism of the people is equally responsible for the political upheavals. On seeing the accession of the military coup people said,

Let them eat . . . 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.

(Achebe, Man 133)
The words mentioned above provoke the reader to rethink the definition of independence and to rearticulate the definition of the government. When we utter the word independence, the first image that emerges in sub-conscious mind behind our closed eyes is that of dawn challenging to the pitch dark that however terrifying its empire may be, it is bound to collapse every time and a new life certainly opens its petals to fill this world with its fragrance. New life, new enthusiasm, new desire and new vision fill the air with new story of cheerful present, bright future and make the people forget the atrocious past. The independence comes with the formation of new government – i.e. the Government of the people by the people and for the people. The very definition itself shows the constructive role of the citizen in the framework of the Nation. But the end of the novel shows the impossibility of establishing order in the state – which is more due to the indifferent attitude of the people than due to the corruption of their leader (Devi 40). The people about whom Achebe talks have nothing to do with the fall of the Government. They are insensitive and indifference to the prowling of their black Mother by such power hungry politician. They have a shameful hope that one day, like the uitlanders, various military coups and their own selected members; they would also have their share from the national cake. Achebe writes,

And as long as men are swayed by their hearts and stomachs and not their heads the Chief Nangas of this world will continue to get away with anything. (Man 59)

When we read Achebe, we actually read three eras – colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial which narrate the history of wretched Nation called Nigeria. Collapse of all the four republics, as the fourth has also not brought any change to the framework of the Nation and the living standard of the citizen, series of Igbo massacres, the
Biafra war, political upheavals and series of coups and counter-coups indicate the failure of independence. The thing one need to ponder about is the cause behind this new narration of the *Nation* after independence, which seems to be old wine in a new bottle, as the colonialists are flung out from Nigeria but the colonialism as a concept is yet practised by men in power after independence. Macheka satirically writes, “... the worst elements of the old are retained and some of the worst of the new are added on to them”. Had they follow the norms of the Federal Government balancing liberty, equality and fraternity, there might have a different scenario of the *Nation*. There might be the tenor of carnival instead of dirge in the narration emerged from independence. *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* both narrate the story of failure of Federal Government. Cynicism of the people and the politician has eventually invited the failure of independence, Republics and series of coups and counter-coups. In Das’ words, “Nigeria had become a free nation but the change was only a nominal one: it remained a victim of colonisation like many other Third World Countries where colonialism did not end with independence but continued in other guises” (126). She further writes, “There are no attempts made to show that having received power in their hands, the Nigerians were capable of transforming the condition of their country and people. Achebe appears to have moved beyond the stage of blaming all ills on colonisation. Instead, he looks within his own people and shows that power can be misused by anyone and the oppression by those in power is more different to withstand and to oppose” (141).

The literary importance of Achebe’s 20th century postcolonial novel, *Anthills of the Savannah* is its affiliation with its prior novel, *A Man of the People*, though it was first published in 1987, after 21 years of the publication of *A Man of the People*. *A Man of the People* begins with the corrupt civilian government, narrates the story of
cynicism of the people and ends with the succession of military coup from where *Anthills of the Savannah* begins.

The story of *Anthills of the Savannah* revolves round the three childhood friends, Sam, the President of the military regime in power, Christopher Oriko, the Commissioner for Information and Ikem Osodi, an ardent editor of *National Gazette* which was controlled by the political power; and Beatrice Okoh, a powerful woman character of Achebe, who was a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. They were connoisseurs in different arts and had chosen their working vicinity accordingly. Thus, the novel is one step ahead to its prior novel where the cynicism of its people is substituted by the yearning mass of the advanced Nigeria for a good government. Nevertheless, the history of political upheaval continues its ascendancy on the life of Nigeria and Nigerians.

According to Achebe the overthrow of civilian regime was “‘a historic fall from grace to grass!’” (*Anthills* 11), and the civilian politicians got what they actually deserved – they were “unloved and unmourned” (11) by the people because they misused their political power. It is true that the power corrupts an ordinary soul. Person’s philosophy gets liquefied in no time once he gets the power. The same thing happened with the civilian politicians. They forgot their service to the people and aimed at the personal benefit. So people, without any other option, welcomed “despicable and heartless” (Chitulu 95) Sam, the young Army Commander, as the Head of State, who had few ideas about what to do. In Achebe’s words, Sam “came to power without any preparation for political leadership” (*Anthills* 11).

Sam, “fatally caught in the corridors of power” (Rao 19), cramped his duty and responsibility only to his personal gain. Suffering from *Macbethian* syndrome, he was ambitious to become the President-for-Life. But the people of Abazon refused to
participate in that national referendum. So, Sam denied them to access water when the Abazon was facing draught. He got all the water bore-holes in Abazon closed. Thus, the people were forbidden from their fundamental rights and needs. When the delegates from Abazon came to him to seek his mercy, he thought that they had come for the demonstration. He did not meet them, but told Professor Okong to address the delegates on his behalf. He said to him,

Find out some nice words to say to them. Tell them we are tied up at this moment with very important matters of state. You know that kind of stuff. . . Tell them, if you like, that I am on the telephone with the President of United States of America or the Queen of England. Peasants are impressed by that kind of thing, you know . . . Humour them . . . Gauge the temperature and pitch your message accordingly. (Achebe, Anthills 16)

