A POST-STRUCTURALIST INTERROGATION OF SELECTED WORKS OF CHINUA ACHEBE

BY

AKINDELE ADEDEJI OLUSEGUN
P16AREN8061

A DISSERTATIONSUBMITTEDTO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS DEGREE (M.A) IN LITERATURE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,
FACULTY OF ARTS,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,
ZARIA, NIGERIA

OCTOBER, 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation entitled **A Post-Structuralist Interrogation of Selected Works of Chinua Achebe** has been carried out by me. The information derived from relevant literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for another degree or diploma at this or any other institution.

…… ……

Akindele, Adedeji Olusegun Date

CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled **A Post-Structuralist Interrogation of Selected Works of Chinua Achebe** by Akindele Adedeji Olusegun meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts in English Language, from the Department of English and Literary Studies of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

……. ……..
Dr. Edward O. Abah Date
Chairman, SupervisoryCommittee

……. ……..
Dr. Keston Odiwo Date
Member, Supervisory Committee

……. ……..
Professor Tajudeen Surakat Date
Head of Department

……. ……..
Prof. Sadiq Zubairu Abubakar Date
(Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies)

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, the memory of my late parents who all died in 2014; Chief E.A Akindele (23rd February, 2014), Mrs. Rachael Aweni Akindele – Stepmother (27th February,2014) and Chief (Mrs.) Naimot Adesomope Akindele (19th December, 2014). May Almighty God grant them eternal rest (Amen). It is also dedicated to the blessed memory of my benefactor, late Col IL Lawal (Rtd), all my superiors, contemporaries and subordinates who died in the North East during the Boko Haram insurgency. It is my fervent prayer that may Almighty God grant their souls eternal rest and also grant their families the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss (Amen).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All thanks to Almighty God, the most supreme, beneficent, gracious, sublime and most ever faithful for His grace in the course of my successful study.

My profound gratitude goes to my amiable supervisors, Dr. Edward O. Abah and Dr. Keston Odiwo, for their immeasurable contributions, understanding and patience during the course of this research. Thank you so very much. May Almighty God remunerate you more abundantly and crown your efforts with success beyond your expectations (Amen).

My sincere appreciation also goes to the entire lecturers of the Department of English and Literary Studies.

I am indeed very grateful to my dearest wife and confidant, Mrs. Basira Titilayo Akindele (Nee Kalejaiye) for her support in keeping the home front while I was away on the battlefield. Indeed, it is not easy to marry a soldier. May Almighty Allah reward you immensely (Amen).

May I also use this medium to appreciate Brig Gen KI Mukhtar, who was my Commander, 29 Task Force Brigade. Despite the pressure on the battlefield, you encouraged me that this is achievable. I will forever remain grateful to you for your fatherly support. Indeed, you are my guardian angel. To all officers and soldiers of 29 Task Force Brigade, it was a rare privilege working with men of timber and caliber of such a rare standard. To all members of DSSC 16 especially Maj DS Yakubu, Maj VG Burak, Maj L Sani, Maj BM Iyere, Maj UI Tarfa, Maj AK Balarabe and all others too numerous to mention, I am indeed grateful. Your encouragements, in different forms, are all well appreciated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page … … … … … … … … ii

Declaration … … … … … … … … iii

Certification … … … … … … … … iv

Dedication … … … … … … … … v

Acknowledgements … … … … … … … … vi

Table of Content … … … … … … … … vii

Abstract … … … … … … … … x

CHAPTER ONE

General Introduction

1.1: Background to the Study… … … … … … … 1

1.2: Statement of the Research Problem … … … … … 6

1.3: Research Questions … … … … … … … 7

1.4: Aim and Objectives … … … … … … … 7

1.6: Justification for the Study … … … … … … … 8

1.7: Scope and Delimitation … … … … … … … 9

1.8: Research Methodology … … … … … … … 9

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

2.0 Introduction…… … … … … … … … 10

2.1 Conceptual Review… … … … … … … … 10

2.1.1 The Nigerian Novel: Its Emergence … … … … … 10

2.1.2 Early Nigerian Novel… … … … … … … 18

2.1.3 Contemporary Nigerian Novel … … … … … 25

2.2 About the Author: Chinua Achebe … … … … … 40

2.1.1: Achebe and Critical Responses (what others say about his works … 45

2.3 Authorial Review … … … … … … … 48

2.4: Theoretical Framework … … … … … … … 60

CHAPTER THREE

Apocalyptic Vision of the Colonized Igbo Society in *Things Fall Apart*

3.0: Introduction … … … … … … … … 66

3.1: Ironical Trans-Cultural Truth and the Woman Perspective … … … 69

3.2: Masculine and Feminine Binaries … … … … … … 82

CHAPTER FOUR

Deconstruction of the Instabilities of Meanings in *No Longer at Ease*

4.0: Introduction … … … … … … … … 104

4.1: Judging the Judgement … … … … … … … 107

4.2: Trans-Cultural Irony and Difference in Context … … … … 127

4.3: Differences and Oppositions … … … … … … 134

4.4: Multiplicity of Meanings and Indeterminate Zones of Representation … 137

CHAPTER FIVE

Duality and Differences Necessary for Conditions of Coexistence in *Arrow of God*

5.0: Introduction … … … … … … … … … 146

5.1: The Body as a Cultural Signifier … … … … … … 152

5.2: Absolutism in Western Rationality and the Relativity in Igbo Rationality …158

5.3: Contests of Text and Context … … … … … … 175

5.4: Major Findings … … … … … … … … … 191

CHAPTER SIX

Summary and Conclusion

6.0 Introduction … … … … … … … … … 193

6.1 Summary … … … … … … … … … 193

6.2: Conclusion … … … … … … … … 196

REFERENCES … … … … … … … … … 196

Primary Texts … … … … … … … … 198

Secondary Sources … … … … … … … … 198

Internet Sources … … … … … … … … 207

ABSTRACT

There have always been two traditions (structuralism and post-structuralism) in philosophy. One asserts that there are truths that are universal and eternal. They stand outside history and the physical world. Contemporary studies in African Literature have been forced to recognize the challenge of an alternative interpretive model by way of post-structuralism, even of postmodernism. Literary studies in Africa are greatly steeped in the modernist forms today. This research is an exploration of the varied possibilities in terms of meanings, oppositions and contrastive perspectives that exist and are manifest in Achebe's works. In order to achieve this, this study carries out an in-depth analysis of the post-structural and linguistic meaning embedded in Chinua Achebe's "African Trilogy": Things Fall Apart (1958), No Longer at Ease (1960), and Arrow of God (1964). This study employs post-structuralism as deployed by Graham Hough (1966) framework in order to achieve the following objectives; to investigate the notion or view held by the colonizer of the supposedly inherent defects in traditional African civilisation; re-construct the notion by examining the binary oppositions of the colonial encounter that led to clashes; assess the linguistic dimensions with which the different and oppositional meanings of situations are the reader's own and not necessarily the truth of history; and evaluate Achebe's works as not a sociological text that is necessarily responsible for bearing with history but a literary product that allows readers to construct layers of meaning out of the interplay of structures within the novel. The methodology adopted for this research is essentially qualitative (library and text-based). The study revealed that on the notion or view held by the colonizer of the supposedly inherent defects in traditional African civilisation is vague and based on the opinion of the Europeans or the structuralist writers of the history of Nigeria and Africa at large. In order to reconstruct notions of Westerner about Africa and Nigeria in particular, the examination of the binary oppositions of the colonial encounter that led to clashes indicated that, they were obviously a deviation from the culture of the land and imposed adoption of the European culture which brought clash of cultures in most cases and a delegation of the Nigerian Igbo culture. The study reveals that Achebe's works are not seen as a sociological text that bears with history but a literary product that allows readers to re-construct layers of meanings outside of the interplay of structures within the novels. This study contributes to the body of literature in the aspect that it presents the post-structural facts of the history of the Igbo people, Nigeria and Africa at large, unlike most critiques that had focused on the sociological and historical domination of the colonial events in the region. This study, on the other hand, indicated that literary works of first generation writers can be critiqued under the purview of post-structuralism or post-modernism in other to project factual (historical) events as represented in the texts. Suggesting that, there should be a conscious attempt to review hierarchies such as man/woman, British civilization/traditional, African civilization, colonialism/traditional African values etc., with a view to challenging the fixed views assumed by such hierarchies and the values associated with such rigid beliefs and or truths.

CHAPTER ONE

General Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

There have always been two traditions (structuralism and post-structuralism) in philosophy. One asserts that there are truths that are universal and eternal. They stand outside history and the physical world. Therefore, they are transcendental or ideal in nature. The other school claims that the world is physical and historical and that any truth we arrive at about it is equally historical and equally located within the physical universe, which of course makes our knowledge is limited and human. The world is not founded on absolutes that exist outside time and space. The first tradition provides a strong claim of authority for those interested in using philosophy to anchor ideas of social order. The second is closer to science than to religion and it promotes the ideal of progressive change. Disputes between these two positions were finally settled by Derrida in 1967 when he strongly reasserted the claims of the second position in three books - *Writing and Difference, Of Grammatology and Speech & Phenomenon, all published in 1967.* Derrida further argued that the most recent attempt to assert the first or absolutist and foundationalist position in the work of Edmund Husserl was mistaken. For Derrida, the metaphor of writing characterizes the world as a field of difference without identity. Derrida's work helped inspire a movement called poststructuralist which sought to learn from Saussure and the other structuralists while moving beyond them to other concerns such as social power.

One thing one might do with deconstruction therefore is to figure out how texts committed to metaphysical values work by suppressing difference, making it appear as a derivative of identity. The task of deconstruction is to undo such hierarchies and to show that all truth is

differential and physical. Seen in this light, the novels Chinua Achebe's are seen here post-structurally philosophic tragedies rather than personal ones. The texts are classic stories of moral struggle and turbulent social conflict. The crisis in the texts are a crisis of the metaphysical conceptual regime upon which the novel's values depend, a regime that privileges identity over difference and truth over representation. The novels argue for a notion of identity as internal essence. Identity gives rise to character differences. The restoration of identity as the source of legitimate social order consists of re-establishing a system of differences that distinguishes absolutely the authentic from the imitative or artificial. Derrida would consider the crisis of representation in the novels, which allows truth to be denied, falseness to be taken for truth and signification to triumph over meaning, to be a crisis of western rationalism or logocentrism. Like logocentrism, the novels portray truth as interior to the mind or logos, as it stands outside signification and can do without its external assistance.

This dissertation attempts a post-structural analysis of selected works of Chinua Achebe, particularly his three internationally acclaimed classic novels that have come to be known as his ‘African Trilogy’; these novels are *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), and *Arrow of God* (1964) are texts that basically revisited the past and emphasizing the fact that the roots of the present day Nigeria lies in her colonial encounter. Thus, apart from covering a variety of subjects, through his ‘African Trilogy’, Achebe’s textstravel through the history of Nigeria’s colonization starting from the very beginning of colonial missionaries to the wake of independence. He did not just revisit the history but also tried to educate folks about what the real story was and how the people ‘fell apart’. However, one objectives of this study is to analyze these novels as embodying the inherent structures of the

pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial African societies by exploring the varied possibilities in terms of meanings, oppositions and contrastive perspectives that exist and are manifest in Achebe's works by deploying some parameters of post-structuralism.

