

Hegemony and Female Objectification: An Ideological Positioning of the Woman in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*

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Abstract- *Inequality arises when policies and values governing the society are manipulated to promote the interest of a particular class or group. This is achieved through the ideological and hegemonic underpinnings of the privileged class or elites in society. This paper therefore examines hegemony and female objectification in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*. It exposes the ideological manifestations of hegemony, discrimination, and ethnic sentiments in our chosen text. Postcolonial theory and feminism are the two theories used in analyzing the primary text. A close study of the novel reveals how groups in the society represented by characters in the novel use language to construct and legitimize acts of oppression against the other. The analyses show that the post-independence African states were noted for imbalance in the socio-cultural and political structures, triggering problems such as marginalization, abuse of power, politics of exclusion, denial of basic human rights, etc. The study concludes by acknowledging that these inequities and exploitative tendencies in the society can be challenged, changed, and shaped into a new order when the dominated members of society assert themselves to gain critical knowledge to emancipate themselves from such ideological underpinnings. Although this may generate conflict, it will, to a certain degree, enable the dominated group in the society to become critically conscious in their environment.*

Indexed Terms- *Hegemony, Objectification, Inequality, Ideology.*

I. INTRODUCTION

African novelists frequently address gender issues and women's identities from a variety of angles and in a variety of methods. The sexist portrayal of women in

Chinua Achebe's stories has made him famous as the father of African literature. By restricting and marginalizing women's roles in the community, Achebe tended to paint a negative picture of African women in his early books, such as *Things Fall Apart*. In contrast to his previous novels that promoted male hegemony and chauvinism. *Anthills of the Savannah* is a political novel that depicts postcolonial Africa. It is a reflection of African politics, especially in Nigeria. The novel aims to reveal women's identities and promote them as vibrant members of the community through the character of Beatrice, the female protagonist. Achebe established a diachronic transformation of women's personalities from victims of patriarchal societies to independent, politically conscious, educated, and self-assertive individuals. Achebe's indiscriminate depiction of the patriarchal Igbo community, which is marked by male hegemony, polygamy, and female marginalization and humiliations, has been criticized by scholars as sexist. This study therefore investigates the issue of hegemony and female objectification, which have created imbalances in society. It also delves into how dominated members of society become critically conscious in order to emancipate themselves from forms of dominance. Forms of social inequality manifest in various capacities in society, for example, male dominance over the female in a patriarchal society, ethnic sentiment that exists between majority and minority groups, the distinction between the base and superstructure, and the list continues. Social inequality manifests in ideology. At this juncture, the crucial question that comes to mind is, "What is ideology?" Ideology is a set of beliefs, attitudes, opinions, or concepts that are shared by members of a particular social group. The beliefs that are embedded in ideology are not consciously observed by individuals because they are ingrained in our thought patterns and are usually taken for granted. Members of

the ruling class or those in higher authority do not often use language just for mere communication and interaction in a social context; rather, they adopt language in the negotiation and legitimization of their ideologies. The ideologies could favor or harm the populace. The ideologies usually affect society adversely as they reflect the individualistic tendencies of the leaders. Ikenna Kamalu and Cynthia Udeh subscribe to the fact that leaders from various sectors use language to communicate ideologies and express social power (66). Leaders in this context control the society with ideologies that are expressed through language. The ideas and beliefs are first of all assumed to be “normal” or “natural” by the members of the society who accept them as part of their existence and history. For instance, in a society where patriarchy is emphasized over matriarchy, the society will accept it as given. It is instructive for us to note that the legitimization of ideologies is made possible through the medium of language. To this end, Onyemaechi Udumukwu contends that “... an ideology ... is embodied in language and accepted as a [sic] given.” (28) By this assertion, it presupposes that every society is ideologically manipulated and governed.

