A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIETY AND THE "DICTATOR": A CASE STUDY OF SIX AFRICAN NOVELS

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Abstract

It is the position of this paper that all the various kinds of rulers in these novels, Sam (Anthills), Koyaga, Nkoutigui Fondio, Tiékroni, Bossouma, (Waiting for the wild beasts to vote Waiting)), of whom we shall only refer to the first three in our discussions, Fahati (Le Récit du Cirque de la vallée des morts… (Le Recit)), Agyeman (Stench), the Ruler, and Emperor Titus Flavius Vespasianus Whitehead (Wizard) and Léon Mignane (The Last of the Empire (The Last)) are spawn by the collective actions and inactions of the masses. This is because every action or inaction by individuals in society is undergirded by vested personal interest. [...]

The fact that the whole society comes together to oust the Agyeman regime constitutes a tacit endorsement of society's complicity in bringing into being that regime. By their collective involvement in this ouster they show that they determine the kind of regime that superintends their affairs. In other words, it is a question of *Ife onye metalu*[44], a man, and by extension a society suffers for its own deeds or misdeeds.

Keywords: Isomorphism, collective responsibility, vested interest, pragmatic-eclectic-choice theory, Poetics of Relation.

Introduction

The Emperor may be a fool but isn't a monster. Not yet, anyhow; although *he will certainly become one by the time Chris and company have done with him.* But right now he is still OK, thank God…I am sure that Sam can still be saved if *we* put our minds to it. His problem is with so many *petty interests* salaaming around him all day, like the shyster of an Attorney-General... (*we* and *he would certainly become one by the time Chris and*

[44] This is an Ibo proverbs translated to mean "What a man commits... Follows him[?] Comes back to take its toll[?] (Anthills of the Savannah 187).

company have done with him are our emphasis, Anthills of the Savannah (Anthills 42)).

Ife onye metalu...The real burden of that cryptic scripture seemed to turn the matter right around. Whatever we see following *a man*, whatever fate comes to take revenge *on* him, can only be *what that man* in some way or another, in a previous life if not in this, *has committed* (Apart from the local language phrase here, all other emphasis is ours, Anthills 187).

"Vested interest, Kwadwo,"…That is the catalyst of politics. Vested interest…" (Stench of Khaki (Stench 173)).

Your own actions are a better mirror of your life than the actions of all your enemies put together. *That is why I told you to watch what you do to others instead of always thinking about what others do to you*…he was asking me to look at my own actions. Maybe the enemy was hidden within my actions (Emphasis ours, Wizard of the Crow (Wizard 118)).

The structure and nature of society is a function of the choices that individuals make, faced with constantly changing dynamics of life, in pursuit of what they deem to be in their best interest. No choice is altruistic,[45] and the composite effect of the choices that individuals make is the resultant nature and form of society and system of governance in which they find themselves. This point is poignantly made by Hammoudi when he indicates that the rules of a dictatorial society, even though unwritten, are generally accepted by all[46]. Indeed, all literary theories are in one way or the other based on choices the artists or literary critic makes in a vast array of possibilities opened to him/her. In their analysis of the four main literary categories identified by Meyer H. Abrams, Trevor Pateman (2005) and Sally Suziki (2010) consider them as ways, manners, and choices made at conceptualising literature, and therefore alternatives ways of analysing the literary product. Our analysis of the six texts that we offer to study briefly is based on the pragmatic-eclectic approach of Choice theory which admits, as and when necessary, every theoretical approach that yields itself to useful appreciation of their contents.

Theoretical Approach

Choice theory therefore offers us a form of callisthenics: a series of intellectual and other exercises that "unstiffens all other theories, limbers

[45] Choice theorists like John Scott (2000) and Leon Felkins (1997; 2006) agree on the point that individuals act solely on the basis of their parochial interests.

[46] When a conflict erupts between an individual and his chief [the ruler] the struggle is merciless. That neither protagonists nor the spectators are surprised by this *indicates beyond any doubt that such are the rules of the game which everyone accepts*…Most important, the rules governing people's attitudes in any type of dominance relation seem to function unhampered, as if in a sphere independent of will (Emphasis ours, 3-5).

them up and sets each at work" (N. M. Gaskill 165). Stemming from this theoretical basis, it is our considered opinion that every form of government, such as the ones shown in these books, is the product of the collectivity of the people. For, the government is run by a party and the party is controlled by the masses[47]. And in a given society "[t]he power structure draws its validity and strength from the existence of the people's struggle." The people "choose a power structure of their own free will and not the power structure that suffers the people[48]." This collective responsibility approach to the analysis of the nature and form of society is reinforced by the Poetics of Relation[49] (Poetics 169)) of Edouard Glissant who posits that everyone contributes, willy-nilly to the socio-politico-cultural setting in which s/he lives.

Application of Theory

The four quotations from Anthills, Stench, and Wizard posit in very unambiguous terms the perception that seems to run through these three Anglophone novels: the collective responsibility of all members of society for the shape, nature, tenor and character of the society. Chris Oriko, Professor Okong and other ministers of the Sam regime are presented by Ikem Osodi as responsible for the foolishness, and the dictatorial tendencies of Sam. With "so many *petty interests* salaaming around him all day" (Anthills 42), he is nurtured into "a monster" that turns around to devour them all. The suggestion by Ikem that they (the citizenry, or at least the crême de la crême of Kangan) could still save Sam with some effort points to the axiom that society creates its ruler. That every society deserves the kind of government it actively or passively nurtures brings to mind a cardinal principle of Choice theory, the main framework within which we propose to analyse these texts: the notion of all human actions being governed by parochial interests. Choice theorists believe nothing is done selflessly. To them whatever a man does is motivated by a vested interest such that his/her choices are adumbrated by his/her best interests.

It is the position of this paper that all the various kinds of rulers in these novels, Sam (Anthills), Koyaga, Nkoutigui Fondio, Tiékroni, Bossouma, (Waiting for the wild beasts to vote (Waiting)), of whom we shall only refer to the first three in our discussions, Fahati (Narrative of the circus of the valley of death[50]… (Narrative)), Agyeman (Stench), the Ruler, and Emperor Titus Flavius Vespasianus Whitehead (Wizard) and Léon Mignane (The Last of the Empire (The Last)) are spawn by the collective actions and

[47]Fanon, Frantz. The Wretched of the Earth. Trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004. 127

[48] Ibidem, 139.

[49] Title translated by me from the French text version.

[50] Title translated from French to English by me.

inactions of the masses. This is because every action or inaction by individuals in society is undergirded by vested personal interest.

Ikem shares the opinion of Ernest Aryeequaye, a minister in the defunct Brako regime, that petty interests "vested interest…is the catalyst of politics."(Stench 173) It is vested interests that win the students of Legon to the side of the opposition. When the economic hardships of the Agyeman era begin to hit them hard, they pitch camp with the disadvantaged of society. The lack of essential commodities, penury of necessary textbooks for their education, and brain-drain which deprives them of the services of their lecturers for reasons of poor working conditions, make them switch their allegiance from the Agyeman regime to collaborate with market women, workers and the disadvantaged section of the Armed Forces, to put pressure on the Agyeman regime to cede power. The fact that the whole society comes together to oust the Agyeman regime constitutes a tacit endorsement of society's complicity in bringing into being that regime. By their collective involvement in this ouster they show that they determine the kind of regime that superintends their affairs. In other words, it is a question of *Ife onye metalu*[51], a man, and by extension a society suffers for its own deeds or misdeeds.