Okong was to accept the petition of delegates of the Abazon and to assure them that their problems would receive His Excellency’s (i.e. Sam’s) personal attention. The formality would thus become legendary for the next day’s newspaper with Okong’s wonderful photograph of shaking hands with the leader of the delegates as an authentic proof of the President’s humble and altruistic concern for the people. After two years, six delegates from Abazon came to the President’s Palace, but the President did not meet them. Meanwhile, Ikem also reached there, but could do nothing. He arranged a meeting with them at the Harmony Hotel. When he reached there they wished to unburden their heart with a hope of a way out to their problem. One of the six delegates told Ikem that before two years they were told to vote for the Big Chief to rule for ever. But they had never seen them before that in their village. So it was obvious for them not to trust on the strangers. However, they had thought that if Ikem would assure Sam’s allegiance or write in his paper in the favour of the
new governing party, the people of Abazon would participate in that election. But Ikem neither went to them nor wrote anything in his paper about Sam. Moreover, the same people told them that the Big Chief did not want to rule forever but he was forced by the people. This made the thing very lucid to the people of Abazon that it was a lie. So, they did not give vote to Sam. After two years they realized that their ‘yes’ would not cause as much trouble to them as their ‘no’ had. So they came again to give their agreement to Sam for the President-for-Life, so that they would be accessed to the water and other basic needs. He said,

So we are ready to learn new things and mend our old, useless ways. If you cross the Great River to marry a wife you must be ready for the risk of night journey by canoe . . . I don’t know whether the people we have come to see will listen to our cry for water or not. Sometime ago we were told that the Big Chief himself was planning to visit our villages and see our suffering. Then we were told again that he was not coming because he had just remembered that we had said no to him two years ago. So we said, if he will not come, let us go and visit him instead in his house. It is proper that a beggar should visit a king. When a rich man is sick a beggar goes to visit him and say sorry. When the beggar is sick, he waits to recover and then goes to tell the rich man that he has been sick. It is the place of the poor man to make a visit to the rich man who holds the yam and the knife. (Anthills 122)

The delegate told Ikem that he did not know the consequence of their effort. But they could tell their people that they had struggled for them with what remaining strength they had. He said,
My people, that is all we are doing now. Struggling. Perhaps to no purpose except that those who come after us will be able to say: *True, our fathers were defeated but they tried.* (Anthills 123)

*No* and *yes* of the people of Abazon reverberate the postcolonial Nigeria. Their *no* illustrates the responsiveness of the people of the independent Nigeria who are capable to decide what is good and what is bad for them. Surprising thing is that these six delegates were not ranked persons but motor mechanics, retail traders, tailors, vulcanizers, taxi-and bus-drivers. Thus, they actually represent the *Nation* as a whole who are aware about their duty and right, as well, who value the sovereignty and who concern for other's wellbeing. These are the qualities that a leader needs. Their *yes* illustrates the vulnerability of the people of the neo-colonial Nigeria, the leaders of which have failed to maintain the sovereignty they achieved after a great struggle.

Achebe begins his *Trouble with Nigeria*:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal examples which are the hallmarks of true leadership. (1)

Chris and Ikem realized how wrong their decision was in selecting and supporting Sam as the Head of the Sate. Chris felt remorseful for many of his colleagues whom he had brought to the job turned to be sluggish and unstable. They could go to any extend in cajoling the President in his presence and gossip about him in his absence, but would not raise voice to bring the change. This is a postcolonial class about whom Achebe has written, but on the other hand he draws attention of the
reader towards a striving mass who were discriminated from their fundamental rights. Their lives had become hell due to the incapable leaders who had no concern for the nation or their electors to whom they ought to oblige.

The ordinary man is always subjugated. His life is full of privation. Achebe says that a VIP’s share of good things is always there waiting for him in abundance even while he relaxes in the coolness of home, and the poor man is out there in the sun pushing and shoving and roasting for his miserable crumbs. He has learnt to squeeze every drop of enjoyment he can out of his stony luck and the oppressor would make a particular point of that enjoyment:

*You see, they are not in the least like ourselves. They don’t need and can’t use the luxuries that you and I must have. They have the animal capacity to endure the pain of, shall we say, domestication.* The very words the white master had said in his time about the black race as a whole. Now we say them about the poor. (Anthill 37)

Ikem’s meeting with the delegates coined a new issue. The President, agitated “like a caged tiger” (Anthills 136) ordered Chris to issue a formal letter suspending Ikem for his link with the Abazon agitators who “were found on careful investigation to be mostly motor-park touts, drug pushers and other criminal elements right here in Bassa” (Anthills 137). He said that two years ago Ikem’s conspiracy with the people of Abazon to sabotage the presidency referendum and Chris role in it had also come forward, but no measure was taken in absence of evidence. Chris disagreed to Sam and gave his own resignation letter. Ikem was sent his letter of suspension by other source. Ikem, the spokesperson of Achebe, gave a wonderful speech at the University of Bassa indicating the beginning of the failure of the government. He said that the massive corruption, the subservience to foreign manipulation, the second-class, hand-
me-down capitalism, the damnable shooting of striking railway-workers and demonstrating students, the destruction and banning of independent unions and cooperatives are not the only reasons. The failure of the rulers “to re-establish vital inner links with the poor and dispossessed of this country, with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation’s being” (Anthills 135) is the major reason for the failure of the government.

