POINTS OF VIEW IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH

BY

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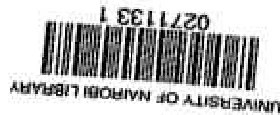

A project paper submitted in partial fulfillment for the M.A degree of the University of Nairobi

September 2002

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ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH

DECLARATION

This project paper is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signature.....................................

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This project paper has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my loved ones: my darling wife, Fridah; my sister, Margret; my daughters, Sharon and Becky; and my nephew, Brian. Their enduring and unwavering support has been the pillar upon which I have leaned in my low and high moments during this study.

AND

IN MEMORY OF MY PARENTS

Christopher Nyandoro and Marcelinah Nyanchama: Your enduring spirit of hard work, dedication and commitment, remain the cornerstones of my struggle to success. May God rest your souls in eternal peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my supervisors, Dr.D.H Kiiru and Dr. Peter Wasamba for their professional guidance in this work. I acknowledge my teachers, Prof. Henry Indangasi, Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, Prof. Hellen Oronga Mwanzi and Dr. Fred Okengo Matiangi for their able tutelage throughout the course. For moral support, I wish to thank my good friends, Evan Mwangi, John Wafula, Aungo Bw'Onderi, Collinse Abuga Onchonga, Rosemary Mweni, Margret Wanjiku, Ephraim Imaya, George Odhiambo Omollo, Everleen Nekesa Makhanu, Elizabeth Achungo Atemi, Maureen Nekesa Ndumba, Mwangi Macharia, Haggai Wapingo Weche, Elizabeth Olajumoke Ayelabola, Dorothy Ngethe, Collins Ocham, Jennifer Nyambura Muchiri, Muhia Mugo, Hilary Gitau, Kawive Wambua, and all members of the department who encouraged me in one way or the other. Lastly, I acknowledge the unwavering support of my family members: my darling wife, Fridah Karimi who is always there for me; my kid sister, Margret Nyarangi, my daughter Sharon Nyanchama and Becky Kendi and my Nephew Brian Nyandoro --you are the pillar on which I lean. Because they gave their best, I take full responsibility for any shortcoming herein.

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ABSTRACT

The study attempts to situate point of view as an overriding aspect of Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah. In doing so, it presumes that the thematic concerns in this novel are influenced by the diversity of points of view which allows for proliferation of contexts and meanings.

The study reveals that the narrators psychological and physical proximity to the events of the fictional world of Kangan influences their perceptions of them. For instance, the political struggles of Kangan are perceived differently by narrators who are farther from the centre of power and by one of the narrators who has a position of influence in government.Similarly , perceptions on gender disparities are perceived differently by the male narrators and the female narrator .

Thematically, this study concludes that the text foregrounds feminine power in counteracting the overly masculine society as a process of achieving a balanced society .Similarly, dialogue is emphasized as an alternative to the militant regime in Kangan. At the centre of this thematic development is the strategy of shifting points of view which allows for diversity of perspectives suggesting a tolerance of the multiplicity of views in society.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Anthills of the Savannah is Chinua Achebe's fifth novel. In this novel the author makes a drastic departure in his narrative technique. Whereas in his previous novels Achebe has always employed one point of view, be it first-person or third-person, in Anthills of the Savannah he has employed different points of view. It is important to take note of this shift in narrative technique since as Scholes and Kellog have observed the teller and the tale mutually co-exist in narrative development. According to them:

> ...narrative art requires a story and a storyteller. In the relationship between the teller and the tale, and that other relationship between the teller and the audience, lies the essence of narrative art. (240)

This implies that without a narrator we would not have a story. It is imperative then, in literary study, to identify the narrator(s) of a text as a way of naturalizing fiction. By identifying the narrators, we, as readers, also choose to trust their intention in rendition and seek to trust their credibility as reliable facilitators of the narrative contracts whose basic convention, Culler argues, "is the expectation that readers will, through contact with the text, be able to recognise a world which it produces or to which it refers "(193).

The identification of narrators also includes the interpretation of their positions and points of view. The narrators' position, both physically and psychologically, affects their attitudes and perceptions. For first-person narrators, like real human beings, their individuality and inclination also establish attitude and perception.

These postulations will be the overriding precepts from which this study will proceed. Further to these postulations, lies the enduring fact that Achebe remains one of the most studied authors from Africa. As a widely published and read author, assumptions need to be made that he has deserving skills in narrative technique. It is on the basis of these assumptions that the need to pursue this study was borne and grew to fruition.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study examines the narrators that sustain the narrative in Anthills of the Savannah. We investigate how the shifting points of view of the narrators enhance narrative cohesion.

We also investigate the effectiveness of using different narrators to tell a similar story based on their different perceptions and sensibilities, particularly as it emerges through Anthills of the Savannah.

OBJECTIVES

The study aims at the following objectives:

(a) To show how Anthills of the Savannah utilizes the shifting points of view employed by its narrators to achieve an organic whole.

(b) To demonstrate that the narrators' physical or psychological position in relation to the events in the story influence their perception, and subsequent rendition to the reader.

(c) To evaluate how the shifting points of view influence the author's exploration of the major concerns in the novel.

HYPOTHESES

This study makes the assumption that in Anthills of the Savannah. Achebe utilizes the strategy of shifting points of view to knead together disparate perceptions in the novel into an organic whole.

The study, further, makes the assumption that by utilizing this strategy Achebe enables us to access "the story's focus, the angle of vision from which things are not only seen and reported but also judged" (Roberts and Jacobs 60).

JUSTIFICATION

According to Roberts and Jacobs:

> Point of view is one of the many ways in which authors make fiction vital. By controlling point of view, an author helps us make responsible inferences about the story's actions.... We need to evaluate what fictional narrators as well as real people tell us, for what they say is affected by their limitations, attitudes, opinions, and degree of candidness. (61)

Narrators, particularly first person narrators, compare to ordinary human beings with varied perspectives. For every situation, narrators take positions and look at it from their own points of view. The narrators' point of view can be weak or strong depending on how they position themselves in proximity to what they observe.

In this study we focus on how Achebe utilizes the shifting points of view to achieve a cohesive narrative structure. This strategy, as used in Anthills of the Savannah, is unique in the sense that it is unprecedented in his fiction. In his first three novels - Things Fall Apart (1958), No Longer at Ease (1960), and Arrow of God (1964) - Achebe employs the third-person point of view, while in his fourth novel, A Man of the People (1966), he utilizes the first-person point of view. In Anthills of the Savannah (1987), however, he employs both the first-person point of view and the third-person point of view. Our study is premised on these shifting points of view and their implications in the novel. It is necessary to discern the rationale behind Achebe's use of different points of view in the novel and whether he navigates these disparate perceptions into a confluence.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

Our study proceeds from a formalist approach to literary study. Formalism attempts to analyse literature "not by its identifiable, or ' natural' (or 'representational'), content but consistently by its form. How it is constructed and how it functions so as to have meaning in the first place" (Davis and Finke 568). By using this approach, we attempt to understand the text's interior patterning or how it works.

In particular, we attempt to study point of view as technique in Anthills of the Savannah. According to Schorer:

> When we speak of technique, then, we speak of nearly everything. For technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter compels him to attend to it; technique is the only means

> he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning, and, finally, of evaluating it. (3)

Our study concurs with Schorer that by appreciating the shifting points of view in Anthills of the Savannah as technique, we are enabled with a depth of thematic interpretation, for, as he further argues, the form of a work of art is its achieved content.

In studying point of view in Anthills of the Savannah, we also pay attention to the first-person narrators as characters. This is in tandem with Scholes and Kellog's assertion that:

> In the eyewitness form of narration, considerations of character are intimately related to considerations of point of view. To the extent that the narrator is characterised he will dominate the narrative, taking precedence over event and situation. (256)

In Craft of Fiction, Lubbock has also argued that, in "the whole intricate question of method in the craft of fiction, I take to be governed by the question of point of view - - the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to the story" (81). According to him then, the narrator can describe the characters from outside, either as an impartial or partial onlooker. He can also assume omniscience and describe them from within, or place himself in the position of them and appear to be in the dark as to the motives of the other characters. In a case such as in Anthills of the Savannah where the novelist utilizes shifting positions, the net effect is that of a wide spectrum of vantage points upon which the reader can interact with the text.

The realization that point of view is a prominent aspect in the study of literature has engaged the minds of literary scholars over the years. According to Wellek and Warren, "point of view, has, at least in the novels received considerable attention since Henry James and since Lubbock's more systematic exposition of the Jamesian theory and practice" (152).

Point of view as understood in literature exist in three variants: the first-person point of view, the second person point of view, and the third-person point of view. The second-person point of view is rarely employed by writers and is absent in Anthills of the Savannah. Achebe, therefore, utilizes the other two points of view in the novel.

"The first-person point of view is really the impersonation of a fictional narrator or speaker" (Roberts and Jacobs 196). In Anthills of the Savannah, three characters impersonate this point of view: Chris Oriko, Ikem Osodi and Beatrice Nwanyibuife. The first-person point of view is potentially the most independent of the author, for such a speaker, as exemplified by the characters we have mentioned is often given a unique identity, with a name, job, economic and social positions. This point of view gives an eyewitness account of events. However, it is not easy to characterise the voice in the third person point of view.

There are three variants of the third person point of view: dramatic or objective, omniscient, and limited omniscient. The dramatic or objective point of view is the basic mode of presenting action and dialogue. This point of view is also called the third person objective. According to Roberts and Jacobs, this narrator reports events in a way that is analogous to a hovering or tracking motion picture camera, or to what,

as they argue; some critics have called ' a fly on the wall (or tree)'(170). The omniscient narrator behaves like God, reporting what the characters are thinking, while the limited omniscient third-person point of view limits attention to a major character. In Anthills of the Savannah, Achebe frequently shifts from one point of view to the other.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Points of view as constructed by different narrators are basic to the narrative cohesion. As Roberts and Jacobs have explained, there is need to establish "the story's focus, the angle of vision from which things are not only seen and reported but also judged" (6). Narrators are central to the establishment of this focus since it is they who offer us their perspective upon which they interpret the narrative material.

The importance of narration is further underscored by the same writers when they assert that, "the principal tool (and heart of fiction) is narration.... The object of narration is, as much as possible, to render the story, to make it clear and to bring it alive to the reader's imagination"(60). By foregrounding the importance of narration in the novel and the important role layed by the narrators, Roberts and Jacobs acknowledge that it would be artistically implausible to have a story without the voice behind it.

A lot of research has been done on Anthills of the Savannah. Our present research, however, reveals no prominent attention paid to the narrators who tell the story in the novel. This is despite the importance of narrators in any narrative rendition.

Petri Raivio, in an essay entitled "Chinua Achebe: Anthills of the Savannah", after acknowledging that Anthills of the Savannah is the first novel he has ever read on African literature, devotes one paragraph to the manner in which Achebe utilizes point of view in the novel:

> The way Achebe tells the story in Anthills of the Savannah is also interesting. He changes the perspective from chapter to chapter. "I" can be Ikem, Chris or Beatrice and it is not always quite clear who's speaking. This choice of method is quite natural because the novel has several main characters of approximately equal importance. (5)

Certainly, the presence of many characters in a novel does not necessarily require shifting perspective. Raivio does not pursue the true merit of Achebe's use of this strategy in the novel. Moreover, Raivio's having been a short essay, could not possibly attend to this matter in great detail.

Beth Soucer in an essay "Ideological positioning in Anthills of the Savannah and The Remains of the Day" compares the two books from a Post Colonial point of view. Here, attention is paid to the ideological implication of people who have secondary or 'helping' roles in the support of someone else's political project (1). He does not pay attention to the narrators' ideological orientation and political socialization. In this study, we look at how the socialization and positioning of narrators sharpen their points of view and enhance the political development in the novel.

Irene Tung in "Language and Words in Anthills of the Savannah and Bones" makes a gender reading on the use of language in both novels. For her, language is an important motif in the novel. She asserts that in Anthills of the Savannah, words are

gendered male and silence female. She argues that Achebe defines Beatrice through the words and perceptions of other characters. To this end, Tung believes that Beatrice gets liberated only at the end of the novel: "By the end of the novel, Beatrice, fulfilling Ikem's prophecy, derives her own role, by taking charge during the naming ceremony instead of waiting for Elewa's tardy uncle" (Tung1).

Tung does not, however, analyse the role of Beatrice as a narrator; she does not delve into what Beatrice says about herself, the other characters in the novel, and society in general. This study attempts an analysis of Beatrice as a narrator and as a character. The study attempts to articulate the possibilities that come with Beatrice as a narrator presenting the gender argument. We make assumptions that Beatrice's role as a narrator enhances her position to pursue her space as a woman in a male dominated society.

