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**A STUDY OF NEO-COLONIALISM ANALYSIS IN THE NOVEL
"ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH"**

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ABSTRACT

Anthills of the Savannah (1987) written by Chinua Achebe is a novel with an actual depiction of the colonized Africans after the period of colonialism. In this novel the writer tries to reclaim the lost dignity of his nation. After independence in 1960, the people of their enlightened nation would be back with their flourished nativity. But, the native rulers fail to restore the nation's dignity instead they remain as the residue of colonisers. An illusion of freedom is given to the nation by the educated leaders of the newly independent state who were brought to power by independence and then educated and trained to be the wet blanket by the colonialist. These elites were the so called representative of the people and nation. This paper aims to draw the attention to the fact that the colonialism was not from within the country rather from foreign. Certain reliable resource has confessed that the period after the freedom is the residual remain of post-colonialism which we term it as Neo-Colonialism. The theory of Neo-Colonialism is the practice of using capitalism, globalization and cultural imperialism to influence a developing country in lieu of direct military control or indirect political control. The expected outcome of the neo-colonialism is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation of the nation. *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) present the see through picture of this neo-colonialism theory and its impact over the nation by its characters.

Keywords: Neo-Colonialism, power, Western-Education, Bourgeoisies

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INTRODUCTION

Anthills of the Savannah (1987) is a narration of incessant effort of the people to conquer a history of suffering brought about by an awful regime. Chinua Achebe's fifth novel after two decades of his previous novel *A Man of the People* (1966) and was credited with having "revived his reputation in Britain". A finalist for the 1987 Booker Prize for Fiction, *Anthills of the Savannah* has been

described as the "most important novel to come out of Africa in the [1980s]". Achebe has created a fictional West African country and named it as Kangan. The main plot of the novel revolves around the trio Sam "His Excellence", Christopher Oriko (Chris) and Ikem Osodi (Ikem) with prevailing political scenario. This trio are the childhood friends who found themselves as high ranked political officials then. Sam a dictatorial president headed the

country with military background. Sam (Kanganse) got trained under Great Britain military force returned to Kangan with Military grip rather than corrupted government. Kangan is a country which is bound with just a President, a cabinet and the military security service. Voice of parliament seems to be missing there. Rest of the duo are controlled by Sam ,IkemOsodi the editor of government National Gazette. Christopher Oriko , the commissioner for information. Despite of their friendship Sam often clashes with Chris and Ikem. Chris is in the position for censorship in the country he tries to control the editor of National Gazette newspaper according to the president's instructions. Ikem always identifies himself with the common people of Kangan and peep into the problems of people against the government that always put himself and Chris in trouble. The character of Ikem is portrayed as radical rather than elite that he infact belongs to. Along with these three main characters comes there two female characters with the stand of feminism which is also considered to be the yet another theme of the novel. Beatrice, an educated and employed under Kangan government is girlfriend of Christopher Oriko. Elewa is a semi-literate Kangan girl who has never been out of the country is the girlfriend of IkemOsodi. This duo has been the moral support to their heroes throughout the novel. Professor Okong, John Kent,Bassa,Gazette,TaxiCabs,PresidentialPalace,Aba zon and Political Unrest are the symbols and characters of the novel.

The novel opens with an official cabinet meeting , after the close of the session the president was supposed to meet the crowd of Abazon province regarding the requirement of water, the basic need of the people. Sam the dictatorial president refused to redress the mere obligation, which made the people to suffer from drought. Ikem goes on to meet the delegation and raise the voice against the government, he is stopped by the traffic police who are actually the State Research Council agents on his return and demanded to produced proof that he had actually visited the delegation in order to be able to accuse him later for siding with the rebellious men of Abazon. Later Ikem was fired from the Gazzate upon orders from the president

who finds Ikem's writing in the Gazzete is too critical of his authority. He directed Chris to order dismissal to Ikem who inturn declines. Radical speech at the university of BASA(the capital of Kangan) is misquoted on the next day in print media giving the impression of regicide . This misunderstanding led Ikem to be charged of treason and shot dead, the government over wrapped it as fatal accident. After this incident Chris feels hopeless to work for President Sam. He is afraid of his survival and goes into hiding, he decided to travel away from the capital who is too charged with disloyalty and become a fugitive as well . When he crosses the province he witnessed some riot over there where he spots a drunken cop dragging a girl to attempt rape. Chris steps to save her consequently he is shot and killed.