Robert Greene's The 48 Laws of Power (The 48 Laws) which is partly inspired by various biblical examples (Moses and Jehu), The Prince of Nicolò Machiavelli, the philosophies of Sun-tzu (author of The Art of War), as well as Carl von Clausewitz, a German-Prussian soldier and military theorist, who stresses on the psychological aspects of war (in his On War), as well as by other great thinkers, also endorses the concept of individual vested interest in any decision or action taken by the individual. Greene's The 48 Laws, as a synthesis of the thoughts of all the above sources and more, constitutes a one-stop point in accessing the dynamics of power and power relations in the real world, and by extension, in the fictional world of the novel. Using the arena of politics as his point of reference, Greene indicates that "constant duplicity…scheming…and subtle strategy" are the tools that courtiers and modern day politicians use to outwit their opponents who "curried favor" from the monarch or the head of state (48 Laws xvii). He thinks as choice theorists do that "dark emotions—greed, envy, lust, hatred—boiled and simmered within" (48 Laws xviii) the arena of governance. In this realm "the art of indirection, learning to seduce, charm, deceive, and subtly outmaneuver [the] opponent" (48 Laws xviii) guarantees one's ascendency in influence. To him, when people overtly display powerlessness there is a "motive of self-interest." And "making a show of

[51] This is an Ibo proverbs translated to mean "What a man commits... Follows him[?] Comes back to take its toll[?] (Anthills of the Savannah 187).

weakness is an effective strategy, subtle and deceptive, in the game of power (Law 22, the Surrender Tactic).

It is this Surrender Tactic that the masses most often use in getting their way with rulers and thereby influence the affairs of state. Greene establishes the influence the seemingly weak and helpless exert on state affairs when he cites the use of naivety as a tool of negotiation. Often, the masses, by pretending to know little or nothing about what is happening, strategise to entrap their leaders. The helplessness and the naivety of the common man is "an effective means of deceit" (Law 21, Seem Dumber Than Your Mark) which even if it is genuine "is not free of the snares of power." He believes that children in acting naive "often act from the elemental need to gain control over those around them." (The 48 Laws xviii-xix). According to Greene, every emotion is a raw material in the game of power. And the ability to master anger, fear, envy, love and affection, and to respond appropriately to them, enables one avoid being a victim of the self-serving interests of those around one and to also take advantage of others.

It is in this vein that Kamĩtĩ (Wizard) tells Arigaigai Gathere (a constable in the police service of Aburĩria) that his problems are of his own creation. If there is anywhere to look for the enemy, he should be looking at the mirror. The mirror metaphor in Wizard is a succinct and straightforward statement that the whole Aburĩrian society is responsible, individually and collectively, for its predicaments. The doctrine of karma is the main theme that runs through Wizard. Major Ennuson (Stench) also tells Nyamekye, a non-commissioned officer under him, that to give into despondency and to throw one's hands in the air constitutes an active contribution to the effort of the oppressive forces he so much abhors. He tells him: "Sorry, Nyamekye, but you annoy me. Don't you see? You are resigning yourself to the situation. You are joining them instead of fighting them... Shake up man" (159).

Our analysis revolves around the character of the dictator, of his immediate associates, and of the common man on the street: the actions and reactions of all characters in these novels generate a continuum of socio-political chain reactions that help model the society in which they live. Each person plays a role in the formation of the kind of power structure in the society in which s/he finds him/herself. Farah (2002 30) as quoted by Gagiano, Annie Africa Today 57 .3 8) states that "*No dictator is born out of a vacuum*. A *dictatorship comes out of society* and therefore one must stand in that society and one must see it [the society] as part of an authoritarian program" (Emphasis ours).

Commenting on this statement by Farah, Gagiano has this to add: "The General's dictatorship is the outcome of Somali society's own dictatorial inclinations, with roots in the familial structure of society—and in

its women, as well as men" (Africa Today 57.3 8). Juraga, Dubravka (1997) also thinks along the same lines as Gagiano. He believes that the dictatorial tendencies in the family structure are what the regime exploits to entrench itself. Achebe puts it directly and succinctly when he suggests that none is a victim of the use of power in his novel (Anthills 203-204). This is because the wielders of power obtain it through some form of negotiations, overt or covert, with the citizenry. Hammoudi (1997 14), in talking about the Moroccan monarchy states that "As for leadership, it has to be negotiated" and that from the early stages of the struggle until the achievement of independence "there was increasing collaboration between the Palace and the nationalists," and that it was the nationalist party that "militated in favor of the monarchy's recovery of its lost prestige" (ibid. 15). Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his The Social Contract (TSC) outlines this clearly. He thinks that when individual force is no longer enough to preserve the human race, and since men cannot create new forces, but merely combine and control those which already exist, the only way in which they can preserve themselves is by uniting their separate powers in a combination strong enough to overcome any resistance, uniting them so that their powers are directed by a single motive and act in concert.[52]

Rousseau in TSC seeks to answer the question as to how in a win-win situation the association of persons on voluntary basis will "defend the person and goods of each member with the collective force of all, and under which each individual, while uniting himself with the others, obeys no one but himself and remains as free as before." (60) He outlines therefore in TSC the basis of a "social pact" (61) in which the members willingly agree to the "total alienation by each associate of himself and all his rights to the whole community" (60) in return for "the preservation of the contracting parties" (78).

One other aspect of TSC which, though not explicitly stated, underscores the "isomorphism" (Michel Foucault 1978 215) between the individual/his family relations and socio-political relations as argued by Dubravka (1997) and Gagiano (2002) is the fact that Rousseau considers the family as"the oldest of all societies, and the only natural one" (50) and "the first model of political societies" with the head of state being analogous to the image of the father. However, unlike it is with the African family, and that of which Foucault talks about with respect to the Greek society, the father figure in Rousseau's conception does not wield absolute control over his children as to determine or give away "their liberty irrevocably and unconditionally" (55). However, the point must be made that for Rousseau,

[52] See The Social Contract. Ed 1968. Pp.59-60 and also the Web "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution.

Foucault, Dubravka, and Gagiano, the family constitutes a model of society and therefore what happens in the family transcends into the wider socio-political arena. Individuals therefore, by reason of their family culture, will either facilitate or inhibit the nurture of any form of governance. Outlining the ruler's moral basis for exercising authority over his subjects, Foucault uses Nicoclès to establish the connection between a just king and a husband who is so with his wife. He establishes the isomorphism between the good order that should reign in a monarch's house and the order that should prevail in his government: "If kings are to rule well, they must try to preserve the harmony, not only in the states over which they hold dominion, but in their own households and in their places of abode; for all these things are the works of temperance and justice" (171-72)

In outlining the moral basis of the king's legitimacy, of his authority to command the obedience of his subjects, Nicoclès insinuates a kind of social contract between him and his subjects based on the conviction of the latter that their interest will not be compromised when they submit to the sovereign. This continuum of social engagement that produces the definitive structure and nature of a society is what Glissant, the Martinican writer and literary critic, terms "the principle of Relation". Under this principle there is no room for indifference. Every act, inaction and reaction provokes a transformation in the system undergirded by the principle of "donner avec"— of "mutual giving" (Poetics) 156), of mutual change and exchange where "there is mutual influence one of another"[53] (Poetics 169) and where none can be passive no matter what one does:

There is no room for passivity in Relation. Each time an individual or community tries to define his/her/its place within Relation, and even when that attempt is contested, s/he/it contributes in shifting general conception, in tracking down old tired classical rules, and thus permits new "pursuits" of the "chaotic-world" (Poetics 150-51)[54].

We wish to refer to this kind of social dynamics as a pragmatic-eclectic-choice theory where all elements of society in a constantly fluid relationship, create new possibilities of interaction as they together determine the nature of their common existence.