Achebe criticizes the bourgeois, elitist hack writers as no more or less than “running dogs of imperialism” and suggests that the “writers in the Third World context must not stop at the stage of documenting social problems but move to the higher responsibility of proffering prescriptions” (Anthills 150, 154). Ikem/Achebe further says, “Writers do not give prescriptions. . . . They give headaches” (154). The word should be so mighty to stir up and kindle the bottomless darkness of the reader’s heart that the revolutionary change may take place. Thus, he rings a bell to awake the writers and the journalists and to teach them their vital role in the independent Nation.

Ikem drew attention of the audience towards the corruption in the Electricity Corporation, electoral merchandising, and discrimination of the tribal from their right to education. He suggested them to go to the origin of the problem to have a way out. He considered the students as the future of the independent Nigeria who should come out from the superstition, develop a scientific approach and raise their voice for the equal right to education. Achebe says,

When you have rid yourselves of these things your potentiality for assisting and directing this nation will be quadrupled. (Anthills 153)

Ikem’s lecture at the University proved to be hazardous. Next day the State Research Council broadcast that in the early morning Ikem was arrested as he was found as the master-mind of the unpatriotic elements in Kangan working in concert
with certain foreign adventurers to destabilize the lawful government of the country. He was also accused for being a link between the plotters in Bassa and a group of disgruntled and unpatriotic chiefs in the Province of Abazon and for misguiding the students against the President and the peace and security of the State. Further they announced that when Ikem was being taken in a military vehicle for questioning at the SRC Headquarters, he seized a gun from an escort and in the scuffle he was fatally wounded by gunshot. The police declared Chris as most wanted for his connection with the recent coup plot and warned the citizens that anybody who concealed the information regarding him would have to pay penalty of death. Chris escape Bassa not as an escapist, but first for his own security and secondly to prepare himself to counter the hideous lie. He disguised himself and proceeded to the North to Abazon. Emmanuel Obete, the President of the Students’ union and Braimoh accompanied him in his gracious journey. When they reached at Abazon, their bus was stopped and evacuated by a crowd celebration the succession of a new military coup as Sam was kidnapped and later murdered. The police sergeant – a disgrace to the force, dragged a school girl, Adama, from the crowd to fulfil his sexual appetite. Most “of the men found it very funny indeed” (Anthills 206). A few of the passengers, mostly women, pleaded and protested to rescue the girl, but in vain. He dragged the girl through clumps and scorched tares and dangers of broken glass. Chris could not bear this. He warned that he would report to the Inspector-General of Police if they do not leave her. The other policeman slung down his gun and told him to run but he dared him to shoot and the policeman shot him. The crowd remained unattended. Only Emmanuel, Braimoh and Adama struggled for his life. The police escaped when a man from the crowd told him that he killed the Commissioner of Information. Braimoh chased him, wrestled him but in vain, and the policeman succeeded to escape from there. The
crowd on the road saw everything but unattended the scene. Thus, the story ends with a splendid sacrifice of Chris, embodying Christ, to save the humanity and with a disgrace of mankind that remained inactive, unconcerned and unaffected in the time of disaster.

The police, “in the real context of Africa today”, in Achebe’s words, “are not the party of the oppressed but of the oppressor” and they are comrades presiding “over the sabotage of the nation by their un-productivity and fraud, and that way ensure that the benefits of modern life will ever remain outside the dreams of the real victims of exploitation in rural villages” (Anthills 152). Achebe is anxious as the security of Africa and Africans is in the hands of such policemen. The treatment of the policeman to Ikem, Chris and Adama shows that had they told the police about the prestigious class they belonged to and the status they owned in the government, they might have not lost their lives. This shows that security and justice is not meant for the common man but for the VIPs. However, Achebe is an optimistic writer. The birth of Elewa’s daughter and her naming, “AMAECHINA”, meaning, “May-the-path-never-close” (Anthills 213) indicates a hope for the good government, responsible leaders and a peaceful life in Africa in future. Ahmed truly says,

Achebe’s writings therefore tend to be a voice of protest. His creative work aims at a recovery of Africans from the nostalgia of agony and sufferings and from the trauma of nightmarish experiences they underwent during the colonial rule. Liberation of African masses from the exploitation of the neo-colonial forces in the form of African leaders in the post-independent era is Achebe’s another important preoccupation.

When we read Achebe what we feel is that he has first attired himself with the attributes vital to make a pen mighty and words sublime; expressed his thoughts that
have not missed the targeted. Later he has propagated what a writer should be and why a writer should be like that. He has played the role he has suggested to his contemporary writers in his essay, *The Role of the Writer in a New Nation*. In her article, *A Literary Diaspora Toasts One of Its Own*, Sengupta quotes voluminous tribute to Achebe on his 70th birthday given by Nelson Mandela and Ms. Tony Morrison. In Mandela’s words, Achebe is a writer “in whose company the prison walls fell down” while Morrison considers him “very large, had no repayment schedule, and was interest-free.”

Like Achebe, Coetzee is also one of such writers – the foreseers, who have dissected all the facets of life. Life for him is a hymn which carries the synthesis of pain and pleasure in mellow and callous tone, as well, to be sung and chirped at any cost. He has premeditated life incredibly intimately; hence his works carry the key to problems of the *Nation* related to the postcolonial and neo-colonial epochs. What the readers necessitate is the execution of that key in their day-to-day life and demeanour.

