





## **Acknowledgments**

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## Abstract

This research paper is a comparative study of The Postcolony in Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966), and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006). It seeks to investigate the extent to which both authors and novels converge in their depiction of their independent countries Nigeria and Kenya. The first chapter handles the settings of both *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) as postcolonies, archetypal of independent Nigeria and Kenya, it highlights the complex web of historical, cultural, and political forces that shape these postcolonial situations through an extensive investigation. The second chapter explores both characters as 'Zombies', that is to say as postcolonial agents or victims without agency to change, they are analysed as people caught in a complex system of power relationships, frequently without agency, and acting as a representation for the general populous in their respective countries. One of the basic findings of this piece of research concerns both Achebe's and Ngugi's commitments to denounce the dehumanizing effects of the 'postcolony' on both rulers and ruled Nigerians and Kenyans. This dissertation sheds light on the complicated legacies of colonialism and the difficulties faced by rising nations as they deal with the shadows of their colonial pasts through a thorough exploration of the postcolonial narratives constructed by Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

**Keywords:** Postcolony, Commitment, Independence, Zombification, Kenya, Nigeria.

## General Introduction

On this continent it has not taken us long to discover that the struggle against colonialism does not end with the attainment of national independence. Independence is only the prelude to a new and more involved struggle for the right to conduct our own economic and social affairs; to construct our society according to our aspirations, unhampered by crushing and humiliating neo-colonialist controls and interference. (Nkrumah, 1963).

Nearly, all African countries have been colonized in the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly, the respective populations went through harsh periods; facing oppression, poverty, and other political considerations. However, for political purposes, some inhabitants were targeted and corrupted by the occupant to serve and enable them to reach their objective, which is to settle as well as possible. After bloody wars; around the 1950s and 1960s, the colonizer started to quit those colonies, leaving the natives in really bad, difficult economic, social, and political situations. As a consequence, some young Africans decided to go abroad seeking a better life especially looking for knowledge and literacy. It was after being graded in the European institutions that those learned Africans came back home, full of hope and eager to change the local populations' destiny and be a part of the nation's glory and enlightenment.

Promises and nice dreams haunted those marginalized communities' spirits, by their political leaders who have adopted exactly the same regime and policy as the colonizer did. Corruption and exploitation of both human and natural resources transformed all that hope and optimism into disillusionment, making also this independence a disguised one, which revealed the hidden intentions and self-serving interests of the ruling class, resulting in a fake independence that didn't really offer anything in the way of empowerment or advancement. It is crucial to emphasize that Nigeria and Kenya are among these African nations that experienced colonization, and were British colonies for several years. After gaining independence in the 1960s, they continue to face the same phenomenon indirectly, and struggling with social, and political issues, which pushed the local intellectuals to use their

voice and writings to expose these issues, through novels, and other forms of: ‘postcolonial literature’. Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong’o, regarded as the leading figures in the intellectual revolt in Africa opposing this postcolonial phenomenon in their countries and the whole continent.

All these elements echoed in my head when reading *A man of the People* (1966) and *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), as far as the setting and characters of the two novels are concerned. Achebe’s ‘Unnamed African country’ and Ngugi’s ‘Aburiria’ are both African nations that recently gained their independences. Despite this, their situation has not much changed. As history repeats itself, the new leaders proved to be more oppressive than the previous. Represented by Chief Nanga, the typical antagonist in *A man of the People* (1966) and The Ruler in *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), are portrayed as corrupt leaders, obsessed by power and both exploiting the countries and their populations, much like the colonizer did. It is because of this representation of the two African countries in the post-independence period, the Unnamed country and Aburiria, with the oppressed and struggling Africans shown by Odili in *A Man of the People* (1966) and Kamiti in *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), that I have found myself pushed to study these two novels in my research, and examine the shared themes, characters, and settings between them.

## **The Review of Literature**

My readings of some of the literature written on Achebe’s *A Man of the People* (1966) and Ngugi’s *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) revealed that these works have been studied and analysed from different perspectives by both African and Western critics. Achebe’s novel is widely regarded as one of the most important works that played a significant role in the development of African literature as a whole, a reason which pushed critics to write about him.

To start with, Do Adjei's "*An Analysis of the Language of Humour in Chinua Achebe's A Man of the People (2015)*" handled this novel from a literary and linguistic perspective. Adjei's analysis of humour in this novel looks at how Achebe uses irony, satire, and other forms of humour to criticize the political and social systems in postcolonial Nigeria. He also examines the use of language to represent the different social classes in the novel and to highlight the power dynamics between them. Adjei states that:

It establishes that there are several sources of humour in the text and they all play significant roles in underscoring the concerns of the text, particularly the subject of corruption. It thus points out that humour results from titles, name-calling, puns, use of pidgin English, irony of situations, comparisons (through devices such as simile), and satire, among other means (Adjei,2015, p.202)

He adds that Achebe's usage of pidgin English exposes the individuals' cultural and linguistic background and represents the variety of Nigerian society. As the critic illustrates, its use by some of the characters reflects their lower social status, while the use of standard English by the educated elite reflects their belonging to a high social class. He also assumes that Achebe's use of humour is significant in the way that it makes the reader enjoy the text by experiencing emotional feelings like a smile or a loud laugh (Adjei,2015, p.1). Adjei affirms that Achebe uses humour in characters' names and titles portraying the individuals' hypocrisies, specifically in the character of Chief Nanga, who is introduced with various humorous and sarcastic titles that are incongruous with his immoral and corrupt behaviour, and this type of humour highlights the corruption in Nigerian society (Adjei,2015, p.197).

Furthermore, another critique entitled '*Aspects of Realism in Chinua Achebe's A Man of the People (2008)*' conducted by V. Dwivedi. In this piece of criticism. Dwivedi discusses the manners in which Achebe uses several elements of realism in the novel. According to him, Achebe's use of realism is important, since it allows him to create a convincing portrait of Nigerian society and its issues (Dwivedi,2008, p.1). Dwivedi analyses the writer's descriptions

of Nigerian landscapes, villages, and cities as well as his portrayal of different characters and their realistic interactions throughout the novel. Dwivedi (2008) argues that Achebe's use of realism is closely tied to his social and political concerns, by depicting the realities of life in postcolonial Nigeria (p.3). the critic assumes, Achebe is able to critique the corruption and other social issues that were present in that society at that time and create a sense of urgency that underscores the need for political and social change in Nigeria. Finally, Achebe's use of realism according to Dwivedi is to criticize corruption and power abuses that were pervasive in postcolonial Nigerian society, by illustrating the realities of life there, and underscores the author's commitment to capturing the essence of Nigerian society during a critical period of its history. By employing realistic elements, Achebe effectively exposes the social, political, and cultural realities of postcolonial Nigeria, offering a profound critique of its flaws and calling for change. The extensive analysis of these aspects of realism contributes to a deeper understanding of Achebe's narrative technique and his impact on the broader literary landscape. (Dwivedi,2008, p.11)

Like Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow (2006)* has drawn a lot of criticism and has been the focus of numerous critics who have studied it from different angles. Dobrota Pucherova's: "*Wizard of the Crow (2006)* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o as a post-communist novel (2018)" examines how the novel reflects the effects of communism on African societies from a post-communist standpoint. According to Pucherova, *Wizard of the Crow (2006)* can be seen as a critique of both colonialism and communism, arguing that both ideologies failed to bring about social and political change in Africa (Pucherova,2018, p.8). The novel in the vision of the critic since it is a call for a new sort of revolution that is based on democracy, equality, and human rights ideals (Pucherova, 2018, p.5). Pucherova claims that this novel depicts a satirical image of a corrupt and oppressive government led by a dictator known as The Ruler. This government is presented as being oppressive and exploitative and represents not

only the oppressive leaders of postcolonial African countries but also the authoritarian rulers of the communist regimes. Pucherova affirms that the novel is a criticism of the way that African rulers or leaders have adopted the same authoritarian and corrupt practices as their colonial predecessors and that Ngugi uses satire and magical realism to highlight the absurdity of these practices and to suggest alternative ways of thinking and living and that Ngugi's work presents a satirical portrayal of a corrupt and oppressive government led by The Ruler, a dictator figure. This government represents not only the oppressive leadership found in postcolonial African countries but also draws parallels to authoritarian rulers of communist regimes. (Pucherova,2018, p.8).

Mustapha Bala Ruma's "*African Literature and Orality: A Reading of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Wizard of the Crow (2015)*" examines the novel from literary and cultural perspectives, Ruma argues that Ngugi's use of orality in the novel highlights the importance of the African traditional culture and challenges the dominance of Western one and that Ngugi's incorporation of orature in the novel serves as a means to present a multifaceted portrayal of African culture. By intertwining oral storytelling, proverbs, and communal values, Ngugi highlights the richness and complexity of African societies. Ruma suggests that this approach is a deliberate challenge to the political and social realities of postcolonial African cultures, aiming to evoke a sense of social responsibility and communal solidarity among readers (2007, p.203). Ngugi's use of orature offers a complex picture of the African culture and challenges the political and social realities of postcolonial African cultures by highlighting the communal aspect of these societies and encouraging a feeling of social responsibility, and this rejection of contemporary African literature written in European tongues seeks to restore the African cultural heritage and confront the effects of colonialism (Ruma,2007, p.198). Ruma adds,

The novel was initially written in the Gikuyu language, following the Gikuyu narrative tradition. This makes the novel to rely heavily on Gikuyu mythology and what Mwangi (2006;255) calls the Gikuyu

‘popular discourse’. For example, Mwangi has argued that the names of characters in *Wizard of the Crow* have cultural and symbolic meanings closely associated with popular narratives within the Gikuyu community of central Kenya (Ruma,2007, p.197)

Ruma argues that the novel's cultural background is enhanced by the use of Gikuyu mythology and popular discourse, which also gives readers a deeper understanding of the community's beliefs, values, and traditions. Because of this, issues can be explored in more depth and characters can grow to reflect Gikuyu cultural experiences. As a result, Ngugi maintains the cultural identity and heritage of the Gikuyu people while also celebrating the value of oral traditions in African literature by drawing on Gikuyu mythology and popular discourse. This approach gives the novel more levels of authenticity and complexity, making it a valuable contribution to African literature as well as a way to protect and promote local traditions.

Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) and Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) have been handled and analysed through different perspectives. In this review of the literature, we have chosen these ones: the literary and linguistic perspectives for *A Man of the People* (1966) and a post-communist and cultural ones for *Wizard of the Crow* (2006). It is important to note that these analyses offer valuable insights into the respective novels. However, they miss to deal with the issue of postcoloniality in the two novels, that are considered as classics of postcolonial African literature.

## **1. Issue and Working Hypotheses**

The review of literature discussed above demonstrates that both Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) and Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) have received a large amount of criticism from a variety of perspectives. It seems that the postcolonial analyses written about them are limited and unfinished. As far as we know, no previous study before ours has undertaken the task of discussing the novels as ‘postcolonies’ using the theoretical auspices of Mbembe's theory on the same. One of the basic hypotheses we raise in this research is related

to two novels and novelists. Knowing that Achebe is West African and Ngugi is East African, what in the histories of both Nigeria and Kenya has pushed Achebe and Ngugi to depict their countries as post-colonies?. The second hypothesis concerns the blending of Mbembe's concepts of the 'postcolony' and 'Mutual Zombification' and the settings and characters in both *A Man of the People (1966)* and *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*. To what extent then are the main characters Chief Nanga and the Ruler typical of the first presidents of independent countries? Our formulation of this hypothesis owes to our reading on the presidencies of both Nnamdi Azikiwe in Nigeria and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya mostly reported as corrupt post-independence Leaders. Last but not least is our questioning of the reasons that pushed both emblematic figures of African Literature namely Chinua Achebe and James Ngugi to depict their independent countries as postcolonies. With reference to the settings of their novels what then has pushed these two committed novelists to denounce the greed, hegemony, and corruption of the 'rulers' and death in the soul of the 'ruled'?. The answer and the discussion of the issue under study and the above hypotheses will be undertaken in both the results and the discussion sections of our work.