Meanwhile, this study has been framed in the main by the view that the theory of post-structuralism is basically a reaction to structuralism. The terms structuralism and post-structuralism both refer to literary and aesthetic expansion of continental philosophy that developed in the second half of the twentieth century in a fashion parallel to certain developments in analytic philosophy. Structuralism derives ultimately from linguistics and it in turns is a discipline that has always been inherently confident about the possibility of establishing objective knowledge. It believes that if we observe accurately, collect data systematically, and make logical deductions then we can reach reliable conclusions about language and the world. Structuralism inherits this confidently scientific outlook: it too believes in method, system, and reason as being able to establish reliable truths. By contrast, post-structuralism although in many ways a reflection of structuralism derives ultimately from philosophy. Philosophy is a discipline which has always tended to emphasize the difficulties of achieving secure knowledge about things. This point of view is encapsulated in Nietzsche's famous remark *'There are no facts, only interpretations'*. Philosophy is, so to speak, skeptical by nature and usually undercuts and questions commonsensical notions and assumptions. Its procedures often begin by calling into question what is usually taken for granted as simply the way things are. Post-structuralism draws from this habit of skepticism and intensifies it. It regards any confidence in the scientific method as naive, and even derives a certain masochistic intellectual pleasure from knowing for certain that we *can't* know anything for certain, fully conscious of the irony and paradox which doing this entails.

In its deconstructive mode, represented in the voluminous and influential work of Jacques Derrida, for example, post-structuralism has systematically undermined the claims of history and subjectivity, called into questioning the privilege of writing over speech in the Western tradition, underscored the arbitrary nature of signification, and debunked the ideology of the unified subject. Indeed, post-structuralism has called the notion of a unified structure into question and insisted that meanings are themselves indeterminate. By contrast, post-structuralism is much more fundamentalist in insisting upon the consequences of the view that, in effect, reality itself is textual documented in literary works. This position is backed by Roland Barthes' *'The Death of the Author'* (1968) which is a rhetorical way of asserting the independence of the literary text and its immunity to the possibility of being unified or limited by any notion of what the author might have intended, or 'crafted' into the work.

"Post-structuralism, then, may be more broadly defined as the application of a deconstructive strategy model to all aspects of culture and thought" (Keesey 350). Deconstruction could be likened to the tool we use to take apart a work layer by layer and consider all its parts, even the conflicting ones while post-structuralism is the broader category of criticism which can apply not just to literature, but to "all aspects of culture and thought" (Keesey, 347). It reminds one a little bit of the difference between close reading and formalism. Close reading is a tool we use to do a formalist reading of a work, just as we can use "deconstructive language to do a post-structural reading.

In contrast to other forms of critical theory, post-structuralism focuses on the social distribution of power associated with the construction of knowledge, what has come to be known as the "power/knowledge" critique: How, exactly, do we come to believe what we hold as true? How is it, for instance, that we come to believe narrative of a

progressprominient in punishment? What institutions and practices shape us to believe in the idea of the "delinquent" or, for that matter, in the idea that we could possibly "rehabilitate" or "correct" that "delinquent"? How have our own disciplinary practices contributed to shaping our beliefs? And at what cost? Natural to human ways of thinking, narratives have no 'natural' structural correspondence to the world and their content is in no way determined. They are an imposition of cognitive processes – guided by our particular desires and yearnings – on a world that is essentially unstructured. A world that, as post-structuralism emphasizes, is in constant flux, and, further, too complex for any single, however convoluted, explanation.

Thus, the objective of this study is to analyze Chinua Achebe's 'African Trilogy', which in this case refer to his three novels – *Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God,* as an examination of the inherent structures of the *pre-colonial, colonial* and *post-colonial* African societies as represented in the selected literary texts for this study. The focus also being to assess language is used to negotiate and establish meaning and the truth about any literary text. Simply put, this study also explores the varied possibilities in terms of meanings, oppositions and contrastive perspectives that exist and are presented fictionally the selected texts. This study does this through an in-depth analysis of the structural and linguistic signs embedded in these novels by deploying the parameters of post-structuralism. Here, while the study focuses on Achebe's systematic effort to research on the roots of the present day crises of the country, the study goes on from re-inscription of culture to re-investigating the past, Achebe's methods of re-education and regeneration. Interestingly, it seems almost pointless to us to analyze a text so carefully and then to conclude that there is no determinate meaning in it and everything about it is contradictory as propounded by the

post-structuralists. However, along the line, one could certainly see how it is possible to find these contradictions.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The theory of post-structuralism is basically a reaction to structuralism. Post-structuralism is a bodyand manner of discourse that followed in the wake of structuralism, and sought to understand a world irrevocably dissected into parts of systems, as in deconstruction. Studies have, however, revealed that little or no critical approach using post-structuralism has been employed to examine the three novels of Achebe that this study sets out to assess. Paramount too, is the fact that any recent study of Nigerian fiction, and particularly the novels of Chinua Achebe is bound to receive unfavourable critical response in the sense that it can be argued that "too much" has already been written about the three works under consideration and about the sundry nature of his works in general. Significantly, this work employs a critical approach of post-structuralism to examine the selected works of Achebe. The research is therefore a deconstructive examination of the inherent structures of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial African societies as represented in the literary works of Achebe that have been chosen for this study. The focus is an assessment of how language is used to negotiate and establish meaning and the truth about any given structure. Simply put, this work explores the never ending dimensions such as the varied possibilities in terms of meanings, oppositions and contrastive perspectives that exist and are manifest in Achebe's works. This study does this through an indepth analysis of the structural and linguistic signs embedded in Chinua Achebe's novels: *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964), to be specific, by deploying the parameters of post-structuralism.

1.3 Research Questions:

In order to achieve this, this study attempts to proffer answers to the following research questions:

i. How is language used to negotiate and establish meaning and some form of coherence given the relativity of meaning and the possibilities of truths that exist in any literary text?
ii. Has language been used effectively to examine the various oppositional conflicts in history to show that there is no truth in the supposedly inherent defects in traditional African civilisation as proposed by the coloniser?
iii. How do the linguistic frames operate with the different and oppositional meanings of the historical situation that afflicted the milieu that Achebe's works foreground?
iv. How are Achebe's works not a sociological text that is necessarily responsible for bearing with history but a literary product that allows readers to construct layers of meaning out of the interplay of structures, within the novel?

1.4 Aim and Objectives

This study, by deploying the tools of poststructuralism, aims at investigatingthe contemporary issues in literary criticism particularly as they relate to the Nigerian novel and to demonstrate that the Nigerian prose fiction tradition is not merely a sociological recounting of events but a literary text that allows readers to deconstruct and make meanings out of it. Thus, the researcher's objectives are to:

i. investigate the notion or view held by the colonizer of the supposedly inherent defects in traditional African civilisation;

ii. re-construct this notion by examining the binary oppositions of the colonial encounter that led to clashes;

iii. assess the linguistic dimensions with which the different and oppositional meanings of situations are the reader's own and not necessarily the truth of history; and

iv. evaluate Achebe's works as not a sociological text that is necessarily responsible for bearing with history but a literary product that allows readers to construct layers of meaning out of the interplay of structures within the novel.

1.5 Justification for the Study

A lot of scholarly research has already been done on the various works of Chinua Achebe from different backgrounds and from different perspectives. Yet, little or few of these seem to question and appreciate the underlying layers of meanings that can be derived from a post-structuralist study of the literary text. It is in this regard that this study of Achebe's works provides insights and perspectives of the understanding of the history of Africa and her literary authors. Besides the fact that this research constitutes a new body of knowledge by adding to the existing literature and studies especially on the Achebe's works, it will also serve as an opening or window for future researches and or criticism. Reading together, the three novels provides a worldview and a cosmos concerning a post-structural systematic representation of a diverse and dynamic African civilisation and way of life.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation

The selected three novels of Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964) constitute the primary texts and the core materials of this research with a post-structuralist guide. Notwithstanding this, references are also made to

other literary texts by Chinua Achebe and other writers from the Nigerian and the larger African context to provide room for cross referencing, intertextuality, comparison, contrast and illustrations.

1.8 Research Methodology

The methodology for this research is essentially qualitative (library and texts-based). The novels of Chinua Achebe constitute the primary materials of this research. Consequently, these novels constitute the foundation upon which the analyses, findings and the arguments of the research are based. Also, the internet has been resorted to for valuable critical materials. The research also relies upon secondary materials in the form of existing literature in books, magazines, journals, articles, reports and other written sources and the media.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

2.0 Introduction

This literature review surveyed books, scholarly articles, and many other sources relevant to the particular thematic issue, area of research, theory, and by so doing, this section provides a description, and authorial evalution of works in relation to the research problem being investigated.

2.1 Conceptual Review

The conceptual framework here is adescriptive tool for several variables in relations to the

thematic of the study in view. This sections presents a conceptual distinctions and organize ideas, strong conceptual frameworks of Nigerian Novels, post-structuralism, African writers, Nigerian writers,etc.

2.1.1 The Nigerian Novel: Its Emergence

Nigeria as a country possesses all the characteristics of a modern state. Among these features of a state that characterize Nigeria include: borders, a central government, citizens bearing Nigerian passports, a seat in the United Nations, and with its own history. Although Nigeria has international political recognitions and a fixed geographical demarcation - one that has stood the test of an unsuccessful secession as well as occasional skirmishing with Cameroon over some islands - what it means to be "Nigerian" or "a Nigerian" is more ambiguous.

If a nation-state is an "imagined community", as Benedict Anderson's widely accepted thesis maintains; Nigeria is about as varied as can be imagined (Anderson, 1991). Within its boundaries are upward of 250 distinct ethnic groups (some count as many as 400), each with its distinct language. Over the colonial period, which was less than fifty years long for Nigeria as a whole, people who spoke different languages, practiced different form of agriculture, worshipped different gods, and had no sense of community or shared fate were somehow metamorphosed collectively into a new people called "Nigerians".

Nigeria's first fiction is its name (Nigeria, which was a derivation from the two words - Niger and area). "Nigeria" is an adjectival evocation of the Niger River, which fuses with the River Benue into a curving T shape that divides the country into three major regions. The name was dreamed up by Florence Shaw, an English journalist and the fiancée of Frederick Lugard, the man who was to become the first governor of the amalgamated colony (Omoruyi, 2001). The British colonialists considered other colourful possibilities, including

"Niger Sudan", "Negretia" and "Goldesia"; this latter was after George Taubman Goldie, who protected the British trading monopoly against French ambitions in the late nineteenth century, thereby winning the title of the "Founder of Modern Nigeria" (Omoruyi, 2001).