Terry Eagleton defines ideology as an “idea which helps to legitimate a dominant political power” (qtd. in Udumukwu 68). In addition, Suzanne Eggins is of the view that the usage of language is ideologically motivated. In her opinion, “the values we hold (consciously or unconsciously), the perspectives acquired through the culture” are all influenced by our ideological positions (qtd. in Kamalu and Udeh 66). Fairclough’s explanation of the term is quite insightful. In Critical Discourse Analysis, he defines ideology as that which “involves the representation of the ‘world’ from the perspective of a particular interest, so that the relationship between proposition and fact is not transparent ... [hence] opacity is inherent in ideology” (44). In the legitimization of ideologies, linguistic resources and elements are adopted and constructed to legalize the ideologies. In line with the above viewpoint, ideologies are naturalized into conventions that govern the society and will make people or participants in that social structure become unaware of the ideological dimensions of the practices of their leaders. As such, the interactants become ignorant of the implication of the conventions that are ideologically negotiated

through language. Also, when participants attempt to be resistant to or revolt against such ideological negotiations in order to effect change, it becomes difficult because the ideological implications of those conventions are not explicit. Hence, analysts posit that there is a need for critical knowledge and awareness to become informed and conscious of their own duty in such an ideological formation.

II. CRITICAL REVIEWS ON CHINUA ACHEBE’S *ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH*

Chinua Achebe has consistently used his works to effect social revolution in Africa and especially in Nigeria. Specifically, he presents the writer as one who is socially responsible and adopts his writings as a medium to contribute to the restructuring of political, cultural and economic issues. In his fifth novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, he succinctly addresses the problem of leadership in the postcolonial context. In an interview, Achebe professes that “... although not at the level at which *Anthills* is done- this is the first time [he was] looking at the leaders, the elite, those who make things happen” (*Conversations with Chinua Achebe* 155). The novel has received a lot of criticisms from scholars who have analyzed it from various angles. From the Perspective of the military, the intervention of the military in the system of governance is a pseudo-salvation to the then corrupt civilian regime. In her view, Helen Chukwuma, argues that “...*Anthills of the Savannah* surveys the military era as an alternative to the civilian regime. [And that] the disillusionment continues among the governed while the leaders struggle for power” 131-2). In agreement with Chukwuma’s assertion on Achebe’s *Anthills...*, Chidi Maduka, believes that with the intervention of the military form of leadership, the problem of an ideal form of leadership became a mirage not only in Nigeria but also in Africa as a whole. From this point of view, he states that:

Anthills of the Savannah casts a look at the military in Nigerian politics and provides an insight which has a resonance for the whole Africa. [Achebe] feels disturbed that the soldiers who have routinely organized coups and taken over government in various parts have become worse than the civilians they have replaced” (65)

Nwachukwu Agbada, contends that military governance could never be the solution to the failure of leadership, but would rather promote retrogression of the entire system. He further argues that “in *Anthills* it is not only the Abazonnians who are the victims of high-handedness of the ruler [Sam] who established himself without public endorsement, the intellectuals are more pitiable of the victims” (92).

The representation of ruthlessness and repression of the entire state of Kangan is adroitly expressed in the manner in which the Head of State, a process whereby an individual consumed by the authority he wields, allows his personal interaction conflict with the ideals of the public. This strategy is what Maduka refers to as the “Machiavellian tactics” Here power is used abusively to gain loyalty. Any attempt to reject such manipulation by the public is described subversion. In the novel therefore, the “... the cabinet, the workers, students and peasants are all victims of the forces of coercion” (Maduka 73).

From the point of feminism and patriarchal ideology, Udumukwu is bothered that in the beginning part of *Anthills...*, there was a conspicuous violence against the women folk, in that the leadership of [Sam] as he failed to incorporate the women into his cabinet. This is represented in the absence of women in the “eleven intelligent, educated men” (*Anthills...* 2), which is an outright injustice against the female folk. For Udumukwu, this exclusion of women from his cabinet and in the scheme of things earlier in the novel constitutes instances of mmegbu, mkpagbu [and] mmehie.” (30) In another view, the name “Amaechina’ (May-the- Path-never close), which is a name usually given to a male child, now christened to a female effects a new-order in the society. By extension, it projects ‘the female’ as an important figure in the society and also as one whose family’s name could be survived by. In the assessment of Achebe, “... to suggest that a girl can have this kind of name is of course saying that this arrangement in which only boys count in terms of maintaining the name of the family is really outdated, because the family can survive also through the *woman*” (*Conversations with Chinua Achebe* 147). Also, the fact that it is a woman, Beatrice, who performs the naming ceremony calls to attention that women are

challenged to take responsibilities in the society. Meanwhile, Maduka, conceives the meaning of Amaechina as symbolizing that “Ikem’s struggle for rights of the people will continue until victory is won” (78).