Hence, this research paper will study and examine; *A Man of the People (1966)* and *Wizard of the Crow (2006)* to find out what these two works shares; Set in different regions, and times, the novels offer valuable insights into the challenges individuals and communities face in the wake of colonial rule and portray the different struggles and issues faced by those people in postcolonial African nations, Nigeria for Achebe and Kenya for Ngugi. This rough situation after independence is the common interest between the two authors. From a postcolonial perspective, this study aims to examine critically postcolonial representations and their impact on society. I will draw a parallel to grasp more deeply African societies' reactions to colonialism and its aftereffects, and how these societies have responded to and resisted colonialism's legacy. To achieve this, I'm going to rely on Achille Mbembe's ideas on the

postcolony, particularly the concepts *the postcolony* and *mutual zombification*. My dissertation will explore the portrayal of postcolonial African societies by both Achebe and Ngugi in their works, which focus on the intersection of politics, power, and corruption. In addition, it will investigate how Mbembe's theory illuminates the mechanisms of power and the modes of governance in postcolonial societies, as represented in the novels.

### **3. Methodological Outline**

In this piece of research, I will follow the IMRAD method. The first part of the dissertation is the general introduction; it is made of four main parts which are a general introduction, a review of literature that tackled the two novels: *A Man of the People (1966)* and *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*. Then, the methods and materials that will compromise the summary of the theory: Mbembe's *on The Postcolony (2001)*, the biographies of Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, and finally the synopsis of the two novels. The second part is the discussion, in which I'm developing the hypothesis and applying the theory i have set at the beginning of the work. It will be divided into two chapters; The first one will focus on settings as postcolonies in both *Achebe's A Man of the People (1966)* and *Ngugi's Wizard of the Crow (2006) as postcolonies*. The second chapter will be character analysis in which we discuss the portrayal of the major characters in the two works as Zombified. And finally, the last part of the dissertation will be the general conclusion.

## II. Methods and Materials

### 1. Methods

This section of my work explores Achille Mbembe's theory on the "*postcolony*" as he develops it in his collection of essays: "*On the postcolony (2001)*". By so doing, we intend to borrow only these concepts of relevance to our work, that are: the notion of "*the postcolony*" and "*Mutual Zombification*".

Achille Mbembe (16<sup>th</sup> November 1957) is a Cameroonian philosopher, one of the most influential critics in contemporary Africa. He is known for his works on postcolonialism, critical theory, and political philosophy. Among Mbembe's greatest influences, the Russian literary critic: Mikhail Bakhtin, whose ideas have deeply impacted Mbembe's understanding of postcolonialism and critical theory. In his book; *Rabelais and his world (1965)*, Bakhtin introduced his concept of *The Grotesque body* as a means of resistance against the dominant cultural and political power. In a postcolonial context, Mbembe argues against this vision and suggests that we need to look at how the state uses the grotesque and the obscene in its ceremonial displays to understand their role in postcolonial regimes of domination, manipulating people to maintain power (Mbembe,2001, pp.103-104).

To begin with, "*The Postcolony*" identifies specifically a given historical trajectory, that of societies recently emerging from the experience of colonialism and the violence which the colonial relationship involves (Mbembe,2001, p.102). Mbembe's analysis of the postcolony is that it is not simply a continuation of colonialism, but rather a new form of power relations that are characterized by new methods of domination and exploitation, and even after achieving independence, African societies continue to be shaped by the legacies of colonialism. These legacies manifest in various aspects, including social structures, economic systems, cultural dynamics, and political frameworks, and continue to influence the postcolonial condition,

shaping the ways in which power is exercised, contested, and negotiated. the legacies of colonialism continue to shape postcolonial African societies. Mbembe notes that the postcolony is characterized by a unique brand of political improvisation, which means that political actors frequently employ unofficial networks and strategies to exercise power. Violence and coercion are just some examples of the many ways that politics can be improvised (Mbembe,2001, pp.102-103).

The second concept is what Mbembe calls: “*Mutual Zombification*”. Mbembe contends that the relationship between the commandment and its subjects is not only one of resistance or collaboration but instead best described as convivial; which means that they have to share the same living space. This familiarity between the ruler and the ruled creates a certain dynamic between them, which involves a *Mutual Zombification* in which both are robbed of vitality (Mbembe, 2001, pp. 103-104). The domination and control exerted by the colonizer over the colonized create a power dynamic that affects both sides. By maintaining dominance, the colonizer seeks to control and subjugate the colonized, often through oppressive systems and structures. However, in the process, the colonizer also loses some of their vitality. They become disconnected from the colonized society, obsessed with maintaining power and relying on a superficial and distorted understanding of the dominated population which is reduced to a state of dependency and disempowerment. In this way, both parties become “zombified” and trapped in a cycle of mutual destruction (Mbembe,2001, p.104). This suggests that Achille Mbembe’s theoretical contribution to our understanding of postcolonial African societies is extremely pertinent to our discussion of politics in the novels under discussion, mainly; *A Man of the People (1966)* and *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*. The concepts presented above will serve as the basis for our discussion section.

## 2. Materials

### a. Biography of *Chinua Achebe*

Chinua Achebe (1930-2013), born in the town of Ogidi in south-eastern Nigeria, which was then a British colony. His father was a Christian catechist and his mother sold cassava in the local market, Achebe grew up speaking both Igbo; his native language and English. Achebe began his formal education at St. Phillip's central school in his hometown of Ogidi, where he excelled, a bright intellect who has a keen intellect and a thirst for knowledge; which helped him attending the prestigious British-style boarding-school in Umuahia where he discovered his love for literature.

After graduation, Achebe has had a diverse range of work experience; before publishing his first novel: *Things Fall Apart (1958)* in London, which was an immediate success and has since become a classic. In his writings, Achebe explored the complexities of African society and culture, as well as the impact of colonialism and the struggle for independence. Being bestowed as the father of African literature, he made a significant contribution to the development and promotion of modern African literature, by establishing a literary tradition that reflected the experiences of African people which paved the way for subsequent generations of African writers. Throughout his life, Achebe received numerous awards and honours, including the man Booker international prize and the commonwealth poetry prize.

### b. Summary of *A Man of the People (1966)*

Achebe's *A Man of the People (1966)* is set in a fictional unnamed African country, after gaining independence from British rule. The novel tells the story of its protagonist Odili, a young idealistic school teacher who becomes disillusioned with the corruption of his country's political leaders. He becomes involved with a charismatic politician named: Chief Nanga, his former teacher who eventually becomes the country's minister.

The story starts when Odili accepts an invitation from the minister. Chief Nanga, the powerful and corrupt minister designated as “A man of the People”, promising change but he uses his power only for his own interest rather than the community. As the plot progresses, Odili becomes more involved in politics and quickly realizes how much Nanga and his associates are corrupt, what marks the beginning of the conflicts that would tear apart these two major characters in the novel. The first one is political, Odili becomes determined to take action and stand up for the common people to overthrow Nanga’s corrupt government and bring about change. The second conflict is personal, it begins when Elsie, Odili’s friend and lover sleeps with Nanga; this love triangle becomes a major source of tensions in the novel, which makes Odili more committed to take revenge. At the end of the novel, Odili decides to attend Chief Nanga’s campaign ceremony, where he is identified and severely assaulted, and his friend Max is killed, and Nanga is brought into custody by the army after the government is overthrown.

### **c. Biography of *Ngugi wa Thiong’o***

Generally known as *James, Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1938)* was born in Kamiriithu, near Limuru, Kenya. **Ngugi’s** talent in writing began when he was a young boy attending school in Kamiriithu; he was an avid reader and showed a talent in storytelling early on. In 1959, enrolled at Makerere University College in Uganda to study English literature. It was there that he became involved in the Pan-African movement, before being graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in English, and returned to Kenya to teach at his former high school. Ngugi’s literary works are characterized by a deep engagement with African history, culture, and identity. He is known for his commitment to writing in his native Gikuyu language, a decision he made to challenge the dominance of European languages in African literature and to reclaim the African voice. This decision had profound implications for his career and personal life, as he faced persecution and imprisonment for his outspoken activism and commitment to African languages and cultural expression His literary career began in the 1960s, with the publication

of his first novel titled: *Weep Not, Child (1964)*, followed by *The River Between*, and *A Grain of Wheat (1967)*, which was his last novel written in the English language. In the 1970s, Ngugi became more politically involved with his decision to start writing in his native language; Gikuyu, dealing with social and political issues in Kenya. In 1977, his play: *I Will Marry When I Want* was performed, which caused his arrestation due to its criticism of the ruling government. After his release, he went to exile and continued to write in the Gikuyu language, and he published his novel: *Devil on the Cross (1980)* which became a symbol of resistance in Kenya.

#### **d. Summary of *Wizard of the Crow (2006)***

Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow (2006)* is set in the imaginary free African republic named: Aburiria, ruled by a dictator called The Ruler. The novel centres around the exploits of a man named Kamiti, a poor peasant who becomes a legendary figure in the struggle against the corrupt and oppressive regime of The Ruler. The story begins with rumours about the ruler's strange illness, with many theories by the Aburirian people about the nature of this illness. Nyawira on the other hand, a student who started working with one of the ruler's associates named Tajirika; but also becomes disillusioned with the political system and created a movement called the Movement for the Voice of the People (MVP), to overthrow the ruler and his government.

Together, Kamiti and Nyawira lead this movement against the ruler, using a variety of strategies and actions aimed at undermining The Ruler's authority, to bring to a close the corruption and hypocrisy of his regime. One of these strategies is engaging a fake wizard, "Wizard of the Crow", who claims to have magical powers; where many truths about this corrupt government were revealed by exposing their lies and their strategies to retain power over people. Through their collaboration as the "Wizard of the Crow," Kamiti and Nyawira

effectively expose the deep-rooted Corruption within the regime, bringing to light the exploitation and deceit that the ruler employs to retain power. By unravelling the ruler's web of lies and manipulation, they empower the ordinary people with knowledge and awareness, awakening them to the reality of their oppressive circumstances. Finally, With the Ruler's demise, a glimmer of hope emerges for a new era of transformation in Aburiria. Relentless in their pursuit of justice and freedom, symbolize the resilience of the people and their unwavering commitment to a better future. He has given up all his power and has been killed by one of his associates, a new era arrives in Aburirian history, with Kamiti and Nyawira determined to keep fighting until true democracy comes to fruition in Aburiria.

### III. Results

This part of my dissertation sheds light on the findings reached throughout this study of the two novels. While analysing Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966), and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), I reached some interesting conclusions and findings, as regard both authors, works, and their related issues. First, our analysis revealed that both authors depicted African nations in the post-independence period and how the colonial legacy continues to shape these countries despite the independence. In fact, to denounce this, both authors have created archetypal places or settings, as well as rebellious characters (protagonists), who violate and challenge the regimes and policies imposed by the corrupt governments.