In "Proverb and Culture in the Novels of Chinua Achebe" Jayalakshm B. Rao argues that "The crowning glory of Achebe's novels is undoubtedly his use of the language and aphorisms of oral culture" (1). She asserts that what sets Achebe apart from his contemporary writers from Africa is his "ability to bring a whole range of human experience before our mind's eye by his consummate use of imagery drawn from both native and alien sources. He makes use of devices like proverbs, folk tales, and religious figginets conveyed through prayers, speeches and song sequences"(1).

Her study does not make any mention of the narrators and their diverse points of view. We shall argue in our discussion that by using diverse points of view in <u>Anthills of the Savannah</u>, Achebe succeeds in bringing to us this whole range of human experience.

In "The Myth of Women and the Reality of Men's Actions" Corey Binns makes a study of Achebe's use of myth but restricts himself to its gender dimensions (1). He shows how in Anthills of the Savannah creation myths are used to oppress women. Binns does not, however, deal with the contribution of Beatrice, as character - narrator, in the process of liberation, and neither does he consider Ikem's contribution in the same process.

Margret Hander in "Anthills of the Savannah and the Post Colonial Gender Question" addresses the gender question through a Post Colonial eye-lens and asserts that women are integral in the building of the African society and she emphasizes that the damaging effect of oppression outside the colonised-colonizers dilemma lies in broadening views of what is important to examine in a post-colonial society or in a work of post-colonialism (2). She, however, does not conceptualize this 'broadening of views'. In this research, we attempt an incisive study of the broadening of views by analysing the proliferations of points of views in the novel.

David Caroll, in his book Chinua Achebe, has argued that in Anthills of the Savannah:

> Frequently episodes document the harsh realities of military rule: the public execution, the police searches, the sycophantic cabinet meeting, the roadblocks, and the inevitable counter-coup. These create the texture of life as it is experienced by and recorded through the points of view of the protagonists in what is basically realistic fictional mode. (168)

Caroll's argument borders on our own position with regard to the importance of point of view in the dissection of political reality in Kangan. Caroll, however, does not pay

adequate attention to this question of point of view, as it is not the main argument in his discussion. This study seeks to focus on the centrality of point of view in the structural and thematic interconnection in Anthills of the Savannah.

Maughan Brown in his essay, "Anthills of the Savannah Achebe's Solutions to the Trouble with Nigeria", attempts to identify the, "tensions and contradictions in Anthills of the Savannah resulting from Achebe's attempt to use the tensions novel as a vehicle for proposing solutions to the socio-political and economic problems of Nigeria" (13). Brown's study is thematic and relies on extra-textual information such as Achebe's interviews and the essays that he has written. Brown does not attempt to analyze the centrality of point of view in the thematic development of the novel. Our study is text based, and is premised on the grounds that point of view advances thematic development in Anthills of the Savannah.

Ezenwa – Ohaeto in his essay, "Patriots and Parasites: The Metaphors of Power in Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah" argues that Achebe shows, "through the use of irony, symbol and imagery in the narrative structure of Anthills of the Savannah an unpleasant portrait of a society pressurized by social forces that are pushing it to a brink of disaster" (34). However, Ohaeto does not analyse the position taken by the various narrative voices in portraying the excess use of power in Kangan. Throughout his essay, Ohaeto does not show awareness of the existence of multiple voices in the novel. Since we advance the view that point of view is central to any incisive explication of thematic concerns in the novel our study attempts to demonstrate how diverse narrators interpret the metaphor of power.

Omar Sougou in an essay, "language, foregrounding and intertextuality in Anthill of the Savannah", gives a stylistic approach to the novel. He acknowledges that: Anthills of the Savannah is:

> Based on spectacular structures in that the narrative is focalized through each of the three main characters in turn: Christopher Oriko (Chris), the Commissioner for Information; Ikem Osodi, the editor of the National Gazette and Beatrice Okoh, Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. Each of them is a reflector through whom we learn about others and about his Excellency, the general and head of the state, Sam. The first three characters take turns to tell the story while an omniscient narrator – a narrator in the first degree – supersedes them very often. (37)

Sougou's concern, however, is on language and foregrounding. This limits his attention and he therefore does not pay adequate attention to the narrators. He therefore mentions the narrator in one paragraph. Conversely, our study is a full-length study on narrators, and in so doing we mention how the points of view advance issues on language and foreground.

Chimalum Nwankwo in an essay, "Soothing Ancient Bruises: Power and the New African Woman in Chinua Achebe's Anthill of the Savannah", pays attention to the parabolic, anecdotal and mythological construction of the novel. He says:

> Achebe offers, variously through parabolic and anecdotal images, why power has been misconstrued by humanity. Here again, his foundry is also into creation mythology where power is like light in its function of nourishment. It is so integral to the world that not even the most

delicate effort to extract the essence of it from its natural, the reality in the cosmos, has been successful. (61)

In his analysis, however, Nwankwo does not note the meaningfulness of the death of Ikem and Chris (who are first-person narrators) as a parabolic construct. Neither, does he pursue the meaningfulness of Beatrice's survival as the prevalent voice of the future (having been constructed around the myth of Idemili). By focusing on point of view, we are enabled to focus on myth, legend and parable from positions advanced by diverse focal points.

In her essay, "New Women and Old Myths: Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah and Nurruddin Farah's Sardines." Patricia Alden compares Chinua Achebe and Nurruddin Farah's construction of female characters. She argues that Achebe fails to create a credible modern lady to play the role of liberator. She considers that Beatrice's mythic construction is unsuccessful. Our study defends the essence of Idemili's legend in creating Beatrice as the voice of the future, which portends peace and modesty in Kangan, as an alternative to the military regime.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the relationship between point of view and thematic progression on the one hand and narrative development on the other, insofar as Anthills of the Savannah is concerned, has not been given adequate attention. This study attempts to address this knowledge gap.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on library research of the relevant material. As a text-based study, we have read the text itself and arrived at conclusions based on textual evidence. Sometimes, however, this rule has been disregarded where aspects in the novel are uncanningly similar to those of previous works by the author. In such cases, a comparison has been made to reinforce an argument.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study limits itself to the study of Anthills of the Savannah by Chinua Achebe. The study focuses on text-based postulations on literary art. As a text and library based research, this study does not include any aspects of a field research, whatsoever.

CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

This is an introduction to the study through to the establishment of the knowledge gap upon which this study becomes necessary and justified.

The first chapter looks at the unconventional narrative voice manifested by Ikem and Chris. In this chapter we look at Chris's limitations and strengths. As a senior government officer, his perspective on the political events in Kangan is examined. While assessing Ikem's rebellion from his class position and the subsequent rendition of his narrative from the perspective of the downtrodden which has been considered as an important distinction between his narrative and that of Chris, the study takes into account the unconventionality of Chris's and Ikem's death despite being first-person narrators.

The second chapter looks at the conventional first-person narrative voice articulated by Beatrice Nwanyibuife, girlfriend to Chris and sister-figure to Ikem. Beatrice, as the third-person narrator, is influenced by her background as a woman. Similarly, her religious background weighs heavily on her narrative perspective.

The third chapter looks at the third-person narrative voice. In this chapter we attempt to see how the three disparate first-person voices are synchronized into a coherent perception of the political events in Kangan. The conclusion summarizes the foregone arguments showing the essence of Achebe's use of shifting points of view in this novel.

CHAPTER ONE

THE UNCONVENTIONAL FIRST PERSON POINT OF VIEW.

In this Chapter we pay attention to the first-person narrative voice. In Anthills of the Savannah, three characters focalize this narrative voice. These characters; Chris Oriko, Ikem Osodi and Beatrice Nwanyibuife, articulate the first-person point of view from diverse perspectives. In so doing, these narrators articulate their preferences and prejudices which are limited by their fictional perspectives.

In Anthills of the Savannah. Achebe employs the first person narrative voice both conventionally and unconventionally. Conventionally, Beatrice survives the tragic history of her country to be able to tell her side of the story. However, Ikem and Chris both die before the end of the story. This is unconventional to the first person narrative technique and for this reason, these two narrators are the subject of this chapter.

Chris's narrative voice is essential to the story given the unique vantage point from which he articulates his views of Kangan. As a Commissioner for Information in Sam's government, he is credible to report on events from the perspective of an insider who understands government operations. He therefore renders to us aspects of Sam's leadership which are important in our understanding of his autocratic streak, yet, which would be inaccessible to the other first person narrators.

Chris begins his narrative with a disagreement, which he has with Sam. This disagreement, foregrounds the conflict in the novel. The conflict in the novel is one in which people who are hitherto bound together with chains of friendship and

brotherhood disengage these chains thus pulling in different polar dimensions. In a small scale, three childhood friends; Sam, Chris and Ikem, pull towards diverse but strained perspectives. At a national level, the people and their leaders dismantle the focal point in which they can pursue their collective ambitions and aspirations as a nation. They instead opt to pursue scattered aspirations. In the process, the leaders and the subjects view one another through a 'them' versus 'us' dichotomy.

Chris is aware of this conflict and in presenting it, he carefully controls his language. To create the tension and a sense of imprisonment he chooses his phrases carefully. He talks of "a gaoler", "the fiery sun", "stronger alarms from deeper resses of instinct", "panic atonement" among others to describe the atmosphere generated by the encounter between Sam and his timid cabinet. Chris's perception of Sam's management of public affairs presumes that it is autocratic as Sam manages the affairs of the nation virtually alone.

Chris's proximity to the powerful people affects his narrative rendition in the presentation that Chris makes about Sam, which lacks direct interpretation. Chris does not give his direct opinion on Sam's behaviour. Instead, he assumes the role of an informed narrator communicating with informed readers, by simply presenting the lexis and leaving it for open judgement and appropriate interpretation.

It is appropriate that Chris distances himself from the subject of his narration. In this way, he successfully portrays the weakness of Sam's government without having to renounce his position in government. Billington Mwangi, in his B.A dissertation, has noted that Chris, as a narrator is "at first reluctant to tell his version of the tale owing

to what might appear as his personal complicity in the national crime" (19). As a narrator, Chris's main challenge is to attempt a justifiable explanation that might make him reliable and dependable in order to give us an accurate account of the political events in Kangan. As a high-ranking officer within government, Chris has contributed to the present status quo. For this reason, he at first engages himself in an exercise of self-justification saying, "but the real question, which I have often asked myself is why then do I go on with it now that I can see. I don't know. Simple inertia maybe or perhaps sheer curiosity: to see where it will all ... well, end" (2). The ellipses indicate textual silence, which demonstrates that Chris is uncertain about his reason for staying in the same government that he condemns.

By restraining from passing judgement on Sam and his government Chris lends credibility to his narrative voice and persuades us that he is being honest in his rendition. Chris is aware that as a narrator, he needs to have a cordial relationship with the reader, which will inevitably lead to our being biased towards him. He therefore attempts a justifiable explanation that might make him reliable and dependable in order to give us an accurate account of the extent of Sam's autocratic regime.

As a strategy of dissociating himself from the events that he narrates, Chris utilizes dialogue and description which enhance direct interaction between the reader and the text rather than by directly fostering his preferences and prejudices. He sometimes takes a background position, subtly bringing the events that he describes to the fore. In such instances it is not clear which narrative voice is at play. He adopts the dramatic objective narrative strategy, which would ordinarily be utilized by the third-person point of view. In the process he succeeds in isolating the events that he

narrates from the voice itself; hence any of his shortcomings as a character does not impede on his narrative.

At the beginning of his narrative, Chris pays a lot of attention to the argument which he has with Sam about whether Sam should visit Abazon (a region to the north of Kangan) or not. In so doing, Chris brings to the attention of the reader the importance Abazon harbours in the entire story. Being the first narrator in the novel, it is imperative that Chris should call the reader's attention to the significance of Abazon. In this incident, Chris aids the reader to focus on Sam by foregrounding Sam's speech. We notice Sam's dictatorial streak when he uses the cliché "but me no buts, Mr. Oriko!" (1) and the Kiswahili word Kabisa (completely). This Kiswahili word attracts our attention due to its intrusion in the lexical environment in which the rest of the items are in English. We later learn that by asserting that he will "not go to Abazon, Finish!" (1) Sam, unwittingly, prophesizes his demise. The word is used within the text as a cataphoric reference, the word points forward. A cataphoric reference as Thorne has noted, is one in which "the reader or listener must refer to a future reference in order to understand the structure used" (46).

By Chris foregrounding this text, he intends readers to notice the fatalistic logic attached to Sam's declaration that he would 'completely' not visit Abazon. The term 'completely' becomes understood after Sam is killed without ever going to Abazon. That his declared war against Abazon is partly responsible for the events that lead to his death is telling. It is ironical that Sam appropriates the word "Kabisa" for social disengagement with a section of his subjects, having learnt it while attending a

meeting the Organization of African Unity, a body whose tenets contradict Sam's current posturing.