Again, on the platform of education, Achebe feels that leaders should be in tune with those they are leading. Leaders should always connect with the led. By this proposition, Achebe cautions that those in higher authority should endeavour to acquire the kind of training that will enable them to brace up to the challenges and demands of the positions they occupy. In his words:

This education has to do with our leaders reconnecting themselves with the people and not living up there, unaware of their reality. . . . the leadership has to connect itself to the source of legitimacy: the peasantry, the workers, the women-the people (*Conversations* 156).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework for this research will be anchored on two theories; Postcolonial theory and feminism. Postcolonial refers to the period after European colonialism. The term recognizes that the colonial past of a nation continues to impact its state. According to Okachukwu Onuah Wosu, Postcolonial literary theory focuses on the literature of cultures that developed in response to British colonial dominance” (1) It is a school of thought that acknowledges and critically examines the political, economic, social, and historical impact of European colonisation through literature. This theory addresses the role literature plays in challenging and perpetuating cultural imperialism, taking into consideration the power struggle between the historically colonising powers and the countries and communities that have been historically colonised. Cultural imperialism refers to how the colonisation of nations has impacted their culture and traditions. Cultural imperialism includes formal actions to oppress different cultural activities and social discourses which look down on different cultures and classify them as 'uncivilised'.

This paper is also analysed through the lens of feminism. Feminism is an ideology that advocates for

equality of sexes. According to Elaine Showalter, feminist critique is “an interpretation of texts from feminist perspective to expose clichés, stereotypes, and negative image of women” (108). Commenting on feminism, Uka, Nkemdirim Carol and Okachukwu Onuah Wosu avers that “the subordination of women remains a big challenge for women in most African countries, where culture and patriarchy dominate women’s freedom, reasoning, and desire to grow” (34885)

The concepts of intersectionality, social life dimensions, social injustice, and social transformation are all of interest to feminism. Understanding the intricacies and shifts in the gendered division of labor has benefited greatly from feminist studies. Politically, economically, and socially, men and women need to be treated equally. This philosophy does not support the idea that men are different or similar, nor does it advocate for the exclusion of males or the advancement of women's issues exclusively. By recognizing and opposing oppression and power, feminist philosophy seeks to promote understanding and change.

IV. HEGEMONY, A FORM OF ABUSE IN *ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH*

Hegemonic strategies are adopted by the ruling class in Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah* to establish and legitimize their political ideas on the Republic of Kangan. As a political strategy, hegemony is an ideological manipulation adopted and enforced by the leadership against the members of the state. Hegemony is understood within the framework of struggle among different groups, to construct instability between blocs in order to sustain relations of subordinations. To this end, Fairclough is of the view that hegemony seeks to construct alliances, integrate rather than simply dominate subordinate classes through concessions or through ideological means, to win their cooperation (76). Another scholar, Louis Althusser gives an interpellative view of hegemony. By interpellation, he subscribes to a process where subjects in a social context are given a sense of inclusion in the views of the dominant group. This is what Antonio Gramsci refers to as an interconnection between the dominant and the dominated social group in his second definition of