As for my blending of the issue, this dissertation relies on Achille Mbembe's theory developed in his collection of essays '*On the Postcolony* (2001)' which provides fascinating details about societies that have just come out of colonization. According to Mbembe, the experience of colonization and the violence that results from that relationship define the postcolony as a distinct historical trajectory. The postcolony is acknowledged to be characterized by chaotic pluralism, including various aspects, but it nonetheless manages to preserve internal coherence thanks to a special set of signs and symbols. We have chosen this theoretical framework because of the similarities in the historical and literary contexts. Both authors were influenced by the same events, namely colonialism and the different issues faced even after independence; and they belong to the same generation. In addition, the two works belong to the same genre, namely postcolonial literature. A clear link is shown while reading the two authors. As regard to Mbembe's *on the Postcolony* (2001); our investigation of both Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) and Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) has shown that he was accurate in his evaluation and vision of this post-war African phenomenon.

By appropriating this theory, we have improved on their portrayal of how these leaders of the newly independent African nations have rattled the entire continent. As a result, our study's conclusions help to fill the gap between the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe and the Kenyan Ngugi wa Thiong'o so that they will be on the same wavelength in their struggle against the oppressive regimes in postcolonial African countries. The findings of our research demonstrate Achebe and Ngugi's shared dedication to exposing cruel regimes and promoting social and political change. This brings them together on a similar wavelength for a deeper comprehension of the challenges faced by African nations, and the critical need for change by recognizing their contributions within the context of postcolonial African literature.

## **IV. Discussion**

This part of our work discusses Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) as postcolonies. It comprises two chapters. The first handles the two novels' settings as '*postcolonies*', and the second is concerned with the concept of '*Mutual Zombification*' through character analysis in both novels. The discussion of the issues in both chapters will rely on the theoretical auspices of Achille Mbembe's definitions of these two concepts of *The Postcolony* and *Mutual Zombification*.

### **Chapter One: Kenya and Nigeria as postcolonies in Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006)**

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the extent to which the settings of the two novels are depicted as typical postcolonies. We will show that both '*the unnamed fictional country*' in Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) and '*Aburiria*' in Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) are archetypal places for what Achille Mbembe labels as the postcolonies. The "unnamed fictional nation" in Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) and '*Aburiria*' in Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) are typical examples of the postcolony, portraying the struggles and complexities that emerge in the aftermath of colonial rule and providing valuable insights into the challenges and dilemmas faced by newly independent nations in the post-colonial era.

#### **a. The Unnamed Country in Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) as a postcolony**

Nigeria was one of the many African countries that suffered from European domination. Being under British colonial rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> C., its struggle for independence was a long and difficult process that impacted the 'country's cultural, economic, and political systems. Becoming an independent nation in the 1960s, Nigeria started to face numerous challenges.

This constitutes a reason why Achebe, who belongs to a generation of African intellectuals portrayed the rough situation that African peoples faced during that period of colonization. Achebe's *A Man of the People (1966)* vividly describes the 'unnamed African country', that just emerged as a self-governing area from the experience of colonization, struggling with pressing issues like corruption, political instability, and social inequality, he writes,

The country was on the verge of chaos. The Trade Unions and the Civil Service Union made loud noises and gave notice of nation-wide strikes. The shops closed for fear of looting. The Governor-General according to rumour called on the Prime Minister to resign which he finally got round to doing three weeks later. (Achebe, 1966, p.89)

Despite the hard fight for freedom, this 'country' is still deeply influenced by its past, and the legacy of colonialism continues to shape people's lives. The authoritarian government in this 'country', represented by Chief Nanga, is shown to be corrupt and more interested in self-enrichment than serving the people they are expected to represent after their election. As illustrated in the third chapter of *A Man of the People (1966)*, rich leaders live in luxurious houses and dress in expensive European suits while their voters remained poor; "the first thing critics tell you about the ministers' official residences is that each has seven bedrooms and seven bathrooms, one for every day of the week" (Achebe, 1966, p.36). These lavish lifestyles of political leaders like Nanga stand in stark contrast to the poverty and deprivation of the majority. The opulence of their dwellings, highlighted in the quote, reflects the vast wealth gap between the ruling elite and ordinary citizens. This stark contrast is emblematic of deep-seated inequality and the government's failure to address people's pressing needs.

The 'country' becomes a victim of its own success, its initial independence quickly turns into disillusionment, which is a common feature in postcolonial African societies. Achebe portrays this period as one characterized by hope and optimism, particularly exemplified by the people of this country, especially the character Odili, one of the main characters in *A Man of the People (1966)*. Odili represents the aspirations of the people who eagerly anticipate a

brighter future for their country. He embodies the initial optimism and belief that the country will regain its former glory under Chief Nanga's governance. This optimism is fuelled by a desire for progress, development, and the restoration of the nation's pride, believing that good things are coming and that the country will gain its glory again with Chief Nanga and his government. This complex mix of hope, ambition, and frustration that often characterizes the early postcolonial period. High expectations meet the reality of governance, and the people eagerly anticipate a brighter future for their country.

As the novel goes on, he realizes how messed up the political system and the people in power are. Chief Nanga, is depicted as the charismatic minister of culture in this country; blinded and obsessed with power and wealth, willing to do whatever it costs to maintain his position. The population is Persuaded that this minister shows abilities to bring light to the country, they trusted him and loved him too much to the point he is considered 'the man of the people. The depiction of Chief Nanga and the people's perception of him serves as a critique of not only the individual but also the broader political system that enables and sustains such figures. It underscores the need for critical engagement, vigilance, and an active citizenry to challenge the abuses of power and ensure a more just and accountable governance; Achebe writes,

No one can deny that Chief the Honourable M.A Nanga M.P. was the most approachable politician in the country. Whether you ask in the city or in his home village 'Anata', they would tell you he was a man of the people (Achebe,1966, p.1).

Chief Nanga exhibits excessive displays of riches and leads a luxury lifestyle at the expense of the nation and its people, which highlights his obsession with power and wealth. He makes decisions and takes acts that serve his own interests rather than that of the country, which is a reflection of the widespread corruption and avarice in the political system. Additionally, he abuses his position of authority and engages in unscrupulous behaviour because of his desire

with wealth and power. He takes use of his position of power to utilize theft, bribery, and other illegal and corrupt methods to amass personal fortune and enrich himself through the people's money and the countries resources. 'In this country', political leaders use various tactics and strategies to maintain power, institutionalize themselves, and gain legitimacy (Mbembe,2001, p.103). They create a world of meanings and turn it into a part of people's common sense, misleading their consciousness and manipulating their conception. As Chief Nanga tells Odili in the first chapter of *A Man of the People (1966)*: 'don't you know that minister means servant?' (Achebe,1966, p.60), to exploit people's illiteracy and make them think that they will bring positive change to the country and that they can trust him and his government. In chapter one of *A Man of the People (1966)*, we are brought to read that:

They were not only ignorant but cynical. Tell them that this man had used his position to enrich himself, and they would ask you as my father did-if you thought that a sensible man would spit out the juicy morsel that good fortune placed in his mouth (Achebe,1966, p.2)

Odili reflects on the prevailing attitude towards Chief Nanga, a politician who relies on the abuse of power and takes advantage of the ignorance of the people, and observes that the citizens are not only ignorant but also cynical, suggesting that they possess a sense of distrust and skepticism about the political system. They may be aware of Chief Nanga's corrupt practices but question whether it is reasonable for someone in his position to resist the temptations of personal enrichment that come with power.

One of the features that enhance Achebe's description of Nigeria as a postcolony is the manipulation of media, the latter way by which the political elites seek to keep control over the country. Newspapers and radio stations are under the control of Chief Nanga, Koko, and other members of the government use them to spread propaganda and steer public opinion. Through bribery and other corrupt practices, the government shapes the people's perceptions of reality, making it difficult for them to grasp the true intentions of those in power; Achebe says,

If I don't give him something now, tomorrow he will go and write rubbish about me. They say it is the freedom of the press. But to me it is nothing short of the freedom to crucify innocent men and assassinate their character (Achebe,1966, p.66)

Knowing the importance of media as far as shaping the public opinion, Chief Nanga seized the opportunity to manipulate the editor of the daily matchet, bribing him in order to write only good and positive things about him. This makes it difficult to his population, especially his critics and haters to have an idea about what is really happening in the country, and what kind of men are they, then think to challenge his authority. Receiving a dash from British companies, like Antonio and Sons in exchange for awarding them the contract to build the national academy of Arts and Sciences, is another corrupt act by Nanga that people totally ignore since their only source of information which is newspapers are controlled, and only good things are said about those in power. In this sense, he claims,

It is my house; you have spoken the truth.' The house in question was the very modern four-storey structure going up beside the present building and which was to get into the news later. It was as we were to learn, a 'dash' from the European building firm of Antonio and sons whom Nanga had recently given the half-million-pound contract to build the national academy of arts and sciences (Achebe,1966, p.96).

In the light of these words, we can clearly see how the legacy of colonialism, and the role of the foreign European powers are still shaping the people's lives in this 'country', and exploiting its natural resources despite the fact of being independent.

Chief Koko is another character in Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966), the minister of overseas training and a crony of Chief Nanga, is another politician who uses his position to exercise power in the 'country' through corrupt practices. Bribing Maxwell, Odili's friend who admitted that he accepted the bribe given by Chief Koko to step down for him under the pretext of hiring a bus, as Odili affirms; 'your good friend Maxwell Kulamo has more sense than you. He has already taken his money and agreed to step down for Chief Koko' (Achebe,1966, p.119). Achebe portrayed Maxwell as all this population who are manipulated and exploited by their

political representatives in their own country which resonates with Mbembe's theoretical framework;

The experience of the postcolony makes it clear that illegal activities are not confined to ordinary people. Enforcing regulations, manipulating the system of bribery collecting taxes and levies, forcibly confiscating hoarded goods and then selling them—all are characteristic of a situation where there is summary violence, looting, and extortion, whether of cash, product, or forced labour (Mbembe, 2001, p.125)

This quote highlights the pervasive nature of illegal activities in societies emerging from colonial rule, and Mbembe's views regarding the seizing of hidden assets and forced labour are consistent with the depiction of economic exploitation in Achebe's novel. This illustrates how people in positions of authority participate in a variety of illicit acts for their own benefit, contributing to an unequal economic system by taking advantage of the labour of the people and accumulating money for themselves.

Another characteristic of the 'country' in Achebe's *A Man of the People (1966)* is the use of humour by its people as a way to express their opposition toward those leaders. Not really a means of resistance since no action takes place, just to express their anger and expose these leaders' figures as they really are (absurd and ridiculous) rather than something otherworldly or superior. This clearly echoes Mbembe's concept of '*the postcolony*', and his description of these newly independent African nations and the different challenges faced by their people; Mbembe claims that:

The question of whether humour in the postcolony is an expression of "resistance or not, whether it is, a priori, opposition, or simply manifestation of hostility toward authority, is thus of secondary importance. For the most part, those who laugh are only reading the signs left, like rubbish, in the wake of the *commandment* (Mbembe, 2001, p. 108).

Trying to survive and make a living in this environment, the only way these oppressed people find is by mocking and criticizing the government and its officials. Odili Samalu, the oppressed people's representative in the country, is portrayed using satire and other types of humour to mock and ridicule the government members, especially Chief Nanga, as the only way of

opposition since they have no power against them. Nanga says to Odili ‘If you like I can bring you six girls this evening’ (Achebe,1966, p.72). Odili responds with laughter, expressing disbelief and frustration. Odili’s reaction to Nanga’s proposition shows his disillusionment towards him, the country’s minister of culture proposes to a citizen to bring him girls to have sex with them. ‘What a country’, means into whose hands has this country fallen, ridiculous leaders who believe that they are above everyone else, but they do not even know how a minister should talk with people, and how to respect their status as representatives of all the people.