Nigeria's present boundaries were established in 1914 when Britain, in its usual arbitrary manner, cobbled together what had been a shifting series of colonial administrative regions into the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. The British had traded in the Niger River area since the eighteenth century and had established the Lagos Colony in 1861. For some time, they had been hesitant about adding tropical colonies, despite their long involvement in West Africa through commerce, proselytizing, and both conducting and (after 1807) suppressing the slave trade. Competition with France and Germany over exploitation of African resources, and the division of areas of control established by the Berlin Conference of 1885, prodded the British to a more active colonialism, however, eventually leading to the 1914 unification.

The colony consisted of three regions, corresponding to the divisions made by the Niger and Benue Rivers. The British administered the three regions separately and quite differently. While it is an oversimplification to interpret Nigerian politics and culture only on the basis of differences among these three regions, they constitute the indispensable starting point for understanding the politics of Nigeria. One ethnic group was dominant in each region. For instance, the Yoruba is dominant in the West, the Igbo in the east, and the Hausa in the North, but all these three major ethnic groups are surrounded by dozens of minority groups jealously guarding their cultures and their political influence. Regional political rivalries were institutionalized by the constitutions of the late colonial period. Thus by October 1, 1960, when Nigeria became an independent nation, it was not at all clear what it meant to be

a Nigerian.

During the five decades since independence, economic crises and political upheavals both distracted Nigerians from the question of what holds the country together and made the question all the more pressing. The 1960s began with intense regional political rivalry which led to a military coup and then a counter-coup in 1966, the secession of eastern Nigeria (the Republic of Biafra) in 1967, two and a half years of civil war costing a million or more lives, and the defeat and reconstruction and re-absorption of Biafra. During the 1970s, a reunited Nigeria benefited from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting countries (OPEC) price hike; the consequent oil boom brought Nigeria immense but unevenly distributed affluence and triggered extravagant public expenditures. After the crises of the post civil war era, the military regime handed over power to the second Republic in 1979. Nigeria appeared to be headed for a more stable, if imperfect, democracy as seen in her continued oil-based prosperity, and pre-eminence in African politics. But it was not to be due to the collapse of oil prices in the early 1980s, from which the petroleum-producing countries have never recovered (Aguiar, M. 1999a).

There is, however, some justification for making the country, Nigeria, a defining analytic unit. The first is temporal. From 1947, locally published pamphlet novels and plays, now commonly called Nigerian Chap books, began to appear in market book stalls, and in 1950 the country held its first Art festival which included lively competitions in literature and drama (Linfors, 1967). The changing concerns of Nigerian authors and the improved quality of their writing in the past two decades suggest the steady growth of literature in Nigeria. These are no longer amateur writers but true professionals who make themselves understood not only in politics but also in the art of writing. They now, with the consciousness of the

peculiarities of their country write primarily for their countrymen. It is no exaggeration to say that they create in their works an authentically Nigerian literature built essentially on Tutuola's *The Palmwine Drinkard* (1952). Chronicle in this includes works of Cyprian Ekwensi *People of the City* (1954) and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958). These writers represent what Oyekan Owomoyela called the first wave writers of West Africa. Their works on the whole represent a transitional period from the novelettesand chap books of the Onitsha market literature, to serious works of fiction written by intellectual authors (Linfors, 1967). Although Nigeria became an independent state in 1960, the Nigerian novel predates this period in Nigerian history as it includes earlier works written by Nigerians and about Nigerian phenomena. Inherently, this position will take *Things Fall Apart* by Achebe, *The Palmwine Drinkard* by Tutuola and *People of the City* by Ekwensi out of this discourse because they fall within the confines of pre-independence Nigerian novels.

The second justification for looking at the Nigerian novel is systematic: the publication and distribution of novels in African countries is largely concentrated within the borders of a single country. Rarely does fiction from one African country find its way into another, except by way of London or Paris publication. While one might expect Nigeria and Ghana, for example, to have close literary ties, multiple contacts among authors, common literary media, and so on but, in fact they do not. If this is the case for English-language publications and writers, it is especially true where there are linguistic differences. Nigeria's closest neighbours Togo, Cameroon, Chad – are all French-speaking, so Nigerian books do not cross the borders except in a few exceptions where few West African novels get translated across the major colonial languages (Linfors, 1967).

The third justification is cohesion: most educated Nigerian writers think of themselves as

Nigerians. In recent times however, some of these authors mostly write to promote their ethnic and cultural identities of the Nigerian people. This attitude is constantly being adjusted to fit into the operative identity informed by the institutions of the Nigerian state. Moreover, this pan-ethnic, cross-regional Nigerian identity is one that most novelists promote. Most Nigerian authors recognize that their works are unlikely to be read in the West, or even in Anglophone Africa, engage in writing hoping that their works will reach almost all the nooks and crannies of Nigeria. For this and other obvious economic considerations, most novelists avoid ethnic or regional parochialism, using techniques such as will allow for a heterogeneous characterization to reflect true Nigerian milieu. They also do this by reflecting injustice diversities in Nigeria by making use of slang expressions from several local languages. More so, they set their novels in some generic African country or space (e.g "Shongai," "Gimba") a scene which mixes features from different Nigerian geographical, geopolitical, cultural belonging. By doing so, they support their claim of writing novels for all Nigerians.

All of these factors combine to define the Nigerian literary experience as complex; therefore, thinking in terms of the "Nigerian novel" becomes the defining perspective of this work. In Achebe's touchstone article, "English and the African Writer", he makes a clear distinction between ethnic literatures and what he envisions as National Nigerian literature. "I hope," he says, "that there always will be men, like the late Chief Fagunwa, who will choose to write in their native tongue and ensure that our ethnic literatures will flourish side by side with the national ones" (*Transition* 18 (1965): 27-30). For Achebe, ethnic and national literatures (literatures in indigenous languages) can co-exist, occupying different ideological niches, respectively. It is, however, undoubtedly the English language that must serve as a unifying,

national language of literature, despite its primarily colonial orientation in Nigeria, a historical fact that Achebe does not hesitate to acknowledge. The reason is that Nigeria like other Anglophone nations in Africa was a British colony. While Achebe here acknowledges the imperial implications of English language use, he cannot ignore its function and status as a Nigerian and largely Pan-Africanlingua franca. Hence, he posited that even though the different indigenous languages are capable of sustaining a literature, they will have to develop as tributaries to feed the one central language enjoying nation-wide currency (Walters, 2007).

Hence, in a 1989 interview with Charles Rowell, Achebe discusses the "special privilege" of English in Nigeria, thus:

> The English language has never been close to Igbo, Hausa, or Yoruba anywhere else in the world. So it has to be different, because these other languages and their environment are not inert. They are active, and they are acting on this language which has invaded their territory. And the result of all this complex series of actions and reactions is the language we use. The language I write in. And, therefore, it comes empowered by its experience of the encounter with me. One advantage it has is this: Although it is thus different, it is not so different that you would have to go to school to learn it in America or in India or Kenya or anywhere English is already spoken. So it definitely has certain advantages which we can only ignore to our own disadvantage. It is a world language in a way that Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo are not. There is no way we can change that. Now that is not to say that we should therefore send these other languages to sleep. That's not what I'm saying. I am saying that we have a very, very complex and dynamic multilingual situation, which we cannot run away from but contain and control (Rowell, 1989:176-177).

Implicitly, as it is inherent in the assessment above, Achebe here recognises the function of English language as virile link-language with a unifying effect. It is notable that while Achebe imbues English with the capability of sustaining and nourishing a truly national language of literature, a language of "mutual communication" between African writers and Nigerian readers as well as the reading populace at large, Achebe is also careful not to attribute to English any *inherent* ideological value (Rodrigues, 2007). While he

acknowledges its colonial, imperial nature, Achebe asserts that at this historical moment, English has primarily utilitarian purposes; it is a useful "world language." Achebe, moreover, even goes so far to assert that the African writer should *not* attempt to write English as a native speaker might; it is "neither necessary nor desirable for him to be able to do so" (Rowell, 1989: 176-177). The English language, and not the African writer, should be the one to bend, asserts Achebe, and made to serve the unique needs of the African author—but without sacrificing the language's mutual intelligibility. While English provides many possible modes of artistic expression and is a language medium that Achebe feels capable of holding the "weight of [his] African experience," Rowell (1989: 176-177) corroborates this by asserting that English remains a tool, a relatively apolitical artistic medium, nonetheless.

Nigerian writers and novelists in particular, continue to be optimistic in spite of the various challenges they encounter in writing. At the same time, they continue as the most persistent chroniclers of the contemporary political, economic, and moral problems within the Nigerian space. They nevertheless express ambivalence and disappointment toward their country. This is occasioned by high level of corrupt practices, economic and political instability, social, economic and political violence in spite of the natural endowment of the country. This sarcastic situation is captured by the late Ken Saro-Wiwa put into pidgin poetry thus:

> Dis Nigeria sef
>
> You too bring confusion!
>
> How person no like you still e like you
>
> Dis no be grade one confusion? (Ken Saro-Wiwa, 1995)

Not liking what they see but loving their country, Nigerian authors regard themselves as bearing witness to the confusion in Nigeria – they used the expression "bearing witness"

repeatedly when they talk about the role of the novelist – in order to help bring about the transition to a better future.

In a conference on Commonwealth Literature held in Leeds in September, 1964, just after the publication of one of Achebe's famous article, "English and the African Writer", which first appeared in *Spear: Nigeria's National Magazine*, and *Moderna Sprak* in 1964, before its publication in 1965, the journal *Transition*,J.O. Ekpenyong enthusiastically arguably even more so than Achebe opined that "the introduction of English as the official language is one of the greatest benefits of colonialism in Nigeria" (Walters, 2007: 144); Ekpenyong explicitly cites Achebe's article and argues that to:

> …level-headed people, English does not seem to have a stiff competition with any indigenous language for election into chair of official language, for strictly speaking, it is not a foreign language in Nigeria; by the peculiar circumstance of her birth, Nigeria was born into English as the mother tongue (Walters, 2007:149).

Hence the relationship between literature and language, in this case, the English language and the Nigerian experience as represented by Chinua Achebe becomes more complicated as it is on one hand a foreign language and the other a "mother tongue". It is such interplay of meaning and interpretation that this work seeks to explore. Thus, one could argue that it was Chinua Achebe who originated and finally defined what Nnolim (2011) called, the "Nigerian tradition" in the novel-tradition which takes its roots from the literature, folkways and is given ballast by vigorous and robust recourse to the folk culture. By that tradition he meant the literary conventions and habits of expression deployed by Achebe in the practice of his art which subsumes other narrative techniques employed by other Nigerian writers to highlight the Nigerian worldview in literature.