hegemony (Udumukwu 32). In the novel, the General Chief-Sam, aspires to metamorphose government from military to a civilian one and desires to be installed as a life president. At the centre of this transition, Sam decides to step aside his military cabinet for good and replace them with civilian ones. To crown it all, he employs the services of unscrupulous security personnel, who appears on Sam’s political scene to seemingly prove Sam’s executive as being incompetent and inefficient to carry out their duties. This step in the wrong direction not only causes chaos but eventually leads to the murder of Ikem, the death of Chris and over throw of Sam’s administration by another government. The security appointees selected by the President (Sam) himself, include Major (later Colonel) Johnson Ossai, the Director of State Research council, the secret police and Chief of Army Staff, General Ahmed Lango. Expectedly, the appointment aided in the stabilization and maintenance of unevenness which begins from the presidential base and extends to the entire community of Kangan. The security agency in *Anthills...* is characterized with a lot of contradictions in that they aid in aggravating crime instead of assisting to forestall and eradicate it. One wonders why whenever, Sam, His Excellency, desires to interrogate any member of his executive, gain more information from any them, threaten his officers or take an irrational decision over a matter, he makes reference to “intelligence report” reaching *him*, which is in reference to the callous secret security personnel. This happens preponderantly as evidenced in pages 17, 22 and 143 of the work. Major Ossai is the secret police that spies on other government officials to project them negatively before the Kangan ruler. Consequently, Sam acts upon this information to unleash his authoritarian intent on his executive members and citizens of Kangan. To intensify Ossai’s ruthlessness, Beatrice Okoh, another character in the novel gives us a mental picture of his image:

I was seeing the controversial Director of SRC at close quarters for the first time and did not, as I might have expected, like him in the least.... Perhaps it was those enormous hands of his like a wrestler’s which struck you at once as being oversize even for a man as big as he. I think he feels awkward about them and is constantly shifting them around from beside to behind him and then

inside his pockets which of course draws more attention to them (*Anthills...*76).

In the extract above, we observe the deployment of ideational function of language in the description of Ossai's physique and personality. The ideational however involves the material process, relational and mental process. The mental process is an aspect of the ideational function of language which is enormously used in the above text. It puts into consideration the mental function such as; thinking, imagining, the emotional such as; hating, loving and the sensory such as seeing, hearing etc. The mental clause involves a "Senser" who is the participant that experiences the process and the "Phenomenon" which is the thing that is sensed or experienced. (Kamalu 67). In the first line of the above discourse, Beatrice is the "Senser", she is identified by the personal pronoun "I", who processes (sees) the image of *the controversial Director of SRC*, Major Ossai (the Phenomenon). The referent (the SRC Executive, Ossai) in the context, is defined in the adjective "controversial" due to his deceptive physical composition noted in clause "...and strong in vaguely disagreeable way" (*Anthills...*76). Her mental description experience of the Ossai's image, is that which connotes fear and reveals him, as the least individual to be admired. In this direction, she describes the abnormality of his hands as "enormous" and likens them to that of a "wrestler". The unusual structure of his physique gives a mental representation of a beast in human form. Ideologically therefore, this characteristics associated with his personality finds impetus "in the manner in which he (Ossai) executes torture on his victims. We are told that he "invented the simplest to tortures for preliminary interrogations. No messy or cumbersome machinery but a tiny piece of office equipment anyone could pick up in a stationery store and put in his pocket- a paper stapler the Samsonite brand" (*Anthills...* 106) (Udumukwu,33). Ossai in deference to his fellow human being is further projected in the manner in which he dissents Ikem's editorials, hence his listener, Beatrice in a presidential party which Ossai is present, listens to his conversation which she records "The editor who I hear is a Marxist of sorts appear to imagine he can eat his cake as well as have it, as we all tend to do this side of democracy" (*Anthills...* 78). Implicitly, we sense an in built hatred for Ikem, whom he refers to as a 'Marxist' in Ossai's language.

As events unfold in the novel, we observe that the abduction and dastardly annihilation of the editor (Ikem) was masterminded by the Central Government and executed subtly through the office of the State Security Directorate, Major Ossai. This information is revealed to us through Chris, a close friend of Ikem:

Oh well! No point continuing to search for the living among the Dead! (Ikem) So he (Chris) changed tack. It is clear that Major Samsonite Ossai and his boss (Sam) were adopting a quiet Line. (*Anthills* . . . 168).