‘Book exhibition?’ asked Elsie. ‘How they de make that one again?’ ‘My sister make you de ask them for me-o. I be think say na me one never hear that kind thing before. But they say me na minister of culture and as such I suppose to be there. I no fit say no. wetin be minister? No be public football? (Achebe,1966, p.61).

The quoted interaction between Nanga and Odili further illustrates the disillusionment and frustration of the oppressed people. Nanga's proposition to bring Odili six girls reflects the moral degradation and lack of respect for citizens, contributing to Odili's exclamation, "What a country." This phrase encapsulates Odili's disbelief in the leadership and highlights the absurdity of those in power.

Again, in *A Man of the People (1966)*, Chief Nanga admits that he does not know what is book exhibition, the first in the country that he personally was due to open about works by local writers. Being unaware of the meaning of this exhibition makes Odili mocking and laughing on him, saying: ‘We all laughed, including the driver whose face I could see in the mirror’ (Achebe,1966, p.61). Not only the meaning of this event, but Chief Nanga totally ignores about the ‘country’s writers and intellectuals; being the minister of culture he should at least have an idea about the literary giants who shaped their country’s identity. With biting sarcasm and satire, Odili ridicules Nanga for his ignorance and illiteracy, highlighting the irony of a leader who claims to represent the people but remains oblivious to the profound literary heritage that can enlighten and inspire them in the future. He says, ‘I have expected that in a

country where writers were so few, they would all be known personally to the minister of culture. But it was clear Chief Nanga hadn't even heard the man's name before' (Achebe, 1966, p.61). chief Nanga adds,

For how else could you account for the fact that a minister of culture announced in public that he had never heard of his country's famous novel and received applause---as indeed he received again later when he prophesied that before long our great country would produce great writers like Shakespeare, Dickens, Jane Austen, Bernard Shaw and --- raising his eyes off the script (Achebe, 1966, p. 65)

Feeling remorse about how the ignorance of the government is applauded by the ignorant people, manipulated by the political elites, and guided to their favour, the only way Odili expresses all his frustration and disillusionment is by mocking them and exposing to the people their true faces of miserable and ignorant, who pretend to be Intellectuals, especially Chief Nanga who pretends to be a doctor. Nanga, says, 'Yes I use to tell them that standard six in those days is more than Cambridge today' (Achebe, 1966, p. 11). All this caused a sense of satire and mockery from Odili Toward him, as a way to expose his truths and to resist his regime even in the absence of any action being taken against them.

With reference to Mbembe's theory on 'the postcolony', it is clear that Achebe's description of the 'country' in *A Man of the People (1966)* fits that of Mbembe, which refers to the enduring legacies of colonialism that continue to shape these countries and their populations, and the different challenges faced by these newly independent African nations. Mbembe argues that,

The notion "postcolony" identifies specifically a given historical trajectory—that of societies recently emerging from the experience of colonization and the violence which the colonial relationship involves. To be sure, the postcolony is chaotically pluralistic; it has nonetheless an internal coherence. It is a specific system of signs, a particular way of fabricating simulacra or re-forming stereotypes (Mbembe, 2001, p.102).

The idea of a "postcolony" and its importance in comprehending communities that have just recently emerged from the experience of colonization are most effectively expressed in the

quote. The word "postcolony" describes the historical development of these cultures, which is characterized by the effects of colonization and the inherent violence that accompanied those interactions. While the postcolony is distinguished by chaotic diversity, Mbembe emphasizes that it nevertheless has an internal coherence. In Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966), the setting is shown battling issues including power struggles, corruption, and the lingering effects of colonial structures. A detailed examination of the ways in which Achebe negotiates the intricacies of postcolonial circumstances is made possible by the use of the postcolony notion. It develops into an effective instrument for analysing the political, social, and cultural contexts of the novel. As a result, this concept provides a useful analytical framework that deepens our comprehension of the complexities and conflicts present in the postcolonial experience as it is portrayed in the novel.

#### **b. The Free Republic of 'Aburiria' in Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) as a Postcolony**

Just like Nigeria, Kenya also experienced colonization and it was a British colony in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, Kenya endured immense suffering, including land confiscation, violent repression, and economic exploitation. In response, the Kenyan people mobilized against the colonial rule and achieved independence in 1963. Nevertheless, this newly independent nation began to encounter many challenges in consolidating political power, promoting national reconciliation, and establishing a viable economic system. These ongoing challenges have shaped the country's history and will continue to shape its future. As we have said about Achebe, Ngugi also belongs to this generation of African intellectuals who always denounced and portrayed their countries' situations.

In *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), Ngugi depicts 'The Free Republic of Aburiria' as an African country that recently gained independence from colonial rule and grappling with its aftermath.

Under the Ruler's reign, the longest-serving president in the country since independence, Aburiria becomes a dystopian society where political manipulation, economic disparities, and social injustices thrive. The novel vividly depicts the struggles of the common people who are trapped in a system that perpetuates their marginalization and denies them the benefits of independence. Aburiria is depicted as a microcosm of the postcolonial African experience, where the promises of freedom and self-governance are overshadowed by corruption, inequality, and the abuse of power. Ngugi's description of The Ruler as a symbol of autocracy and exploitation reflects the challenges faced by many newly independent African nations in their struggle for true liberation and progress. Ngugi writes,

the illness had something to do with the aging of his rule: he had sat on the throne so long that even he could not remember when his reign began. His rule had no beginning and no end; and judging from the facts one may well believe the claim. Children had been born and had given birth to others and those others to others and so on, and his rule had survived all the generations (Ngugi, 2006, p. 5)

We can understand this metaphorical illness as a result of the long and authoritarian rule. A sense of continuous authority is suggested by the concept of the ruler sitting on the throne for so long that he is unable to remember when his reign began, establishing an almost timeless and endless dominion.

The Ruler in *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) is described as a powerful politician, the one and only who can decide in Aburiria. His decisions and orders cannot be challenged. Ngugi writes, 'He ponders 'what he would have to do to make Rachael understand that he, The Ruler, had power, real power over everything (Ngugi, 2006, p. 7). Feared and respected by everybody in the country, a big majority of the Aburirian population are persuaded that he is the man whom the country missed after all these years of struggle against the colonial powers. He was untouchable in terms of authority and power, making the country his own possession. A prime example of these lies is in the unwavering obedience displayed by Sikiokuu, one of his ministers

who is portrayed as being ready to do everything to make The Ruler proud of him and gain his confidence;

I beg your mighty excellency please to give me more powers to smoke out those who are behind the latest plot to dishonor your person and government. I want to increase the number of state ears, eyes, and noses so that not a school, a marketplace, or any public space however small shall go undetected. I want to present you with all the elements of you, Our ruler, and of the country' (Ngugi, 2006, p. 135)

The government cultivates loyalty and adulation toward the ruling elite. Through personality cults, portraying the leader as a heroic figure or saviour of the nation, speeches, and stories that highlight The Ruler's supposed wisdom, charisma, and achievements, these corrupt leaders are controlling and manipulating the people's vision, are disseminate many strategies to generate a sense of reverence and unquestioning support among the citizens. 'Our Ruler, and of the country', this illustrates and exemplifies the degree of power that The Ruler possesses in the country, and to what extent has Aburiria fallen into the hands of a totalitarian ruler, using violence, coercion, and whatever it costs to be the one and only source of power in the country. Machokali and Sikiokuu, two of his ministers who are ready to scarify their lives for him, at the point of comparing him with God;

My Lord on Earth and Heaven, that I shall do everything within the powers you have now given me to crush the members and leaders of this so-called movement for the voice of the people. Even if they are djinns, I will get djinns that can out djinn them. O My Lord, their cries for mercy will be heard in all corners of the globe (Ngugi, 2006, p.136).

The above comment serves as an additional illustration of the ruler's power and the conditions that an authoritarian regime would impose. The mention of the ministers Machokali and Sikiokuu, who declared they were willing to give their lives in defence of the leader, highlights the strong sense of allegiance that is developed through coercion and lies.

'Independence' with a question mark, is how Aburiria is portrayed by Ngugi. The government succeeds in imposing its totalitarian regime in which people live in constant fear of persecution for speaking the truth and exposing the widespread corruption in their society;

‘he knew that in Aburiria the truth could get you in trouble: ‘he must control how much of it issued from his mouth’ (Ngugi,2006, p.364). After all this period of struggle with colonial powers and the decline of the European settlers, the Aburirian people have found themselves in a similar situation, struggling with its legacy and facing the same system of exploitation, poverty, corruption, violence, and many other issues. Ngugi writes,

‘Weren’t you just talking about a new Aburiria? If fifty-year-old university professors are becoming the Ruler’s youthwingers, why can’t university graduates become beggars?’

‘I didn’t mean university graduates in general, but women graduates. Like you, for instance.’ (Ngugi, 2006, p.83)

The retort about university graduates potentially becoming beggars introduces a sense of despair and challenges the narrative of progress. The response, singling out women graduates, adds a gendered dimension, perhaps indicating a specific vulnerability or disadvantage faced by women in the societal context. This passage captures the skepticism and irony surrounding the promises of change, hinting at the complexities and contradictions within the social and political landscape of Aburiria.

In ‘Aburiria’, the corrupt government is implementing many strategies to legitimize itself and maintain its supremacy over the people. The totalitarian so-called The Ruler, along with his staff of corrupt ministers taking advantage of the population’s poverty and colonial trauma, manipulating them and using their plight to consolidate their power. Despite the overwhelming poverty faced by the citizens, the Ruler and his ministers have the idea to launch ‘the Marching to Heaven project’ which promises to transform the ‘country’ and bring prosperity to the people. Ngugi states,

Our project will be the first and only superwonder in the history of the world. In short, Machokali declared, Marching to Heaven was the special birthday cake the citizens had decided to bake for their one and only leader, the eternal Ruler of the Free Republic of Aburiria (Ngugi, 2006, p.17)

Through ideological speeches and mottoes such as ‘national development’ or ‘progress’, the ruling elite in *Wizard of the Crow (2006)* justify their policies and actions, presenting them as necessary for the advancement of the nation; ‘In the postcolony, the commandment seeks to institutionalize itself, achieve legitimation and hegemony (recherche hégémonique), in the form of a fetish’ (Mbembe, 2001, p. 103). These concepts evoke a sense of collective purpose and can discourage dissent by framing opposition as hindering progress, glorifying their regime and presenting themselves as the protectors of the national identity, and encouraging a feeling of unity and solidarity among the population who are subjugated and manipulated into their favour and making them forget their poor living conditions. Then, they Turn it into an object of worship and reverence. This Marching to Heaven project is going to be the central symbol of authority, and the population is expected to regard it as a representation of power, inspiring a sense of awe and submission, this perfectly aligns with Mbembe’s understanding of the postcolony;

In a postcolony of this kind, then, I am concerned with the ways state power creates, through administrative and bureaucratic practices, its own world of meanings—a master code that, while becoming the society’s primary central code, ends by governing, perhaps, paradoxically, the logics that underline all other meanings within the society (Mbembe, 2001, p.103).

The notion of a "master code" by Mbembe suggests a dominant narrative or framework imposed by the state, becoming the central reference point for the society. This master code not only governs the administrative aspects but also extends its influence paradoxically to shape the underlying logics of all other meanings within the society. The Ruler employs elaborate rituals, speeches, and symbols to establish a master code that reinforces his authority and suppresses dissent. The administrative and bureaucratic apparatus serves as a tool for enforcing this master code, reflecting Mbembe's insight into the ways state power shapes societal meanings.

In *Wizard of the crow (2006)*, the character of the Ruler personifies the repressive methods used by the ruling government. The Ruler maintains power through a combination of propaganda, coercion, and manipulation. He employs a cult of personality, presenting himself

as a larger-than-life figure who is portrayed as a saviour and a magician capable of performing extraordinary feats. As a way to cultivate a sense of fear and awe among the population, which strengthens his authority and control, through which he suppresses any opposition or rebellion menaces by the people.