During the O. A. U meeting, Sam meets old Ngongo, an old president of one of the neighbouring countries. Since Sam has a penchant to imitate that which is foreign to him, he tries to be like old Ngongo because the old man "never smiled nor changed his expression no matter what was going on around him" (52). By the time Chris begins his narrative, Sam has already undergone a transformation and is by then alienated and detached from the aspirations of his people.

Chris presents Sam as alien without necessarily saying so. He therefore succeeds in detaching his role as narrator from his role as a character in Sam's government. By remaining at the background Chris utilizes dialogue all along and we get to know what he thinks by analyzing what he exposes to us of Sam. Sam speaks and acts for himself, therefore making us judge him by what he says and does. Chris takes advantage of his proximity to power to construct his narrative from the information that he has gathered over time, imaginatively controlling hypothetical information into a meaningful incision of Sam's character and the nature of his government.

By letting Sam speak for himself, Chris allows the reader to analyse Sam's speech acts. For instance, the cliché "but me no buts" (1) which Chris uses during the argument, suggests superficiality in Sam's manner of speech. It also shows a dictatorial streak in Sam. Linguistically this statement belongs to the imperative mood (which is used to address commands or orders). The vocative, Mr. Oriko, appears in the middle. The vocative, in this case, expresses a changing attitude that Sam has

acquired towards Chris. We realise this shift in attitude when Sam refers to him variously as Chris, Mr. Oriko and Mr. Commissioner, creating the impression that his attitude towards Chris is unstable. Despite the fact that this changing attitude directly impacting on Chris's friendship with Sam, by avoiding being accusatory and instead maintaining an objective narration, Chris succeeds to control the reader's focus on Sam. He also succeeds to show Sam as inconsistent particularly in matters of loyalty and principle. The reader imagines that if Sam can not have a stable relationship with his childhood friends, then he would less likely have a stable relationship with the people that he leads.

Abazon, where Chris would like Sam to visit, is a dry region where people rely on boreholes to survive. In recent times, however, the government has refused to dig boreholes so as to punish the people. Sam is reluctant to visit Abazon because the people in Abazon refuse to endorse him as life president. This creates the impression that Sam is at war with his people. Suspense is then built around the impending showdown between Sam and his regime on the one hand and the resilient spirit of the people on the other.

Chris's vantage ground enables him to successfully dramatize the actions of Sam and the cabinet. This is an advantage he does not share with the other narrators who sometimes give us second-hand testimony and hearsay of the operations in government. Chris dramatizes his argument with Sam to great effect. He describes how their disagreement shifts from a war of words to an eyewink battle. Finally, Chris gives in but not before he informs us that he does so in "ceremonial capitulation" (1), which shows his reluctance to concede defeat. Despite the symbolism of this mock-

struggle, an element of shallowness is maintained as the basis for their actions and counter actions remains unclear to the reader. Chris's dramatization of this episode affords us insights into Sam's character. Chris enjoins us to witness the actions of Sam first-hand rather than reporting them to us.

Chris also dramatizes the actions of his cabinet colleagues. He describes in detail the reactions of his friends. From Chris's perspective his colleagues are to blame for the state of affairs. He accuses them of complicity, having lost their self-confidence. For this reason, days are good or bad for them depending on how "His Excellency gets out of bed in the morning (2)". Sam, it becomes apparent, attempts to consolidate power around himself without reference to the respect of the rule of law. Neither does he subject his words and actions into vigorous intellectual rigour, which would, if he did, surmount the limitations primed by a group of sycophantic commissioners that surround him.

Clearly, from Chris's point of view, the commissioners seem to have abdicated their duties by perpetually agreeing with their leader even in circumstances where they feel that he is wrong. Hardly do they engage in objective inquiry on the socio-economic misery that the people of Kangan go through. Instead, having engaged in a massive scale of corruption, the commissioners readily cheer on Sam's autocratic leadership. Chris blames his cabinet colleagues, "Eleven intelligent men who let this happen to them... the cream of our society and hope of the black race" (2). Consequently, Chris absolves Sam from any wrong doing, in the process absolving himself too.

Chris uses imagery to describe the relationship between Sam and the commissioners. On the one hand he casts Sam as an omnipotent god-like figure, while on the other hand he describes the commissioners as being animal-like. For instance, Chris tells us that the commissioners "lie close to their hole, ready to scramble in" (2), and that, "the frightened Commissioner for Education began to disappear into his hole, as some animals do, backwards" (3). During the disagreement between Chris and Sam, the Commissioner for Education is so scared that he scatters his papers on the table. Chris describes this action as, "the strangest act of all: the scattering again of his council papers in panic atonement and restitution for the sacrilege he has come so close to committing"(3), and "he has drawn his upper arms tight to his sides as though to diminish his bulk; and clasped his hands before him like a supplicant" (9). The degradation of the commissioners to the level of animals and the elevation of Sam to celestial status shows a strain in political stability, which in turn forebodes tragedy.

By using imagery in this manner, just like by using dramatic narration and description as we have noted, Chris succeeds to expand the possibilities of interaction between the reader and the text. The reader interprets the images and discerns the concerns that Chris is articulating without being apparent. Chris chooses words such as "atonement" "sacrilege" and "supplicant" to elevate Sam to a celestial being and the commissioners to his worshippers. When Sam becomes conciliatory to the commissioners, Chris explains that "the fiery sun retires temporarily behind a cloud" (3). The symbolism of the sun runs across the novel. The sun is described as the "undying eye of the Almighty" with which he looked at his creation, pondered, and finally decided to tame the nature of authority by "wrapping around power's rude waist a loincloth of peace and modesty"(102).

The god-like figure which Chris draws of Sam has drawn the attention of Michael Naumann who has argued that, "like the burning sun, Sam, the military head of state, a rigid character, makes most ministers retreat into burrows. Sam is afraid of the people and he sees a petition as an act of indiscipline" (113). Blinded by power, Sam alienates himself from his cabinet and the people that he leads. Consequently, he becomes dehumanized and loses the susceptibilities that would enable him to lead his subjects well. His alienation from the people is intensified by the fear he has of their latent power. Chris says:

> He soon mastered his fear, although from time to time memories of it would seem to return to torment him. I can see no other explanation for his quite irrational and excessive fear of demonstrations, for example. Even pathetically peaceful, obsequious demonstrations.(3)

Fear precipitates hate. Hate for self, and hate for the unknown. This results to an ego defence mechanism in which Sam engages in a process of self-denial and the projection of a false identity. He becomes unnecessarily ruthless and cruel, a far cry from the man his childhood friends (particularly Chris) describe as a socialite. Sam's fear is derived from his political ascendancy, which is not through the popular will of the people but rather through the gun. Despite consolidating power and entrenching his authority on the people, he is aware that with the lack of grassroots support, no political establishment can last long. His case is worsened when neither himself nor his officers exhibit a strong sense of political morality to win the support of the masses. It would appear, then, that the nature of political ascendancy that does not have the support of the people is built on sand and will come crumbling down.

Chris presents the actions of his colleagues in the cabinet with a great sense of irony. Rather than assist Sam with the leadership of the nation, they are too fearful to the extent of pursuing only their personal survival. Their survival instincts are so sharp that the Commissioner for Education, for example, is thrown off-balance during the disagreement between Sam and Chris. Chris tells us:

> Then he glances round the table until his eyes meet His Excellency and fall dead on the mahogany. The silence had not been broken since my second apology. I was quite certain that the poor fellow (never a strong one for originality) was getting ready to speak my very words, strictly in the same sequence. I swear it. He had drawn his upper arms tight to his sides as though to diminish his bulk; and clasped his hands before him like a supplicant. (3)

By Chris describing the commissioners as dehumanized, he foregrounds the distance Sam's government maintains from the Kangan people who did not elect it. Throughout this episode Chris sustains an awareness that the commissioners do not owe their jobs to the people but rather to Sam. Similarly, he demonstrates that Sam does not owe his job to the people but rather to the power of the gun.

After the cabinet meeting's episode, two narrative voices intervene before we meet Chris's voice again. These voices are the third person narrative voice and the first person narrative voice focalised by Ikem. The narrative interruption invites other perceptions to the interpretation of how the power brokers relate with the ordinary people of Kangan. Further, Chris is transformed from narrator to character. We are

made to weigh what he has been telling us, his perception and attitude towards the events and people in Kangan against what others think of the same. This alteration of vantage points for the three narrators, from narrator to character and back to narrator widens the scope of point of view.

The next time we interact with Chris's voice he has shifted his vantage position from a cabinet meeting to a social gathering in high society. This provides a range of atmospheres necessary to broaden his perspective on his perception of Kanganese politics. Chris's new vantage ground is at Mad Medico's house. The group in Mad Medico's house comprises of elite members of the Kangan high society. Like in the previous episode (during the cabinet meeting), Chris's voice remains in the background rendering his narrative through description and dialogue. The beginning of the episode temporally creates the impression that it is narrated from a dramatic or objective point of view (a third-person point of view) which according to Roberts and Jacobs, this is "as complete and impartial as the speaker's position as an observer allows"(201). Without warning whatsoever, Chris plunges right into the middle of the dialogue in the room:

> 'Same here,' says Ikem.
>
> 'Shit!' replies Mad Medico, 'you don't have to follow your fucking leader in this house, you know. Come on, have scotch or campari or anything -- even water-- just to show him.'
>
> 'Too late' says Ikem. 'we were enslaved originally by Gordon's Dry Gin. All gestures of resistance are now too late and too empty. Gin it shall be forever and ever, Amen.' Jovial moods, but there is not the slightest sign of gaiety in the voice or face. (54)

By Chris consistently remaining in the background in his narrative and only occasionally coming to the fore, he succeeds to distance his point of view from his existence as a character. We therefore trust his point of view as objective and reliable.

At Mad Medico's house, a sense of camaraderie is prevalent in the group as evidenced by the manner in which the group relates. Equally, Chris is more relaxed and focused on the judgements he makes on the surroundings unlike in the cabinet meeting where he indulges in the exercise of self justification and glorification. The overall impression the reader gets from Chris's relaxed mood is that having endeavoured to win over the reader at the beginning of his rendition, Chris is now more assured and has to interact with the reader in a relaxed atmosphere. The relaxed mood also allows the reader to have an interaction with the ruling elite away from their official duties.
Mad Medico, who plays host to the company, is a humorous character. His real name is John Kent. Although he is subtle in his approach, Mad Medico's attitude to Africa is condescending. He feels that Africa is a place for fun making in contrast to his country of origin, England, where life is taken too seriously. Mad Medico introduces his friend Dick as "a white man in the tropics," foregrounding the 'Otherness' of Dick. He contrasts Dick's white skin with the hot climate in tropical Africa, suggesting the discomfort that Dick might feel in Africa. Clearly, from Mad Medico's introduction, Dick, and by extension Mad Medico himself, are distinctly different from the people who surround them. Throughout this episode, Chris remains sharply sarcastic of the two white men. He says of Dick: "Dick nods disinterestedly. He has scarcely said a dozen words all afternoon. He drinks gin and lime as though it was Alka Seltzer"(56). He also captures their patronizing attitude thus:

'Oh, I wouldn't go quite that far,' I say. 'We are no more illogical in these parts than any other people, yourselves included.' There is perhaps more shrillness in my voice than is required'

'Come! Come!' says Dick in a most offensively patronizing tone. 'John is only joking. You see what I mean,' says Mad Medico before I can claim to be joking too. 'No sense of humour left. None whatsoever. They are all so stiff and damned patriotic, so quick to take offence. You cant make a joke here if you are white' (57-58)

By focusing his narrative on the two white men, more or less like he previously focuses his narrative on Sam's use of Western cliches, Chris exposes the 'foreignness' prevalent in Sam's government. He, in the process, foregrounds the greatest weakness of Sam's government: the superficiality of its leaders which alienates them from their subjects. He further develops the theme of foreign influence on the national politics as a basis for disharmony in Kangan. Through him, we witness the foreignness in the language used by Sam, in his political thinking and in his invitation of people like Mad Medico whom he invites to manage institutions in Kangan. This is something that qualified local people could efficiently do.

Chris's perspective is controlled by his proximity to those who wield power. It would appear, however, that the author seeks greater dialogue by employing further perspectives based on the first person narrative voice. It is for this reason that Ikem, though himself an elite, focalizes his first-person point of view from a vantage ground other than that from the position of power. It is appropriate that Ikem articulates issues from the perspective of the downtrodden. As a highly educated man, Ikem is fully aware of the existing relationship between the ruling elite and the ruled. But, as a

rebel, Ikem is capable of talking for the oppressed without having to be poor or pretending to be one. He argues:

> There seems no way I can become like the poor except by faking. What I know, I know for good or for ill. So for good or for ill I shall remain myself; but with this deliberate readiness now to help, and be helped. Like those complex, multivalent atoms in Biochemistry books I have arms that reach out in all directions.... A helping hand, a hand signaling for help. With one I shall touch the earth and leave another free to wave to the skies. (142).