Newman S. (2004) in stating Foucault's concept of the "decapitation of sovereign power" says that

> Foucault (1980b99) maintains that the analysis of power starts from its "*infinitesimal mechanisms*"---from the multiplicity of practices, relations, techniques and discursive operations *that intersect at all levels of social reality* running through institutions [...] for Foucault,

[53] Phrase translated by me from the original French text.
[54] Translation of original text into English by me.

> *power is fundamentally productive, rather than repressive* [...] power …*produces and incites. Subjectivity itself is produced*, rather than denied by power. Moreover, according to Foucault, the subject central to revolutionary discourse "the man described for us, whom we are invited to free*, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself* (Emphasis ours, 143-144).

What comes out of this philosophical perspective of power and its dynamics by Foucault (a position Ikem in Anthills seems to espouse) is that power is not centralised and cannot be situated at any particular place, in any particular institution or in any particular person. It is diffused and self-generative. This is much like the position of Choice and pragmatic theorists who believe that man in his choices, actions and speech-acts generates (creates) other situations that invite completely different responses depending on the interests of the individual or groups involved at any given time. In its productive nature, "power produces and incites", invites other reactions: from all elements of society who cannot, according to Glissant, remain indifferent. The fact of life is that everyone is vested with power which s/he uses to negotiate his existence in any socio-political environment. Power in its diffused and dispersed functionality, is exerted on all fronts and "it intersects all levels of social reality": from individuals to institutions.

In looking at the dictator, the father of the nation, the Ruler or whatever he and his subjects choose to call him, we shall examine triggers such as greed (selfishness), fear (insecurity), ruthlessness, cunning, divisiveness, superstition and insincerity on all sides of the social spectrum as factors generative of dictatorship. It is important to remind ourselves that none of the human traits enumerated above is exercised in a vacuum. No individual can express selfishness, fear, ruthlessness, cunning etc in the absence of other individuals, or at least circumstances or things. And as already noted, these emotions, depending on how they are handled by the individual will or will not allow the individual to benefit from the "game of power" played by everyone, (including even a baby who will, with shrill cries, demand and obtain his/her due from the parents) at different levels and with differing intensity.

Fear as an emotion is common to all the dictators that we come across in the six novels.

Indeed some of them live in such morbid fear that it virtually dictates whatever they do, say or think. It appears that all the other character traits of these men are generated by their fear of one thing or the other. Fear underpins their desire to divide the people, and it inspires their insecurity, ruthlessness, and desire for protection through occult and other means. The common, poor and insignificant hamlet dweller helps create the dictator by inspiring in him the fear of losing all he is, has, and aspires to be.

The fear that the Ruler in Wizard has of his subordinates taking over his position makes him very ruthless. His visits to the chamber where he preserves the skulls of his adversaries: "students, teachers, workers, and small farmers that he had killed" (10) reveals how fear is at the root of his ruthlessness. In remonstrating with the skulls of these adversaries he says, "You fucking bastards, it is your own greed and boundless ambitions that led you here. Did you seriously think that you had a chance to overthrow me?" (11). In his remonstration, we notice that the ruler mentions the greed of his subordinates as a factor that pushes him to be ruthless with them. In pin-pointing their greed as the reason why they find themselves in their present predicament (i.e., dead), he indirectly accuses himself of dealing thus with them because he also is greedy, and cannot allow them to have more than what they already have.

The same trait of fear as a stimulus to ruthlessness is exhibited by Fahati who states this very clearly in Narrative: "Perhaps, I am a coward, much like every criminal, who kills in order not to kill himself or be killed" (16)[55]. The poverty of the most insignificant subject of a ruler inspires in the latter a fear of one day becoming like the former. He knows that everyone, including the poorest of his subjects, has dreams of succeeding him. All the rulers, be it Agyeman, Koyaga, Sam, Nkoutigui Fondio, Léon Mignane, the Ruler or Fahati, are keenly aware of the innate desire of their subjects to take over from them. Fear, for whatever reason, is therefore the greatest trigger of the cruel actions of the dictator.

Col**.** Agyeman's ruthlessness is as well triggered by fear. In his ruthlessness he combines the tactic of crushing completely the opponent (be it physically or spiritually) with an unpredictability that strikes fear in them. In this way he takes total control of the situation. By so doing he seems to apply Laws 15 and 17[56] of Greene. When he gets to the Operations Room where Major Ennuson, the Chief Operations Officer and his second-in-command, Wing Commander Andan are, he bursts in with his escort and has them disarmed. A consideration of self-preservation and pure parochial interests conditions his ruthlessness, given the rough political environment in which he finds himself. Weighing the consequences of failure in his attempt, Col. Agyeman is ready to mow down anyone, friend or foe, who portends any danger to the success of his coup plot. Here, Col. Agyeman (Stench), much like Titus Tajirika (Wizard), acts atypically from the theory

[55] Translation of original text by me

[56] Law 15 advocates the complete (in body and spirit) annihilation of the opponent: there is a risk of having the enemy recover to seek revenge when not completely destroyed. The law 17 advises keeping the enemy in a state of anxiety and fear: he must be kept in a state of suspended terror. He must not be enabled to know what may happen in the foreseeable future.

propounded by Svolik (2009)[57] whereby superior power and advantage of an opponent serves to dissuade a potential coup maker from going ahead with his planned action. The strong awareness of the consequence of his/her failure and the knowledge of not standing any dog's chance at success in what s/he is meditating, according to Svolik, stops the usurper of power from continuing with his/her meditated action.

We would like to observe in passing that fear, being an irrational, or rather, irrationally rational behavior, elicits several responses from its victims. The citizenry of This-Country in Narrative, for instance, are ready to give to the system of the Spotted-Rhinoceros whatever it asks them in order not to bring their loved ones in harm's way, even if they end up dying for compromising themselves and others:

Over here it is said with resignation that "to protect oneself in the marshes of misery and injustice, it no longer suffices for a convict to die while shouting out the truth that has been so often stifled, but *to die while blessing the Cult for sparing relatives* one leaves behind… (Emphasis ours, 35)[58].

Indeed, Nkoutigui Fondio and Tiékroni in Waiting, respectively (166-69, 201-202)[59] use the same approach to unearth their imaginary adversaries. Fear forces some subjects to do things according to the dictates of the rulers. However, no matter in which way a person responds to the trigger of fear, s/he helps in moulding the society in which s/he lives. Another interesting observation that we want to make about fear is that it is mutual (reciprocal) in nature: if one individual is afraid of another, chances are that the other is also, in one way or the other, afraid of him/her.

And in the face of fear, each party chooses, depending on what s/he sees his/her chances of success to be in a particular optional action, to either act ruthlessly, or meekly submit to the dictates of the other party. These choices are critically evaluated and adopted to satisfy "vested self-interest". It therefore appears to us that as far as the outcome of the trigger of fear is concerned, there is no victim and no victor: it is a win-win situation whereby each adopts a posture that best suits his/her interests at any given moment. The emotion of fear being a double-edged sword, cutting both ways, people in authority use the stick and the carrot approach in its diverse manifestation

[57] Depending on whether a coup threat is credible or not, potentially costly or not, determines the decision of any coup plotter to go ahead with his attempt or not and the reaction to the plot by the executive in place at the time. When the prospect of success is slim, the coup plotters shelve their intentions. They do similarly when even if success is assured and the cost is likely to be very high. ("Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics in Authoritarian Regimes, 2009 481).

[58] Original text translated from French by me.