As we have already mentioned in our study of Achebe's *A Man of the People (1966)*, one of the methods of manipulation used by the government to exert dominance over its people and keep the nation under their thumb is influencing and convincing people to distrust the media, especially the newspapers. As portrayed by Ngugi in *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*, the ruling elite in 'Aburiria' recognizes the power of information and the role of media in shaping public opinion. By convincing the people that they do not need newspapers, the government effectively curtails the dissemination of alternative perspectives and critical analysis. This tactic allows the government to maintain monopoly over the narrative and control the information available to the population. This is evident in *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*'s book II: 'Queuing Daemons', minister Machokali expresses his fear of the media, and tries to convince people that they do not need the newspapers in Aburiria, as they begin to reveal the truths and as everyone discovers the true faces and the evil sides of these leaders. Minister Machokali argues,

That is why I have always said that the government should ban all newspapers. We can do without them. Before the colonials came to this land, didn't our ancestors live to a ripe old age without ever reading a newspaper? They are a curse, these newspapers, but if I was asked what was at the root of last night's fracas, I would answer with one word: envy. Those beggars must have been sent there by our political enemies to blemish the reception. Do you know that there are ministers who are very envious of my friend Machokali simply because he is a man who can see far? Let me tell you what is wrong with us black people. Unlike Indians and Europeans, we lack group solidarity. We hate to see one of us succeed (Ngugi, 2006, p.101)

Here, Minister Machokali is criticizing the newspapers and that they should be banned by the government, in order to mask their corrupt practices, knowing their power in the society and their capacity to inform the people of the truth. By discrediting the credibility of newspapers and dismissing their importance, Machokali aims to create a sense of apathy or distrust toward

independent media sources. As a result, the population becomes reliant on state-controlled media outlets, which disseminate information in line with the government's interests

Their manipulation and influence extend also to educational institutions. Using children, brainwashing, and preparing them for the future to view The Ruler in Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow (2006)* as an example or an idol. The Ruler states,

The Ruler's name could be taught in all Aburirian schools and colleges, supplanting the outmoded theories of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, and Pope. Another minister said that the political theories of Ancient Greece belonged to the dead and should be thrown out the window. 'We cannot allow the sepulchral mud of the dead to besmirch the spectacular mind of the living.' He said (Ngugi, 2006, p.163)

These are his ministers' words, glorifying his power and persuading the public opinion that he has the knowledge and wisdom to replace the ancient scholars and philosophers. Trying to convince them that his name should be taught in all the country's schools, as a way to manipulate the young minds and shape their perception toward both the Ruler and his government. By advocating for the inclusion of the Ruler's name in the curriculum, the government aims to shape the minds of young students from an early age. This indoctrination normalizes the ruler's authority and presents it as an unquestionable component of their education.

Still in *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*, Ngugi depicts another method by which those in power exert their control over the population and try to extend their influence to the entire world by spreading dissemination of propaganda and the cunning diversion of information. Through a variety of techniques, censorship, manipulation of information, and the creation of false narratives, The Ruler ensures that his version of reality is the only one accessible to the population, which alienates them from the real world. In *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*, this is depicted through the Ruler's friend and minister in his government: Machokali, whom I call the minister of propaganda, who is portrayed as a master manipulator, skilled in the art of shaping

public opinion through deceitful storytelling and disinformation. Machokali's role is to create an illusion of progress and stability in Aburiria, even when the country is crumbling under the weight of corruption and mismanagement. As the previous quote, Ngugi states,

Has anything like this ever happened in the history of the world? The lion and the lamb lying together? Fear not those who queue in hope but those who fear those who queue in hope. Take a cue from me: use the queue, don't abuse it. Instead of banning queuing, we should present it to the world as the very picture of a nation lining up behind its leader's vision (Ngugi, 2006, p.162).

While the population is queuing to claim their rights; the lack of work and all the corruption that has spread throughout the country, The Ruler and his government try to use it in their favour. They attempt to manipulate public perception by distorting the reality of queuing. The minister employs persuasive rhetoric to promote the idea that queuing is a positive and admirable display of support for the leader's vision. Which showcases the minister's skill in manipulating language and distorting the truth to shape public opinion. It reveals the minister's attempts to fabricate a positive narrative around queuing, presenting it as a symbol of patriotism and support for the ruler's vision, while disregarding any potential concerns or criticisms. The quote highlights the use of persuasive tactics and propaganda to influence public perception and maintain the ruler's grip on power;

Nyawira now told him about the secret plans of the Ruler: that they had chosen a day in which to dedicate a site to the project of Marching to Heaven. She told him of the State's sinister intentions to use the queues in Eldares to convince the Global Bank mission that the people were fully in support of the project (Ngugi, 2006, p.209)

Rather than working to search for solutions to all these problems faced by this oppressed population, the government's only concern is to save its reputation and spread false information about these queues to manipulate not only the people but also the entire world, and make them believe that these actions carried out by the people, are driven by love and support for the president, By disseminating misleading information and shaping public opinion, the ruler aims to consolidate his authority and perpetuate his regime's oppressive rule. Mbembe argues that;

Vocabulary, and narratives that the *commandment* produces are meant not merely to be symbols; they are officially invested with a surplus of meanings that are not negotiable and that one is officially forbidden to depart from or challenge. To ensure that no such challenge takes place, the champions of state power invent entire constellations of ideas; they adopt a distinct set of cultural repertoires and powerfully evocative concepts; but they also resort, if necessary, to the systematic application of pain. The basic goal is not just to bring a specific political consciousness into being, but to make it effective. (Mbembe, 2001, p 103).

As we see it also in *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*, when the movement for the voice of the people started to take action against The Ruler and his government. The government spreads false narratives and labels the movement as a violent and destabilizing force. They portray the activists as dangerous criminals or foreign agents seeking to overthrow the government. They portray these opponents as obstacles to development who hinder the nation's advancement. This framing makes it difficult for critics to challenge the government's actions without being labelled as hindrances to progress or traitors creating fear and division among the general public, discouraging support for the movement and justifying the government's repressive measure. Additionally, the ruling regime employs misinformation to discredit the movement's leaders. They spread rumours and fabricate stories to tarnish the reputation of the activists, portraying them as corrupt, immoral, or incompetent. This is exemplified by Kaniuru, a member of this government who is in love with one of the leaders of the movement for the voice of the people; Nyawira, and tries to influence and manipulate her to become against this movement, destroying the image of his members; especially Kamiti who is a close friend of Nyawira and a Fidel member of this movement;

I must tell you this: he was one of the beggars outside paradise, and we now know that the real force behind the beggars' gathering is the so-called Movement for the Voice of the People. He must be a member, as are all these people in the queue outside your office. How do I know that? The queue begins where I first saw the man standing, which could mean that while he was talking to you, he was actually casing the joint. These people all want to smear the Ruler's good name by exaggerating the severity of unemployment, by dramatizing the plight of the unemployed. That man, your friend, is a threat to the stability and security of the country." (Ngugi, 2006, p.145).

His spread of false information serves as a tactic of suppression and control. He aims to create confusion, undermine the credibility of the movement, dissuade people from joining or supporting its cause, and manipulate the narrative by distorting the truth. Through these tactics, the government seeks to maintain its grip on power and quell any opposition.

As we have said before in our analysis of Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966), the Aburirian people also use different types of humour and satire to express their frustration, resistance, and a means of subverting or challenging the official narratives imposed by the ruling elite. Kamiti, the Ngugi's protagonist in *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) who pretends to be the real Wizard of the Crow, having super wonders, endowed with the divine power to discern a person's actual nature; which allows him to mock and ridicule the authorities. Despite the fact that he is simply acting and pretending to be The Wizard of the Crow, the Ruler and his ministers believe in him and take the opportunity to benefit from his so-called superpowers and use them to have more power and control over the country and its population;

I take the trouble to bring my boss to you so you can take his money' Nyawira reasoned with him, 'and all you can say is, no? Why else would I lure him here, knowing that the malady is hopeless? All you need do is look at him, shower him with saliva, sputter some mumbo jumbo, send him home, and pocket his money (Ngugi, 2006, p.170).

These are Nyawira's words, planning with Kamiti how they are going to pocket Tajirika's money, one of the Ruler's ministers and friends. Using Kamiti's talents of acting being the Wizard of the Crow and taking advantage by the absurdity, ignorance, and their obsession by power to Expose the gap between the idealized image projected by the government and the reality experienced by the common people. Then, he mocks them by employing a certain type of satire and sarcasm. This can be seen as a means of resistance and exposing the realities of this so-called government, and their true faces. By ridiculing and mocking the actions and beliefs of those in power, he exposes their absurdity and hypocrisy. And the contradictions of the ruling class, effectively undermining their legitimacy and authority;

It was while laughing that Kamiti suddenly felt possessed of an emotion so powerful that it almost made him tremble. Revenge, good luck was bringing his enemy to his door for him to exact the sweetest vengeance. Strange that the prospect of evil had excited him more than the thought of doing good (Ngugi, 2006, p.170)

Another act by Kamiti is in which he expresses his frustration against The Ruler and mocks him by spreading the rumor about his pregnancy. This deed serves as a symbolic act of emasculation and resistance against oppression even in the absence of a concrete action of rebellion against him. By associating The Ruler, a symbol of power and dominance, with pregnancy, Kamiti effectively emasculates him and challenges the traditional notions of masculinity and strength that The Ruler represents and pretends to have;

What made him envious, even in his drunken state, was the sight of people crowded around a storyteller whose tales and manner of telling them captured the imagination of the audience so much so that some of them had even forgotten that they had come here to drink. The climax came when the storyteller lowered his voice and made hints about knowing something about the pregnancy of a president. People whistled. Then silence, waiting for more. A pregnant president? (Ngugi, 2006, p.593)

This act can be seen as a way of exposing The Ruler's ignorance and illiteracy, challenging his power and reputation in the country. This rumor highlights The Ruler's absurdity, who claims power and superiority, revealing his lack of knowledge, and understanding, and made him a subject of mockery and laughter for all who hear this information; 'his alleged pregnancy made him a laughing stock, insurgents were wreaking havoc all over the place, and pressure from abroad was building. His absence from public view only intensified the pressure and the questions' (Ngugi, 2006, p.613).

It is clear that Ngugi's portrayal of 'Aburiria' in *Wizard of The Crow (2006)* resonates remarkably with Mbembe's concept of '*the postcolony*', which refers to the varied challenges encountered by the newly independent African Nations, and the complex dynamics that arise in societies after the era of colonial rule, emphasizing the enduring effects of power structures, corruption, and the struggle for liberation. Mbembe explains,

The postcolony is characterized by a distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion, as well as by distinctive ways identities are multiplied, transformed, and put into circulation. But the postcolony is also made up of a series of corporate institutions and a political machinery that, once in place, constitute a distinctive regime of violence. In this sense, the postcolony is a particularly revealing, and rather dramatic, stage on which are played out the wider problems of subjection and its corollary, discipline. (Mbembe, 2001, pp. 102-103).