Since Ikem is not, himself, a poor man, his point of view is shaped by what the poor people tell him about their oppression (second hand testimony and hearsay) and what he observes them do (first-hand witness). As one who understands his class position and limitation, his choice to articulate his point of view from the vantage ground of the downtrodden is a conscious one and therefore deliberate. Ikem understands that the relationship between the ruling elite and their subjects (or the oppressor and the oppressed) is not a direct one. He therefore becomes averse to suggestions that portray easy solutions to the problems that afflict the downtrodden, but identifies with them in their struggles. His resolution to touch the earth qualifies him to bear witness on the consequences of the dictatorial regime upon the ordinary people.

In the novel, the sky and the earth symbolise dichotomic relations in the power arrangement. The sky is portrayed as being at war with the earth. The sky symbolizes the ruling elite while the earth, their subjects. Ikem's conviction to touch the earth as he waves to the sky is informed by mediation within this dichotomy.

Ikem presents his perspective in three different ways. As an artist, he writes a creative work 'Hymn to the Sun'. He then directly narrates his experiences. Finally, he utilizes the epistolary mode by writing to Beatrice a 'love letter,' which is ingrained with his ideas about the place of women in the struggle for liberation. In his narrative, Ikem utilizes pidgin. This makes him credible to speak for the downtrodden. By sharing a common code with them, Ikem suggests that he understands their aspirations. Ikem's attention to the language of the people is in tandem with the people's sense of being. Ikem identifies with the downtrodden's aspirations and thus he is able to persuade us, as readers, that he is a credible witness.

Ikem utilizes anecdotes to enhance his point of view. As a first hand witness rather than a narrator of first hand experience (which we have seen Chris to be) it is appropriate that he uses anecdotes to draw comparisons and arrive at conclusions. In this way, he succeeds to convince the reader that he has the necessary sensibilities to speak for the downtrodden.

In one of the anecdotes, he tells the story of Mr 'So Therefore'-- a worker at the Posts and Telegraphs who often beats his wife in the middle of the night. In one of these instances, Mr. So Therefore beats his wife in the night. The next morning, Ikem finds the two relaxed and in a friendly mood. This greatly shocks Ikem who is lost for words as he tries to comprehend how those who suffer at the hands of the oppressor tolerate their circumstances.

This incident reminds Ikem of another in which two taxi drivers had visited his house to make an apology to him. It happened that he had had a competition with one of the two over a one-metre space on the road. The drivers come to Ikem's house to apologize because they feel that it was rude to compete with a person of Ikem's social standing. The drivers, however, subtly blame Ikem for driving a battered old Datsun without a Chauffeur. Their argument is that had Ikem been in a flashy car in accordance with his class, they would have easily identified him. Ikem is forced to question himself:

> ... How does one begin to explain the downtrodden driver's wishful preference for a leader driving not like themselves in a battered and spluttering vehicle but differently, stylishly in a Mercedes and better still with another trodden person like themselves for a chauffeur?.... An insistence by the oppressed that his oppression be performed in style. (138-9)

It is ironical that the downtrodden admire the ostentatious display of the wealth stolen from them by the oppressor. This admiration, at first shocks Ikem but it also educates him on the complex psychology involved between the oppressor and the oppressed. By trying to understand the psychology of the oppressed, Ikem veers from Marxist thinking in which the oppressed are seen to come together to overthrow the oppressor (154). It emerges to him that the institutionalisation of oppression is a complex process, which might need a complete overhaul. He tries to interpret the dynamics of society and concludes that there are no easy solutions to human problems. He thus becomes a critic of simplistic maxims in approaching solutions that afflict society.

Ikem's point of view seeks completeness and accuracy of observation. He does not want to rush the reader into hasty generalizations but instead delves into the bottom of the argument by trying to unearth its essence. Despite his being a first-person narrator, Ikem attempts impartial presentation of his narrative by appearing to be honest, objective, intelligent, impartial and thorough. For this reason, in his entire narrative Ikem consistently indulges in the process of self-questioning and self-examination.

There are moments when Ikem opens up his thoughts to the reader, making the reader visit his innermost struggles in attempting to balance the conflicting nature of the human element. By sharing his thoughts with the reader at the exclusion of the other characters, Ikem succeeds in winning the reader's empathy. As he constantly questions his emotions and actions towards the socio-political set-up, Ikem invites the reader to share with him these feelings. In one instance, Ikem finds himself missing the nightly fights between Mr. So Therefore and his wife. He questions himself: "Do you miss it then? Confess you disgusting brute that indeed you do!" (34), to which he responds, "well, why not? There is an extra-ordinary surrealistic quality about the thing that is almost satisfyingly cathartic" (34).

By opening himself up to us, Ikem establishes a rapport with the reader and succeeds in having the reader in great confidence. Ikem wrestles with his own postulations as he tries to find out whether he makes any significant achievement towards liberating himself, as much as he would like to liberate his people from the shackles of an oppressive government. As an intellectual, Ikem thoroughly dissects the liberation process and finds out that life is fraught with irony: the oppressed might not understand the position of the liberator.

As a self-styled liberator, Ikem's intellectualism lends credibility to his point of view. His intellectualism makes up for his inability to report from a first hand experience which a narrator from a poor background would. Ikem reconstructs his narrative through hypothetical and imaginative information, which is a mark of his interaction with the downtrodden for whom he speaks. Aware that for a new social order to be created, the prevailing systems need to be questioned, if not overhauled, Ikem demonstrates that sacrifice of individual comfort is a necessary ingredient in this process. This precipitates Ikem's decision to narrate his story from an unfamiliar vantage point: that of the downtrodden.

As noted, Ikem's narrative utilizes anecdotes, some of which which inform his perception of power. In one of these anecdotes, Ikem tells us of a wrestler, in fact, a champion of Kangan, who refuses to be drawn into a brawl with a drunk man bent on irking him. People advise the wrestler to deal with the drunken man firmly, but the wrestler appears keen on quietly sneaking out of the market. People are at first surprised that one should tolerate such a nuisance for so long, until one man in the audience recognises him as "last night's new champion wrestler of Kangan" (47). The second anecdote is about a soldier who nearly runs over a hawker in Gelegele market with his jeep. The shocked trader asks the soldier, "Oga, you want kill me?" (48) and the soldier responds, "if I kill you I kill dog"(48). The soldier's act of brawn shocks the crowd but the hawker takes it in his stride.

> 'Does he mean that after killing me he will go and kill a dog?' And others joined in the laughter. 'No, he means that to kill you is like to kill a dog.' ' So therefore you na dog....Na dog born you.' But the victim

stuck to his far more imaginative interpretation, 'No,' he said again. ' If I kill you I kill dog means that after he kill me he will go home and kill his dog'. (48)

Ikem utilizes these anecdotes to enhance his point of view. By dramatizing the contrasting usage of power in the two anecdotes he successfully makes the reader approve of the first episode in which a strong wrestler chooses to use his physical power sparingly while condemning the soldier in the second episode who uses his office to harass the ordinary people. Ikem, through these anecdotes, criticises Sam's government which flaunts its authority on the citizens. As is the case in the anecdote of the unobtrusive wrestler, here also, the citizens are the bedrock of political power, yet government leaders behave as if they could do without them. Through these anecdotes Ikem tells us that true power rests with the people themselves who are, however unostentatious with it. The government leaders on the other hand, like the drunk man of Gelegele, arrogantly provoke the people of Kangan by constantly insulting their patience.

Besides using anecdotes, Ikem makes use of sarcasm, to dramatize Sam's character:

> There is something else about Sam which makes him enormously easy to take: his sense of theatre. He is basically an actor and half of the things we are inclined to hold against him are no more than senses from his repertory to which he may have no sense of moral commitment whatsoever. He was fascinated by the customs of the English. (50)

Sam's play-acting, as perceived by Ikem, foregrounds the unreliability of Sam's leadership and by extension that of his government. Ikem tells us of an incident in which Sam spent a whole morning trying to choose a pipe. The attention that Sam pays to such little incidents insinuate a shaky political status in his leadership strategy. By advancing this argument, Ikem builds on earlier insinuations by Chris, on Sam's superficiality. This superficiality is demonstrated in Chris's narrative by the foreign words and clichés that Sam uses. Ikem brings it a notch higher by assessing his character. That Sam holds the West in awe demonstrates that he is not keen to have a mutual interaction with his people that would translate to a meaningful co-existence between the leaders and the led.

It is worth noting that when Ikem analyses Sam's character he does not articulate a second hand testimony and hearsay but, instead, he renders a first hand experience having known Sam for over 25 years. The shift in articulating from a second-hand testimony (in which he must imaginatively interpret the experiences of the oppressed) to articulating from a first hand experience is necessary to foreground Ikem's class status which he has had to sacrifice for the purpose of controlling his point of view. Ikem attempts to deal with this limitation (of articulating his point of view from the oppressed's perspective while belonging to the elite class) by also constructing his point of view through creative art. Thus Ikem succeeds in capturing the imagination of the oppressed people for whom he speaks. Ikem's 'Hymn to the sun' is one of the only two artistic pieces of his creative work that we encounter in the novel. Beatrice tells us that Ikem has "written a full length novel and play on the women's war of 1929 which stopped the British administration cold in its tracks" (91).According to Beatrice, in these works, Ikem assigns women "the traditional role which society gave

them of intervening only when everything else has failed, like the women in the Sembene film who pick up the spears abandoned by their defeated men folk" (91 – 92).

In the novel, however, we encounter two of his works. One is published with one of his editorials and, according to him, is to be sung to the tune of "Lord Thy Word Abideth":

> The worst threat from men of hell
>
> May not be their actions cruel
>
> Far worse that we learn their way
>
> And behave fierce than they (43)

Ikem uses the poem to conclude his editorial in which he attacks capital punishment. The irony of its effect on the ordinary people in Kangan is that the same people who had seemed to enjoy the occasion in which capital punishment is executed, end up liking this poem so much that they sing it "up and down the street of Bassa" (43). The people's reaction to this poem underscores Ikem's belief that the people's power can be restored back to them. Clearly, Ikem understands the latent power that is hidden in the common person's humble mien.

This poem is similar to the 'Hymn to the sun' in the sense that Ikem invokes the supernatural to artistically discuss political issues in Kangan. 'Hymn to the sun' is dedicated to the sun. It is a form of prayer. This hymn is a response to Brigadier Misfortune who warns the people of Kangan that they will be steamed into well-done mutton (27) by the sun in April. Ikem describes the disagreement between the earth and the sky in a legendary manner. According to Ikem's hymn, the sun is determined

to be vengeful to the earth and shall not relent even for the compassion of mankind. Ikem uses anthropomorphic metaphors to describe the anger and vengeance of the sun. Ikem thus compares the sun to the hunter who, homeward bound with a great hunt, the carcass of an elephant, on his great head still dallies on the way to pick up a grass-hopper between his toes (30).

The metaphor here portrays the 'undying eye of God' as greedy and unreasonable. Yet, it is with the same 'undying eye of God' that the Almighty looked upon the earth and decided to tame the misuse of authority. It turns out that the 'undying eye of God' acquires these qualities to deal with leaders who exhibit them. Taking the dimension of a legend, Ikem describes the kind of destruction that is done by the vengeful sun. He describes this destruction with a sense of timelessness making it appear as having happened in some unknown time only to bring it suddenly to the present: "So they sent instead a deputation of elders to the government who hold the yam today and hold the knife, to seek help of them" (33).

This sudden shift from the cosmic abstractions to the concrete (where we are in an apparent present dealing with characters whom we interact with in the narrative) merges the supernatural and the natural world in an analogous sense. Suddenly, we feel that the 'undying eye of the Almighty' which Ikem has so far kept in the province of the supernatural world, translates to those in government who hold the yam and the knife, meaning Sam. In this respect, Ikem's 'Hymn to the Sun' is an important statement on Sam's actions, particularly as it underscores the spiritual which attempt to encroach on the mythological universe. Sam's spiritual encroachment on the province of the gods makes the semantics of the 'undying eye of God' perpetually

ambiguous. On the one hand we are confronted with the possibilities of the 'undying eye of the Almighty' being the reservoir of peace and tranquility while on the other representing its polar opposite of violent militancy espoused by Sam's military regime. Constantly, we are made to weigh Sam's mortality as a human being, with the gods immortality, whom he attempts to impersonate and we hence arrive at conclusions that Sam's fate might be violent.