2.1.2 Early Nigerian Novel

Clearly, Nigerian literature from its oral roots: myth, legend, folklore, folktales among

others, including its written poetry, dramatic and novel genres, has been an encapsulation of the totality of experiences of the people that have existed within the geopolitical enclave that was called Nigeria from 1914. Before the advent of science and technology being direct results of the colonial background of the country which eventually gave birth to the establishment of printing houses and literature in Nigeria and across sub-Saharan Africa had relied mainly on the oral traditions, norms and values of their respective environments. The advent of printing therefore marks the birth of literature. The only written works in circulation in pre-colonial Nigeria or before the arrival of colonial settlers and missionaries were religious texts such as the Qur'an and Hadith which were written in Arabic Language. Manuscripts in the local languages were both rare and mainly handwritten or hand-printed. It was not until the 1890s, with the arrival of Western printing technology and the consolidation of European settlements in the coastal parts of East and West Africa, that written literature established itself. Most of the fictions produced then were in the European languages, the principal of these being English, French, and Portuguese (African Literature, Encarta, 2007). This view is corroborated by G.G. Darah (2008:176-177) thus:

> ...Islamic religious influence in the north began as far back as the eleventh century...the jihad was both a religious tendency which gave impetus to the popularization of literature as both a medium of religious instruction as well as a weapon for criticizing the power that be...Just as literature in the north was brought about through the agency of Islam, so was literacy in the south the product of Christian "fishers of men".

The earliest West African written poetry was mainly religious, and the best of it reflected a familiarity with pre-Islamic poetry as well as North African religious writings. Other literary output that shaped and gave directions to writings in West Africa and Africa in general include among others:

(a) The epic of Sundiata (15th–16thCentury)

(b) The Slave narratives of Olaudah Equiano and

(c) Joseph J. Walter's Guyana Pau.

With the establishment of regular contact between European settlers or traders and the indigenous peoples, writing began to emerge in European Languages. The literature of this period consists mainly of the writings of slaves and, for the first time, its first place of publication was outside Africa. Because of its links to the slave trade, literature of this period is also largely African in nature. One of the best-known authors of this era is Olaudah Equiano who published his autobiography in Britain in 1789 under the pseudonym of Gustavus Vassa.

Amos Tutuola's novel, *The Palm-wine Drinkard* (1952) caused a stir in English language fiction, setting in motion the entire tradition of modern Nigerian novel-writing. He was the first African writer to take a locally inflected version of a "metropolitan" language and use this as a literary medium. His work was 'new' in terms of diction but drew extensively on Yoruba myth, story structure, and cosmology and also sets the pace for the growth and development of the Nigerian novel.

However, it is said that Yoruba Literature may have pre-dated the 19th Century because of Northern Yoruba's contact with the Islamic religion. This presumption is based on the fact that Islam is associated with learning. However, after the fall of Oyo Empire in early nineteenth century, Ilorin became a centre of learning because of its close contact with Islam. Yoruba Imams and teachers back then must have written literary works, but there are little or no evidence to authenticate this fact. Again if such works existed, they may have been written in Arabic. Later in the 19th century, with the return of liberated slaves and the establishment of Christian mission schools in Yoruba land, efforts were made by scholars to

write both in English and Yoruba languages. However, Samuel Ajayi Crowther's *A Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language* (1843) laid a solid foundation for the written literature in Yoruba language. Another major influence on the development of Yoruba literature was the cultural nationalism in Western parts of Nigeria, that started at about 1880s. The Yoruba elite tried to rekindle their customs and institutions and this gave rise to an agitation for the teaching of Yoruba history, in schools.

Consequently, some of the educated ones with creative abilities started writing Yoruba literature which they hoped would help to document their cultural and social norms so that their traditional forms of folklore, legends, histories, and parables will not get into oblivion or extinction. Moreover, the schools needed these texts in their curricula. The pioneer Yoruba literary scholar is E. M. Lijadu. He was a school master and catechist for the Anglican mission in Ondo. His works were mainly in oral literature and religion. They include *Ifa: Imole Re Ti Ise Ipile Isin Ni Ile Yoruba* (1887*); Orunmila* (1908) and a book on poetry *Kekere Iwe Orin Aribiloso* (1886). A romantic fiction in pamphlet form *Dolapo Asewo Omo Asewo* was written by an anonymous writer in 1890. The work presented a story in a plot that followed a logical sequence though it contained some obscenities. *Alo Meje,* a pamphlet, a collection of short stories was published in 1893. Many imaginary stories were also published in Newspapers. What could be regarded as the first novel in Yoruba is *Itan Emi Segilola* by I. B. Thomas which was published in 1930. It was serialized earlier in 1929 in a newspaper, Akede Eko. This was followed seven years later by Daniel Fagunwa's *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole*(not just a fairy tale after all). Fagunwa has remained an outstanding Yoruba novelist. He uses allegory that is based on Yoruba folktale tradition in which "every event can be used to teach a moral" (Isola: 79). His novel is presented in an

episodic plot that usually revolves around the adventures of a brave hunter on a dangerous journey. It contains some popular Yoruba tales that are loosely strung together. However, he invents some of the stories and borrows some from Christian religious literature and other literary sources. The hero encounters some difficulties but in the end, he surmounts the obstacles and accomplishes his task triumphantly. His successful attempt inspired other writers like Ogundele who published *Ejigbede Lona Isalu Orun and Ibu Olokun* (1956); Omoyajowo who wrote *Itan Odeniya – Omo Odeleru* (1957); Fatanmi's *Korimale Ninu Igbo Adimula* and others wrote like what could be regarded as fantasy like Fagunwa though they were not as successful as him.

Meanwhile, the rise of Hausa fiction was facilitated by the establishment of elementary and provincial schools in the northern parts of Nigeria between 1909 and 1928 and the interest of the government in the development of books especially literature. The first sets of literature were translations from Arabic to Hausa by the translation Bureau set up by the government. The bureau was later renamed Literature Bureau to accommodate works by indigenous authors. This bureau organized fiction-writing competitions in Hausa encouraged indigenous author to write literary works. Many writers entered for the competition but only five outstanding entries were selected and published. They were *Ruwan Bagaja* by M. Abubaka Iman, *Shaihu Umar* by M. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, *Gandoki* by Bello Kagara, *Idon Matambayi* by M. Mohammadu Gwarza, and *Jiki Magayi* by M. Tafida. These were the first Hausa novels which are still published as classical Hausa literature" *(*Yahaya 15*).* These authors made use of the oral traditions in form of story-telling especially in their use of the narrator. However, some of these novelists made use of historical facts, while some of them historical facts with fantasy. A good example is Shaihu Umar who starts his novels with a

story-telling session in which the narrator recalls past historical events, based on reality of life of the people to his audience. According to Yaro Yahaya, Gandoki also starts with the narration of past events concerning the wars of British occupation of Hausa land. From real life situations, he plunges into the world of fantasy as *Gandoki,* the hero engages in "skirmishes with djinns and other supernatural beings." *Ruwan Bagaja* is pure fiction that depicts a hero, Iman who sets out in search of healing water. He succeeds in getting the healing after overcoming all the obstacles, and forces in the wonderland of djinns in the East. In appreciation of the literary quality of Abubakar Imam's work, the government employed him to work with the literature Bureau where he produced his *Magana Jarce* in three volumes. In this work, he adopted the style of the Arabian Nights but the sources remained the Hausa folktales. He also fused the tales with the English Grimm's *Household Tales* and the Arabic *Khalila wa Dimna*. He fused them with "drastic touches of originality, by giving the narration of the stories a unifying theme through key recurring figures *(Yahaya 16).* Thus Abubakar Iman became the first prolific Hausa novelist.

The origin of Igbo literature could be linked with the beginnings of formal studies of Igbo language in the mid 19th century as a result of the efforts of the missionaries to develop the indigenous language. The development of Igbo orthography propelled some Igbo men to write in their language. According to Ernest Emenyonu, Rev. J. F. Schon's publication of *A Grammar of the Ibo Language* in 1840 aided the development of Igbo literature. Rev. Ajayi Crowther and other missionaries also helped in to collate the unwritten Igbo materials and to put them in the written form. Other publications followed but the *Isoama-Ibo Primer* published by William Baikie was a turning point for literature in Igbo. This work contains a translation of the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, Igbo alphabets, words, phrases,

sentence patterns, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. It also contains some extracts, which according to Emenyonu, "became the first literary creative in Igbo written literature". The book was revised and enlarged in 1927 to include more essays on religious and secular topics and a long narrative riddle on about the sun and a folktale. After the revision, the title was changed to *Azundu* and it remained the major work in literature in Igbo language for nearly a century. This and other such publications eventually served not only the primary religious purpose of evangelism but also as a sound foundation for the written indigenous literature in which folktales and other genres of oral tradition were recorded and woven into poetry, short stories and novels in Igbo language. In addition to textbooks in Igbo, literary texts were also written. The development of this literature like the development of the Nigerian literature, is based on oral narratives and the portrayal of life, traditional values, proverbs and other aspects the Igbo culture.

Pita Nwana's *Omenuko* was the first full-length literary work in Igbo. Omenuko contained a lot of "wit, volatile humour and insistent moral overtones" (Emenyonu). The sayings of Omenuko the major character is likened to John Ploughman's talks as *Omenuko* remained the dominant literary piece in Igbo language for about three decades. F. C. Ogbalu contributed immensely to the development of Igbo literature. Apart from his own writings and efforts to promote the language, his varsity Press, Onitsha helped in the publication of Igbo literature and other literary works. This publishing house helped to encourage and revitalize the Igbo literature. Subsequently, Leopold Bell-Gram's *Ijeodumodu Jere* and D. N. Achara's *Ala Bingo* were published in 1963. D. N. Achara also published *Elelia Na ihe Omere* in 1964. These novelists made significant use of the repertoire of Igbo oral heritage in form of proverbs, riddles, and other unique nuances of the language.

Literature also abounds in other major Nigerian languages. For instance, there are other literary artists such as E.E. Nkanga who wrote in the Efik language but E.N. Amaku, nicknamed "the man with inky fingers" by his friends and contemporaries, towers above the rest. The Efik fiction evolved from the oral literature of story telling. In *Edikot Mbuke* which is regarded as his "greatest prose work" *(Babalola: 50)* he uses animal characters like Ekpe (Leopard) who is famous for his agility and the Ikut (Tortoise) who is notorious for his craftiness to tell interesting stories that intermingle fantasy with reality. These novels in the indigenous languages help to improve the vocabularies of, popularize and perpetuate such languages. They also contribute to the linguistic development of the languages.

Given the above, one could posit that literature in local languages occupies a very important position in the developmentof literaturein Nigerian, but literature in any foreign language had its roots in the oral heritage of the writers' traditional background. In the words of Ernest Emenyonu, "every Nigerian who tells or writes a story today in whatever language, is reflecting consciously or unconsciously something of his past, something of his people's or community's heritage.