[59] These pages correspond to a French text I translated.

to handle it. The ordinary man, so-called, seems to be more motivated by fear than the high and powerful. That however may be a subject of investigation to prove the truth or otherwise of this assumption. If he is motivated by fear, he is likely to be more treacherous and dangerous. Tajirika's example, seen to be a coward by Machokali, and having "No backbone… Wizard 258), and that of the old man who meets Cheikh Tidiane Sall (The Last), after his much applauded speech at the 80th birthday celebration of Léon Mignane, are classic cases of how the not-so-high-ups in society, inspired by fear, can be dangerous. After listening to the man who has, (just less than a minute ago, praised him for his outstanding delivery), ask to be assisted to have audience with Léon Mignane, Cheikh Tidiane Sall's thoughts are transmitted to us by the narrator: "Cheikh Tidiane sadly eyed the man's coal-black countenance. That very man would be prepared to disown him, no later than this evening, if Léon Mignane told him to" (The Last 1989, 42). This man is the type described by Machiavelli (The Prince 101-102) as capable of betraying a friend in order to get something to satisfy his discontentment.

Divisiveness or disunity is one of the favourite tools used by dictators, and serves as a trigger of dictatorship. This trigger stems naturally from the selfishness of man. And selfishness is closely linked with fear (it stirs the fear of losing something or someone dear).With each person wanting to have the best, each ethnic group desiring to obtain the juiciest part of every deal, it becomes easy for the ruler to capitalise on that to set one group against the other. In talking therefore about divisiveness, the fear trigger will often be alluded to. This art of divide and conquer, as we shall soon see, is skillfully used by all the dictators, especially the Ruler in Wizard, and Tiékroni and Koyaga, who learns his first lessons on dictatorship from Tiékroni, in Waiting.

Using either the stick and the carrot, or the divide to conquer tactics, after overcoming the occupants of the Operations Room, Agyeman first seeks to compel them to support him. Then he isolates Major Forson (the Chief Operations Officer) for praise and an offer of promotion. However, without waiting for any response whatsoever from them, he orders his escort to shoot them. In this way, he makes them know that anything can happen to them, good or evil, depending on their response to his overtures (Stench 4). Put in this precarious position, these men have to choose between either living to stage a come-back subsequently or dying for no good reason. They choose life, reasoning that this option presents them with the most beneficial package of the moment.The erratic and whimsical tendency of Col. Agyeman only reveals his desperation. This desperation is fuelled by fear of failure and the consequences thereof. He is aware that the Brako regime will not deal with him kindly if his attempt fails. He shares this trait of

desperation with almost all, if not all the other dictators: Koyaga (Waiting), Léon Mignane (The Last), Fahati (Narrative), Sam (Anthills), and the Ruler (Wizard).

The lack of respect with which Sam treats the "members" of his "Cabinet" and most of the people of Kangan stems from his fear of them, and the desperate need he has of making them feel insignificant and dependent on him. The same phenomenon is observed with Fahati in Narrative, and Léon Mignane in The Last. As Kad (Kabirou Amadou Diop- a freelance investigative journalist in The Last), the counterpart of Ikem in Anthills puts it, all ministers of state in the regime of Léon Mignane are stooges of the president. Even the radically independent-minded minister of Justice, Cheikh Tidiane Sall, is, in the thinking of Kad, another stooge of Léon Mignane[60]. As stooges, they are treated with a great disrespect.

Having undermined the authority of his ministers by engaging a parallel cabinet that exercises real authority, Sam treats them with great contempt. He castigates and humiliates his chief of police when demonstrators from Abazonia storm the Presidential Palace to petition the government on their distressing drought situation. Sam descends heavily on his Chief of Police because of his fear of the civilian populace. It is significant to note that these civilians are none but poor and weak villagers suffering from the ravages of several years of drought. Sam is said to be "quite frankly terrified of his new job" at the onset of his reign. As the omniscient narrator puts it, it is incomprehensible why the military,

> […] armed to the teeth as they are can find unarmed civilians such a threat. [...] [He] can see no other explanation for his *irrational and excessive fear of demonstrations*... Even pathetically peaceful, obsequious demonstrations. (Emphasis ours Anthills 12)

The paranoia that Sam demonstrates in the quotation above stems from his mistrust of his cabinet ministers. This paranoia is fundamental to all dictators. It leads them to know neither friend nor foe: all are lumped into the same category. Tiékroni and Nkoutigui Fondio in Waiting, and indeed all the rulers outlined in the novels fall prey to this weakness of paranoia. This paranoia is generated by the suspicion of the ruler that as he is a pretender, all his subjects too are the same. As Tiékroni puts it "[a]ll men are pretenders. Their good sentiments are pure scheming. The cockroach devours our sours by blowing on it.[61]" (Waiting 200). He thinks thus because he believes same to be true. And to a point he is right. Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 17:9 KJV) says "Most devious is the heart; It is perverse—who can fathom it?"

[60] « The ministers were all used as puppets… Even you, *Joom Gallé.*"(The Last 235)
[61] Translation done by me

Sam therefore personalises the government of Kangan. If the government falls, none of his ministers will be the derision of the world but he: "Yes, it is me General Big Mouth, they will say, and print my picture on the cover of Time magazine with a big mouth and a small head. You understand? They won't talk about you, would they" (Anthills 14-15). His fear of the fall of his government and the disgrace that will ensue pushes him to humiliate and brutally deal with everybody who seems to be a threat to the stability of his regime and a possible cause of his immanent disgrace. He even goes as far as physically eliminating those he cannot make irrelevant. This fear informs his act of retiring "all military members of his cabinet and [replacing] them with civilians" (Anthills 13). Ironically, he states, in reference to Professor Okong and his colleagues whom he considers incompetent that, "Give me good military training and discipline any day!" (Anthills 19) The fear[62] of contest and challenge in any way to his authority makes His Excellency Sam abase anybody who seems to have some dignity and respect about himself/herself. This reminds us of Fahati in Narrative, who says he abuses and destroys his subjects out of fear of destroying himself or being destroyed (Narrative 16).

Nkoutigui Fondio, Koyaga, Tiékroni and others in Waiting,[63] all out of fear, resort to very repressive and cruel ways to deal with those they perceive as posing danger to their hegemony. They plot and implicate their opponents in cooked up crimes and have them eliminated. Tiékroni for instance cannot tolerate the existence of another person who challenges him. He considers himself as "[T]he only master...the only male hippopotamus in the reach...he could do as he pleases...he has all power...even that of changing faecal matter, thoroughly kneaded turd, into a gold nugget" (Waiting 185)[64] He could therefore dispose of his subject as best suits him. Baré Koulé in Alioum Fantouré's Tropical Circles (Tropical)considers it a crime for any of his subjects to show any sign of dignity, to demonstrate any quality of excellence in any endeavour: "One aught not, above all, to

[62] This law stipulates that to attain the height of power, one must not inspire fear by trying to outshine his superiors. He should always make them look more brilliant than they are. The example of Saul and David in the Bible is a classical example of the out-play of this law. The same principle is what underpins the behaviour of Antoine Behî, Baré Koulé and Leon Mignane Law 1 p. 1-7

[63] Nkoutigui Fondio will sleep with the wives of his victims the very moment when they are being shot at the firing squad in order to take control of all the vital forces of his victims (En Attendant 167). Koyaga will cut off their male genitals and insert them into their mouths in order to emasculate their vital forces by encasing them in a circular movement (En Attendant 100).