From Ikem's hymn we learn about the metaphor of the anthills and the grass. As the sun scorches the earth, the trees become, "hydra-headed bronze statues so ancient that only blunt residual features remained on their faces, like anthills surviving to tell the new grass of the savannah about last year's fires" (31). This metaphor is the first apparent reference to the title of the book. The meaning of the metaphor might be unclear but we get the feeling that the anthills, though ugly and not as beautiful as the "new grass of the Savannah", remain unshakeable. The new grass will soon be burnt out by the "fiery sun and the anthills will still stand there waiting for new grass" (31). This analogy in the novel makes reference to the people and their leaders. New leaders emerge, beautiful in their newness, and they might overlook the masses, but will be swept away leaving the masses standing, awaiting other leaders.

That Ikem writes his hymn to the sun and another hymn to be sung in the tune of 'Lord Thy word Abideth' introduces the idea of pantheistic democracy in which Ikem shows an interaction between the Christian religion and the African traditional religion. His arguments on pantheistic democracy are further developed in his 'love letter' which he sends to Beatrice. This love letter is not a conventional love letter but rather an essay in which we interact with his thoughts. Ikem writes this essay after being prompted by

Beatrice's criticism of his inability to give women modern roles which they should play alongside men. Beatrice's challenge is the greatest that Ikem faces in his arguments.

The essay then is a form of a new beginning for Ikem -- a realization that his conceptualization of liberation is inadequate unless he fully integrates all oppressed groups in his conceptual frame. In his new thinking, Ikem considers that patriarchy has always found excuses to subjugate women and to oppress them. He quotes extensively from the Judeo-Christian myths and his people's myths. He finds similarity in these myths hence universalising the oppression of women. From this letter, we get the impression that Ikem has finally reached the highest level of self-reform and identification with oppressed people.

Ikem is aware that social reform must begin with the evaluation of the individual self. He finds fault in his previous postulations, but rather than entangle himself with past regrets, he utilizes his present revelations to fasten his resolution to fight oppressive institutions. He thus advances the theme of social reform. In his argument, however, social reform cannot be achieved exclusive of individual reform. He argues:

> Society is an extension of the individual. The most we can hope to do with a problematic individual psyche is to re-form it. No responsible psychoanalyst would aim to do more, for to do more, to overthrow the psyche itself; would be to unleash insanity. (100)

Ikem believes that social reform is the panacea to the social disharmony in Kangan. He, however, makes a distinction between social reform and revolution. He argues that revolution can be catastrophic as it may lead to social disintegration. He therefore

hinks that it can be counter-productive. Thus, throughout his narrative Ikem emerges as a pro-reform crusader.

Ikem's narration is in contrast to Chris's. While Chris opens his narrative at a presidential palace, Ikem opens his narrative from middle class staff quarters. In Chris's narrative, the setting, atmosphere, and language reflect power and authority. In contrast, Ikem utilizes nuances availed to him by the pidgin speech community to focalize his point of view from the ordinary people's perspective. In focussing their narratives in these dichotomies these narrators give us a chance to look at the power relations in Kangan from contrasting perspectives. They also represent the opposing polarities of the political divide. Ikem consciously articulates the position of the oppressed subjects, while Chris unconsciously represents the interests of the ruling class. Chris would, of course, want to imagine that he resists the class definition of his status, but by accepting to retain his class position, he inevitably assumes the identity of the ruling class. These polar differences between Ikem and Chris veer them from operating within common vantage points of view resulting in a proliferation of the perspectives on the politics of Kangan, hence the expansion of the narrator's collective perception.

The two narrators die before the novel ends. This is unconventional. In the first person narratives, narrators often survive to tell their story. It is possible that since the two narrators are directly involved in the politics of Kangan from different polarities, the author eliminates them and passes on the narrative to a third narrator who is neutral to the political devide. This third first-person narrator, Beatrice, appropriately takes

the neutral line as she is close to both Chris and Ikem. To Chris she is a girlfriend, while, to Ikem she is a sister-figure.

However, Chris and Ikem however, share an important perspective in their points of view. As male narrators, their points of view are influenced by patriarchy. Throughout Ikem's narrative, manifestations of a 'man's voice' suffice. This is despite Ikem's latter change of heart after Beatrice calls to his attention this 'man's voice' in his artistic works. After Elewa visits him, Ikem insists that she should not sleep in his house. He agues:

> A man should wake up in his own bed. A woman likewise whatever they choose to do prior to sleeping is no reason to deny them that right. I simply detest the very notion of waking up and finding beside you somebody naked and unappetising. It is unfair to you but especially to her. So I have never bargained with my right to repossess my apartment and my freedom fully. To shower and retire to my bed, alone is, it seems to me, such a simple, straight forward and reasonable expectation. But many women take it as a personal affront, which I find very odd indeed. They are their own worst enemy, women are.(37)

It is apparent from the foregone that Ikem does not consider a man as possibly becoming sexually unappetizing. This is a manifestation of the 'man's voice' which intrudes into his otherwise well meaning crusade against the oppressed people. His efforts notwithstanding reality demands that a member of the oppressed or suppressed groups focalizes their position informed by their sensibilities. It is for this reason that Ikem acknowledges to Beatrice that:

> I can't tell you what the new role for women will be I don't know. I should never have presumed to know. You have to tell us. We never asked you before. And perhaps because you've never been asked you may not have thought about it; you may not have the answer handy. But in this case everybody had better know who is now holding up the action. (98)

Ikem candidly acknowledges his limitations in attempting to speak for women. This is the same limitation he faces when attempting to speak for the poor. It is thus understandable when the author kills Ikem to allow Beatrice articulate this position. Chris on the other hand is outrightly limited by his class position. His office in the military regime makes his voice important insofar as he gives us the insiders account. His voice, however recedes in relevance in relevance as the narrative advances to what should be done to achieve the system's reform. He is part of this patriarchal system that needs reform and is , therefore, unsuitable in articulating them. The artist does not, for that matter, make a mere figural shift from him but rather a qualitative shift to another character who possesses the moral standing to articulate such reformist views.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the author uses the narrative voice to build up his thematic progression interconnected with point of view as a structural device. In this way the structural design of the novel gains importance in drawing conclusions about the overall message derived from it.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONVENTIONAL FIRST PERSON POINT OF VIEW

In this chapter we focus on the conventional first person narrative voice. Beatrice Nwanyibuife, who articulates this voice, unlike Chris and Ikem, survives the tragic events in Kangan to narrate her story. In the government, Beatrice is a senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. She has first honours in English from Queen Mary college University of London, England.

As a woman she delves into autogynographical concerns which set her apart from the other two narrators as she seeks to construct her own identity. In analysing Beatrice's narrative it is imperative to distinguish the "woman's" voice from the "man's" voice (which is manifest in the previous narrative voices) to be able to understand the "differential ethical development that appeals to the woman's own experience not derived from the 'universal' experience of men" (Smith and Watson 30). These autogynographical concerns advance a revision of socially established concepts of women's life issues such as growing up, coming to voice, affiliation, sexuality and textuality, and the life cycle. She struggles to make visible subjects which would remain invisible under patriarchy. She reconstructs her childhood revealing the psychology of patriarchy and challenges patriarchal positions which even members of her household held when she was growing up. She argues:

> I must mention that in addition to Beatrice they had given me another name at baptism, Nwanyibuife – a female is also something. Can you beat that? Even as a child I disliked the name most intensely without being aware of its real meaning. It merely struck me at that point that I knew of nobody else with that name; it seemed fudged! (187)

As patriarchy attempts to define her unfavourably she defies such a definition and instead attempts to define herself by claiming models of heroic identity. For instance, she prefers the abridged form of her name Buife (asserting that she is something worth of attention) but discards the derogatory derivation of womanhood: "perhaps it was Nwanyi the female half of it that I particularly resented" (87). By challenging such cultural stereotyping, Beatrice engages herself in self-re-interpretation and self-discovery.

In attempting to address women issues more succinctly than Ikem and Chris do, Beatrice offers an alternative voice to Chris's and Ikem's. Beatrice's voice then attempts to persuade the reader on the validity of dissecting the oppressive institutions from a woman's point-of-view. In so doing, Beatrice succeeds in rendering sensibilities other than Chris's and Ikem's in diagnosing the extent of the political malaise in Kangan. She expands the scope of perception in what might be regarded oppressive and unjust.

Her friendship with Ikem and Chris brings her close to those who wield power in Kangan. She tells us that she had gone fairly often to the palace with Chris and sometimes with Chris and Ikem in the early days after Sam took over power (70). Because of her proximity to power, her voice becomes equally credible in analysing the political situation. This is because physical proximity to the political regime enriches her political experience and awareness. By telling the reader that she was a regular visitor to statehouse she attempts to persuade the reader as to her suitability as a narrator. As Chris's lover and Ikem's sister-figure Beatrice's reliability is unquestionable and the reader trusts her narrative's ability to render a credible account

of Kangenese politics. Similarly, Sam treats her with some modicum of respect, which is consistent with the argument that she is knowledgeable enough with many aspects of politics in Kangan. By being close to both Ikem and Chris, Beatrice presents a middle ground of their diverse vantage grounds.

Her proximity to the leaders of Kangan is exemplified by the journalists' reference to her as the "latter day Madame Pompadour" (84). The journalists do so to catch the eye of the authorities. The allusion to Madame Pompadour refers to Antonneite Poisson who was the favourite of King Louise XV, between 1745 – 1751. As mistress of the king, she used her position to manipulate generals and patronize writers. Madame Pompadour defended Choisen et Bemis to the king. She is also known to have been a great defender of the arts and letters (Petis Larousse Encoulerws 657). The implied meaning to the journalists' text is that Beatrice is a manipulative and crafty character who would use her sexual power to dictate the nature of social events.

Beatrice foregrounds the journalists' postulations to show the patriarchal mindset which exists even among the merchants of information. In so doing, Beatrice succeeds in portraying oppression as wider and complex than prescriptive definitions would warrant. A narratological analysis of the journalists' text from a gender perspective reveals that the visualized paradigm anchored by the allusion to Madame Pompadour harbours a patriarchal presumptuousness (which Beatrice refers to elsewhere to as "Bottom power") (87). This has phallic associations that underscore the male chauvinism which she has to surmount in her struggle to assert herself. According to Kabira and Masinjila:

> Narratological analysis acknowledges that often there are multiple actors and voices in the same text, present via any given medium. The aim of the analysis is to identify the different elements within both the written words and the gender responsiveness of a text. (13)

Beatrice consistently challenges the interpretation of socio-political phenomena through a masculine point of view. In so doing Beatrice calls the reader's attention to the feminine aspects of society whose importance is down played by patriarchal socialization. The reader is made to compare Beatrice's strategy in emphasizing femininity against the backdrop of military power (which is socialized masculine), and considers the possibility that feminine socialization, if integrated in society, would reduce the destruction that comes with an overemphasis of masculine socialization in the construction of social order. However, before Beatrice can successfully place her arguments against socially accepted positions, however, she has to surmount impediments that face , Beatrice is a non-entity (23). This is a fact that she finds necessary to deal with as she quintessentially claims her narrative space. She thus gives a historiography of her existence in time and space.

She aggressively defends herself from the analogy between her and Madame Pompadour. The journalists would like to insinuate that Beatrice is the power behind the throne; a fact that she strongly contests. According to her, she got involved with Ikem and Chris quite by accident. She tells us that she had met Ikem while in college in England, and Chris while he was still the editor of the National Gazette. She asserts:

> And if I say that Chris did all the chasing I am not boasting of anything. That was simply how it was. And I wasn't being coy either. It was a matter of experience having taught me in my little lonely world that I had to be wary. (87)

The loneliness that Beatrice talks about foregrounds her role as narrator and as a character. Beatrice, it seems, moves against the grain by defying accepted institutions to establish her own code. As a narrator her 'woman's voice' survives to stitch together the narratives of Ikem and Chris long after they are dead. Conveniently it is Beatrice's diary that records the narratives of Ikem and Chris and the male narrators voice survive because of Beatrice's lone foresight. Beatrice's loneliness then serves to isolate her from the rest of the world around her, making her both unique and distinct. For this reason, "it brings tears to her eyes"(84) when anybody calls her ambitious or even compares her to Madame Pompadour, since she "never sought attention; not even as a child" (84). Despite her discomfort with the reference to Madame Pompadour, Beatrice's role as a character-narrator is significantly heightened, since she is the only character narrator who survives to tell the tale. This exalts her to the position of the custodian of the narrative. Significantly, it is she who requests Chris to maintain his diary (67) while in turn, Ikem challenges her to speak out because "everybody had better know who is now holding up the action"(98).