Mbembe contends that the postcolony becomes a stage for larger struggles over dominance and control. It acts as a revealing and dramatic stage where control mechanisms and power relations are played, influencing people's lives and experiences in postcolonial society. This emphasizes how intricately intertwined power, violence, and the quest for agency are in the postcolonial setting. The examination of both created societies has shown some remarkable parallels in how they are portrayed, both are dealing with the fallout from colonial rule. A deeper comprehension of the power relations, oppression, and difficulties encountered by these postcolonial entities has been made possible by the analysis of administrative and bureaucratic processes, the creation of master codes, and the manipulation of society meanings through the lens of Mbembe's framework. As the chapter progresses, it becomes clear that Mbembe's concept of postcolony is a useful instrument for revealing the complexities of these intricate environments, providing the framework for a thorough analysis of the next chapters. The nameless nation and Aburiria present themselves as fertile grounds for diving into the effects of colonial legacies and the exercise of state power.

## **Chapter Two: Mutual zombification in Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006)**

This chapter examines the extent to which the main characters of the two novels are depicted as zombified. We will show that Chief Nanga and Odili Samalu in Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966), The Ruler, and Kamiti in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) are reflections of what Mbembe calls: *Mutual Zombification*. My aim is to shed light on how these characters symbolize the broader socio-political environment in which they exist. Through this exploration, the chapter seeks to unravel the nuanced ways in which zombification manifests in the characters' actions and relationships, offering insights into the impact of postcolonial power dynamics on individual agency and identity. Mbembe suggests that the absence of resistance or accommodation in the relationship between the dominant and the dominated is due to a sense of conviviality. Conviviality refers to a state of coexistence marked by mutual respect, understanding, and a shared sense of community and argues that this conviviality, rather than leading to resistance or refusal, results in a Mutual Zombification of both parties. This suggests that the familiarity and coexistence within this convivial relationship prevent meaningful change or transformation.

Precisely this logic—the necessary familiarity and domesticity in the relationship—explains why there has not been (as might be expected from those so dominated) the resistance or the accommodation, the disengagement or the “refusal to be captured” the contradiction between overt acts and gestures in public and covert responses “underground” (sous maquis). Instead, this logic has resulted in the mutual “zombification” of both the dominant and those apparently dominated. (Mbembe, 2001, p. 103).

### **a. Odili Samalu, and Chief Nanga as Zombified characters in Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966):**

In Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966), the two main protagonists are portrayed as sharing the same living space and having some connections. As the story unfolds, Achebe portrays the intertwined journeys of Nanga, a once-promising leader turned corrupt politician,

and Odili, the idealistic protagonist who becomes disillusioned with the corrupt system. Both characters exemplify the ways in which the oppressive postcolonial environment robs individuals of their ability to effect meaningful change and renders them impotent in the face of prevailing power structures. Through the exploration of their *Mutual Zombification*, Achebe delves into the complexities of postcolonial power dynamics and sheds light on the challenges faced by individuals striving to navigate a society shaped by the legacies of colonialism.

To begin with, Chief Nanga represents the archetype of a corrupt African politician who emerges as a promising figure but succumbs to the allure of power and wealth. Obsessed by power, Nanga is living just to accumulate it, and getting control over people. His only concern makes him disconnected from society and confined into his own world of luxury, displaying lack of concern and importance for the everyday challenges and hardships faced by the ordinary people he governs. Despite being aware of their poverty and lack of basic amenities, he remains indifferent and fails to take action to address their needs. He even ignores pleas for better healthcare and education facilities, showing a disconnect from the struggles and realities of the people;

The Daily Matchet for instance carried a story which showed that Chief Nanga who had himself held the portfolio of Foreign Trade until two years ago, had been guilty of the same practice and had built out of his gains three blocks of seven-storey luxury flats at three hundred thousand pounds each in the name of his wife and that these flats were immediately leased by British Amalgamated at fourteen hundred a month each. At first this and other stories were told in innuendo, but by the second week all restraint and caution were cast to the four winds (Achebe, 1966, p.99)

The news that Chief Nanga uses his ill-gotten gains to build a mansion for his wife shows a clear disregard for the well-being of the people he serves. Chief Nanga's decision to give his wife ownership of the opulent flats implies a conscious effort to hide his illicit money and avoid public attention. By doing this, he not only contributes to the corruption cycle but also exhibits a lack of accountability and transparency. This act not only underscores his prioritization of

personal wealth accumulation over the well-being of his constituents but also highlights the exploitation of the country's resources for personal gain.

As the plot progresses in *A Man of the People (1966)*, we are brought to see clearly Chief Nanga's personality. We come to notice his obsession by power. As he gets graded, he becomes a victim of his own arrogance and procession. Starting by his adoption of Western lifestyle and values, to his blindness by wealth, these, distance him from his cultural roots and the struggle for the others becomes useless for him. Achebe says,

Mr Nanga always spoke English or pidgin; his children, whom I discovered went to expensive private schools run by European ladies spoke impeccable English, but Mrs Nanga stuck to our language—with the odd English word thrown in now and again. (Achebe, 1966, p.31).

Nanga's usage of the colonizer's language in his country illustrates his denial of his own culture and his alienation and detachment from both the society and his nation in general. As a leader, he is expected to champion the interests of his nation and work towards its development and upliftment. However, he succumbs to the allure of power, wealth, and Western influence, which leads to his moral and spiritual decay. As a result, Chief Nanga has found himself in a situation where human ethical values and principles that should guide him were lost on him. He then gets totally alienated from real life. His only purpose is running after power and wealth using his position as a minister that enables him to exploit people and treat them as mere subjects. From his nowadays life, the way he talks to his associates, and his relationship with his wife, we notice that politics really transformed him into a person who dehumanizes not only himself but also the people he is meant to serve. Due to the lack of first-hand knowledge or empathy for the hardships faced by his population, his decisions and policies do not adequately reflect the lived experiences and struggles of those he is governing. This disconnect can lead to a growing gap between him and the poor citizens, exacerbating social inequality and perpetuating the cycle of domination. Odili Samalu says,

Look at the new house he is building. Four storeys! Before, if a man built two storeys the whole town would come to admire it. But today my kinsman is

building four. Do I ask to share it with him when it is finished? No. I only ask for common beer, common five-shilling beer.' (Achebe, 1966, p.96).

This act of building luxurious houses, demonstrates his desire to elevate himself above all the others. However, the quote also suggests that Chief Nanga's actions are out of touch with the reality of poverty and deprivation faced by many in his country. By prioritizing his personal wealth and indulgence, he becomes complicit in perpetuating a system of inequality and neglecting the needs of his people. Because this leader's only concern is to shine and get more powerful and wealthy, he totally forgets the poor citizens' needs. As a minister, he is expected to be all ears to change their daily life, and bring them to forget the colonization period they lived. The image is reflecting the two different worlds of the population and their governors: the first is imposed and the second is chosen. Independence which is normally meant to bring some comfort to all the country does not seem to have changed anything. Another kind of oppression is starting to get deep-rooted: while the poor people are daily struggling to get even food to eat, Chief Nanga leads a luxurious life; that disconnected him from the reality of the population, frustrated by the indifference of their representatives. Odili Samalu adds,

Because the man was a minister bloated by the flatulence of ill-gotten wealth, living in a big mansion built with public money, riding in a Cadillac and watched over by a one-eyed, hired thug. And as though that were not enough, he had had the obscene effrontery to say he thought I was too tired! A man of fifty or more with a son in a secondary school and a wife whose dress gets caught between the buttocks thought I was too tired! And here was I doing nothing about it except speculating whether Elsie would go back to her hospital that day or spend another night with Chief Nanga (Achebe, 1966, p.75).

As we see in this quote, Odili Samalu expresses his disillusionment and frustration about Nanga's actions dealing with his lack of modesty and understanding. Odili's belief that Chief Nanga thought he was "too tired" highlights the absurdity and arrogance of the minister's attitude and his policy. Despite his age, privileged status, and family responsibilities, Chief Nanga shows a lack of empathy and understanding for the exhaustion and struggles of the common people. This reveals his self-centeredness and detachment from the daily realities of

the ordinary citizens. Here, we are brought to see how Nanga's dehumanizing effect of power and wealth touched not only Chief Nanga but also Odili Samalu who is portrayed as being very frustrated, angry, and powerless. He is trying to get a place in this society dominated by Nanga but disillusioned since Odili once used to be one of Nanga's supporters. He talked also about Elsie, his lover who has a special relationship with Nanga. Odili contemplates whether Elsie would return to her job at the hospital or spend another night with Chief Nanga it highlights his indulgence in personal affairs, and useless things at the expense of his duties and true responsibilities towards his population. This further exposes his moral decadence and the erosion of his commitment to public service. This causes a sense of emotional turmoil and conflict between them, and a sense of jealousy by Odili which raised the tension and made also him obsessed. A mixture of personal affairs with the love he has for his country makes him obsessed by taking his revenge on Nanga;

'Please don't talk to me again,' I said

'What...! wonders will never end! what is wrong, Odili?'

'I said don't talk to me again,' I replied as coolly as possible.

'Wonders will never end! is it about the girl? but you told me you are not serious with her; I asked you because I don't like any misunderstanding.... and I thought you were tired and had gone to sleep...'

'Look here, Mr nanga, respect yourself. don't provoke me any more unless you want our names to come out in the newspapers today (Achebe, 1966, p.72).

This is one of their conversations, illustrating Odili's frustration and his attempt to set boundaries and distance himself from Nanga. Nanga's disrespectful behaviour, such as his involvement with a girl, suggests a growing awareness in Odili that their previous relation comes to an end. Nanga reacts with surprise and attempts to calm the situation. He refers to Elsie and implies that Odili previously mentioned not being serious about her. This can be seen as a strategy to deflect attention from his own actions and maintain control over the narrative. We can clearly see how their familiarity and domesticity also contribute to a sense of entrapment, despite the power imbalance between them. Odili is caught in a web of relationships and power dynamics, unable to fully distance himself from Nanga and the corrupt

system. This conviviality between them and the fact that they are sharing the same living space perpetuates and reinforces their dehumanization. Odili feels oppressed and neglected in his country, since Nanga totally ignores him as if he were not human, just running after enriching his wealth and power.

Another illustration of how Nanga blinded by his power and his rapid growth from poverty to a luxurious life, pushed him to let his people starve and suffer from the country's rough situation and face his corruption. The poverty resulting from his use of the public money (the people's money) to his self-interest and enrichment, pushes Odili to the refusal of this situation, expressing his perturbation and irritation;

I saw beggars sleeping under the eaves of luxurious department stores and a lunatic sitting wide awake by the basket of garbage he called his possession. The first red buses running empty passed me and I watched the street lights go off finally around six. I drank in all these details with the early morning air. It was strange perhaps that a man who had so much on his mind should find time to pay attention to these small, inconsequential things; it was like the man in the proverb who was carrying the carcass of an elephant on his head and searching with his toes for a grasshopper (Achebe, 1966, p.71).

The presence of beggars sleeping under the eaves of luxurious department stores and a lunatic sitting beside a basket of garbage symbolizes the stark contrast between wealth and poverty, sanity and madness. Here we see Odili's frustration and dehumanization, but also Chief Nanga's detachment from this society and the absence of a mutual connection between him and those he governs. Here, Odili feels trapped within the corrupt system, unable to effect meaningful change. His sense of powerlessness and inability to break free from the cycle of corruption reflect his own zombification. Odili's frustration and growing apathy contribute to his own dehumanization, as he becomes resigned to the system's constraints. Both personal concerns, the situation of his country, and seeing with his own eyes what Nanga is doing, knowing that he can't do anything. He sees people begging and homeless while Nanga is living his best life in his luxurious houses. This pursuit of self-interest and power leads Nanga also to engage in many corrupt practices, such as bribery and many others.