Ikem, at this point is alleged of regicide and other allegations which were falsely leveled against by the nation. While the members of the public were trying to understand these problems that had suddenly compounded in the nation within a short while, Ossai cashes on the situational imbalance in the nation, and announces the kidnap and execution of Ikem. Ossai presents this report stealthily in this manner: "... Mr. Osodi was fatally wounded by gun shots" (*Anthills...* 169). This is however an ideological manipulation by the dominant ruling class- the government, the State Security and Media to dissimulate and deceive the ordinary masses of the Kangan Republic from understanding the state of affairs in the country. This ideological framing is intended to 'make light' the seriousness of the hideous lie being told by the same government. The hollowness of Sam's administration is further revealed, as he treats with levity issues that concern the generality of the people. Hence the dominated in the society are usually the victim's of failed leadership. In other to awaken the consciousness of the society to the reality of the falling Hero (Ikem), Chris and Beatrice made frantic efforts to present the actual information to the public:

A few minutes after he (Chris) began working he re-emerged in the living- room where his host and Beatrice were making phone calls and told them to make sure that people understood that Ikem was not just wounded but dead. He was convinced that the drafters of the government statement had deliberately chosen a phrase which was popularly misunderstood in order to diffuse the shock of the news by revealing its full extent only in stages (*Anthills...* 170).

The above account unequivocally unveils ideological underpinning of the dominant social group. The assertiveness of Chris and Beatrice conviction over Ikem's demise is made possible through their knowledge of the manipulative idiosyncrasy of the present-day government. Expectedly, the victims of this manipulation become the People. Ideologically therefore, hegemony is achieved as selfish policies, mitigated and presented to the subjects as an acceptable phenomenon. Hence, the hegemonic rulings of the Big Chief, (Sam) are executed through the intelligence of Major Ossai and his group.

It is worthy to note that, the abuse experienced by top official personnel in the novel, is spearheaded by the State Security agency working with Major Ossai. The embarrassment Ikem receives, at the car park of Harmony Hotel, shortly before his death, and the harassment Beatrice receives in her apartment, when Chris was being sought for by the same agency are all manifestations of Ossai's initiative. Also, the indiscriminate detention of citizens and public execution of individuals for sport are instances of abuse of power which are masterminded by the Ossai. Again it baffles one in the manner at which the Kangan's States Man (Sam) went through the chaos in his presidential jurisdiction with ease and comfort beats one's imagination. We are informed of this through Chris's contemplation. Chris reveals to us that although "There were unconfirmed rumors of unrest, secret trials and executions in the barracks. But His Excellency rode the storm quite comfortably..." (*Anthills...* 14).

In line with hegemonic strategies evidenced in the work, we observe Professor, Reginald Okong, whom Sam subtly works through with ease to achieve his political, selfish interest on the populace. The Abazon confederates, who have hitherto refused to endorse the Emperor (Sam) for life presidency, suffer negligence from the Central government due to their action. The inhabitants of the region, who now regret their 'supposed disloyalty' to the military dictator, send a deputation to the Presidential Palace to plead on their behalf. Amused by this development, Sam sends his ally, Professor Reginald Okong who is also the Attorney —General to represent him before the delegation. Sam asks Okong to address the delegation

and gain their consent subtly as he (Sam) gives Okong firsthand information about the delegation:

The crowd that came in an hour or so ago,'... has come from Abazon. It is a peaceful and loyal and goodwill delegation. If I should agree to see them, what is there to stop the truck- pushers of Gelegele Market marching up here tomorrow to see me. They are just as loyal. Or the very market-women's organization trooping in to complain about the price of stockfish imported' from Norway.... 'So I have a standing answer to all of them. No! *Kabisa*. '...But we must remember that these are not your scheming intellectual types or a bunch of Labour Congress agitators but simple, honest —to —God peasants who, from all intelligence reports reaching me, sincerely regret their past actions and now want bygones to be bygones. So it would be unfair to go up to them and say: "You can go away now, His Excellency the President is too busy to see you. You get me?"'. . . Your Excellency. That's my line. 'His Excellency: Tell them if you like, that I am on the telephone with the President of United States of America or the Queen of England. Peasants are impressed by that kind of thing, you know.' 'Beautiful Your Excellency, beautiful' 'Humour them, is what I'm saying. Gauge the temperature and pitch your message accordingly (*Anthills...* 16-17).