Beatrice has peculiar insights far beyond Ikem's or Chris's grasp. Her ability to foresee the future prompts Chris to consider her as a member of the house of Baal, or as 'priestess' (14). The reference to Beatrice as a prophet of Baal fits in the narrative progression in two different ways. First, Beatrice is constructed around the legend of

Idemili; "the daughter of the Almighty"(102). She is the prophetess of Idemili, Secondly, Beatrice tries to intercede in the disagreement between characters whom Naumann classifies as "earthly and solar personalities"(55) but fails. In failing to invoke the powers of Idemili to intercede in the developing tension between the two different groups, she faces the same fate as do the prophets of Baal who call upon their gods but fail. Yet this failure is only temporary since as her voice survives Chris's and Ikem's there seems to be tacit suggestion that her voice needs to be listened to.

Beatrice attempts to reconcile the disparate perceptions between Chris and Ikem in the trend of political socialization in Kangan. She frowns at the radical rebellion espoused by Ikem while decrying Chris's equivocation, which benefits the status quo. Beatrice also reprimands Sam for alienating himself from his subjects and embracing foreigners instead. As Beatrice, however, attempts to reconcile the divergent perceptions between Chris and Ikem, she seems to be aware that her voice is the voice of the future. She thus compares her role with "Chielo in the novel, the priestess and prophetess of the Hills and the Caves" (114). In Things Fall Apart, Chielo is the priestess of Agbala the oracle of the hills. From time to time, Chielo is possessed by the spirit of her god and begins to prophesise. As priestess and prophetess, Chielo is in a position to reprimand the lords of the land: "Beware, Okonkwo!." She warned. "Beware of exchanging words with Agbala. Does a man speak when a god speaks? Beware"(114).

By comparing herself to Chielo, Beatrice successfully draws the reader's attention to Chielo's prophetic attributes. Beatrice implies that her narrative has an essential ingredient of the prophesy that Cheilo is renowned for in Things Fall Apart. Beatrice

also suggests that although her voice is focalised from a socially disadvantaged position (that of a woman), she is confident to surmount the social obstacles and survive as the voice that portends Kangan's future. Her comparison with Chielo squarely puts the masculine and feminine conflict into focus.

While in Things Fall Apart Okonkwo is synecdochely constructed as the essence of masculinity in the Ibo cosmology, he is unable to challenge Chielo's reprimand though she is a woman. Moreover, although Okonkwo is a man of action, feared and respected for the role he plays in defending his society as warrior, the words which Chielo spits at him throw him into a state of inaction. This shows the potent power of words, a motif that is fully developed in Anthills of the Savannah. Words, as a motif in Anthills of the Savannah, unlike in Things Fall Apart, are not merely implied but rather actively pursued as an alternative to physical combat symbolised by the military regime in Kangan. This gives credence to the purpose of Chris, Ikem and Beatrice's existing as narrators whose narratives must survive during Kangan's tragic events. That words which Ikem and Chris write survive them, shows the potent ability for words to outdo action. Action may survive during its span but words outlive it, survive it and give credence to it. Beatrice seems to be aware of the importance of words in her role as a narrator:

> My friendship with strange words began no doubt quite early when I first recognised it and welcomed it at the end of my father's family prayers to begin or end of the day--prayers so long that I would float in and out of sleep and sometimes keel over and fall on my side. (85)

Beatrice successfully dramatizes her 'friendship' with words. By considering words as her friends, she dramatically demands her narrative space. It is noteworthy that her first acquaintance with words is during prayer sessions. Given her background as the daughter of Idemili, Beatrice suggests an analogous relationship between words and the religious background that she espouses. Idemili's overriding tenets are peace and modesty. Therefore, Beatrice's attempt to compare words alongside her religiosity implies that she is a convert to both in an analogous sense. Viewed against the background of the military regime in Kangan, we discern a developing thematic strand in which Idemili (a goddess connoting a feminine aspect of the cosmos) whose tenets: peace and modesty, can be articulated through the means of words.

In this context, Beatrice's interpretation and understanding of the meaning of words positions her as the custodian of Ikem's and Chris's narratives. Her narrative becomes the voice of the future, which seeks peace and modesty, manifested through dialogue, rather than by militancy or autocracy. Beatrice is in a position to foresee and eventually oversee the coming to birth of a new social order in which dialogue gets prominence above violence and in a more liberal and accommodating society where greater space is availed to pantheistic democracy, gender sensitivity and a greater class interaction.

While Chielo knows which god she is serving, it is not clear to Beatrice for whom she works. She sometimes feels her prophetic powers but her function is undermined by her interaction with the western world which degrades African traditional institutions. This unsettles her performance as the priestess of Idemili, the daughter of the Almighty, whom we are told was sent to earth, "to bear witness to the moral nature of

authority by wrapping around powers rude waist a loin cloth of peace and modesty" (102). As an educated narrator, however, Beatrice like Ikem and Chris, plays the role of a social analyst, making a commentary on the political socialization in Kangan. As a woman, she develops her narrative as an autogynography assessing the broader socio-political issues alongside her existence as a woman.

Because of her role as the custodian of the narrative Beatrice refers to herself as cherubim and seraphim- biblical attendants of God or a holy place. She further attempts to protect the sanctity of her nation's institutions, and to assuage the impending catastrophe in the country, resulting from the leadership that has locked out the subjects from playing a role in national harmony. In playing the role a cherubim, Beatrice challenges Sam's political stance. She asks him: "If I went to America today, to Washington DC, would I walk into a White House private dinner and take the American president hostage. And his Defence Chief and his Director of C.I.A?" (81). By challenging Sam thus, she becomes the first narrator to directly question Sam's authority. She accuses him of betraying the nation to the foreigners hence defiling the sanctity of nationhood. This is an important stage in the narrative progression. While Chris uncritically describes the foreignness of Sam's actions, Beatrice takes us a step further in the narrative build up when she openly questions this extraneousness which is the height of alienation. She challenges this exoticism which precipitates social disintegration in Kangam.

Beatrice's presumption of cherubim and seraphim enhances her psychological point of view in which her preferences and prejudices shade the descriptions of her narrative. She successfully persuades the reader of her intentions for the nation. As a narrator

she narrates her experiences in the expansion of the space of participation not by recollection but by actually describing her participation and involvement. She describes her actions without reservation by including those that the reader would most likely disapprove of, hence she succeeds to convince the reader that she is genuine and well meaning. When persuading Sam against foreign influence on his leadership, she sacrifices her morality by involving her sexual power to seduce Sam from succumbing to foreigners. She says:

> And I was glad the king was slowly but surely responding! I was glad!. The big snake, the royal python of a gigantic erection began to stir in the shrubbery of my shrine as we danced closer and closer to soothing airs, soothing our ancient bruises together in the dimmed lights. Fully aroused he clung desperately to me. (81)

Symbolically, Sam's royal python (his sexual organ) responds to Beatrice's riverbed (her sexual organ). In the novel, "Eke-Idemili.... Royal python, messenger of the daughter of God – the very one who carries not a drop of venom in its mouth yet is held in greater awe than the deadliest of serpents!" (105) is used both as Idemili's totem (the goddess of peace and modesty) and as a phallic image of a man's sexual organ. This comparison between Eke – Idemili as the totem of daughter of God and as a man's sexual organ converges two diverse social ideals in a symbolic sense: femininity and masculinity. In the novel, there appears to be a suggestion that there is a need to blend masculine and feminine ideals to achieve a balance in society. Beatrice, of all the character–narrators, seems to have pursued this thematic strand more aggressively.

By invoking her sexual power, Beatrice is also utilizing her mythic power as the priestess of Idemili to preserve the nation from the impending tragedy, which she understands to be a result of the political system's alienation from the ordinary masses. Sam physically responds to Beatrice's overtures but in spirit he is already exiled from his people and also from himself. He is no longer in control of himself and by extension of the nation. He therefore misses the chance to steer the nation off the looming tragedy.

Beatrice believes that the reconstruction of nationhood must be done with the reconstruction of the woman's role in society. She challenges Ikem for having thoughts that are unclear and reactionary on the role of the modern woman in society (96). She also questions the current constitution of the woman's role in society. She argues:

> But the way I see it is that giving women today the same role which traditional society gave them of intervening only when everything else has failed is not enough, you know, like the women in the Sembene film who pick up the spears abandoned by their defeated men folk. It is not enough that women should be the courts of last resort because the last resort is a damn sight too far and too late! (92)

Her criticism of Ikem sharpens the latter's sensibilities in his quest to identify with the oppressed masses. It is on the basis of her criticism upon his position that Ikem constructs his love letter. Upon sensing his imminent death, as a martyr for the oppressed, Ikem formally hands over the baton of the struggle to Beatrice and tells her

to speak out for the women who are the most oppressed group of people. This challenge greatly takes effect on Beatrice:

> I stared at the paper, at the writing... elegant but at the same time, immensely powerful. He got up too and I walked up to him. Impulsively he circled me in his embrace. I looked up at him and he began to kiss me. Everything inside me dissolving; my knees giving way under me; I was trembling violently and I seemed to be struggling for air. (101)

Based on Ikem's challenge, Beatrice takes the role to fight the Desdemona complex as an overriding motive. She believes that unless Sam stops depending on foreign ideology in the management of his local politics, the future of the nation is doomed. Her first chance to do this comes during his visit to Abichi. Sam invites her to the presidential retreat in Abichi. She is at first surprised that she has not been invited with Chris. Chris tells her to keep all options open. He does not protest the possibility that Sam is taking away his girlfriend. Beatrice is surprised that Chris can react so open handedly on such a matter. From Chris's reaction at this personal level, we are enabled to see how reticent Chris can become when it comes to openly challenging injustice at whatever level. With a tongue in the cheek, Beatrice says that she finds him too reasonable on that front.

Beatrice's narrative successfully prepares the reader for the future role that Beatrice must play in providing alternative leadership in Kangan. By constantly foregrounding the role of women in society, and by narrating her heroic deeds in the struggle to reconstitute society, Beatrice encourages the reader to see her as capable of offering

alternative leadership in Kangan. During her invitation to Abichi, for instance, Beatrice protests against the impolite manner in which Sam invites her. She says:

> My first act of rebellion which was to bring a wan smile on my face five minutes later for its sheer futility was to refuse my escorts' offer to sit in the owners corner of the black Mercedes standing in my drive way. As he rushed a head of me and opened and held the door I simply said sorry, walked over to the other side and let myself in. The Chauffeur turned sharply round on his seat perhaps to get a good look at today's eccentric cargo. When I said good evening to him on top of all that, he seemed dazed to begin with and then his bafflement gave way to a wide happy grin which pleased me very much for it confirmed that I had successfully compounded my rebellion first to spurn a seat of honour and then to so great a mere driver first. (72)

The nonchalance that Chris exhibits during this occasion towards the kind of interaction that Beatrice might have with Sam, is indicative of his continued attack on Ikem. Ikem says, "Chris keeps lecturing me on the futility of my crusading editorials. They achieve nothing. They antagonise everybody. They are essays in overkill. They are counterproductive"(38). Yet, political inaction is not the by-motive of Ikem and Beatrice. The two take their position in what they believe in and fight for it. At Abichi, during the dinner to which she is invited by Sam, Beatrice perceives as the material reality of Western intrusion in African affairs the presence of Westerners who come to Africa and try to advice African leaders on how to manage their affairs. In this she targets Lou Cranford, an American journalist. Lou tells Beatrice that she

would want them to discuss matters to do with the woman's angle. Beatrice, noticing her as a 'Desdemona' becomes offensive to her and pointedly tells her that she did not see what "a reporter who could stroll in any time and get it all direct from the horse's mouth would want to hear from the likes of me"(75). The American girl notices Beatrice's hostility and involuntarily, perhaps, "her eyes narrowed into a fighting squint for the briefest moment and then just as swiftly changed fast back to friendliness" (75-76)

In Lou, Beatrice sees a threat to the political constitution of Kangan which she has vowed to protect. She is incensed with the manner in which the political elite besmirch the dignity of the nation in the presence of Lou:

> She could occasionally leave him (Sam) hanging on a word she had just spoken while she turned to fling another at major Ossai whom she addressed only as Johnson. And wonder of wonders she even referred to the Chief Staff, General Lango, as Ahmed on one occasion. And for these effronteries she got nothing but grinns from the gentlemen in question. Unbelievable! (78)

According to Beatrice, Lou's actions throughout the dinner party are outrageously familiar and domineering. She finds the officials' response to her, including that of Sam, shocking and with determination she vows to challenge these kind of events by reinstituting some modicum of discipline among the political elite.