Coetzee has minutely analysed the life of South Africans. His *Waiting for the Barbarians* depicts of how the life is affected by the colonial features. Colonel Joll embodies the power of the colonialist of an unnamed empire. But the reader is not sceptical, it being the British Empire. Joll has come there from the Third Bureau under emergency power which is the most important division of the Civil Guard to probe affairs of the place. The Magistrate, mouthpiece of Coetzee, informs him about an old man and a little boy caught in a raid. The old man elucidates that they know nothing about thieving. They were going to the doctor as the boy, who is his sister’s son, has a sore. The Magistrate says to the Colonel,

A coincidence: normally we would not have any barbarians at all to show you. This so-called banditry does not amount to much. They steal a few
sheep or cut out a pack-animal from a train. Sometimes we raid them in return. They are mainly destitute tribespeople with tiny flocks of their own living along the river. It becomes a way of life. The old man says they were coming to see the doctor. Perhaps that is the truth. No one would have brought an old man and a sick boy along on a raiding party. (Waiting 4)

Politically South Africa is free, but in reality freedom is a fantasy and not meant for Africans. It has not come with peace, prosperity and harmony but with perpetual terror and torturing and readers are not masked from “somewhere someone is crying” (Waiting 5). The tranquil life of an African community, called barbarians, is disturbed by the administration of the capital and by the influx of Joll, as these so-called protectors of the people follow the footsteps of the colonialists. Joll has little interest in the state affairs, but for hunting and his last adventure of slaying thousands of deer, pigs and bears. Thus, he puts his feet in the shoes of the colonizers. His imported systematic mode of investigation in the province has made the life of the people hell. The Magistrate, concerned for the barbarians, says to Joll,

What if your prisoner is telling the truth . . . yet finds he is not believed? Is that not a terrible position? Imagine: to be prepared to yield, to yield, to have nothing more to yield, to be broken, yet to be pressed to yield more! And what a responsibility for the interrogator! How do you ever know when a man has told you the truth? (Waiting 5)

Nevertheless, Joll believes in Machiavellian philosophy. He is concerned with the end not with the means adopted to achieve it. What he wants is the truth. He has coined his own method of investigation to reach the truth. He says, “There is a certain tone . . . . A certain tone enters the voice of a man who is telling the truth. Training and experience teach us to recognize that tone” (Waiting 5). Thus, Joll is gifted of
Creating truth out of nothing, just to electrify the people and to have some evidence in the register. He has developed an obstinate and a systematic mode of torturing the innocent, a method that was invented and cultured by the imperialist on the foreign land to establish their power. He says to the Magistrate,

I am probing for the truth, in which I have to exert pressure to find it. First I get lies, . . . then pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth. That is how you get the truth. (Waiting 5)

Joll’s philosophy goes beyond the Magistrate’s faculty of understanding, what he can grasp from his conversation with Joll is that “Pain is truth; all else is subject to doubt” (Waiting 5). Joll reports to the Magistrate that during interrogation contradictions became apparent in the prisoner’s testimony. The prisoner became enraged and attacked the investigation officer. The prisoner fell heavily against the wall when a scuffle ensued. They tried to revive him but in vain. The poor man, ignorant to the ritual he would receive from Joll on that night, didn’t know that he was suppose to tell not what he knew, but what the investigator’s ears wanted to listen. His dead body was sewed in a shroud. “The grey beard is caked with blood. The lips are crushed and drawn back, the teeth are broken. One eye is rolled back, the other eye-socket is a bloody hole” (Waiting 7). This is how he was victimized for nothing, not by the colonizer but by the Colonel, the protector. He did not know that “an interrogator can wear two masks, speak with two voices, one harsh, one seductive” (Waiting 8). The truth was that his hands were tied and it was not possible for him to protest the Colonel when he hit his head with the wall. But on file it was recorded that:
The prisoner became uncontrollable and attacked the visiting officer. I was called in to help subdue him. By the time I came in the struggle had ended. The prisoner was unconscious and bleeding from the nose. (Waiting 6)

Joll does not hesitate to injure the little boy with hundreds little stabs. Terrified with Joll, he starts telling him whatever comes to his mind to please him. He tells him that his clan have stolen sheep and horses; they are arming themselves and in the spring they are going to join in a great war on the Empire.

Joll arrests some fishing men considering them barbarians–thieves, bandits and invaders of the Empire as they hid themselves when they saw him and his soldiers. They accept this new environment in the cell without any hostility and they seem “to forget they ever had another home” (Waiting 20). Their custody has not brought even any change to their life. Coetzee considers them “strange animals” (Waiting 19), “savages” and writes, “They are happy here; indeed unless we chase them away they may stay with us forever, so little does it seem to have taken to lure them out of a state of nature” (Waiting 20). Later, a rumour spreads in the town that “the new batch of prisoners” (Waiting 23) is diseased and they will bring an epidemic to the town. So later they are treated as if they were untouchables. The tireless Colonel, in “his quest for the truth” (Waiting 23), begins his exceptional method of interrogation, but finds nothing. Finally they are released, but they leave a girl of their batch behind.

The Colonel and his men exposed the barbarian girl’s father to her naked and made him gibber with pain. They exploited her physically and sexually. They put a fork with two teeth in the coals till it was hot and told her that they would burn her eye out. A man brought it very close to her face and made her look at it. They held her eyelids open. But she “had nothing to tell them. That was all” (Waiting 44). This is
how she lost her eyesight and the poor father could do nothing except to annihilate himself. Joll is replaced by Mandel to continue his senseless procedure. The Magistrate is arrested for his help to the blind barbarian girl.