[64] Translation by me

distinguish oneself; it was a crime to have any dignity about one self. We were condemned to anonymity" (161)[65]

The importance of the role of the general citizenry in fostering dictatorship through inaction fueled by fear is adequately captured by Anand S. et al.(2012). Though this book deals with the AIDS situation in Rwanda and Angola, the concept of the cost of doing nothing, inscribed in its title and content, can be applied to the attitude of the so-called ordinary citizen who is too helpless to do anything to improve his/her lot. In the preface to this book, Smartya Sen quotes the words of Albina du Boisrouvray, whose clear-headed vision on the issue inspired the book, to bring out forcefully the cost of inaction to an AIDS ravaged environment:

You say you are doing no harm but what about the deprived kids you could have saved *through doing something positive* for them—aren't you simply neglecting the harm of ignoring that? …This really is the opportunity cost of doing nothing (preface, Emphasis ours.)

And in page 2 of the book itself the writers state that, "The cost of inaction is not the cost of doing nothing: it is *the cost of not doing some particular thing*." (Emphasis ours, Anand et al. 2012 2).The point made by Anand S. et al. is that inaction is action, and does have implications, positive or negative. The failure of the people to act, through fear or any other trigger, contributes to the state of existence in which they find themselves. As much as the cost of ignoring the consequences of the AIDS pandemic in Rwanda, Angola and elsewhere, by people who should have acted in one way or the other has devastating repercussions on the people in those parts of the world, so does turning a blind eye, an indifferent eye to occurrences in one's immediate society impact on the quality of life one enjoys.

Another trait of the dictator worth considering in this analysis is that of superstition. In Waiting it is recorded that Fricassa Santos was a person who uses occult powers and that Koyaga has to employ occult means to overcome him. Both individuals are said to have consulted with great fetishes across Africa in order to ensure their success on the throne. The Ruler in Wizard in a similar manner employs the services of magic to keep his throne. He is said to have a secret room where the mortal remains of his victims are kept for occult purposes. Nkoutigui Fondio engages in a ritual of sexual humiliation of those opponents he kills by sleeping with their women at the very moment they are being killed in order to be insulated from attacks from these victims. As Major Ennuson suggests, this dabbling in "spiritual" matters by a ruler makes his/her rule susceptible to brutalities:

The brute force which was often resorted to, sometimes unjustifiably, touched something deep inside him and outraged his sense of justice

[65] Translation by me

Would such brute force be absent from this government, especially since the Head of State, as was widely known, was a dabbler in spiritual matters? (Stench 16)

Emmanuel C. Eze (2009 91), a Nigerian-born American postcolonial philosopher, indicates that it is only ordinary reason with "[w]hich we could with some certainty assume as protection against the excessive in claims- political, religious, or artistic- to the 'miraculous'." For, according to him, "when the extraordinary is introduced, it often leads tragically", to "moral, and quite often physical, self-destruction" (81).

Reverend Bentil (Stench), the spiritualist, seems have a firm hold on the psyche of the Head of State such that he could make him do anything he wants. He has his own ulterior motives for getting himself attached to the Head of State: pecuniary gains. Having earlier "worked with [the colonel] on the latter's first coup d'état", Reverend Bentil gets the Head of State do anything he comes up with. In order to neutralise the activities of some putchists that he may have conjured up, Rev. Bentil gives Col. Agyeman some Florida water as a charm with the following instructions: "'Rub some on your face every morning before you go to the office for a week. I shall see you again. Agyeman took the concoction and put it in his pocket'" (Stench 74).

With this enigmatic parting statement he keeps the Head of State in a mental frame conditioned by fear. In this state of mind, the Head of State is well disposed to do anything so long as it will help save him from trouble. Agyeman thus shares the predicament of Fahati, who is ready to do anything in order not to be hurt by his subjects who he has grown to fear. The state of anxiety in which Agyeman is in can be deduced from his inexorable inquiries to Rev. Bentil as to whether the latter could do something to prevent the predicted calamity: "Can you do something about it...? But who are these people at all? Agyeman's tone was plaintive... Are you sure you can do something about it..." (74) Ironically, while Agyeman uses fear to keep his subjects obedient to all his dictates, Rev. Bentil, one of his subjects, also exploits the fear of Agyeman of losing power to get monetary reward from the latter. Just as we hinted earlier on, everybody, including Rev. Bentil, contributes in his/her individual and peculiar ways in sustaining the canker of the oppressive so-called "one-man show" of Agyeman.

In real life all the dictators of Africa and elsewhere use the willing and interested support of members of society to keep themselves in power. As Svolik (2009 481), a professor of political science at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign indicates that (*American Journal of Political Sciences* 9.2), Hafiz al-Asad, Leonid Brezhnev, Saddam Hussein, Mobutu, and Theodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo and countless others, all have used a network of materially and financially induced supporters to institutionalise

their regimes. Through this system of patronage, the ruler cultivates his subjects to understand that the benefits they are enjoying from him can only be sustained if they maintain their loyalty to his cause. Fear of losing these benefits makes the general populace, conditioned by the gifts they receive from the ruler, continue to give him support in diverse ways: and often in a manner detrimental to their own general welfare. This is because "[i]t is in the nature of men to see obligation in the favors they have conferred just as in the benefits they have received" (Machiavelli 58). The case of young technocrats and careerists who, with barely any experience, are drawn into government and showered with goodies of power is rift within these regimes. Léon Mignane knowing this category of the citizenry to be

…avid pleasure seekers, eager for rank and honours … kept them plentifully supplied with all the little things that deaden a man's will to react, to refuse, to disagree with the Father in charge.

Anyone's dignity can be destroyed by sedulously fulfilling his every desire. Léon showered them with benefits: luxurious staff housing, cars, appointments to the boards of mixed-economy companies—with honoraria. Better still, he turned a blind eye to the embezzlement of public funds (The Last of the Empire 98).

The unexpected reshuffles that Léon Mignane undertakes make all these young Turks comply with his every dictate. They fear being replaced. Rev. Bentil and many others, such as the mallams and jujumen consulted by army officers like Major-General Adutwum, are all guilty of helping prop up the so-called "one-man" show of now Gen. Agyeman. Like the university of Ghana students, they support these rulers with whatever gift they are endowed with for material and financial gains: gains they are not ready to give up for anything, even if that involves mortgaging their collective interests. The system of patronage therefore, while building a popular social base of support for the ruler also fosters the fear syndrome. The fear of having ones legitimate rights denied makes the citizenry freeze into inaction, thereby helping promote the much-hated dictatorship. Those who refuse to support the ruler, by the dynamics of the clientele network are denied what is legitimately theirs as citizens by the state, or even have the little they have acquired either seized or destroyed. Hammoudi talking of this factor puts it this way:

This should not surprise us: authoritarian arbitrariness is based on a monopoly of resources; thus there can be political redistribution, and the new bourgeois can be kept in abeyance by the precarious nature of authoritarian favours (36).

The whole idea of a "one-man show" is therefore a mirage conjured by the close collaborators of the Agyeman regime to absolve themselves of any blame for the mess they have all created together. This cliché of one-

man-show in the real historical context is picked up by the masses, leading to the palace coup that overthrows General Kutu Acheampong (a former head of state of Ghana, 1972-1978)—the character partly incarnated by Agyeman. Interestingly, after this coup is successfully executed, none of them is excused for his complicity in the tragic state of the nation. The rejection of this attempt to assign blame only to a few people seems therefore, even in the thinking of the people who populate the fictional world, to consign to the dustbin of memory the idea that dictatorship is foisted on an unwilling majority by a handful of people.