Beatrice's narrative appropriately takes up the conventional first person voice. In so doing, Beatrice emerges as the harmonising factor of the disparate voices of Ikem and Chris, building the narrative to its appropriate thematic implications. The death of Ikem and Chris allows the thematic development towards reinstitution of nationhood alongside the reinstitution of the feminine powers in the cosmos. Beatrice, a woman, survives to reconstruct the tragic history of Kangan by emphasizing dialogue as an alternative to military dictatorship in opening up the democratic space. In this chapter then, Beatrice emerges as a custodian of the national institutions as much as she struggles to reconstitute the role of women in society. In so doing she builds the ideas of Chris and Ikem to greater finesse. In Beatrice's narrative we see the intensification of criticism in Sam's manner of running the government. Beatrice, however, unlike the previous narrator, figures out more clearly what needs to be done. And her point of view as a woman, a senior government official and prophetess of Idemili enables her to advance her arguments more candidly.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THIRD PERSON POINT OF VIEW

In this chapter, we focus on the third person narrative voice. This narrative voice heightens the dramatic interest of the novel by broadening the perspectives advanced by the three first-person narrators whom we have so far discussed. In Anthills of the Savannah, Achebe utilizes the third person objective more frequently than he does the third person omniscient. Besides the third- person objective, Achebe also utilizes the third limited omniscient point of view. In this chapter, we discuss instances in which these variant third person points of view are used and the overall effect this bears on the novel.

Omar Sougou has noted that Anthills of the Savannah is based on:

> Spectacular structures in that the narrative is focalized through each of the three main characters in turn: Christopher Oriko (Chris), the Commissioner for Information; Ikem Osodi, the editor of the National Gazette and Beatrice Okoh, Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. Each of them is a reflector through whom we learn about the others and about His Excellency, the General and head of the state, Sam. The first three characters take turns to tell the story while an Omniscient narrator – a narrator in the first degree – supersedes them very often. (36)

Sougou seems to acknowledge the eminence of the third person narrative voice (although not necessarily the omniscient narrator) in harmonising the disparate first – person narrative voices. The third-person narrative voice intermittently intervenes in

the testimonies rendered by the first person narrators. Chris who opens the novel with his first–hand witness is interrupted by the third person narrative voice in the second and third chapter only for Ikem's voice to take up the discourse in Chapter four. This trend persists throughout the novel. If there had been two voices at play; that of Chris and that of third person narrative, the result would be an interplay of the voices leading to what Sougou refers to as the story being "channeled in dumples"(37). This however, is not the case and, instead, we have multiple voices all struggling to be heard.

The first impression one gets in this multiplicity of voices is that the text is a loose structure grounded on disparity. As the reader interacts with the novel further, it soon crystallizes that the multiple voices are structured as in a conversation where every voice takes a turn in the discourse. It turns out that the text, which has borrowed heavily from the oral literature tradition, is advancing a collective role in narration where even the reader is encouraged to tie the loose ends from one chapter to the other. The reader's active involvement is important if we are not to be at a loss as narrators take turns without any warning whatsoever.

The third-person narrative voice in the novel plays the role of conglomerating the disparate perspectives in the novel, which move towards the text's thematic strand. The use of the limited omniscient is particularly effective as it proceeds from the perspectives offered by the characters without necessarily describing the inner workings of the characters. Conveniently, again, the limited omniscient used is the objective point of view who offers, "a dramatic presentation…. complete and impartial as the speaker's position as an observer allows" (Roberts and Jacobs 201)

The third-person narrative intervention between the first-person narrative voices enhances and controls irony in the novel. The subjective first person voice is articulated alongside the objective third person voice. By the time Chris opens his narrative in the first chapter, he is clearly unaware of the disaffection that Sam harbours against him (Chris) and Ikem. Neither is he aware of the extent to which his colleagues in the cabinet can go if only to isolate progressive forces from Sam to alienate him. In light of this, Chris, for instance, considers Prof. Okong as harmless and a baffoon. The third person narrative voice in the second chapter shows that Okong is, instead, a crafty underhand operator who can be destructive to those around him. It is Okong who sows the first seeds of discord in Sam's mind about Chris's and Ikem's loyalty to Sam. Sam does not immediately respond to Okong's accusations but instead calls in the Attorney General who confirms Okong's sentiments by presenting a theory that reminds Sam of the wisdom of old President Ngongo who once told him: "Your greatest risk is your boyhood friends, those who grew up with you in your village. Keep them at arms length and you will live long" (23).

The third-person narrative voice appears to undermine Chris's right from the beginning of the novel by subjecting him to irony. Clearly, what Chris says about himself and his friends in the novel often appears to be highly contradicted by the third person narrative voice. Similarly, Chris's intention, no matter how well meaning, does not always lead to its desired end. For instance, although, according to Chris, he remains in office not as an accomplice to the national crime but to make "farcical entries in the crazy log-book of this our ship" (2), the third-person narrative voice interrogates the true motivation of Chris's insistence on remaining in government. It

emerges that Chris is an aspirant of the Ozo society. As Commissioner for Information, he is one of the lords of the land. In one of the few instances where the omniscient narrative voice is in use, the omniscient narrator penetrates Chris's subconscious mind and unearths a lasting dream in him, which he does not mention in his narrative. This is during an intimate moment with his girlfriend Beatrice, their sexual act is symbolically transformed to a journey to the shrine of Idemili, and as required by Idemili, Beatrice-- a woman-- leads him to Idemili's shrine. He, severally, falls on the way and it becomes Beatrice's responsibility to raise him. The cardinal question in Chris's mind as focalized by the omniscient narrator during this symbolic journey is:

> But would he be found worth?. Would he survive? This unending, excruciating joyfulness in the crossroads of laughter and tears. Yes, I must, oh yes I must, yes, oh yes, yes oh yes. I must, must, must (114).

The irony of Chris's situation is heightened by concurrently foregrounding the two voices in juxtaposition. The omniscient narrative voice poses a rhetorical question showing great doubt about Chris's being found worth. Chris, showing great ambition, promises that he must be found worth. His use of the auxiliary verb 'must' put against the greater forces that must determine his worth, heightens the irony.

According to legend, as explained in the novel, the aspirant of the Ozo political office must be accompanied by his daughter or the daughter of a kinsman to the shrine of Idemili. The omniscient narrator tells us:

> This young woman must stand between him and the daughter of the Almighty before he can be granted a hearing. She holds his hand like a

child in front of the holy stick and counts seven. Then she arranges carefully on the floor seven fingers of chalk, fragile symbols of peace, and then gets him to sit on them so lightly that not one single finger may be broken. (104)

For one to be an aspirant of the Ozo society then, he has to accept two demands by Idemili before joining it: that he had to be led by a woman to the shrine and that he had to accept the sanctity of peace of all costs. In the traditional Ibo community the Ozo society is an important political office. According to Robert M. Wren:

> The Ozo title holder entered into the community of real men within his own clan. He was in a sense, fulfilled. He had proved his dignity and worth, and his superiority over unfulfilled men. He was indeed for the first time truly a man. (57)

In Anthills of the Savannah, one can not qualify to join the Ozo society unless he has fulfilled the requirements placed by Idemili. Besides accepting the legitimacy of the leadership of a woman to the shrine, and committing himself to the tenets of peace and modesty, the aspirant has to practice maximum self-restraint. For example, in the twenty eight days, in which the ritual takes place, he is not allowed to step in his house with his wives. A story is told of Nwakibie, an aspirant of the Ozo office who could sneak at night to visit a widow he fancied, reasoning thus: "why will a man mounting a widow listen for footsteps outside her hut when he knows how far her man has travelled?" (104). By refusing to practice personal restraint, Nwakibie, one morning encounters Eke-Idemili, the royal python " the messenger of the daughter of God' (105) and instantly dies.

The omniscient narrator exposes Chris's subconscious mind as he contemplates that he will be found worth joining the Ozo society. The omniscient narrator's penetration of Chris's subconscious mind leads us to interpret him in a manner that we would not have while dealing with his narrative. The use of the omniscient narrator successfully confers the narrative point of view to a non-participant who is less inclined to offer a subjective point of view. The omniscient narrator takes advantage of his ubiquitous presence to offer an omnipresent witness, which is witness of a higher level. To interpret the narrative situation coherently, the third-person narrator allows for diverse readings of the subtext, text and extra-text, beyond the limits of the first-person narrative voice.

The third person narrative voice foregrounds the importance of the Ozo society, which apparently is important in interpreting Chris's character and role in the novel. The reason why the first-person voice would be inadequate to discern the implication of the Ozo society in the novel lies in the subtextual, textual and extra-textual readings of the narrative, which demands the possibilities that come with omniscient narration. For instance, the kind of truth that emerges from the mythic construction in which Chris makes the symbolic journey to the shrine of Idemili explicates Wren's argument when he asserts that the Ozo society was the manner in which one entered into the "community of real men within his own clan" (57). The legend of Idemili, it becomes apparent, (from the sexual act) is a juxtaposition of the feminine and masculine aspects of society which the text suggests should be weighed contemporaneously if society is to achieve a balance in social order. For Chris then to have aspirations of joining Ozo

society, his worth must be determined by his willingness to contextualize the specific demanded by Idemili.

Chris's proximity to Beatrice gives him a chance to interact with Idemili's tenets, given that Beatrice is constructed as the principal representative of Idemili's creed on earth. Similarly, his association with an oligarchical military regime, which constantly buffets its people through all avenues available to oppression, endears him to precepts that are antithetical to Idemili. This is the dilemma that Chris must deal with, for, as an aspirant of the Ozo society, Chris must make known to all and sundry which principles he is ready to commit himself to. Beatrice does not make his case any better by constantly chiding him against behaving like the three green bottles in her sitting room which hang high up on the wall, proudly overlooking the rest of the room. Chris, having been entrapped by the lavishness of power, finds it rather difficult to make an adequate choice in good time. His, spiritual rigidity which makes it difficult for him to unchain himself from the trappings of power is understood by the omniscient narrator only who informs us that, in Beatrice, "Chris saw the quiet demure damsel whose still waters nonetheless concealed deep over-powering eddies of passion that always almost sucked him into fatal depths" (105). In this way the omniscient narrator prophesises the death of Chris and pegs it on Chris's spiritual inadequacy.

Besides the omniscient narrator is the limited omniscient who follows Chris's movements without penetrating his mind. The limited omniscient tells us what he sees Chris do and what he hears Chris say without analysing them. We are enabled to see Chris as an ironic and tragic figure. Chris defends the government against censure from Ikem. The limited narrator, adopting the dramatic point of view, presents Chris's

words as he says them without conferring upon them any attitude or prejudice. At one point, the dramatic point of view narrates to us a disagreement between Chris and Ikem:

> Chris called Ikem on the telephone and asked him to send a photographer to the Reception Room of the presidential palace to cover a goodwill delegation from Abazon. 'That's a new one. A goodwill delegation from Abazon! A most likely story! What shall we hear next?'
>
> 'And for God's sake let me see the copy before it goes in'
>
> 'And why, if one may have the temerity to put such a question to the Honourable Commissioner?'
>
> 'You've just said it. Because I am the Honourable Commissioner for Information. That's why.'
>
> "Well that's not good enough, Mr. Commissioner for Information. Not good enough for me. You seem to be forgetting something, namely that it is my name and address which is printed at the bottom of page sixteen of the Gazette and not that of any fucking, excuse my language, any fucking commissioner. Its me who'll be locked up by major Samsonite if the need arises, not you. Its my funeral..'
>
> 'Quite irrelevant, Ikem. You ought to know that we have gone over this matter a million times now if we've gone over it once; and I'm getting quite sick and tired of repeating it. I am doing so now for the last time. Chapter fourteen section six of the Newspaper Amendment Decree gives the Honourable Commissioner general and specific powers over what is printed in the Gazette. You know that well. I will

now invoke the letter of that law and send you my instruction in writing. Expect it in the next half-hour. It is clear that's how you want it, so I will oblige.'(27)

It is noteworthy that the third person objective voice narrating the above episode does so in chapter three. Chris, having rendered his narrative in chapter one in which he condemns his colleagues in the cabinet for complicity in the national crime, is in this chapter exposed by the third person objective narrator through great irony. The third person objective narrates this episode more successfully than an omniscient narrator would because we are made to arrive at our own conclusion by simply listening to the dialogue between Ikem and Chris. Chris takes advantage of his office to act as irresponsibly as Sam does and therefore contradicts his own postulations about Sam's supposed misrule.