The nominal *crowd* is in reference to the delegation of Northern Kangan country, Abazon, who have come to state their predicaments to the General leader. The power that Sam wields, places him on an elevated platform of authority where he regards his fellow humans in the appellation *crowd*. The ideological import of this is that power enables one or a group of people to perceive other group in a derogatory manner. In this manner, the deputation from Abazon, are referred as people who are disturbing the peace of the presidency, because they desire to draw the attention of the leadership to their ordeal as citizens of the same nation. It is important to note, that His Excellency recognizes the delegates as "peaceful", "loyal" and goodwill". Ideologically, his recognition of his subjects is ironical, in the context of usage. Sam, by the use of the terms to qualify the delegates who were hitherto against his monarchical agenda, indicates that he now perceives them as true subjects

who are first of all sorry and are now willing to give their mandate in order to endorse leadership for life. He is rather impressed by this development as slackness to their plight has finally encouraged their forced loyalty to his government. Unfortunately for the delegation, the disposition of His Excellency to their plight is quite ungainly, as he believes that his acceptance of their stake would present him as a “sunk”. In the text of usage, it indicates one doomed for failure in leadership. The repetition of the noun *attitude*, in the context above as His Excellency’s disposition is strategic, it evinces that His Excellency does not identify the prime need of the ordinary masses that legitimated his authority as their leader. Hence, giving attention to the problems of his citizenry in his definition is a “Sheer sign of indiscipline”. In the above excerpt, we see that, loyalty is best appropriated or understood by the ruling class when the led are ignorant and susceptible to the ideological policies and naturalized conventions of the rulers. Again, this deputation who are referred to as simple-honest-to-God peasants” because they emerge from the rural quarters of Kangan, classify them as being incomparable to the knowledgeable union leaders in the city, who may challenge the decisions of the government easily. The phrase ‘*humour them*’ in the above also is adopted as a hegemonic mechanism to deceive and make his subjects feel that he is bothered about their problems. He therefore wins the cooperation and support of the masses by acting or hailing them into the dissimulation mechanism of Sam. In other words, the phrase is a hegemonic strategy to give the people a sense of inclusion and make them assume that their request has been attended to, by His Excellency.

V. FEMALE OBJECTIFICATION: AN IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONING OF THE WOMAN IN *ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH*

Objectification is a strand of feminism that studies the ideological framing of the existence of an individual or gender solely as an instrument to be exploited. It has been argued that Achebe possesses the proclivity to assign subservient or flat characters to the female folk in his works. It is against this background that Achebe with respect to his *A Man of the People* that “... the women are depicted either as subservient and naïve

house wives, parlour wives, or objects of decorations” (Udumukwu 200). The same motif no doubt resonates in *Anthills* as well, *but* in a different presentation. It is against this backdrop, that we analyze the female folk in the work. In the novel, the woman is seen as an entity that is conditioned by the overbearing presence of the male folk in strategic positions in the society. In this regard, we are told of the “eleven intelligent, educated men” *Anthills...* 2) of the cabinet, with the exclusion of women. Apart from instances where the woman is projected in the novel, as an influential personality in the society such as the American white woman Lou who possesses a domineering influence over the men at the presidential party, in Abichi and the Christening of Ikem’s daughter, Amaechina by a woman, Beatrice (*Anthills...* 222), the rest of the projections featured women majorly as those were not only conditioned by the desires of their male counterparts, in the perspective of sexual urge, but also as those who are battered and subjugated as a result of their inability to have male children. From this point of view, we are presented with Elewa and Beatrice whose roles in the novel are laudable but from the ideological point of view, they are objectified as a result of their feminine composition. In the case of these women, they are loved because of their sexual activeness. Evidently, we see Elewa, Ikem’s girlfriend who blames her woman’s lot after a sexual escapade with her man. All that Ikem’s does, to explain his reasons for not allowing her to pass the night in his apartment becomes futile. In that state of annoyance, she says: “You explain what? ... But woman done suffer for this world-o if I no kuku bring my stupid nyarsh come dump for your bed-room you for de kick me about like Ibe football? I no blame you at all”. (*Anthills...*34)