In addition to his luxurious houses and his ‘Cadillac’, Nanga finds a way to showcase his magnificence and authority through ceremonies and spectacles involving wasteful spending, and opulence. Chief Nanga aims to maintain his status and stay in power by planning extravagant parties. These occasions are specifically organized to emphasize his magnificence and create respect and admiration among the general public. Chief Nanga uses displays of riches and power not just for his own self-gratification but also as a means of dominance and to strengthen his control over the people. Nevertheless, both Chief Nanga and Odili Samalu feel dehumanized by these spectacular performances. The excessive emphasis on wealth and position causes them to lose touch with the struggle faced by all people and promotes their disenchantment from reality. The sharp opposition between the grandiose festivities and the people's extreme poverty only serves to increase their sense of alienation and zombification.

As soon as the Minister’s Cadillac arrived at the head of a long motorcade the hunters dashed this way and that and let off their last shots, throwing their guns about with frightening freedom. The dancers capered and stamped, filling the dry-season air with dust. Not even Grammar-phone’s voice could now be heard over the tumult. The Minister stepped out wearing damask and gold chains and acknowledging cheers with his ever-present fan of animal skin which they said fanned away all evil designs and shafts of malevolence thrown at him by the wicked (Achebe, 1966, p.7).

Chief Nanga, the Minister, steps out of the Cadillac, adorned in damask and gold chains, embodying the excessive wealth and lavishness associated with the ruling elite. His attire and ostentatious accessories further contribute to the grotesque nature of the scene, emphasizing the stark contrast between his luxurious lifestyle and the poverty experienced by the ordinary people. This strategy is often used by the Government to mark their territory and show their power in the country. It reveals the excesses nature of this power, deepening the sense of dehumanization and degradation experienced by both Nanga who is in his small world as we have said before, and Odili, initially hopeful and supportive of Chief Nanga. Witnessing these grotesque displays of power and opulence, Odili becomes more and more disillusioned. He realizes that Chief Nanga, in his detachment and decadence, has lost touch with the struggles

and experiences of the ordinary people. Odili's disillusionment represents his own journey towards zombification, as he recognizes the degree of Nanga cruelty and how much he is detached and totally disconnected from the society or the country in general.

Mbembe analyses the figurations of the postcolonial state and its ruler using Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the grotesque body, which is characterized by excessive obscenity and is used by the ordinary people to resist the oppression of the ruling elite. He contends that the Grotesque is used not only by the underclass as a form of resistance but also by those in power to show their wealth and denote their dominance throughout the nation (Mbembe, 2001, pp. 111-112). The governing elite makes its subjects aware of their affluence through ceremonies and festivities, which both dehumanizes and turns them into zombies. The poor regular people are only watching, ostracized, and oppressed without any capacity to change things, while the ruling elite are completely cut off from society and just focused on power. Challenging him adding that the Grotesque is used also by those in power to maintain their control over the country and the population. Mbembe argues,

we need to uncover the use made of the grotesque and the obscene not just in ordinary people's lives but in the timing and location of those occasions that state power organizes for dramatizing its own magnificence; in the actual materials used in the ceremonial displays through which it makes manifest its majesty; and the specific manner in which it offers these, as spectacles, for its "subjects" (cibles) to watch. (Mbembe, 2001, p.112).

Mbembe points to the materials utilized in these ceremonial displays as crucial elements that manifest the state's majesty. These opulent or shocking materials serve as symbols of authority and dominance. By carefully selecting and presenting these materials, state power seeks to assert its superiority and assert its control over the collective imagination of its subjects. He also emphasizes the specific manner in which these spectacles are offered to the subjects to observe. These events are presented as public spectacles, intended to be watched by the subjects. By doing so, state power reinforces its own presence and perpetuates a sense of awe and submission among the spectators. It is clear that Achebe's portrayal of Odili Samalu and

Chief Nanga in *A Man of the People (1966)* resonates remarkably with Mbembe's concept of "*Mutual Zombification*," which refers to the fact that both the oppressed and the oppressor are trapped within this destructive cycle, with each reinforcing and perpetuating the dehumanization of the other. It highlights the complex ways in which power dynamics operate and the detrimental effects they have on both sides. In the novel, Odili Samalu represents the oppressed, grappling with disillusionment and the loss of his ideals as he confronts the corruption and abuse of power within his society. Chief Nanga, on the other hand, embodies the oppressor, consumed by a lust for power and wealth, disregarding the well-being of the people he is meant to serve. By examining their mutual zombification, Mbembe aims to shed light on the entangled relationship between the colonized and the colonizer, emphasizing the need to break free from these power dynamics and envision alternative ways of existence that promote equality, justice, and human dignity.

#### **a. Kamiti, and The Ruler as Zombified characters in Ngugi's Wizard of the Crow (2006)**

In *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*, Ngugi depicted his two major characters as archetypes of the oppressor and the oppressed in the postcolony. The Ruler, the emperor of the recently independent free republic of Aburiria is the dictator who does whatever it costs to maintain himself in power and gain supremacy over the country and its population. Kamiti is the young rebellious citizen (the voice of the people) who becomes disillusioned with this totalitarian government that exploits the country and the people. Aburiria, the last of the ruler's concerns; rather than serving the well-being of the people he is governing, those oppressed citizens represented by Kamiti who trusted him, he runs only for his interest leading him to a total detachment. He gradually started dehumanizing both himself and the population he is expected to protect. The result is that, people's struggle for social justice doesn't seem to be their leaders'

priority. He is totally unaware of the governed everyday difficulties, whose disillusionment gets heavier and heavier;

It is said that the walls and ceiling of the chamber were made from the skeletons of the students, teachers, workers, and small farmers he had killed in all the regions of the country, for it was well known that he came into power with flaming swords, the bodies of his victims falling down to his left and right like banana trunks. The skulls of his most hated enemies hung on the walls and others from the ceiling, bone sculptures, white memories of victory and defeat (Ngugi, 2006, p.10).

The quotation shows clearly the lack of The Ruler's feeling towards his people. His chamber's decorations with human corpses and sometimes remains of their bodies show his total absence of humanism. Furthermore, those images seem to be more entertaining for him rather than reminding him of the horror they have been submitted to. Certainly, every skeleton represents a horrible souvenir he experienced through his life: teachers might have tried to teach him good things. His fellow students could have also assisted him, and the workers he has assassinated may have been the ones he used to live with. However, instead of the positive values he could have acquired from the other members of the society, he only behaves like their enemy since he forgets any kind of friendship and brotherhood, his new status of governor transformed him into a blind and deaf person who sees and hears only what he wishes.

In the development of the storyline, the situation in Aburiria became clearer. Poverty, oppression, corruption, as well as numerous other problems are faced by the country. This is not at all The Ruler's concern. As the ultimate power in the country, he is expected to shed light on these issues faced by the population. Instead, his position and policy in general, have blinded him; becoming enslaved by power and wealth. As a consequence, he is pushed to embody the corrupt and oppressive nature of authoritarian regimes; dehumanizing not only himself by losing the moral and human values, but also the people he is governing. Represented by Kamiti who is frustrated by facing the oppressive government attitude without getting the ability to do anything against. Kamiti's fear of the oppressor obliges him to assume all the

consequences; being arrested, tortured, and subject to different forms of violence by these leaders whose authority and power has become their strongest weakness;

“Me, ruler of Aburiria? Oh, no, no! Even for a parliamentary seat or a ministerial post, I have no ambition. My main and only interest in life is making money. Give me a prosperous business, and you will see a very satisfied man.”  
(Ngugi,2006, p.398).

This quote shows how The Ruler has lost his communal values and disconnected from the well-being of the people. He declared openly that he has no ambition for political positions, such as being the ruler of Aburiria or holding parliamentary seats or ministerial posts, indicates a detachment from his responsibilities and duties associated with governance towards his population. Instead, he emphasizes his desire for financial prosperity and personal satisfaction. This narrow focus on wealth accumulation demonstrates a state where materialism and individual gain overshadow broader social concerns. All that illustrates the degree of his selfishness and egocentrism. The Ruler’s preoccupation with money and personal satisfaction suggests a disregard for the welfare of the society he is meant to govern. This self-centred mindset perpetuates a cycle of greed and corruption, reinforcing the dehumanizing effects of power and the erosion of moral and ethical values. Politics and his high position have profoundly influenced him in many things, his vision, and personality since he became the governor of the free republic of Aburiria. As a result, he becomes obsessed only by power and wealth, letting his people and nation struggle with the consequences of his actions, including all his corrupt practices and strategies to maintain his power over the population. The Ruler’s arrogance is very clear in the novel, he wants to prove his power and control to the point of wanting to build the Marching to Heaven, under the pretext of communicating directly with God, a project that needs a lot of money;

His cry on behalf of the people had reached even the ears of the Global Bank, who had now sent a mission to Aburiria to give money for Marching to Heaven. They sang of their hope that the project would be completed as soon as possible. Then the Ruler would be at one with God (Ngugi, 2006, p.249)

The powerful managed to convince even the bank to finance this absurd project, while the country the country is facing poverty, and a big majority of the population were reduced to begging in the streets of Aburiria, just close the luxurious offices of the Ruler and the other members of his government. Poverty and misery can be noticed in every part of the country. This exemplifies perfectly how the Ruler is cut off from the poor society and poor people who are all around him. He continues ignoring his status as 'The Ruler' and his responsibilities toward this nation. This, leads him somehow to a kind of dehumanization and a loss of vitality. We can say that wealth blinded the ruler at the point of forgetting his humanity, let's say that he denies his status as a president or a governor, but humanity is primordial, and it is lost in the Ruler. In addition to his indifference about the struggles of the common people and the decay of his moral character, The Ruler engages in corrupt practices for personal gain, he embezzles public funds, accepts bribes, and uses his position of power for personal enrichment;

How would they move the ruler from his hotel room? How would they get him through the doors? And what about getting him to the airport? Piles of money from the Aburirian treasury, paid to a company, the hotel, and the airline, facilitated solutions and confidentiality about the operation they code-named Hotexit (Ngugi, 2006, p.507).

The theft of public funds and their use to secure his own escape is a sign of the ruler's moral decline and loss of compassion for the common people he is tasked with governing. He prioritizes his personal interests and convenience rather than employing the resources for the nation's growth and well-being. All these actions demonstrate his detachment from the principles of good governance and his willingness to exploit the system for his own benefit, degrading his moral integrity and contributing to not only his zombification but also those he governs. The common people represented by the novel's protagonist Kamiti, who finds himself in a critical situation, where his moral and psychological states are somehow unstable; 'This zombification means that each has robbed the other of vitality and left both impotent

(impouvoir) (Mbembe, 2001, p. 103). As we see it in the novel's Book two: Queuing Daemons Trying, Kamiti looking for a job with despair in one of The Ruler's offices in Aburiria;

A job. All I am looking for is a job," Kamiti sputtered.  
At this hour?" Tajirika said, slightly irritated that Kamiti had interrupted him when he was just beginning to warm up about himself.  
I have been to several other offices" (Achebe, 1966, p.52)

Kamiti's urgent need for a job emphasizes his outcast situation in society. He is reduced to the stutter and asking for work, exposing his feeling of powerlessness and weakness. His dehumanization is clear in the way Tajirika neglects his request and treats him with disrespect and indifference. The way he interacts with Tajirika, who works under the Ruler's orders, shows how his value as a human being has been reduced. Kamiti's request is muted by Tajirika's fury and self-centeredness, illustrating the dehumanizing nature of the discussion was. As a result, Kamiti's needs and struggles go unfulfilled. He continues to feel like a corpse and loses more dignity.

To resist this oppressive government, Kamiti invented a new role and a personality for himself, pretending to be the Wizard of the Crow as a way to resist to this corrupt regime of The Ruler and his government. Throughout his journey as the 'Wizard', Kamiti discovered many things, including the Ruler's obsession by power and many other secrets were revealed. Kamiti discovers directly the levels of corruption, desire, and disinterest for the well-being of the general population as he goes deeper into his performance and interacts with the ruler and his inner circle.