The Colonel returns with twelve men. He unveils them at the square to prove his notion of the barbarians to be true. He rubs dust and writes “ENEMY” (115) with a charcoal on their naked backs. Then the soldiers begin beating them till the charcoal and dust begin to run with sweat and blood and the red welts are raised on their backs and buttocks. When the soldiers are tired, Joll offers chances to the crowd who takes part willingly in beating the prisoners. Coetzee writes, “That it brings shame on everyone when a girl is permitted to flog a man? That spectacles of cruelty corrupt the hearts of the innocent?” (Waiting 118).

Exploitation of the barbarians echoes the pain and agony of the colonized. Their claim for the land reverberates to the claim of the people of South Africa who were and are exploited before and after colonial period. The people of town are not the real owner of the land. Years ago they came from somewhere, and found the place a comfort zone for their settlement. Now they claim for it. They represent the white South Africans who enjoy the privileges which actually belong to the black South Africans. Economic development becomes the most important function in the autonomous Nation. This reminds me Furnivall’s words: “Economic development . . . is a condition of welfare, and welfare a condition of autonomy, because self-governing institutions cannot be built on a foundation of ignorance and ill-health” (459). The black South Africans are deprived from such right. Coetzee believes that the Nation cannot develop if the half of the total population is progressing and the rest is regressing. The citizen is an entity—a building block, which runs the organization called the Nation. In dearth of collaborated toil the Nation loses its origin in the myths
of time. And South Africa has paid penalty due to apartheid and its effect reverberates in the life of the Nation even today. The asymmetrical growth of the people of South Africa is the result of disparity of the government conducted in the allocation of right and duty where the white are privileged and the black South Africans are deprived. This biased treatment of the government has stunted the growth of the Nation. Coetzee’s Disgrace and Age of Iron depict this scorching issue and raise voice against it to bring changes and these two races together.

Age of Iron shows the dreadful apartheid from the matured, intellectual and solemn eyes of Mrs Curren who had only heard about its eeriness, but at closing of the final chapter of her life she has its firsthand experience. The novel begins revealing the outcome of apartheid:

There is an alley down the side of the garage, you may remember it, you and your friends would sometimes play there. Now it is a dead place, waste, without use, where windblown leaves pile up and rot. (Age 3)

This beginning divulges that time has taken toil. Exuberance of the life is lost. Everything is utterly out of shape. Only reminiscence–musing of the bygone days is left. Social, economic and cultural framework of the Nation is altered and it seems that Mrs Curren is waiting to grieve over the devastation. The words mentioned above are the first words that come to her mind when she returns home after receiving the revelation of the day that her life has reached to the irredeemable stage of cancer. It is the time when she feels an intense need of someone’s solidarity. But what she finds is sterility and assassinating solitude. She has a daughter, but not with her in this grievous period, as she has left South Africa forever taking a vow that she would never come back because of her dissatisfaction with the government for its partial and tyrannical treatment to the black South Africans which has made the life chaotic and
insecure. She hates South Africa so much that she shakes the dust of her country before she leaves for America in 1976. Her last words, “Do not call me back, Mother. . . because I will not come.” (Age 139) reverberate even after years in the conscious and sub-conscious mind of the mother and intensify her pain. The year she left South Africa shows that the colonizers are not responsible for this devastation, but the governing body which has learnt from the colonizer how to get benefit from the diversity and dependencies and followed the colonial policy to sustain their autonomy as “Whatever lofty sentiments may inspire pronouncements on colonial policy, its practical application is coloured and conditioned by interest” (Furnivall 458).

Bheki, fifteen year old son of Florence, shows the appalling apartheid to Mrs Curren. He has left Guguletu as the schools have been closed. Students have put many schools on fire. Many of them have become activists protesting against the brutal apartheid and hounding police force and claiming for their fundamental rights of freedom, equality and fraternity. An “arrogant, combative” (Age 47), insolent, insurgent, and insensitive generation has immerged out from this social havoc which is capable of laughing and throwing petrol on seeing a woman on fire screaming for help. Coetzee writes, “But who made them so cruel? It is the whites who made them so cruel!” (Age 49). They consider the police as the terrorists as they forcibly send them to school. Bheki has his own mindset for the school. He says, “What is school for? It is to make us fit into the apartheid system” (Age 67). Mrs Curren is taken aback by Florence’s pride for her son’s such attitude. She wonders how Florence can allow Bheki to wander here and there on the street killing time till apartheid comes to an end. She believes that apartheid is not going to die all of a sudden. It may never go from the psyche of the people. She is worried for Bheki’s future. However, she fails to answer Bheki’s question,
What is more important, that apartheid must be destroyed or that I must go to school? (Age 68)

In order to destroy apartheid so many children of Bheki and John’s age join the communist activity leaving books and pens aside and taking guns in their hands. At the age of fairy tales and nursery rhymes, they are fed with the terror, animosity and sadism of apartheid and prepared to protest against it. This has destroyed the incorruptibility of their age. Bheki’s sudden disappearance leads Mrs Curren to five dead bodies neatly laid out against a wall. Bheki’s eyes were open and staring. His mouth was open, too. The rain had been beating on him and on his comrades. Their clothes and hair had a flattened, dead look. There were grains of sand in the corners of his eyes. There was sand in his mouth. Mrs Curren wants to know the person who did it. “Who did it?” replies Mr Thabane, Bheki’s uncle, “If you want to dig the bullets out of their bodies you are welcome. But I will tell you in advance what you will find. ‘Made in South Africa. SABS Approved’” (Age 103).