Ikem, specifically tells Elewa, that he would not like her to be counted among “all the-loose women for Bassa who no de sleep for house” (*Anthills* 36). By this proposition, Ikem assumes that “*Al!*” the women in the state capital city are flirtatious. This is an ideological framing or notion about the individualist (Ikem) in his relationship with the opposite sex, the woman. His resentment about the female folk is also perceived in his contemplation. For him, he dislikes the idea of waking up in the morning to behold the presence of a nude woman at his bed side. This

however becomes contradictory as Ikem strives to disconnect from the very same folk he derives sexual satisfaction from. In fact, his monologue reveals to us that the very essence why he loves Elewa is as a result of her sexuality. Against this backdrop, Ikem informs us he is “extremely fond of the girl, more than anybody [he] can remember in years. And her love-making is just sensational. No *gimmicks*.” (*Anthills...37*). From Ikem’s reflection, we observe, that it is on the basis of sexual satisfaction that a man of his education and status in the society relates with Elewa who is not educated as reflected in her pidgin constructions. From the foregoing, we see that Elewa is subjectified as an object of sexual fulfillment. Chris tells us Ikem’s perception of women. For Chris, Ikem “doesn’t say too much to any girl [and that] he doesn’t think they have too much brains.” (*Anthills 65*) On the same premise, Beatrice who is Chris’ girl is liked by her man on the same the basis of sexual satisfaction. Unlike Elewa, Beatrice is an educated lady with first class honours, but her education does not in any way, inhibit the memories of male chauvinism she suffers in her father’s compound in her younger ages. Her conservative attribute in public or among her colleagues is connected to this ideological framing of patriarchal superiority from her socio- cultural background. This rather affects her personhood and makes her susceptible to her male counterparts displayed in her previous relations and obviously, at the presidential dinner in Abichi. She wonders the effrontery in which Lou, her American counterpart in the party, spoke to His Excellency and his men at the gathering. For Beatrice, that was “unbelievable” (*Anthills 78*) On the basis of her sexuality, Chris places her alongside his previous affairs and even his six months marriage with Louise in America, and concludes that the sexual excitement he gains from ‘BB’ as she is fondly called by him is incomparable. In this light, Chris reveals that “Beatrice is a perfect embodiment of [his] ideal woman, beautiful without being glamorous. Peaceful but very strong. Very, very strong. I love her and will at whatever pace she dictates.” (*Anthills... 63-4*). His object of love, Beatrice, is best appreciated as an instrument for sexual relations. These circumstances however stretches back to the subjugation and battery Beatrice’s mother receives from her father as a result

of her inability to conceive a male offspring, which the father of Beatrice thinks his wife, is solely responsible for. This resentment is so much on the part of Beatrice’ mother that her mother bore her a huge grudge and wished that she had turned a boy at her birth, having prayed and desired a male offspring before her birth:

I didn’t realize until much later that my mother bore me a huge grudge because I was a girl- her fifth in a row though one had died - and that when I was born she had so desperately prayed for a baby boy to give my father. This knowledge came to me by slow stages which I won’t go into now (*Anthills... 87*).

We observe that the construction of the above text focuses on the mental process of the ideational metafunction of language. The verbal group ‘*didn’t realize*’ reveals the psychological state that Beatrice is subjected to as a result of her gender configuration. The grammatical construction exposes the experience she goes through in her father’s house, an experience of loneliness which results to puniness and makes her become less ambitious in life. Beatrice’ father’s premium on the male child, however unveils his disapproval of the female ones, which Beatrice is identified with. He is a typical representation of patriarchy which exposes his ideology. Naturally therefore, Beatrice, being a female child, downgrades her and. classifies her in the category of second class citizens.

CONCLUSION

We have established through the analysis of our chosen text that every society is structured by conventions, policies, beliefs, and ideology. Through ideology, the people are manipulated and conditioned to adopt their subordinations. We have also explored how the woman is seen as an entity that is conditioned by the overbearing presence of the male folk in strategic positions in the society. This paper concludes that individuals who are victims of failed leadership, and social prejudice assert themselves for change; hence they are transformed from subjects to social agents of change.

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