2.1.3 Contemporary Nigerian Novel

In the beginning was oral literature, which was the root of African literature. Similarly, Nigerian literature, in particular, began with the oral tradition, pioneered by the unsung heroes of her literary past, like royal bards, warriors, story tellers, priests and many others. Literary elements like folklore and proverbs were originated by these unknown literary soldiers. According to Bade Ajuwon (1985) in his article, 'Oral and Written Literature in Nigeria', in *Nigerian History and Culture,* pre-literate Nigeria once enjoyed a verbal art civilization which, at its high point, was warmly patronized by traditional rulers and the

general public (Vansina, J. M., 1985). “At a period when writing was unknown, the oral medium served the people as a bank for the preservation of their ancient experiences and beliefs. Much of the evidence that related to the past of Nigeria therefore, could be found in oral traditions.” He cited the instances of Yoruba community where “as a means of relaxation, farmers gather their children and sit under the moon for tale-telling… that instruct the young and teach them to respect the dictates of their custom”. This was the practice across the cultural groupings that form Nigeria today. A literary work must, therefore, derive from these basic traditional elements to be adjudged as African literature. Nigeria, therefore, owes her present giant strides in the international literary scene to her rich oral tradition (cited in Okpewho, I., 1992).

Literary scholars are unanimous on the view that Yoruba literature attained its maturity in the first three decades of the twentieth century. According to Isola, Yoruba became a written language in 1842. Poetry written in Yoruba has a far longer origin than Yoruba literature in the other genres. The earliest poetry, written in the form of religious hymns, was published in a collection by Henry Townsend in 1848. “Moses Lijadu published *Kekere Iwe Orin Aribiloso* in 1886. He followed this with the publication of *Awon Arofo Orin ti Sobo Arobiodu ati ti Oyesile Keribo* both performed in the ‘arungbe’ poetic form of the Oro Cult of the Egba,” wrote Isola. In terms of drama, the Yoruba have a very vibrant theatre and drama tradition that dates back to the pre-colonial ‘Alarinjo Agbegijo’ performers and other cultic/ritualistic theatres, according to Adedeji. It is no wonder that the best of plays, including English plays today are produced mainly from the cultural background. Novel writing in Yoruba also has a pride of place in the Nigerian indigenous literature. Isaac B. Thomas’ *Itan Emi Segilola Eleyinjuege, Elegberun Oko Laiye*, the first novel in Yoruba, was

published as far back as 1930. On this novel, Isola wrote, "Thomas' socially relevant, realistic novel, first serialized in 1929 in *Akede Omo*, was not the first attempt at novelistic writing in Yoruba. But his novel was the first that exhibited features of the modern novel." Thomas' efforts set the pace for other literary works especially by Daniel Olorunfemi Fagunwa, who is said to be the best known Yoruba novelist. His *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale* (1938), according to Isola, is arguably the most popular literary work in Yoruba. The novel has been translated into English by Wole Soyinka as *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (1968). Fagunwa's novels, centred mainly around a lone heroic figure, did not only inaugurate the magical-realist tradition in Yoruba novelistic writing, but ultimately serve as inspiration to a generation of Yoruba novelists including Ogundele's *Ejigbede Lona Isalu Orun* (1956), Delano's *Aiye D'aiye Oyinbo* (1955), Afolabi Olabimtan's *Kekere Ekun* and Faleti's *Omo Olokun Esin*.

There is no doubt about the fact that Nigerian literature in English Language is one which attracts greater attention and has the greater influence nationally and internationally today. This is because, according to Ogunba (1971) the literature has been produced by the new westernized elite who often have greater literary competence in English than in their indigenous languages. Ogunba further observed that "although some highly literate Nigerians (for example Professor Akin Isola) have chosen to write in their indigenous languages rather than English, the number of writers who have made such a choice is very small indeed" (cited in Sone, E. M., 2018). It could therefore be said that literature in the English language has taken firm roots in Nigeria. However, even before the written literature began to take some roots on the Nigerian soil, a Nigerian, Olaudah Equiano, had made a literary breakthrough in far away Europe with his autobiography titled *The Interesting Narrative of*

Olaudah Equiano or *Gustava, the African* published in 1789. The book was the first to give the West the true picture of Africa and the evils of slavery.

The real indigenous Nigerian literature in English was pioneered by the legendary Amos Tutuola in the 1950s. His work, *The Palmwine Drinkard*, is famed to be the first Nigerian novel, having been published in 1952. This novel is seen as a link in the transition of Nigerian literature from vernacular to English language and to the western literary tradition. It preceded Cyprian Ekwensi's *People of the City* which is regarded as his first novel though he started earlier. In the story, Tutuola crafted a unique narrative from traditional elements of Yoruba mythology drawing extensively from the story telling, myth, legend and other forms of Yoruba and Oral traditions. His seeming shortcoming in proficiency in the English language somehow became a plus when critics began to the see the uniqueness of the manner in which he captured the way English is spoken by the ordinary people in his community. In spite of this apparent flaw, the novel was a huge success. It brought him to the limelight and instantly an international fame. He followed it with the publication of other novels like *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1952), *Simbi and the Satyr of the Dark Jungle* (1955), *The Brave African Huntress* (1958), *Feather Woman of the Jungle* (1962), *Ajaiyi and His Inherited Poverty* (1968) and *The Witch Herbalist of the Remote Town* (1981). He died in 1997.

Interestingly, Cyprain Ekwensi's *People of the City* (1954) is regarded as the first West African novel in English. His first creative work was a collection of short stories *Ikolo the Wrestler and other Ibo Tales* published in 1947 and *The Leopard Claw* also in 1947. In 1948, he published his first pamphlet in the Onitsha Market Literature tradition. His other works include *The Passport of Mallam Ilia* (1960), *Jagua Nana* (1961), *Burning Grass* (1962) and many others. He has about twenty-six novels and novella and could be said to be then the

most prolific novelist in Nigeria. Interestingly, Cyprian Ekwensi studied forestry and pharmacy. He later studied broadcasting. He worked and retired with the media where he rose to the rank of the Federal Director of Information in 1961. This does not mean that he did not practice his original profession but he seemed to have been involved in a lot of professions and excelled in all. He was a teacher, a journalist, a pharmacist, a diplomat, a businessman, a company director, a public relations consultant and a writer. A writer summarized his personality thus:

> There are two Cyprian Ekwensis. Cyprian Ekwensi, the Nigerian novelist, broadcaster, short story writer, the man who lives in the world of ink and Literature – and Cyprian Ekwensi, the pharmacist, the man of the white coat, dispensing medicine, sterilizing injections and controlling drugs (Emenyonu, 1991:22).

His most controversial novel was *Jagua Nana* which has been the only novel that was debated upon by Nigerians in the house of parliament (Emenyonu, 1991). This was when a foreign company's proposal to adapt the novel for the celluloid was stopped. The novel uses the heroine, Jagua Nana, a prostitute to satirize the Nigerian Society especially politics. Jagua was an Ibo lady who abandoned her husband in Enugu, went to Lagos and became a superlative prostitute. Through her profession, she got involved with all sorts of men from the top civil servants/politicians to rouges and armed robbers. In her encounter with these men, Ekwensi explores the theme of corruption in the Nigerian Economic and Socio-political system. The political story in the novel is that of "exploitation of the people, fraudulent abuse of power, reckless embezzlement of public money and ultimate forfeiture of public trust" (Emenyonu, 1991:24).

The issues raised in the novel though published more than four decades ago, are still relevant to our contemporary experiences - rigging of election, assassination of political opponents, misuse of public funds, the existence of the suffering people who are in the majority and

many other social vices are still burning issues in contemporary Nigeria. Jagua Nana's only regret is that she could not bear a child of her own. However, she ended as a very wealthy woman because one of her customers, a top politician left a lot of money that belongs to his party with her. When he died, nobody could claim the money. It became Jagua Nana's money. Cyprian Ekwensi died in 2000.

Meanwhile, before Amos Tutuola and Cyprian Ekwensi ventured into the art of writing, British imperialists who worked in Nigeria and thought they knew much about the colony produced literary works based on the local setting. One of such writers was Arthur Joyce Lunel Carey (1888 – 1957), who served as an administrator and soldier in Nigeria from 1910 to 1920. His works, particularly the novel, *Mister Johnson* (1939), were about his experiences in the British civil service and his views on the African culture. The novel, described as comic and tragic, centers on Johnson, a young Nigerian who falls foul of the British colonial regime. Johnson is assigned as a clerk at an English district office in Fada. Because he is from a different district he is regarded as a foreigner by the natives of the area. Even though he works his way into the local society, marrying there, he never really fit in. Worse still, he has difficulties in adjusting to the regulations and mechanism of the district office and his official duties. Cary had on several occasions been quoted as saying that *Mister Johnson* was his favourite of all his books. But critics have questioned the views expressed in the book.

Indeed, Chinua Achebe was in the forefront of criticizing the views expressed in the novel, *Mister Johnson*. He pointed out that the depiction of Johnson as representative of Africans is flawed from the very outset, in the sense that such a character, a figure without a family to support him, is very difficult to imagine in the context of Nigerian society. Thus, as Achebe

himself admitted, the novel was the motivating factor for his novel, *Things Fall Apart*, as he sought to correct the wrong impression portrayed in *Mister Johnson*. He said in a collection of radio interviews published by Heinemann in 1972: "I know around 1951, 1952, I was quite certain that I was going to try my hand at writing, and one of the things that set me thinking was Joyce Cary's novel, set in Nigeria, *Mister Johnson*, which was praised so much, and it was clear to me that it was a most superficial picture of - not only of the country - but even of the Nigerian character, and so I thought if this was famous, then perhaps someone ought to look at this from the inside." So, he set out to challenge the colonialist's depiction of the African society in *Things Fall Apart* and his other novels.

The emergence of Chinua Achebe and his contemporaries in the 1940s/60s marked a milestone in the Nigerian literary history. Generally referred to as the first generation writers, this crop of writers gave African literature focus and direction. Other outstanding writers of this era were Wole Soyinka, Gabriel Okara, T.M. Aluko, Christopher Okigbo, John Pepper Clark and Cyprian Ekwensi. They addressed basic African problems like colonialism, neo-colonialism and propagated African values to the outside world. They sought to correct the misrepresentation of Nigerians and Africans in literary works like Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* and *African Witch*, Rider Haggard's *She, King Solomon's Mines* and *Allan Quartermain*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. For instance, as against the African society of *Mister Johnson,* portrayed as uncivilized, simple and corrupt, the Igbo society of *Things Fall Apart* is shown as having grown from a long tradition of careful decision-making and a well arranged system of religious, social and political beliefs.