At the same time, I want you to take away all powers of persuasion from my competitors. Make their hands limp and wet with sweat so that when they shake those of Chairman Titus, they will only piss him off; roughen their tongues so that when they roll them out to sing his praises, they will produce rasping noises worse than the screeching of metal on metal; cause their eyes to run with filth so that when they try to make him captive to their wishes, they will only disgust and repel him. Do you know the story of the great battle between the Sun and Wind over who could make Man take off his coat? Wind made Man only cling more to his possession. Sun made him surrender it willingly. Wizard of the Crow, make my enemies the Wind. Make me the Sun. Put me at the head of my class, first among equals in guile and venom." (Ngugi, 2006, p.149).

As he begins acting as the real Wizard of the Crow, having magical powers; Kamiti noticed at what point The Ruler is obsessed only by power and the population and the nation is the last of his interests. As The Ruler's obsession intensifies, Kamiti is drawn deeper into his web, forced to navigate the treacherous terrain of the ruler's world, and becomes more and more frustrated not only by all these secrets that are revealed but also by his situation that he is powerless without the ability to bring about change to his country. Initially, Kamiti seeks to challenge The Ruler's regime and bring about change to the country. However, as he delves deeper into The Ruler's world and assumes the persona of the Wizard of the Crow, he becomes entangled in a complex circle of deceit, manipulation, and power dynamics. The Ruler's obsession with control and dominance gradually consumes Kamiti's individuality and purpose. As the wizard, Kamiti becomes The Ruler's confidant and he is tasked with using his supposed magical powers to serve The Ruler's interests, further eroding his sense of self. He is forced to navigate The Ruler's treacherous political landscape, where loyalty is demanded and dissent is met with severe consequences. Kamiti's actions and decisions are no longer guided by his own beliefs or aspirations but are dictated by The Ruler's agenda. Kamiti's dehumanization is the result of his gradual transformation into a manipulated and controlled figure within The Ruler's oppressive regime. Through the loss of personal identity, The Ruler's manipulation tactics, and the entrapment within the system, Kamiti loses his agency, autonomy, and ultimately becomes a pawn in The Ruler's game of power. Kamiti says,

They were interested in only two things: to be empowered and to cripple their rivals. Yes, when it came to greed, they were clones of one another. Their greed stank. Even as I asked them questions about their afflictions, the smell of evil and greed oozed out of their every pore and made it difficult for me to breathe. For a time I was able to endure the ooze by sniffing the scent of flowers that you always left behind. But Tajirika's rot proved more terrible than any that I had experienced before: a black man celebrating the negation of himself. This final blast of foul air was unbearable. (Ngugi, 2006, p.207)

Kamiti's statement reflects a profound sense of disillusionment and despair. He observes that those around him, including his rivals and even himself, are driven solely by the desire for

power and the intention to undermine others. The pervasive greed and evil that emanate from them are so overwhelming that it becomes physically suffocating for Kamiti. Through his acts of resistance, such as spreading rumours, and trying to make the Ruler believe that he truly can increase his degree of power, makes Kamiti affected by the widespread moral deterioration and immorality in society. He views this greed as a stench that penetrates everything, making it hard for him to breathe and representing the poisonous environment in which he is imprisoned. This insight underlines the destructive effects of *Zombification* on Kamiti's mental state as he observes his own community being betrayed and their oppression continues to dehumanize the population. As a result, Kamiti's transformation reflects his loss of agency, identity, and hope within a system that perpetuates injustice and denies humanity of its citizens. Kamiti's anger is intensified by the realization that his efforts to seek justice and change are often met with repression and indifference from those in power. His dehumanization is an example of the way that oppressive regimes impact people, robbing them of their humanity, objectives, and hope in the possibility of a better future. Kamiti argues,

“Maybe there were many reasons; maybe there was only one; the truth is that nothing is very clear in my mind. I did not choose to play at being the Wizard of the Crow. I was thrust into it. You know how this whole business began. What was his name—I mean the police officer who chased us across the prairie that night? Arigaigai Gatherer. A.G. What a name! Arigaigai! Had you ever come across such a name before? It was A.G. who set me on the road to sorcery. My own troubles made me all too willing. (Ngugi, 2006, p.207).

This quote highlights the transforming and zombifying consequences of becoming the Wizard of the Crow has had on Kamiti's life and identity while also representing his rocky and uncertain journey to that position. It shows the internal conflicts, outside pressures, and tragic incidents that have shaped his life and have left him feeling conflicted and forced into a position he did not select but must play. It implies that his decision to enter the world of magic and take on the persona of the Wizard of the Crow was not made lightly but rather as a result of challenges in his personal life.

Another factor that intensifies Kamiti's dehumanization is the fact that he is the leader of the movement for the voice of the people. The leader of this movement assumes the lead in a rebellion against the oppressive regime. As the story progresses, Kamiti becomes more and more frustrated due to his both own actions and the corrupting impact of power on him and the country in general. Kamiti who was once a symbol of resistance and optimism, has undergone a transformation that dehumanizes him and makes him losing touch with the movement's initial objectives and exhibiting moral flaws. This represents an enormous burden for him, challenging The Ruler's corruption and the oppression of his government. Kamiti once promised to be the leader, a true leader who can lead to victory and glory against the oppressors. Everybody believed and followed him blindly. Unfortunately, all they experienced with him is nearly the same as they did before, Kamiti only showed weakness and incapacity to solve any kind of problem in the country. He was so despaired that the only solution he finds better is to fled to the forest in order to find inner peace. Kamiti says,

“Nyawira, please don't go back to Eldares, back to the corruption. Let's build a shelter here; listen to what the trees and the animals have to tell us. Long ago, my ancestors, the hunters, believed that the sun was our god because it was the source of fire and light. When we were children and we captured its heat in pieces of glass, we believed we'd captured a bit of its power. (Ngugi, 2006, p. 211).

His request to Nyawira not to go back to Eldares, which stands for the height of corruption, is an illustration of his desire to isolate himself from the falling apart and corruption that had consumed his surrounds. However, Kamiti initially adopts refuge in the calmness of the forest, he soon comes to terms with his leadership of the movement for the voice of the people, the weight of responsibility and being faced with the ruler's oppressive policy and regime dehumanize him.

As we have previously stated, one of the things that contribute to this *Mutual Zombification* and dehumanization of both The Ruler and Kamiti, are *The Grotesque* displays of power and wealth. As depicted by Ngugi in *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*, The Ruler indulges

in excessive displays of wealth and opulence, exposing his richness and control over the nation, which is delved into poverty and misery. His birthday party, a significant event in the novel, is characterized by excess with luxurious decorations, elaborate costumes, and a multitude of expensive gifts for The Ruler;

The Ruler, his ministers, and the leaders of the Ruler's Party, all under a shade, kept cooling their tongues with cold water. The citizens without shade or water distracted themselves from the hot darts of the sun by observing and commenting on what was happening on the platform: the clothes the dignitaries wore, the way they walked, or even where each sat relative to the seat of might. (Ngugi, 2006, pp. 12-13).

'Luckily', a very reduced part of the population has the opportunity to get to the meaning of the word: 'birthday'. Whereas, the remaining, the forgotten, are just figures brought there to just see what they could not imagine before; 'the grotesque is no more foreign to officialdom than the common man is impervious to the charms of majesty'. (Mbembe, 2001, p. 110). This exemplifies The Ruler's cruelty and detachment from his country and the different needs and struggles of the population he is meant to govern sincerely.

Ngugi's portrayal of Kamiti and The Ruler in *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*, echoes perfectly Mbembe's concept of *Mutual Zombification*, depicting them as both victims. The ruler's disconnection with his people and country, and Kamiti's disillusionment, made them both dehumanized and zombified. One is obsessed by power and the other is reduced to a mere subject in his own country. In his position of authority, The Ruler becomes detached from the realities of his people and country. His obsession with power blinds him to the suffering and aspirations of those he governs. This disconnection ultimately dehumanizes him, transforming him into a mere shell of a leader, devoid of empathy and understanding. On the other hand, Kamiti, the protagonist, experiences disillusionment as he confronts the harsh realities of his existence. He finds himself reduced to a subordinate position within his own country, marginalized and stripped of agency. This process of dehumanization leaves him feeling powerless and trapped, reinforcing the mutual zombification depicted in the novel.

In conclusion, the examination of Mutual Zombification in Achebe's "A Man of the People" and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's "Wizard of the Crow" has offered an engaging perspective for understanding the complexity of life in the postcolonial era. We have revealed levels of symbolic zombification as described by Mbembe through the figures of Chief Nanga and Odili Samalu in Achebe's writing and The Ruler and Kamiti in Ngugi's novel. In both novels, the antagonists and protagonists show up as mirror images of what Mbembe calls Mutual zombification process, in which people and their political representatives become both victims and trapped in a mutual cycle of destruction, due to a combination of cultural manipulation, political corruption, and power struggles.

## V. Conclusion

This piece of research has explored the impact to which *Chinua Achebe's A Man of the People (1966)* and *Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Wizard of the Crow (2006)* are comparable and post-colonially connected. Through the lens and the perspective of Mbembe's *on the Postcolony (2001)*, i have compared the two novels and came to the following conclusions: the settings are archetypal of what Mbembe called the postcolony, as for the main characters, who share exactly what Mbembe calls mutual zombification. Achebe's *A Man of the People (1966)* and Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow (2006)* reflect the postcolonial political Instability in Nigeria and Kenya. Both countries experienced harsh conditions after their independence from the colonial power. These novels share common features that portray the degree to which the postcolonial ruler in African countries was corrupted. The setting in the two stories is a clear portrayal of how colonial power destabilized the peace in the African countries and destroyed (stopped) their growth.

Through the use of Mbembe's *on The Postcolony (2001)*, we highlighted the similarities between both the characters and the settings in the two novels which serve as microcosms of the broader postcolonial realities in Africa. On the one hand, 'The Fictional Country' in *A Man of the People (1966)* and 'Aburiria' in *Wizard of the Crow (2006)* are archetypal of these African nations after their independence. Betrayed by their natives who once represented a sense of hopefulness for their countries, these leaders now use their position and the people's naivete to their advantage as well as the resources of their nations. On the other hand, the main characters In Achebe's *A Man of the People (1966)*, Chief Nanga who took control after the disguised independence from British rule. But ultimately, he ended up worse than the colonial rule, and the main protagonist Odili, who becomes disillusioned and oppressed. This represents the struggles of these African exploited and face corruption. Similarly, the ruler in Ngugi's

*Wizard of The Crow (2006)* becomes the ultimate dictator to his people, and Kamiti, on the other hand, is exploited and loses faith in this unjust system of government.

Finally, we come to the conclusion that both Achebe and Ngugi perfectly captured these independent African nations in their works. They both discussed their ideas and criticized the difficult circumstances that African countries are still dealing with today in a pleasant manner. We also deduced from this study that these countries have been betrayed by their fellow citizens, which makes things more complicated and leaves the people feeling extremely disappointed since they've once trusted them and regarded them as symbols of hope and optimism.

While the limitations of this research prohibited me from fully delving into all the fascinating facets of Achebe's *A Man of the People (1966)* and Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow (2006)*, an emphasis on the theme of power can provide readers with a thought-provoking viewpoint. Accomplished by hard work, our scope of study is open to many other studies, one can gain new insights into the intricacies of power dynamics in post-colonial environments and the possibility for resistance and change by contrasting how the authors approach this issue.

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