Frightened about the future, Agyeman is ready to do everything within his capacity to prevent any disaster. He therefore quickly accepts the invitation of his father to go home for some rituals to protect him from any evil. Once home he is washed with some "herbs and other medicines" and made ton drink some herbal "concoctions" (Stench 108). Agyeman by his actions shows he is in not about to put all his eggs in one basket. When his father asks him whether Rev. Bentil helped him to come to power he chuckles and says: "It was not only him. There were about three or four others. I took no chances." (Stench 75)

It is probably to assuage their own fears that Col. Agyeman and the other dictators, as suggested by Fahati, keep their ministers in a state of uncertainty, of fear. This is to prevent any of them nursing an idea of upstaging them, as most of them (dictators), did to their political mentors. The weapon of fear and uncertainty (Greene's Law 17) that Col. Agyeman employs to keep his subordinates in check is noticed in his frequent reshuffles of cabinet and ministerial appointees. In this he is in good company. Fahati, The Ruler, Léon Mignane and Sam all keep their subordinates in a state of suspense, uncertainty and fear as to what can happen to them next through their erratic and capricious decisions and actions.

The critical role that sorcerers play in the running of the state, (and by extension, the role the commonest of the most common of the populace in the configuration of the nature of governance in the country plays), is emphatically stated when the narrator in Wizard states the desperate need the Ruler has for the occult powers of the Wizard of the Crow:

The Ruler, like many other opponents of the Wizard of the Crow, had always wanted to *secure for himself all the sorcerer's knowledge and powers, without the sorcerer's* irritating, embarrassing, and even *threatening presence*… He would have the Wizard of the Crow kidnapped immediately after the confession and brought to the State House in secrecy. Whether he *disappeared him* after securing a cure and the secret of growing dollars or after appropriating all his powers; or retained him under lock and key in the

State House, using him as the need arose, only the Ruler will be in the know (Emphasis ours Wizard 672).

Apart from underlining the great need the Ruler has for the sorcerer's power and knowledge, the passage above also highlights the role of the fear factor in the creation of dictatorial regimes. It is the fear (the threatening presence) of the sorcerer that induces the Ruler to want to "disappear[ed] him". As it is in this case, the source of this fear is obviously unaware of his role in creating the dictatorship that holds sway in the nation. The poverty of the people serves as a reminder to the ruler of the lowly state from which s/he has risen from and the kind of strong desires s/he has had at that time of supplanting those that are better placed socio-economically and politically. This particular point is explained in Anthills, when the taxi drivers and the spectators of the execution of the four criminals insist their oppressors oppress them without any attenuation, since they also nurse the hopes of occupying one day the positions those oppressing them now occupy.

It must be noted here that Kamĩtĩ, the Wizard of the Crow, is an ordinary unemployed graduate living in squalor and abject poverty. That an individual like that can inspire fear in the Ruler underscores the significance of the poor and marginalized in the scheme of things in any nation. The supposed gift of divination and healing of Kamĩtĩ inspires fear in the ruler because he (the ruler) is confronted with another person with a quality that he does not have and which makes that individual a potential threat to his throne. In Waiting, Koyaga and Fricasso Santos are said to have fortified themselves with great magical powers. So were Nkoutigui Fondio and Tiékroni in the same novel. Likewise, Léon Mignane in The Last also incants upon his throne and smears it with all kinds of concoctions and portions in order to secure himself on it. Daouda, noticing the throne of the president for the first time is tempted to sit on it. However, fear of the magical incantations Léon Mignane makes, and the portions he smears on it frightens him away:

Daouda was discovering the throne for the first time. He was fascinated, as if attracted by a supernatural power. […] When his middle finger touched the cushion's seam, his blood flowed more quickly, piercingly chill. It seized his whole body. […] This sudden fright reminded him that the Venerable One pratised fetishist rites. Before every trip, he would summon masters of the art of consultation. He himself, Daouda, had several times carried messages to these sages. He had more than once seen Léon Mignane anointing himself with *safara*. And he would not soon forget the story of the infant stolen from the maternity ward to be offered up as a sacrifice

One day the Venerable One, in an expansive mood, had whispered to him:

"Africa is irrational! Or else its rationality is such as to startle the modern world…One has to make sure of such practices…to protect oneself against enemies within" (The Last 17).

The magician or medicine man in Africa is usually from the very deprived and poor sections of society. The fear that these rulers have of them stems from the fact that the latter are supposed to have the ability to harm them. Any sense of inadequacy that the ruler feels in comparison with any subject of his/hers, triggers fear which also triggers the irrational repressive tendencies they exhibit towards that subject.

In the case of Anthills, Sam treats with great contempt and ruthlessness the people of Abazon especially, and the masses of Kangan, whom he cannot allow to demonstrate for fear of his government being toppled. In the quotation from Wizard we notice that selfishness also plays a significant role in creating a dictatorship. We observe that many people, including the Ruler, seek to appropriate for their sole use, the power and knowledge of the Wizard of the Crow and after that eliminate (disappear) him.

Much like Sam in Anthills, the Ruler sees every interaction between himself and any other as a duel of wills that he must always win. This desire to be the best in everything underlines the megalomania of these rulers. Every encounter therefore represents for him/her a performance space in which s/he tries to demonstrate that "Might is Right" (Wizard 19). In an attempt to kill two birds with one stone, the Ruler sends the Wizard of the Crow outside of the grounds of the Parliament buildings and law courts. He attempts to thwart the efforts of the People's Assembly slated for the same venue and to win a war of wills against the wizard of the crow at the end of which he will incarnate the powers of the wizard (Wizard 705). This is reminiscent of Nkoutigui Fondio and Koyaga in Waiting of Ahamadou Kourouma. Koyaga, in order to emasculate his rival, Fricasso Santos, after subduing him, performs a ritual of "the excision of the penis and the insertion of the penis and the bloody scrotum, between the teeth, into the mouth" (132) in order to emasculate Fricasso much in the same way as the demonstrators who demand the blood of Koyaga are treated "to destroy the avenging forces that the soul dispatches against its killers" (124). The belief in the world of the supernatural and its influence on the world of the living, whose influence is moderated by the sorcerers and witch-doctors, makes these sorcerers and witchdoctors a dreaded and hated species by the rulers. These rulers cannot countenance the sharing of power of any kind with any other person whatsoever. Nkoutigui Fondio, while his victims are being executed sleeps with their spouses for the same reason as noted earlier. Tiécoura, the responder to Bingo, the official praise singer (griot) of Koyaga,

has this explanation on this habit of Nkoutigui Fondio sleeping with the wives of his adversaries:

Consequently, it is untrue that he dreamed up con-spiracies in order to murder the husbands of the women with whom he wished to sleep. No! The truth is that, for magical reasons, he craved these women in the night their scheming husbands were executed so that he might profit fully from their deaths. (Waiting 190)

The role of magicians and witchdoctors in the affairs of the state is closely linked to the question of fear: the fear of losing power and of being a victim of one's victims. The principle of self-defense and the instinct for survival makes a victim nurse the desire to overcome his oppressor and if possible reduce the latter to the state of helplessness s/he has found himself/herself in. Machiavelli gives a classic example of a situation in which Antoninus Caracalla, son of Severus, whose "ferocity and cruelty was so immoderate" that he "became an object of hatred…and began to be regarded with terror by those who surrounded his person and was finally slain by a centurion in the midst of his troops" (The Prince 108-9). The error of Antoninus according to Machiavelli was that "he had condemned the brother of the centurion to an ignominious death and threatened the officer himself every day, and yet kept him in his body guard" (The Prince 109). Hammoudi analyses this syndrome and states among other things that the ruler is a target for elimination. For the master is also one that others try to eliminate—in order to take his place—and who, as a consequence, must often chastise his disciples and keep them under surveillance (Masters and Disciples 43).

Daniel Maximin (Solitary Sun[66] (Solitary 1981) captures this kind of situation very clearly when in retaliation for the decimation of rebellious Negro slaves by their masters, a lady native doctor, whose two sons are killed by the forces of a general of Napoleon, general Richepanse, and who is charged with the treatment of the latter, poisons him to death instead.