This unambiguously indicates the failure of maintaining the sovereignty which has been achieved after prolonged slavery from the foreign rule, exploitation and lots of struggles. For such internal crises, according to Coetzee, one cannot blame to the colonizer. They are like Mrs Curren’s cancer the germs of which go on multiply with every moment; that never let her to forget that she is dying gradually with each advancing and passing moment; never let her to live the last moments peacefully even when she knows that they are, like sand, elapse out from her fist. Racism is a worm that nibbles the Nation without letting the citizen know about her being liquefied. This is a common problematic issue of all those countries the citizen of which are divided by such narrow domestic walls, where the prevailing social and cultural issues are the responsible factors in intensifying the breach between the two distinct communities.
The tangible examples are the crisis between Hindu and Muslim in India, Sunni and Shia in Afghanistan. Mrs Curren says,

What might happen to me no longer mattered. . . . My life may as well be waste. We shoot these people as if they are waste, but in the end it is we whose lives are not worth living. (Age 104)

The words mentioned above sound like a confession of a white South African writer on behalf of his class which is exploiting the black South Africans. They are enjoying the privileges which actually belong to the black South Africans. He is worried for the future of Nation and for the generation to which Bheki and John belong. He writes,

Comradeship is nothing but a mystique of death, of killing and dying, masquerading as what you call a bond (a bond of what? Love? I doubt it). I have no sympathy with this comradeship. You are wrong . . . to be taken in by it and, worse, to encourage it in children. It is just another of those icy, exclusive, death-driven male constructions. That is my opinion. (Age 150)

John hides himself in the darkness of Florence’s room. His eyes are wide open envisioning the moment of glory when he will arise when the fiery flower will unfold and when the pillar of smoke will rise. He has held a bomb on his chest like a talisman: as Christopher Columbus lay in the dark of his cabin, holding the compass to his chest – the mystic instrument that would guide him to the Indies, the Isles of the Blest. But what this bomb will guide this boy is a mystic to the reader. Mrs Curren, “in a fog of error” (Age 136), feels that she hates neither Bheki nor John but the form they have turned into. She is not able to accept this growing generation, to Bheki as now “he is not loveable”, Coetzee asks, “But did you not have a part in making him unlovable?” (136). These confessional words speak a volume of the writer’s courage
to tell his community that they are responsible for the animosity the black South Africans have nurtured for them. Bheki and John become the victim of the police and lose their lives in a police encounter. Coetzee writes,

   Poor child! Poor child! From somewhere tears sprang and blurred my sight.
   Poor John, who in the old days would have been destined to be a garden boy
   and eat bread and jam for lunch at the back door and drink out of a tin,
   battling now for all the insulted and injured, the trampled, the ridiculed, for
   all the garden boys of South Africa! (Age 151)

   Thus, everything is utterly changed, but this change is annoying one. Mrs
   Curren belongs to the class of subjugator and Florence, Bheki and John represent the
   class of subjugated. What Coetzee anticipates for is an optimistic change between
   these two classes and two races, but what he finds is “a time out of time” (Age 50).
   The time about which Coetzee talks, carries a crime and in Mrs Curren’s words,

   A crime was committed long ago. How long ago? I do not know. But
   longer ago than 1916, certainly. So long ago that I was born into it. It is part
   of my inheritance. It is part of me, I am part of it.

   Like every crime it had its price. That price, I used to think, would
   have to be paid in shame: in a life of shame and a shameful death,
   unlamented, in an obscure corner. (Age 164)

   Mrs Curren’s cancer represents the crime of exploitation of the black South
   Africans. Though Coetzee is a white South African writer, he wishes coherence
   between them. He believes, “There are no rubbish people. We are all people together”
   (Age 47) and with this intention he has portrayed Mrs Curren who has soft corner for
   the black South Africans.
"Disgrace" is the story of David Lurie who represents the apartheid and his daughter, Lucy who represents the consequence of apartheid. Thus, David represents the past and Lucy represents the present of political history of South Africa. Lucy becomes the victim of a gang rape and the rapists were the black South Africans. She feels that it was done with personal hatred. She is speculated with a thought why they hate her when she had never set her eyes on them. But David has an answer:

It was history speaking through them . . . . A history of wrong . . . . It may have seemed personal, but it wasn’t. It came down from the ancestors.

(Disgrace 156)

During apartheid the black South African women were subjected to the animal spirit of the white South African men. Even after legal ban on apartheid, it has continued its atrocious Rudra Tandava (a dance by Shiva in a violent mood that brings destruction) of havoc. Just the tables have turned and the history is reversed. Petrus is a hand at Lucy’s farm. He belongs to the subservient strata of South African society. But, Lucy never maltreats him. His indirect possible role in the burglary cannot be denied, as his abrupt evaporation from the place raises many questions to which only history is answerable. The most shocking revelation is that one of the rapists, Pollux, is Petrus’ brother-in-law who is only sixteen and as he is not of the marriageable age, Petrus offers his own hand for the marriage as it would be a springboard for him to climb up the upper strata of South African society and credit him the possession over Lucy’s life and land where he is merely an assistant. In David’s words, “Petrus has a vision of the future in which people like Lucy have no place” (Disgrace 118).