Speaking on the political values of this literary generation, M.J.C. Echeruo, observed that "it was in Achebe and his generation that the political agitation (and) the philosophical

speculations of 1940s bore their first fruit, long before the actual independence in 1960."Achebe(1988) himself confirmed this when he said, "I had to tell Europe that… Africa had a history, a religion, a civilization… We reconstructed this history and civilization and displayed it to challenge the stereotype and cliché." Explaining the combative posture adopted by the writers of this era even after the departure of colonialists, Achebe said, "Europe concede independence to us and we promptly began to misuse it… So we got mad at them and came out brandishing novels of disenchantment." At this point, the writers became more concerned with the issues of governance and corruption among the indigenous politicians that took over from the colonial masters. This period witnessed the publication of critical works like *No Longer at Ease* and *A Man of the People* by Chinua Achebe, *The Interpreters, Kongi's Harvest, Madmen and Specialists, A Dance of the Forest* and *Season of Anomy* by Wole Soyinka, *Casualties, Song of a Goat* and *The Raft* by J.P. Clark-Bekederemo, and *Path of Thunder* by Christopher Okigbo.

The issue that became a major concern to the Nigerian writer in the 60s and 70s, apart from the multiplying societal ills, was the Nigerian Civil War which took place between 1967 and 1970. The war, which is said to have claimed the lives of over 100,000 soldiers, affected the Nigerian literary scene in many ways. It claimed the life of one of the country's most celebrated poets, Christopher Okigbo, and caused untold hardship to other writers like Wole Soyinka, who were detained for crying out against the atrocities perpetrated in the war. The bright side of the ugly incident, however, is that the war provided inspiration for many writers, particularly those directly involved. These writers poured out their frustration, anger and memories in considerable quantities and qualities. For instance, Elechi Amadi wrote a powerful novel, *Sunset in Biafra* (1973), depicting his war-time experience. Other

testimonies to the madness of the era were Soyinka's *The Man Died* (1972), Chukuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* (1976), Ken Saro Wiwa's *Sozaboy* (1985), Flora Nwapa's *Never Again* (1976) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*(2006).

Rather than abating, the evils against which the first generation writers preached, it multiplied by the day and generated poverty and health issues within the country. So the critical tone and themes of the literature of the first generation writers were sustained and amplified by writers of the subsequent generations who emerged from the mid 1970s. As Dr. Ahmed Yerima, the General Manager of National Arts Theatre, Iganmu-Lagos, rightly observed, Nigerian literature manifests the struggles of a people whose country is undergoing the painful process of transformation from colonial through neo-colonial to wholly self-determining nation (Onwuka, E. C., 2010). So, the second generation writers reacted to the bloody civil war, immediately followed by an ill-managed oil boom that, in turn, created social and political dislocations that the nation is yet to overcome. The second generation writers, according to Aiyejina (1988 cited in Fasan, R. O., 2010), "wrote socially-relevant, highly critical (some of them with a Marxist-proletarian bent) literature in highly accessible, people-oriented language". Prominent among such writers are Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan (playwrights); Niyi Osundare, Odia Ofeimun, Tanure Ojaide (poets) and Festus Iyayi, Eddie Iroh, Zaynab Alkali, Labo Yari and Abubakar Gimba (novelists). A typical example of the protest works of this era is Iyayi's novel, *Violence* (1979), which portrays violence not only as a physical phenomenon, but as a circumstance in which a man is denied the opportunity of being the real man he is supposed to be. Femi Osofisan's *Kolera Kolel* (1975), Niyi Osundare's *Songs of the Marketplace* (1983), Labo Yari's *Climate of Corruption* (1978), Abubakar Gimba's *Innocent Victims* (1988) and Chris Abani's *Masters of the Board* (1985).

Recently, critical discourse on Nigerian fiction employs historicizing techniques that categorize texts according to generations, each of which is presumed to share formal and political qualities and represent a distinct stage in national literary development. The question of categorizing authors into generations has remained contentious among critics, however, it is popularly believed that the mid 1990s to the present is the era (of the third generation writers) who grew and started writing in the period of the structural and economic disjunctions that characterized Nigerian military rule. According to Onwumere, "the pressures exerted by the seemingly unending crises in various sectors of the economy: labour and electoral crises, mass unemployment, decayed infrastructures and constant closure of schools and lecturers' strikes; police and military brutality - all of these constitute the themes of the writings of 3rd generation of writers" (cited in Sumaila Isah Umaisha, 2010). Onwumere further explained that unlike the works of the earlier generations, there is a lot of experimentation, both thematic and stylistic, in much of the present writings.

Prominent writers of this generation are Akin Adesokan (*Roots in the Sky*, 2004*)*, Maik Nwosu (*Invisible Chapters*, 2001), Helon Habila (*Waiting for An Angel*, 2000) and *Measuring Time*, 2007), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (*Purple Hibiscus*, 2003and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, 2006), Sefi Attah (*Everything Good Will Come*, 2005and *Swallow*, 2008), Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo (*House of Symbols*, 2001), Biyi-Bandele (*The Sympathetic Undertaker and Other Dreams*, 1991, *The Man Who Came in from the Back of Beyond*, 1991, *Burma Boy*, 2007). Others are Ahmed Yerima's plays (*Hard Ground, Yemoja*,etc), Ben Tomoloju's plays (*Jankariwo* and *Askari*), Osonye Tess Onwueme's play (*The Reign of Wazobia*), Ben Okri (*The Famished Road, Starbook*, etc), Emman Usman Shehu's poetry (*Questions for Big Brother*), Sumaila Umaisha's collection of short stories (*Hoodlums*),

Ahmed Maiwada's poetry (*Saint of a Woman*, 2004, *Fossil*, 2008 and his novel *Mudoski* etc), Mu'azu Maiwada (*State of the Anus*), Baba Muhammad Dzukogi's poetry (*These Last Tears*, 1997) Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's (*I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, 2009) and Teju Cole's (*Open City*, 2011) and others, and they all speak with the same angry voice in their literary works.

All along, Nigerian women were not left out of the literary scene. They made tremendous contributions to the country's literary development in all the literary genres. It all began with Flora Nwapa, the first published Nigerian female novelist and the first woman in Africa to have her work published in London. Her first novel, *Efuru* (1966), redefines the place of the woman in the scheme of things. And that set the tone not only for her subsequent works but for those of other female writers like Mabel Segun, Phebean Ogundipe etc. In the 1970s, other female writers like Zulu Sofola, Catherine Acholonu, Adaora Lily Ulasi, Buchi Emecheta and Zaynab Alkali came up. Notably, Zaynab Alkali is the first female writer in English to emerge from the North. She made her debut in 1984 with her novel, *The Stillborn*. This was followed by *The Virtuous Woman* (1985), *Cobwebs and Other Stories* (short stories, 1977), *The Descendants*, (2005) and *The Initiates* (2007). The new generation female writers have arguably gained more visibility than the old generation, especially writers like Chimamanda Ngozi-Adichie who won the Orange Prize for her *Half of a Yellow Sun* in 2007. However, both the old and the new generation female writers are so dynamic that they explore not just the feminist aspects, they also engage in issues of general concern such as politics, war and economy.

The beginning of written Nigeria children's literature, according to Virginia W. Dike of the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, coincided

with the attainment of independence in 1960. She observed that though a few titles, like Cyprian Ekwensi's *Drummer Boy* and *The Passport of Mallam Ilia*, were written some years earlier, they were not published until 1960. Dike further observed that the development of children's literature was motivated by the felt need for a literature that would more adequately reflect indigenous views and realities. "It was also stimulated by the rapid expansion of education and the resulting need and market for supplementary reading materials." The early titles, which concentrated on supplementary readers for the pre-adolescent age group in senior primary and junior secondary schools, were produced by the African Readers Library of the African Universities Press which, according to Dike, came out with 34 titles between 1962 and 1988. Other series that came up later were the Nelson Rapid Readers (1965) Longman's Palm Library for Younger Readers (1968), Oxford Universities Press' Adventures in Africa (1968) and Evans Africa Library (1976). New indigenous publishing houses like Onibonoje also produced titles for children.

Development in children's literature was boosted particularly in the 1970s and 1980s when MacMillan's Winners Series brought out its first title in 1978, followed by others, such as the University Press Limited's Rainbow Series. These early works, according to Dike, were mainly based on adventure stories in which the hero or heroes, especially boys, fell into danger and helped bring criminals to book. Examples are Achebe's *Chike and the River* and Ekwensi's *Juju Rock.* Some had school stories as their subject matter, with the young hero gaining admission into school (e.g *Eze Goes to School* by Nzekwu and Crowder) and boarding school children playing their usual pranks (e.g *Tales out of School* by Nwankwo). It should be noted that women writers like Christee Ajayi, Remi Adediji, Teresa Meniro and Mabel Segun played a prominent role in the promotion of children's literature in Nigeria.

Each of them produced over ten (10) books in this genre. It was indeed an exciting time for children's literature as it was for adult literature. According to Fayose, who compiled a bibliography of children's books published in Nigeria since 1960 for the Nigerian Book Development Council, by 1986 there were over three hundred titles, many of which were prose fiction. Unfortunately, the economy, which had been relatively good since the oil boom of the 1970s, declined from the mid-1980s, affecting the production of the genre in the same manner it affected adult literature. Presently, only few publishing houses in Nigeria like the Lantern Books division of Literamed, publish series of fiction for children and youth. Today, such books are mostly published in Britain. They include Heinemann's Junior African Writers Series (JAWS) and Heartbeat Series, which began in the 1990s. Though the titles are by Africans, including Nigerians, and set in Africa, they are scarcely available to the African and Nigerian youths for which they are intended.

Between the late 1970s and early 1980s, Nigerian young writers were given the opportunity to have their works published courtesy Macmillan Publishing Company. Through the company's young writers' series known as Pacesetters, hundreds of youths across Africa were published, with Nigeria forming the largest percentage. The series dealt mostly with contemporary issues that were of interest to young adults. Among the lucky young writers to be published were Mohammed Sule, author of *The Undesirable Element* (1977) and *The Deliquent* (1979), Helen Obviagele who wrote *Evbu My Love* (1980) and Dickson Ighrini who authored *Death is a Woman* (1981) and *Bloodbath at Lobster Close* (1980). Other works in the series include Kalu Okpi's *Coup!*Sunday Adebomi's *Symphony of Destruction*, Ibe Oparandu's *The Wages of Sin*, Sam Adewoye's *The Betrayer* and Victor Ulojiofor's *Sweet Revenge*. By the early 1990s, there were about 125 Pacesetters titles. And the books were

widely available, even in the market bookstalls, which usually sold only textbooks. However, with the economic decline which began around the 80s, Macmillan separated from Macmillan Nigeria, taking with it the Pacesetters copyright. Consequently, the series vanished, and only occasional pirated versions of a few titles could be seen in Nigeria. But, those who were fortunate to have been published have made their marks and some have even gone further to produce more serious works. Among such writers are Mohammed Tukur Garba, author of *The Black Temple* (1981) and Muhammed Sule who published *Eve of Eternity* and *The Devil's Seat* respectively in the 90s.