Generals died of climatic conditions, both in Haiti and Guadeloup. Richepanse […] fell sick in the month of August. […] he died suddenly despite all the tender care of a renown old Negro Woman, […] [who] administered to the august patient barbadine jam and herbal tea from the sap of their poisonous roots. (Solitary 63)[67].

When the white masters get to know the complicity of their Negro slaves in their predicaments, they become more vicious, and that in turn makes the slaves take to other means to eliminate their bosses. The variation of methods that the slaves use in this novel to survive the tyrannical

[66] Title translated by me.
[67] Translation of text from French by me.

tendencies of the white masters is reminiscent of "the chameleon's skill in adapting to varying orders of life" in "a poetics of flexible perspectives" (4) that permits it to survive in a paradoxical world in "constant quest for equilibrium [and] of change and stability." (Anyidoho) The following excerpt from Wizard also serves to illustrate the point. The ruler, desperate to get answers from the Wizard of the Crow, because he is afraid of what the future holds for him, threatens him in this way:

When confronted for an answer the following day, the Wizard of the Crow said that his powers did not lie.

It was not a question of what he wanted or not, the Ruler now said in a *menacing* voice. He would have to do whatever was expected of him.

> Kaniũrũ intervened: "That is what the English call an *ultimatum.*"
>
> "Yes, an ultimatum," the Ruler echoed.
>
> Dictators thrive on fear, reflected the Wizard of the Crow. They loved to see their subjects quake and make desperate pleas for mercy and forgiveness. If the dictator intended to kill him, he would do it anyway, no matter what the Wizard of the Crow said (Emphasis of ultimatum is ours (Wizard 668).

As if to make it unquestionably clear that fear fuels cruelty and dictatorial tendencies, the narrator makes us see how Tajirika, who harbors a morbid fear for the Wizard of the Crow, yearns to see him "disappeared" from the scene. After the blast outside the People's Assembly, propelled by fear, the Ruler seeks to impose "a super eye over the military" (Wizard 706). The ruler takes this line of action because he is seized by morbid fear. Dr. Furyk in describing how the Ruler reacts to fear says: "But his eyes, those eyes, I have never encountered a look like that in an adult. They looked scared and helpless, like the eyes of a child stricken with fear at the unexpected and the unknown" (Wizard 471).

Fear also inspires the desire of Tajirika to see to "the disappearance of Nyawĩra and the Wizard of the Crow" (Wizard 706). Tajirika sees in this course of action a means of getting rid of the Wizard of the Crow who has to that point shadowed his life. In addition, the "disappearing" of the Wizard of the crow will also assure him of permanent possession of the charm that the latter once gave him (Wizard 707). Tajirika's desire to eliminate Kamĩtĩ (the Wizard of the Crow), is the product of both fear and selfishness. Self-interest fuels the cruel thoughts of Tajirika as it does the meditation of all the major characters of the novel.

Playing his role as a commentator, the narrator considers fear as the source of misery. Machokali's fear of what his political enemies are about to do to him leads to his committing a blunder of giving over a note to the Ruler in which the Wizard of the Crow writes "the country is pregnant." This act of handing over the incriminating note to the Ruler is imprudent because the

country and the Ruler are synonymous. In his commentary the narrator states: "But *too much fear fuels misery*, and the thought that his political enemies might be plotting against him made him ignore his better instincts as he handed the note to the Ruler" (Emphasis ours Wizard 511).

What the above quotation implies is that many people fall into various hurtful ways due to fear. The show of fear by the masses paralyses them and makes them hesitate, fumble and cower before the cause of their fear, thus leading to a life of misery, oppression and even death, as the fate of Machokali shows. The confusion that fear can inflict upon a man is shown in the reaction of Sikiokuu when he is consulting with the Wizard of the Crow to uncover the lair of Nyawĩra. The narrator, taking on his function of commentary, says this of him:

He talked as if words came out first and thought followed, although just now it was more like thought had become tired of following words and got stuck in only one desire; the way to Nyawĩra's lair. Strange that the tone of one man's voice could carry such a mixture of *prayer, bribe, threat, fear, and ambition* (Emphasis ours Wizard 408)

The above text portrays how fear can trigger an admixture of emotions and reactions. In this passage Sikiokuu is shown to be ready to adopt any measure so long as that measure yields his desired objective: the capture of Nyawĩra. The prime emotion at the root of the rest of the other emotions evoked here is fear: fear of losing political advantage, money, and unlimited control over the lives of others. The fact that fear serves as a trigger for dictatorship is concretely shown when Sikiokuu, in talking about what power is able to make available to one, declares,

There is no minister who does not dream of one day becoming the Ruler…Imagine your ministers and ambitious members of Parliament feeling honored that you have taken an interest in their wives, ecstatic when they know you have made love to them? Power, I dream of that power every hour of the day, whether awake or asleep (Wizard 414).

It should be observed in passing that the quotation above confirms Hammoudi's point that the ruler or master is a target for elimination. Because of fear, respected members of the Aburĩrian society are ready to have their inalienable civil, political, social and even conjugal rights violated. This fear, as we see above, is partly fuelled by ambition. In other words, these members of the society give away these rights in exchange for something else they consider better. The Ruler, aware of these ambitions of his ministers, "disappeared" some of them for dreaming to upstage him. Indeed, the prediction that a "bearded spirit" will overthrow him pushes him to decree that no one should wear a beard in his entire realm. Fear of being overthrown motivates the Ruler to display this dictatorial behaviour. And fear of losing political position and privilege, or of death, for standing up to

the demands of the Ruler, turns many citizens into groveling sycophants. In so doing, they exercise their power of decision in their best interest: they decide to take sides with the dictator. As Major Ennuson puts it in Stench, a position Jean-Paul Sartre, in his preface to Wretched of the Earth (Wretched 2004)) seems to have advanced, when one decides to be passive out of fear or for whatever reason, in the face of tyranny, one has decided and chosen the side of tyranny. Sartre in the 2004 edition of The Wretched writes: "But if the entire regime, even your nonviolent thoughts, is governed by a thousand-year old oppression, your passiveness serves no other purpose than to put you on the side of the oppressors" (Iviii).The trigger of fear as a factor in the promotion of dictatorship is most eloquently outlined in Narrative as observed earlier.

In reality, the "fear of the unknown" (Wizard 471) leads the Ruler to kill many in a very ruthless and barbaric manner. In this sarcastic monologue with some former ministers he has killed he states,

I plucked out your tongues and tore out your lips to show you that a politician without a mouth is no politician at all… You fucking bastards, it is your own *greed and boundless ambitions* that led you here. Did you seriously think that you had a chance to overthrow me? Let me tell you. The person who would even dare has not yet been born, and if he is, he still will have to change himself into a spirit and grow a beard and human hair on his feet. You did not know that, did you? he would add, pointing at them with his staff menacingly, his mouth foaming with fury (Emphasis ours Wizard 11).