Lucy has to accept the offer to become the third wife of Petrus with no other option, as the result of the gang rape takes form in her womb. Moreover, she knows
that the women are safe nowhere – neither in Salem where she lives and is raped by the black South Africans nor in Cape Town where David lives and rapes the girls like Melanie. The burglary and Lucy’s tragedy both provoke the reader to rethink about the security of the people after independence. It seems that the security is an illusion in the 21st century. Change in the social strata of David and Petrus, and Lucy and Petrus show how the tables have turned in the political history of South Africa. It raises many questions like: Do the white South Africans deserve this change? Were the black South Africans waiting for the tables to turn? How long would this atrocious history continue its existence? Why are women subjected to the history?

Coetzee’s Life and Times of Michael K deals with the futility of war. War and its consequences are subtle subjects dealt by the intellectual minds of literature. All those wars that have been fought on this beautiful planet to which we call earth, tell us the story of catastrophe. The writers’ special interest for these subjects is not because they adore them but they adore the life. No war is ever proved to be beneficial to the Nation. However, the tragedy is that it takes place, no matters where, why, when and between whom. Even after centuries of the innumerable wars human beings have not learnt any lesson from their consequences. Men at war are bestial, whereas civilized man has the power to tame beasts. War is a kind of plague or contagious madness. It makes the life unnecessarily hectic. With this central idea Coetzee has given shape to Life and Times of Michael K.

Life and times of Michael K, the title character of the novel, actually represent the life and times of South Africa in general and of Cape Town in particular which has become hell due to the Civil War and the martial law imposed on the people. K is annoyed with this life and pines for freedom and a peaceful life. Due to the indifferent health, Anna, K’s mother, is now of no use for her employer where she used to work
as a domestic servant and that is why she is dismissed. They decide to leave “the
burning city [Cape Town] for the safety of the countryside” (Life 150) and to go to
her father’s place, Prince Albert by train. But social and political tumults make it
impossible for K to have reservation in train and permit him to leave Cape Peninsula
police area. Sardonically speaking, for K they are like ‘Waiting for Godot’. Anna’s
health becomes poorer. Her living condition, in her words, is like that of “a toad under
a stone” (Life 9). They succeed to leave the messy terrain of Cape Town saving
themselves from the police, but on the way Anna’s ailment becomes the worst. She is
hospitalized and finally she loses her life while struggling for a meaningful and
peaceful life. On his way to Prince Albert, K is maltreated by the soldier who prods
his things and considers K a thief. K sniffs out the soldier’s interest in Anna’s money,
he says to him, “What do you think the war is for? . . . For taking other people’s
money?” (Life 37). Then he is stopped by the railway police for not having a permit,
so he is assigned to a gang working on the track. From there, he is unloaded at Touws
River with a few other labourers. When he sniffs out the reason, he ducks out through
a hole in search of a life free from all kinds of vassalages. Finally he reaches to Prince
Albert after a great struggle. There he lives an isolated life at the Visagies’ farmhouse.

In the initial stage of his life in isolation, he lives like a “savage” (52), like a
primitive man, hunting and accumulating his prey, but gradually he learns a lesson
and tries to systematize his life. An evolution takes place in his life and he becomes a
“cultivator” (Life 59). With the passage of time he forgets Cape Town and the war.
But like an intruder or say the colonizer, a stranger comes who introduces himself as
the grandson of Visagie. K is found disillusioned when he says, “I let myself believe
that this was one of those islands without an owner. Now I am learning the truth. Now
I am learning my lesson” (Life 61). He learns a universal lesson that to head other’s freedom is a human tendency.

Here, the grandson plays the role of the colonizer who sets his eyes on K’s possessions. He says to K, “I’m not the one who pays you, I can’t put you off the farm just like that. But we have to work together, otherwise—” (Life 64). The very words of the grandson make his intention very clear to the reader that now he is going to claim from K’s share and turn K “into a body-servant” (Life 65). The grandson desires for the Power while K pines for Freedom. At length he gives off the unspoken caution to K that if K does not agree to his proposal of sharing the farm and its products, “there is no future for either of’ them (Life 65). K is again caught by the police of Jakkalsdrif—a camp where the jobless people get roof and their basic needs in exchange of the labour work. They are paid for that labour. In captain’s words “It’s a work camp . . . It’s is a camp to teach lazy people to work!” (Life 91). Here, on the charge sheet he is listed as ‘Michael Visagie—CM—40—NFA—Unemployed’. He escapes from here also and reaches where he wants to live forever in isolation, i.e. the Visagie’s farm. Coetzee writes, “What a pity that to live in times like these a man must be ready to live like a beast. A man who wants to live cannot live in a house with lights in the windows. He must live in a hole and hide by day. A man must live so that he leaves no trace of his living” (Life 99).

At Jakkalsdrif camp, K loses his interest in work imposed on him. He prefers starvation and resists the life given to him in “charity” (88). When he leaves the camp, he thinks about his existence: “I am like an ant that does not know where its hole is . . .” (83). But at farm his aspiration for life blooms. Here, he enthusiastically employs himself in the work from morning until he is completely exhausted. He repairs the house, cleans the farm; works at dam and in last he plants a handful of pumpkin and

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melon seed. Coetzee says that as he tends the seeds and watches and waits for the earth to bear food, his own need for food grows slighter and slighter. Hunger is a sensation he does not feel and barely remembers. He eats whatever he finds, as he has yet not shaken off the belief that bodies that do not eat die. “When food comes out of this earth, he told himself, I will recover my appetite, for it will have savour” (Life 101). This juxtaposes to his refutation of work and meal offered to him at the camp. This also shows that K is not a slacker, but what he prefers is the work of his own choice and as per his own proficiency. He does not take time to think when, where and why, instead he just starts working to re-cultivate the farm. It is because he loves that place and work, as here he finds “the bounty of the earth” (Life 118). He says, “That is why it is a good thing that I, who have nothing to pass on, should be spending my time here where I am out of the way” (Life 105). He decides to live in the farm quietly for the rest of his life, eating the food that he has cultivated. And the time comes to cut the first ripe pumpkin. Coetzee writes,

He chewed with tears of joy in his eyes. The best, he thought, the very best pumpkin I have tasted. For the first time since he had arrived in the country he found pleasure in eating . . . . Such pumpkin, he thought, such pumpkin I could eat every day of my life and never want anything else. And what perfection it would be with a pinch of salt—with a pinch of salt, and a dab of butter, and a sprinkling of sugar, and a little cinnamon scattered over the top! (Life 113-114).