The "first generation" writers were interested in challenging the images and stereotypes of Nigerians (and Africans) that were perpetuated during colonial rule, "second generation" writers wrote highly critical literature and seemed to be more concerned with contemporary Nigeria. They also seemed to have been influenced by the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). In fact, the civil war generally affected Nigeria's literary scene. Meanwhile, it is quite evident that the "third-generation" of Nigerian novelists are profoundly crafted and have continued to record an impressive vertical and horizontal growth in terms of literary outputs with newer names added to the corpus almost at regular intervals. It is also clearly evident that the issues thematised in third-generation Nigerian novels are germane to the enabling twenty-first century society. Just like the Achebe's generation of writers who are representatives of their ages through the cultural cum socio-historical leanings of their works, the third generation writers are radiating element of intertextuality which qualify them, as "Achebe's grandchildren". Actually, one notice deliberate attempts by the writers to associate aesthetically with the Achebe tradition. For instance, *Purple Hibiscus* opens with "Things Began to fall apart …" (Adichie) while there is a similar reference in *Waiting for an Angel*:

"Things started falling apart…" (147). These examples show that third generation Nigerian writers, even though not strictly confined to the same experiences and passions, are similar in thematic concerns and principles. In clear terms, there are evidences of an ideological continuity, that runs through the corpus of African literature. This link, simply put, is an abiding commitment to socio-historical issues which as Mutisso (1974) predicted amounts to the fact that "politics in literature is a healthy phenomenon because good literatures in the present Africa aim to, extrapolate the major social and political concepts that will be used for the socialization of present and future generations" (244). Thus, by inference, third-generation Nigerian novelists effectively thematize the daunting realities prevalent in the enabling milieu.

Most significantly, in spite of all the numerous challenges bedeviling the Nigerian literary scene, it could be said that Nigerian literature has come a long way, considering the teeming number of writers that have emerged and the giant achievements of writers like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. Achebe's legendary *Things Fall Apart* has been translated into about 50 languages globally. Soyinka, on the other hand has done Nigeria and Africa generally proud by winning the Nobel Prize in 1986. Nigerian writers of the new generation have equally pushed Nigerian literature to the pinnacle by winning some of the most prestigious literary prizes. Ben Okri won the Booker Prize for his *The Famished Road* in 1991, Helon Habila in 2001 (for his prison-diary story), Segun Afolabi in 2005 and E.C. Osondu in 2009, won the Caine Prize for their "Love Poems", *Monday Morning* and *Waiting* respectively. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has, like Habila, won the Commonwealth Prize for Literature. She has as well won the Orange Prize with her novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Beyond setting international literary standards, Nigerian writers have also succeeded more

than any group in the country in exporting our culture and tradition to other parts of the world. This fact was eloquently stressed by the renowned literary critic, Professor Charles E. Nnolim. According to him, "Nigeria today stands tall before the international community because of the collective endeavours of her writers… While our politics and the shenanigans of our business deals often sell the country's private shames in the international scandal market, it is through the collective endeavours of Nigerian writers that Nigeria stands redeemed and enhanced in the eyes of the world." Indeed, it would not be out of place to affirm that Nigerian literature is indeed at its golden age.

2.2 About the Author: Chinua Achebe

Chinua Achebe is the author, co-author, or editor of some seventeen books, among which are six novels. These novels include: *Things Fall Apart* (1958); *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966), *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and *There was a Country (2012)*. He is the editor of several anthologies, short stories, children literature, including the popular essay collections *Morning Yet on Creation Day* and *Hopes and Impediments*, and the collection of poetry *Beware Soul Brother*. In West Africa and Nigeria in particular, Achebe as well as his literary output have played a very important role in the development of literature in English. Significantly, three of his novels, *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God* are the primary texts considered in this research. The publication of Chinua Achebe's first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, in 1958, is now considered to be one of the seminal moments in the history of African literature in the English language. Although there were several important writers in the English language before Achebe, including such major figures as René Maran, Amos Tutuola, Paul Hazoumé, Peter Abrahams, Sol Plaatje, and Cyprian Ekwensi, Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*, has

become the starting point for many discussions of the African novel. According to Alisha R. Walters (2007), Achebe is undoubtedly Nigeria's and Africa's most widely read author and is frequently analyzed using the apparatus of western literary criticism. Interestingly, his first novel, *Things Fall Apart* is certainly the most widely read and known work of African literature both inside and outside the continent and an important reference point for many novels written in the last decade of formal colonialism in Africa and the first decade of independence (www.wikipedia.com). The story which centres on the downfall of an Igbo village and an Igbo man, Okonkwo, at the inception of nineteenth century colonialism, is, moreover, often compared to fundamental, archetypical narratives of struggle and tragedy, such as the biblical story of Job (Priebe, 1998).It deals with the conflict of Western and African traditions as they influence the life of a community.

Achebe's other novels, *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1967), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), spanning a significant period of postcolonial Africa, have equally been influential in mapping out the nature of African culture and the institutions of literary interpretation. The relationship between his works and the gamut of other African prose fiction is underscored by the centrality of his works in defining not just Nigerian prose fiction but also the canonization of African literature. And because these works occupy such a crucial place in the teaching of African literature, there is a sense in which Achebe has become the nexus for the history and criticism of this tradition of letters. And while there is no general consensus on why Achebe's novels came to occupy such an important place in the history of African literature, there is no doubt that part of his appeal has been due to the fact that from the moment he started writing in the early 1950s, he has produced novels, where form and content has been driven by the desire to imaginatively

capture key historical moments African since the inception of colonialism to what is now known as post-colonialism.

Basically, Achebe's novels can be divided into two categories: First, there are those works that are concerned with recovering and representing an African pre-colonial culture struggling to retain its integrity against the onslaught of colonialism. *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* belong to this category: they are narrative attempts to imagine what pre-colonial society could have looked like before the European incursion and the factors that were responsible for the failure of Igbo or African cultures in the face of colonialism. These novels are themselves cast in a dual structure, with the first part seeking to present a meticulous portrait of Igbo society before colonialism, and the second part narrating the traumatic process in which this culture loses its autonomy in the face of the colonial encounter. As Ohaegbu (2000) argues, "African literature is constantly under pressure to define itself, as it does not carry out its own identity with it… authenticity and literary identity embody the ability to recreate literary experiences from diverse literary, social and cultural experiences and conditions." Unlike some of his contemporaries, however, Achebe does not seek to recover the logic of a pre-colonial African culture in order to romanticize it, but to counter the colonial mythology that Africans did not have a culture before colonialism. As he noted in an influential essay called "The Role of the Writer in a New Nation" (1964), his works were concerned with what he considers to be a fundamental theme "that African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty" (Achebe, 1964:158) At the same time, however, these narratives are often attempts to explore the fissures of pre-colonial culture itself in order to show why it was vulnerable to European

colonialism. In essence, Achebe's concern revolves around grasping and analyzing the rapturous clash of cultures; the western and the African in order to depict socio-economic and historical forces responsible for the loss of identity and the subjugation of Africa and its peoples.

Although Achebe is considered to be the premier novelist on the discourse of African identity, nationalism and decolonization, his main focus, as he has insisted in many of the interviews he has given throughout his career, has been on sites of cultural ambiguity and contestation. If there is one phrase that sums up Achebe's philosophy of culture or language, it is the Igbo proverb: "Where one thing falls, another stands in its place." The complexity of novels such as *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* depends on Achebe's ability to bring competing cultural systems and their languages on to the same level of representation, dialogue, and contestation. In *Arrow of God,* for example, the central conflict is not merely a racial one between white Europeans and black Africans, or even an epistemological encounter between an Igbo culture and a colonial polity, but also a struggle between idioms and linguistic registers; although, the novel is written in English, as are all of Achebe's works, it contains one of the most strenuous attempts to translate an African language or dialecta idiom to European languages (English Language). Although, we read the words of the Igbo in English, Achebe goes out of his way and uses figures of speech, most especially proverbs and adages, to give readers the sense of the culture and how they might have represented themselves to the colonial masters and also to counter the highly regimented and stereotyped language of the colonial masters. Hence, the relationship between literature and language, in this case, the English language and the Nigerian experience as represented by Chinua Achebe becomes more complicated as it is on one hand a foreign language and the

other a “mother tongue”. It is such interplay of meaning and interpretation that this work seeks to explore using the parameter of post-structuralism.

Ultimately, however, the authority of Achebe’s works has depended on their role as cultural context. This does not mean that they are not imaginative works, or that their formal features are not compelling, or that they are valuable primarily as ethnographic documents; rather, Achebe’s novels have become important features of the African literary landscape because they have come to be read and taught as important sources of knowledge about Igbo. For scholars in numerous disciplines, such as history and anthropology, *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are read as exemplary representations of African traditional cultures at the moment of the colonial encounter. And although *No Longer at Ease* has not had the same cultural effect as these other novels, it is clearly indispensable in the mapping of the transition from colonialism to postcolonialism. For students trying to understand the violent politics of postcolonial Nigeria, especially the period of corruption and military coups in the mid 1960s, there is perhaps no better reference than *A Man of the People*.

The parallel between Achebe’s works, the historical and social referents is so close that, it is difficult not to read his major novels as the major documentfor the African experience. For this reason, Achebe’s novels are notable for the sense of realism; indeed, while a novel like *Anthills of the Savannah* is unusual in its bringing together of techniques drawn from realism, modernism, and what has come to be known as *magicrealism*, rarely does Achebe’s work reflect an interest in formal experimentation for its own sake. The use of a multiplicity of forms in this novel can be connected to the author’s desire to account for a postcolonial crisis that cannot be contained within one feature of literary discourse. It is perhaps because of his commitment to realism that Achebe’s novels have tended to be out of fashion in

institutions of interpretation dominated by theories of structuralism and post-structuralism.

In the foregoing discussion therefore, considering the colonialist notion of inferiority of Africa and its people, the patriarchal treatment of Achebe's works and those that adopt a sociological framework, among others, it is apparent that from whatever angle earlier scholarly works have treated Achebe novels especially the ones under consideration by this research, adequate attention has not been given, using post-structuralism, as this study attemptedsort out the new meanings, oppositions and contrastive perspectives that existed and are evident in Achebe's works. To this extent, by deploying the parameters of post-structuralism, this study seeks to generate less visible tropes and perspectives that do not appear literal, latent and given as far as Achebe's novels are concerned.

2.2.1 Achebe and Critical Responses (What others say about his works)

Chinua Achebe, winner of the 2007 Man Booker International Prize, often credited as the father of African literature, is considered the most influential author of African literature in English of the modern era. His influence as a writer, critic, professor, and statesman is unparalleled; to date, some fifty monographs, edited collections, and special journal issues have been devoted to his work, with scholarly essays and articles numbering well into the hundreds (cited in Quayson, A., 2000). Achebe's works are notable for their shaping of language and creation of new idioms for expressing African experience in English. Politics, history, colonialism, masculinity, the family, gender, the individual in society, and many more are among the many themes that run through his works; creating the African identity is also a very important variable to Achebe's way of writing and he sees it as the most important role as an African writer.This in turn, has attracted critical responses and is still very much open to more critical responses.