It is after Ikem's death that Chris gets a chance to re-evaluate his position in government. He resigns from government in the days leading to Ikem's death and then runs away from his house out of fear for his life after he learns of Ikem's death. It is during this escape that Chris starts to learn the nature of the vagaries that the people of Kangan have had to endure as the leaders wallowed in lavishness. Similarly, he gets to know of the depth of richness prevalent in the ordinary people's emotions. He finds out, to his shock, that the downtrodden are far more imaginative and innovative than he could ever conceive them to be while he was Commissioner for Information. The limited omniscient thus portrays Chris as naïve in matters to do with the rest of society away from the elite society. Emmanuel, a student, surprises Chris with the kind of intelligence that he exhibits:

> Chris was almost certain that Emmanuel's Gazette story must be more than marginally responsible for thus putting the law of their guard. He was something else, that boy Emmanuel. Why did we not cultivate such young men before now? Why, we did not even know they existed if the truth must be told! (191)

The limited omniscient deliberately chooses his words in a manner to expose Chris to irony. By being "almost certain" Chris shows reluctance to accept Emmanuel's input in diverting the police from Chris's way. There is a sharp contrast between this reluctance with the candid admission that Chris makes about his never having thought that such young men existed. It is worth noting that the contrast is achieved by a movement from the limited omniscient to the omniscient in which Chris's thoughts are focalised as if through a first person narrative voice. The irony achieved lies in what Chris actually thinks (but would rather hide from the reader) and the impression he would like to create; hence hiding his guilt.

Chris is forced to acknowledge that it is far more difficult to survive as a poor man than it is as a rich man. During his escape to the north he is at one moment, forced to disguise his identity. He is supposed, in doing so, to try to appear like a poor man. Confronted by policemen Chris forgets his disguised name and job. He is shocked to find that it is extremely difficult to impersonate a poor man. This greatly amuses Braimoh, one of the men accompanying him:

> 'You think you no go forget your job again?' his companion asked teasingly. ' when you no fit talk again that time, fear came catch me proper and I begin pray make this man no go introduce himself as Commissioner of Information!

> 'Me Commissioner? At all. Na small moto part na I de sell. Original and Taiwan'.
>
> 'Ehe! Talkam like that, No shaky – shaky mouth again. But Oga you see now, to be big man no hard but to be poor man no be small thing. No proper Wahala. No be so?'
>
> 'Na so I see – O. I no know before today says to pass for small man you need to go special college. (194)

The interaction between Chris, Emmanuel and Braimoh teaches Chris a lot about the ways of the ordinary people. At Braimoh's house, Chris has to tolerate the biting of bed bugs. For the first time in his life, he is forced to dress in dirty old clothes and to eat dirty Kola nuts; to act like a poor man. As he travels to the North, he looks with wonder at the scorched earth of Abazon and shudders at the kind of misery the people of Abazon must have undergone. During the whole episode, the reader gets the impression that Chris is repentant and willing to cross over his class trappings. The limited third-person narrator, keenly tracking the movements of Chris, indicates a sense of growth in him. It is as if Chris is undergoing a transformation, questioning his past in the process of self-discovery.

At the Great North Road, however, Chris learns that Sam has been killed and his government taken over by the Chief of Staff, General Ahmed Lango. Chris suddenly decides to go back to Bassa, clearly revealing that he is still trapped by his aspirations for power. At this time, the reader is reminded of a previous prophecy by Brigadier Misfortune at the beginning of the novel (in chapter three). Brigadier Misfortune's prophecy becomes meaningful as Chris reactivates his interests to go back to Bassa

the capital city, with the hope of playing part in the power sharing arrangement. He prophesises thus:

> This is Brigadier Misfortune of the Wilting 202 Brigade telling you you are not fine. No my dear countrymen. You will not be fine until you can overthrow the wild sun of April. Later tonight, fellow countrymen, you will hear the full text from General Modth himself.... I am only a month piece – you will hear the words direct from him after the National Anthem shall have been played backwards. (28)

We are forced to read the narrative backwards as suggested by the omniscient narrator (focalized by Brigadier Misfortune), to be able to understand the fate that befalls Chris just as he is about to set back for Bassa. The Great North Road being in Abazon reminds us that Chris began his narrative with a quarrel between Sam and himself about Abazon. Chris had then wanted Sam to visit Abazon in an attempt to help people who were suffering from severe drought. It also occurs to us that Abazon symbolizes the fierce struggle between the sky and the earth, which Ikem artistically portrays in his hymn. As we have noted, the sun is described, in legend, as the undying eye of the Almighty with which the Almighty "saw and pondered and finally decided to send his daughter, Idemili, to bear witness to the moral nature of authority by wrapping around power's rude waist a loin cloth of peace and modesty" (102).

Chris's decision to go back to Bassa undermines Idemili's basic tenets which he must fulfill to be able to qualify for the Ozo society. The violence that is associated with the new government take-over in which Sam is killed contradicts Idemili's tenets of peace and modesty. For this reason Idemili faults Chris for wanting to enjoin himself

to the new government. The dramatic point of view portrays Chris's new-found ambition with an element of sarcasm.

> 'We must head back to Bassa, right away, where is Braimoh? Get things out of the bus. His obsessed seriousness was a rebuke to Emmanuel's faint-hearted sarcasm and he went away to his assignment somewhat chastened. (214)

Shortly after, a policeman kills Chris as he tries to save a young girl the latter attempted to rape. As we have suggested, the suddenness of his death shows Idemili's disapproval of his going back to Bassa to join the military regime. According to legend the aspirant of Ozo society would have to seek the approval of Idemili but:

> Neither at the first audience nor at his second does Idemili deign to answer him directly. He must go away and await her sign and pleasure. If she finds him unworthy to carry the authority of Ozo society she simply sends death to smite him and save her sacred hierarchy from contamination and scandal. (104)

Having argued that the omniscient narrator penetrates Chris's subconscious mind in which it is revealed to us that he is an aspirant for the Ozo society, and having seen how the limited omniscient and dramatic point of view track and dramatize Chris's words and actions which suggest his lust for power; it is possible for us to conclude that Idemili finds Chris unworthy of joining the society and therefore leads him into his death in this little incident.

Unlike Chris's death, which occurs without precedented conscious actions in his life's pattern, Ikem's death occurs as the limited omniscient narrator carefully tracks his actions, which are deliberate and decisive. Anthills of the Savannah has given so much attention to Ikem that Maughan Brown has considered him as the authorial voice in the novel. Brown argues.

> Ikem's credentials as an authorial voice... are established so clearly, in a variety of ways, that the distancing devices carry very little conviction.... The reader's sympathy is clearly sought for such statements as Ikem's: "while we do our good works let us not forget that the real solution lies in a world in which charity will have become unnecessary" (p, 155). Key scenes like the public executions on the beach are described through Ikem's eyes. (8)

Brown's position above has also been echoed by Naumann. In the novel the limited omniscient often articulates his point of view from Ikem's perspective which makes him a very important character in the novel. Ikem chooses to identify with the ordinary people. His editorials in the National Gazette are highly critical of the excesses of Sam's government. Chris attempts to muzzle Ikem's democratic right to free expression by trying to censor them but fails as Ikem remains steadfast in this commitment. This wins him accolades from members of the low class. Taxi-drivers and students hold him in reverence. It is they who help Chris after the death of Ikem, and it is the disharmony that they create in the country that, largely, warrants the overthrow of Sam's government. His own people from Abazon trust his word as an article of faith. The old man from Abazon says, "We have Osodi in Bassa. If he

comes home and tells us that we should say yes we will do so because he is there as our eye and ear" (126).

When he visits Harmoney Hotel to meet with his kinsmen, he is welcomed as a traditionally titled man:

> 'Our people say that when a titled man comes into a meeting the talking must have to stop until he has taken his seat. An important somebody has just come who needs no introduction. Still yet, we have to do things according to what Europeans call protocol. I call upon our distinguished son and Editor of the National Gazette to stand up.'(121)

The limited omniscient, throughout, presents Ikem as one who respects people despite their stations in life. At Harmoney Hotel, he listens carefully to the compelling voice of the old man from Abazon. The old man from Abazon foregrounds, more than anybody else in the novel, the essence of words as an overriding theme in Anthills of the Savannah:

> So why do I say that the story is chief among his fellows? The same reason I think that our people sometimes will give the name Nkolika to their daughters – Recalling – is – Greatest. Why? Because it is only the story that can continue beyond the war and the warrior. It is the story that outlives the sound of war–drums and the exploits of brave fighters. It is the story, not the others, that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort, without it, we are blind. Does the blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story; rather it is the story.(123)

The old man from Abazon at this point acts the role of a focalizer if we are to accept Webster's view that, "...the narrator and the focalizer are usually distinct elements in the narration process" (51). The view that the old man gives on the importance of the story is the perspective of the third person narrator who is aware of Ikem's and Chris's impending deaths but who is also aware that their story of the tragic events of Kangan will survive them. The narrator, through the old man from Abazon, assigns the role of recalling to a woman when he relates the role of the story in society with the name given to women, 'Nkolika': Recalling – is – Greatest.

The old man's powerful speech stirs Ikem into action. He undertakes to play the role of the warrior who heeds the words of the town crier to go to war. This is the role which the omniscient narrator seems to have assigned him. In the words of the old man:

> 'To some of us the owner of the world has apportioned the gift to tell their fellows that time to get up has finally come. To others He gives the eagerness to rise when they hear the call; to rise with racing blood and put on their garbs of war and go the boundary of their town to engage invading enemy boldly in battle. And then there are those others whose part is to wait and when the struggle is ended, to take over and recount its story. (123)

Ikem heeds the old man's call and takes the battle head on: aware that the eventuality of it could be his death. He openly defies Chris's caution and challenges the political system more vigorously. He is eventually killed for his steadfast defense of the masses.

Chris's and Ikem's death lead to two important developments in the novel. Firstly, Beatrice (a woman) is enabled to grow from the shadows of her two friends. In the process, she takes over leadership in the struggles espoused by Ikem and which Chris also realizes towards his death. The third person narrative voice then kneads together the emerging thematic trend: striving for social balance by incorporating feminine power in a male socialized society (symbolized by the military regime). As the novel races to conclusion, Beatrice emerges as the leader of progressive forces represented by a small group of people that surround her. This group comprises of an army-man, a student, a house-girl, Islamic and Christian followers among other diverse representatives hat conglomerate in the struggle to unite disparities in society. Secondly, the death of the two takes the narrative to a higher level, higher than the battlefield to the level of the story, which must survive the battlefield. And in this, again, Beatrice is given the responsibility of, "bringing together as many broken pieces of this tragic history" (52), by not only writing her narrative but also by reconstructing the narratives of Chris and Ikem.

In this chapter, we have seen how the third-person narrative voice attempts to fill in the loose ends left by the first person narrative voice to create a complete whole in the thematic development of the novel. The third person narrative, at times focalized by the omniscient voice, penetrates the mind of a character to bring out the character's most hidden desire. At other times, the third person utilizes the dramatic point of view to dramatize the characters through dialogue and action, and we are made to judge them through what they say and do. And finally, the third person narrative voice takes the form of the limited-omniscient tracking the movement of a single character and

sometimes reporting events from his or her perspective or simply describing the character's progress.

CONCLUSION

In this study we have tried to analyze the technique of point of view in Anthills of the Savannah. Being the fifth novel by Chinua Achebe, but the first to utilize different points of view as a strategy, the overriding assumption has been that thematic concerns have had prevalence in Achebe's decision to utilize this strategy.

In Anthills of the Savannah, more than in any previous work, Achebe has more forthrightly tackled the gender disparity existent in society. Consequently, he has given women a more meaningful participation in this fictional country of Kangan. For this reason, Achebe has created three first person narrative voices, one of which is focalized by a woman. These three voices are made to focalize their perspectives against a backdrop of the military regime (which symbolizes masculinity) in its excesses. The three first person narrators are influenced by their physical and psychological points of view to construct disparate perspectives. Chris, a commissioner in Sam's government looks at the issues from his position in office. Ikem, an artist, rebels and advocates for social reform: but he is neither poor nor a woman – people whom he attempts to fight for. As the story progresses towards a climax in which the overly male-socialized society must be neutralized by integrating it with feminine power, Beatrice gains a central role both as a narrator and as a character.

In our study we have attempted to demonstrate that in an attempt to neutralize the male presence and male voice, Achebe kills his two prominent character-narrators hence constructing an unprecedented first-person voice in which such narrators die. This is

unconventional. We have also tried to demonstrate that Beatrice's voice survives to continue speaking out against the military regime. Developed alongside the essence of feminine power in society is the importance of words manifested as a story. The importance of words against the backdrop of military dictatorship is to provide dialogue and consensus as an alternative to dictatorship.

So far, we have also tried to show that issues, which can not be dealt with by the limitation of the first-person narrators, have been focalized by the third-person narrator. Such issues include concerns such as the elimination of Ikem and Chris from the novel. These concerns and their overriding motivation have been dealt with by the third person narrative voice in its different manifestations: the limited omniscient, the dramatic point of view and the omniscient point of view.

By Achebe utilizing this technique of diverse points of view, he succeeds to harmonize the novel's overriding theme by looking at it from various positions.

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