Chinua Achebe writes about the problems and states the prevailing theme that is most visible one of these problems is corruption, dictatorial rule which is associated with neo-colonialism. Though the rulers are indigenous they impersonalised themselves from their own nativity.

The novel also portrays the impact of colonized states There is a reference to the Western manipulation of Africa in the scene in which Beatrice attends the official party organised by Sam to impress the American Journalist. The journalist wraps the whole crew inculcating them about the Kangan's treatment of foreign affair and debt. The western attitude is represented towards their African countries and their unequal standing in world politics. Beatrice " If I went to America today, to Washington DC, would I, Could I, walk into a White House private dinner and take the American President hostage. And his Defence Chief and his Director of CIA?" (Anthills of the Shavanna 74).

Neo-Colonialism is one of the themes of the novel and is well explained through the nature and behaviour of the main character Sam"His Excellence" , who replicate the early colonizer by suppressing and manipulating his own people. His own people is treasonable by his attitude and work to seek his self-interest. Majority of the elites who belong to this minority country are western – educated from upper class of Kangan . The impact of the colonizers are seen in these people who serve

less to meet the basic needs of the people. The three main characters of the novel are detached from the people commonly and act with a sense of privilege with the less educated people. Sam, his character embodies a distance between himself and the people and is blindfolded by power. He seeks to be elected as "President for life time" He embrace on being called as "Your Excellency". Without having any interaction with people he simply concerns only about his power and supremacy. It is well narrated in Chapter 2 as he refuses to meet the delegation and on his behalf Profesor Okong addresses by telling them the Head of the State is too busy to see them. Sam presents himself more as an imitator of Englishmen. Achebe clearly states that the Western-educated elite of independent Africa are not representative of African people because of their feeling of superiority over illiterate and semi-literate people. Achebe like Frantz Fanon acknowledges that danger against the nation is not from the European colonizer rather than the home-grown. We could see that this episodes are actually an indirect continuation of European colonialism, because the colonizers know that they have left the colonized country in the hands of the elites who are educated from the Western and will act in no better way than the European. Chris and Ikem are completely different from Sam. Though Chris doesn't encourage the western attitude of Sam towards the Kangan Society, in the beginning of the novel Chris appears to enjoy his power given to him by being in a position close to the president. He constantly tries to get Ikem to comply with Sam's will and put down his harsh attack on the government. Although Chris realizes how Sam was transformed into a complete English fiend he appears unwilling to give up his position in the Cabinet. Chris shows no real commitment to the people and remains personally detached from their true problems. After few episodes Chris slowly transforms himself and comes into contact with the common people and begins to develop his patriotic affinity with his country.

Ikem is a unique despot who mostly recognizes the common people in Kangan. A clear statement from the author is kept in front of the readers that recognition is not the only weapon to make him a good model for a national

representation. Because he is Western –educated and he kept himself at a distance from the common people, and he communicates less to the semi-literates and ill-literates. For example The elders of Abzon, can not understand his political speeches because the influence of the English language is seen majorly in his speeches. This made the people unable to understand his contribution and patriotism. In the lines of Ikem's confrontation "I was really amazed by their perceptiveness" (Anthills, 43) reveals his inability to identify himself with the common people of the society. He is well aware of his power over the ordinary people because in an incident where he was about to send his girlfriend Elewa to her home in a taxi, he reveals his power over the taxi driver. He use to threaten him by pointing the torch on the drivers face and checking the registration number. His authoritative language he used to the driver show that he actually belong to the higher class not from the common people of the society. Sam Chris and Ikem all appear to be the colonizer in the disguise of indigenous and so the author's final view is to put them all to death.

CONCLUSION

Neo colonialism is considered as the extended theory of Post-Colonialism. Colonial practices by former colonial masters to the detriment of their former colonies. Achebe like Kwame Nkrumah sees neo-colonialism as the worst and the most perilous forms of colonialism. Many states are not even as good as the European after the independence. Neo-colonialism in another facet of its mutations and manifestations ensures the control of a nation's values through culture like media, language, education, music and religion using her powerful control over this mass communication the Western nation export its values and cultural tastes to other parts of the world to the detriment of the local culture. This has fostered a colonial mentality. Africans constantly prefer the western mode of things like music, products, idea, physical appearance, religion etc to their own without any determination to their own identity.

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