K finds the pumpkin sweet because it is the fruit of his desired hard work. The Civil War restricted not only the life but the emotion of the people. It has actually killed the very life giving aspiration of the human being. The novel does not depict the story of killing of the people, but how the smooth going life is destructed and how
the free will of the individual is colonized due to the Civil War. K’s pleasure is destructed by the soldiers’ intrusion in that place in search of men who blew up the railway tracks and they take K to the medical ward at the Kenilworth rehabilitation camp in Cape Town. Here also K refutes the special treatment given to him by his doctor. He has not forgotten how his mother was treated in her last days by the owner where she used to work. He says to the doctor,

My mother worked all her life long . . . She scrubbed other people’s floors, she cooked food for them, she washed their dishes. She washed their dirty clothes. She scrubbed the bath after them. She went on her knees and cleaned the toilet. But when she was old and sick they forgot her. They put her away out of sight. When she died they threw her in the fire. They gave me an old box of ash and told me, “Here is your mother, take her away, she is no good to us” (Life 136).

Anna always remains in K’s conscious and sub-conscious mind even after her death. K fails to cease himself relating her with his surroundings. So, he prefers a life in solitude. When the police ask him for whom he used to grow vegetables, K says, “What grows is for all of us. We are all the children of the earth” (Life 139). This shows that K seeks not only his own freedom and rights but of others also. Thus, Coetzee tries to cohere the parted races by giving the illustration of the Nature that knows no difference of cast, creed, colour and race. Noel reminds the doctor that they are fighting the war “so that minorities will have a say in their destinies” (Life 157) and it seems that K is also fighting a war, but in his own way. Coetzee gives a new imaginary form of the Civil War to the restless life during apartheid and shows the failure of the driving force to establish consistency after independence. He exhumes the atrocious colonial and apartheid period and amasses the stuff for his literary opus
the protagonists of which seek “to decode the past and thus understand the “barbarians” as they are framed and fashioned at the edge of empire” (Meskell 92). Durrant opines that Coetzee “seek to find a way of relating to this ‘underwritten’ history” (438).

At Kenilworth K weighs “no more than a sack of feathers” (Life 163). He refuses to eat as he does not want to build up his strength to get it exhausted again by obeying the commands of the authorities. He escapes from there and after taking a complete round, he reaches to Sea Point—the point of origin from where he had stated escaping. Here also people pity on him and treat him as an object of charity. K says, “Everywhere I go there are people waiting to exercise their forms of charity on me” and in return they want him to narrate his life lived in cages “as if he were a budgie or a white mouse or a monkey” (Life 181). They shake their heads and feel sorry and angry and ply him with food and drink; women take him into their beds and mother him in the dark. “Whereas the truth is that”, K says, “I have been a gardener, first for the Council, later for myself, and gardeners spend their time with noses to the ground” (Life 181). This shows that K’s struggle is of an individual for freedom, identity against the violation of human rights and the “state-approved torture” (Gallagher 277). But when we read in between the lines, we realize that Anna’s life has relevance with the state history. Like Anna, the people representing a class, working and suffering at various camps, have been refused and forgotten by the state. It hardly needs to mention that not a single prisoner at Jakkalsdrif camp and at the Kenilworth rehabilitation camp belongs to the upper class of the South African society. And this is the fundamental reason why K cuts himself off from the society and why he seems to be aloof from everything. His own life and times recapitulate the history of his mother and of the Age he belongs to. Because of his harelip he is deserted by his
mother, mocked by the society and never taken into consideration by the women. He is acknowledged by nobody. He has always felt that he is discarded.

Thus, Achebe and Coetzee show how colonialism of Africa in general and Nigeria and South Africa in particular has mutilated the native culture; how the same culture is a matter of proud and a barrier, at the same time in the progress of the *Nation* when it is blindly adhered by the agent of the culture; how sovereignty is at stake when the *POWER* goes in the wrong hand; how the needle of the compass turns from the colonialists to the vulture like politicians when the leadership aims at the personal gain; and how the racism poisons the tender human heart and kills the very aspiration of the life eventually the unity, peace and harmony of the *Nation*. In nutshell, the selected novels of Achebe and Coetzee recapitulate the political history of the colonizer after independence and the authors seem optimistically waiting for a drastic change of Age of iron into an Age of tender dreams and the Age of assimilation between the old and new culture, and different races so that the sovereignty may succeed to elevate the *Nation* and the living standard of the people, as well.

In the next chapter, ‘Critical Analysis of Major Themes and Characters in the Selected Texts of Achebe and Coetzee’, major and minor characters representing their social and cultural roles, racial and gender discrimination, the thematic concept, symbols and the significance of the titles of the selected novels will be discussed.
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