The above quotation outlines the factors of fear, selfishness and superstition in the nurturing of the phenomenon of dictatorship in Aburĩria. The analysis so far indicates that there are some characteristics very common with these dictators. They are fear, (the feeling of insecurity), greed (selfishness), ruthlessness, cunning, divisiveness, insincerity and superstition. Maybe, of all the dictators presented in these novels, Nkoutigui Fondio embodies all their negative traits, much like Manguai, whose personality cuts across Narrative, Shepherd of the Sahel[68], and Dark veil[69] (all by Fantouré). Nkoutigui Fondio plots coups in order to eliminate his adversaries, dabbles in the occult, engages people who adulate him and tell lies to cover up his criminal activities and short-comings. Speaking of him, the narrator says:

Not a semester went by without a new conspiracy in the socialist regime of the République des Monts. Some were promoted by the dictator to rid himself of potential future opponents who were unmasked by seers and

[68] Title translated from French by me.
[69] Title translated from French by me.

marabouts. Nkoutigui's faith in Islam and in socialism had done nothing to hinder his daily recourse to traditional African practice (marabouts, sacrifices, grigris). The greater part of Maclédio's job consisted of contriving words, lies, cynicism and eloquence to provide a rational justification for actions which had none because they were directly inspired by the geomancy or marabouts (Waiting 189).

His fear of competition is translated into his demanding to be considered the best in every field of endeavor. In this connection he is in the same category as Fahati who finds every sign of exceptionality among his people a threat to his hegemony. These rulers therefore consciously eliminate all who show signs of independence or dignity. This desire to be considered the best in every field of learning and practice is symptomatic of the megalomania that is the mark of all these dictators. This predicament is not, unfortunately, limited to the Ruler or dictator alone. Every citizen of Aburĩria, exemplified in Tajirika, Sikiokuu, and Machokali and to some extent Kamĩtĩ, shows a desire to be the best. Kamĩtĩ shows this tendency when he initially thinks that the only way to change things in Aburĩria is through the spiritual medium, a domain he seems to excel in above every other character in the novel. His preternatural levitations and transmigrations are symbolic of this desire to rise above all and to have supervision over all. No wonder that all those who wield political power are afraid of him and therefore seek to annex to themselves his virtues. The factor of fear as a trigger for dictatorship, which is the root of all the other factors, is most clearly indicated in Narrative, where Fahati states that it is the fear of what his people will do to him that instigates him to treat them cruelly:

I, seated on My people, trampling upon them as one does to an old doormat, dragging them along as one does to and a worn-out old slipper, torturing them as one does a mortal enemy, destroying them as one does an old ruined edifice bombarded, violated by time and foul weather …

I wanted to be a Paradoxical-Spotted-Rhinoceros
tolerant
loving…
I wanted to be able to sleep the sleep of the innocent… But
I will never have such a privilege
Never
except
to be a Spotted-Rhinoceros imprisoned by his own
power and hounded by the ghosts of his victims…

I wanted	But
simply	I cannot
To allow	Allow
To live	To live
and	and
To survive	To survive
To allow	for
To hope	Fear
For the right	of
Of being free by others	

endangering myself. (Le Recit…, pp.26-28)[70].

Koyaga expresses the same sentiment when, in annihilating his adversaries who seek his blood for regicide, he says "They all called for the assassins to be hanged. For me to be hanged. It was them or me…We must show no weakness, no pity. It was them or us." (Waiting 133)

Fahati is condemned, by the sheer reason of his hold on power, to be otherwise than he would have wished to be: a dictator. Fear of getting hurt or killed, should he allow his subjects some liberty to aspire to anything good and hopeful turns him into a tyrant. As he states later on, echoing Koyaga's word's, the choice was either to let the people die and he live, or he dies and they live. « -The choice was between me and my Spotted-Rhinoceros-Cult and The-people. [71]» (Narrative 100) The fear of the people is such that there cannot be any compromise between the Ruler and his subjects. No middle ground: his interest and those of the people are mutually exclusive. And yet, as Glissant puts it, the relationship between them is that of "interdependence" (Poetics 157). Their existence is not only symbiotic, but mutually parasitic: they are mutually other-generative. They either remain in the mutually abusive relationship or cease to be who they are severally and

[70] Text form as in original text translated into French. Format of text is kept because Fantouré uses form to communicate his ideas.
[71] Translation by me from original text.

individually; and so, mutate into different natures, and thus implicitly self-destruct. This points to the relevance of the "Poetics of Relation" of Glissant and the position of choice theory: which both postulate that there is a dynamics of "an inexhaustible field of possibilities generated by the cross-fertilisation of cultures." (Poetics 69)[72]. The choices that individually the opposing camps make create totally new environments and persons out of them; integral in their outward form and structure, but completely and imperceptibly different in nature, response and operation.

Conclusion

The dictator and his oppressed victim have need of each other to exist much as, according to Korang (©2004 3), the dominating, imperialising West needs the non-West to survive. Korang, quoting Chattejee says "Enlightenment itself, to assert its sovereignty as the universal ideal, needs its Other: if it could ever actualize itself in the real world as the truly universal, it would in fact destroy itself" (17). The implication of this thesis is that the dictator needs the dominated to be who he is: without the dominated he ceases in essence to be a dictator. This idea is expressed by Martial, the grandson of Martial, the rebel, in The life and half (The life)[73], when he states, "We are in such need of others…We need others: it doesn't matter who.[74]" (The life 89) The narrator in The life completes this mutual sense of need that individuals have of each other, even of the most aberrant individuals that can ever be, when he says of Chaïdana and Martial (grand children of Martial the rebel) that

"They longed for the old man with wounds, they longed for the militia and their bugging hassles, *and they needed the hell of others to complete their own hell.* A quarter or a third of hell is as cruel as emptiness." (Emphasis ours, The life 89)[75]

The mutually dependent nature of the relationship that exists between the dictator and his subjects makes each side of this binary relationship both host and parasite of each other. In the ever changing dynamics of their mutually generative relationship, their fear of each other yields a change in which they remain locked-up in a duel in which the scale may remain tipped on the same side or the other; and always producing in each case a new scenario on the canvas of the performance space in which they find themselves. This mutually dependent and other-productive relationship between the ruled and the ruler in Africa makes it difficult for many rulers to relinquish power for fear of the worst.

[72] Translation by me.
[73] Title translated into English by me
[74] Text translated from French by me.
[75] Text translated into English by me.

In modern Africa, the phenomenon of "the last of the empire" as exemplified by current and former rulers such as Abdoulaye Wade, Ben Ali, Hussein Mubarak, Maumar Kaddafi, Mobutu Seseko, Sani Abacha, Laurent Bagbo, Robert Mugabe, and so on and so forth, is still prevalent, simply because African rulers are afraid of what their successors and subjects may do to them should they relinquish power. So consciously or unconsciously, through the factor of fear, the African people contribute to the hardening of the positions taken by their rulers. They therefore actively or passively create the conditions favorable for the nurturing of whatever dictatorship they complain to be living under. In other words the dictator is as much a creation of his/her "victims" (this term is used in the sense in which Beatrice Okoh uses it in Anthills) as s/he creates them. This paper therefore will find its perfect conclusion in the words of Fanon as he establishes the dialectical relationship between the ruled and the dictator:

This dictatorship […] in fact symbolizes the decision of the bourgeois cast to lead the underdeveloped country, at first with the support of the people but very soon against them. (125) [….] *If the leader drives me, I want him to know that at the same time I am driving him*. (127) […] But political education means […] driving home to the masses that everything depends on them, that if we stagnate the fault is theirs, and that if we progress, they too are responsible, that there is no demiurge, no illustrious man taking responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people and the magic lies in their hands alone. […] *It is the force from the rank and file which rise up to energize the leadership and permit it to dialectically make a new leap forward* [...] no member of the upper echelons has been able to take precedence in any mission of salvation. It is the rank and file which fights for Algeria […] *without their difficult and heroic daily struggle the upper echelon would collapse—just as they are aware that without the upper echelons and leadership the rank and file would disintegrate into chaos and anarchy*. […] *In practice it is the people who choose a power structure of their own free will and not the power structure that suffers the people*. (Emphasis ours, The Wretched138-39)

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