Some of the most-read contributions, which examine Achebe both as a writer of fiction and as a critic in his own right, include but not limited to Catherine Lynnette Innes' *Chinua Achebe* (1990). It is a foundational study of Achebe's work, which serves as an exemplar of interdisciplinary and sociopolitical study of the author and his writing, while Simon Gikandi's *Reading Chinua Achebe: Language and Ideology in Fiction* (1991) offers a series of sophisticated readings that engage with postcolonial criticism, politics, and cultural studies. Jago Morrison's *The Fiction of Chinua Achebe* (2007) and Keith M. Booker's *The Chinua Achebe's Encyclopedia* (2003) are essential guides for students new to Achebe and scholars hoping to deepen their engagement with the diversity of his writing and criticism on it. Morrison's *Chinua Achebe*(2014) is particularly important as the most-recent book-length study of Achebe's writing, including discussions of his most recent work, *There Was a Country*. G.D Killam's *The Writings of Chinua Achebe* (1977), Robert M. Wren's *The Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua Achebe* (1980), and David Carroll's *Chinua Achebe: Novelist, Poet, Critic* (1990) remain among the most-cited examples of Achebe scholarship. Though not as theoretically sophisticated as more recent additions to this body of work, they stand as important touchstones in the development of criticism on the author, and they are notable for their chronological purviews and attempts to situate Achebe's writing within the context of Igbo tradition and social formations.

As for Achebe, his main concern revolves around grasping and analysing the rapturous clash of cultures; Western and African cultures, in order to depict the historical and socio-economic forces that are responsible for the loss of the African identity and the subjugation of Africa and her people. Emmanuel Obiechina is an ardent critic of Achebe's works. In *Arrow of God*, for instance, Obiechina states that the tragedy of Ezeulu is occasioned by the

interplay of his divine essence, distracted by his human essence, and his inability to distinct the two. No doubt Obiechina's comments are not exhaustive of Achebe's preoccupation. Plausible as this assessment of Ezeulu may be, Obiechina fails to relate the exercise of power, Ezeulu's intrinsic interest as a major source of his tragedy.

Unavoidably, certain aspects of these novels have also met with disapproval from readers and critics: some have criticised Achebe's portrayal of Africans and Europeans, his description of modern Nigerian attitudes, his choosing of the European form of the novel and writing in English, and increasingly the (male) protagonists' or the implied narrator's alleged attitude towards women has become the target of criticism. Less controversial than Achebe's stance on gender issues are his political views. It has always been accepted that his writings do not only represent an important post-colonial position but also a scathing critique of Nigerian society and politics. However, in a writing career that includes poetry, children's books, short stories and political commentary, Achebe's criticism contributed provocations that not only shaped the development of writing from Africa but also the way we read it, even where it may remain unacknowledged. Undoubtedly, Achebe also accorded religion, culture and domestic economies of everyday Igbo people's lives at a level of intimacy and humanity that rendered their experiences universal, boldly shifting the boundaries of perspective. Thus, in his essay on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, when Achebe spoke of the rewriting a western view of Africa, he concluded by saying: "Although the work of redressing which needs to be done may appear too daunting, I believe it is not one day too soon to begin." Hence, one cannot help but think that, without the audacity of Achebe's belief; that the world was ready to read the African story, by an African. From his own perspective, Nigeria's literary landscape would have been condemned to a bleak

monochrome, which is the basis for adopting the poststructuralist praxis as a tool to reading with the intent to augument knowledge in the field regarding Achebe's works.

2.3 Authorial Review

Contemporary studies in African Literature have been forced to recognize the challenge of an alternative interpretive model by way of post-structuralism, even of postmodernism. Literary studies in Africa are greatly steeped in the modernist forms of a 'given' that guides the reading of the text, a position which is understandable within the context of the spiritist-magical worldview still dominant in 21st century African society (Ibuot, E. J., & Onunkwo, C., 2017).

Simon Gikandi's "Chinua Achebe and the Invention of African Literature" (Esonwanne, 2007) describes Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* as a novel that examines the cultural instability caused by the collapse of colonial rule. The events found in that novel, particularly the very survival of Igbo culture (exemplified by Umuofia) had to do with the colonial intrusion into the people's lives. It is an account of the psychological hold of colonialism over the lives of African peoples. The entry of the colonial rule did put the people's lives at risk. Gikandi describes this traumatic experience as "the crisis of the soul"; notwithstanding his deep treatment of this psychical world (Esonwanne, 2007 cited in Ibuot, E. J., & Onunkwo, C., 2017). Gikandi is, therefore, a good representative of the school of thought that views the African novel as having a specific key for unravelling the 'inner meaning' or substructure of a text. The search for the 'inner meaning' or substructure of a literary text is a search for the real, which is a modernist streak. In the article, "Oedipus, Ogbanje, and the Sons of Independence," Neil Ten Kortenaar examines Chinua Achebe and Mongo Beti, two of Africa's "Sons of Independence," with a view to seeing whatever knowledge their works

might yield about "the African nation-state and modernity" (Esonwanne, 2007, p. 141; Kortenaar, 2007, pp. 181-202 cited in Ibuot, E. J., & Onunkwo, C., 2017). For Kortenaar, therefore, novels may be viewed as paths for the representation of historical events – these events should serve as the 'magic wand' for understanding the novel. For Isidore Diala, the 1998 Winner of *The Pyre and ANA Cadbury Poetry Prize*, who belongs to this school of thought, African Literature is necessarily bound up with real historical issues that must be found outside the borders of the text (Akubuiro, 2005 cited in Ibuot, E. J., & Onunkwo, C., 2017). It is along this line that Olusegun Oladipo views Achebe's novels as clear stories of Africa, generally and Nigeria, specifically; in this light, the *Anthills of the Savannah* is a description of African socio-political and economic situations (Oladipo, 1988/89). Unlike the case above where reality is tied to a substructure of the literary text, here it lies in historical facts, outside the text – something akin to Archimedes' desire for a place to stand and move the world. Is objectivity not a knowledge-format supposed to be uninvolved, unbiased, abstract, pure, and non-value-based? But if these works (*Things Fall Apart* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, for instance) are literary texts as they are thought to be, how are they different from historical texts? If they concern themselves with historical materials, then we must have them as facts of history with their locations, years and dates. In other words, why call them literary texts whereas they are historical texts? Why the duplication of names if the contents are identically structured? In Gikandi's case then, *Things Fall Apart* offers us psychological data. If so, why is it classified as a literary genre whereas it should be a text of reading on psychology? It appears that Gikandi, like a lot of African scholars, does not appreciate the need for each discipline to stand clearly defined. Literature must be different from

psychology and history. The latter has been addressed in "Reading, Text, and the Metaphors of Perceptions" (Akwanya, 2013, pp. 76 – 84 cited in Ibuot, E. J., & Onunkwo, C., 2017).

Brenda Cooper examines Buchi Emecheta's *Kehinde* and Assia Djebar's *Fantasia* in "Banished from Oedipus? Buchi Emecheta's and Assia's Djebar's Gendered Language of Resistance" and reveals how metaphor is tyrannically deployed with a view to asserting the superiority of the male over the female. The Law of Symbolic Order is activated to protect patriarchal discourse and empower male dominance (Esonwanne, 2007, pp. 143 - 158). The theme of male superiority is again queried by Clare Counihan in "Reading the Figure of Woman in African Literature: Psychoanalysis, Difference, and Desire." She argues that Frantz Fanon and Homi K. Bhabha changed the discourse of sexual difference into the discourse of racial difference. She notes that Fanon's and Bhabha's translation of psychoanalysis from the thought of sexual difference to that of racial difference defaces, and negates the figure of the woman as *Other*. This translation process reduces the figure of the woman to that of "a phantom, shimmering in and out of presence and absence" (Counihan, 2007, pp. 161 – 162). But in "Gender and Sexuality: An Analysis of Female Crisis in Buchi Emecheta's Novels," Samuel Onuigbo and Chika K. Ojukwu picks up the foregoing thread by demonstrating how the female, in the form of the girl-child suffers the double tragedy of i) being unwanted, and ii) being cultured to be stupid. Ona, in the *Joys of Motherhood*, is not permitted to marry but to live as the mistress of Obi Umunna. She was to bear him a male-child. If she bore a female-child, Obi Umunna would not accept her; and thus, Agbadi would have her (Emecheta, 1979). While the male-child is indispensable, the female-child is being rejected. The exhibition of stupidity in thinking is hereby portrayed as the hallmark of a woman in that she is encouraged to exhibit mediocrity or outright stupidity. But if a woman

demonstrated possession of grey matter, wit and wisdom, she was swimming against the current created by the men for women to swim in, and was rebuked. For this reason, Nkwocha Agbadi rebuked Ona at the instance of perceiving that Ona was unduly intelligent. He cautioned her, in the first week of motherhood, for refusing to be a woman and choosing to think like a man (Onuigbo & Ojukwu, 2013). This temper quickly calls to mind the view of Carrie Chapman that the world discouraged women from self-development and self-expression yet claimed her to be valueless; it gave her no education, denied her every appearance of responsibility while positing that she had no genius nor orator; to enjoy pleasure, she had to gain it as a favour through engaging in vanity (as cited in Jagger & Rothenberg, 1984, p. 4). Notwithstanding the strides in Western societies (and other parts of the globe) to correct this anomaly, Chapman's viewpoint still finds corroboration in present-day Western society, an example being the disparity in the number of female philosophers employed in universities (Ratcliffe & Show, 2015). The situation is even worse in Nigeria where the ratio of female philosophers may be as low as 1% of the total number of male philosophers; at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Nigeria's first indigenous university), in over 40 years of the existence of its department of philosophy the first female came into her teaching ranks in 2015. This imbalance needs to be seriously addressed but even without sacrificing meritocracy. In these studies, on the elevation of the male as a superior entity over and above the female lies an important modernist presupposition: that the real and significant is the male-man. In the text, the man is viewed as real whereas the woman or female is either inferior or an illusion. But is it sound to argue that because the female is different from the male, she is outside reality or inferior to man, or even an insignificant semblance? No. Contemporary studies in biology, psychology and neuroscience are yet to provide supporting

proofs to the idea of the female-child or woman as a 'second sex'. This idea of the insignificance of the female seems to be more of a socially constructed, albeit distorted, justification for the perpetuation of oppression and violence against the female such as sex-specific salary structure, sex-selective abortion and 'genderisation'.

Ibuot, E. J., & Onunkwo, C. (2017) study on Derridean Deconstruction and Modernist Influence in African Literature, defining the African identity gave rise to varied fields of studies such as African Literature and African Philosophy. From its inception, men and women with bias in modernist presuppositions shaped it. A new way of literary interpretation – post-structuralism – has been presented, attracting much negative reactions that literary studies centres in Africa are not insulated. The passion for the real/truth of a literary work, a major heritage of modernist thought has thus coloured literary discourse in Africa. This paper examined how this search for the real (or truth) has manifested in literary works via Jacques Derrida's deconstructive strategy. The call of the United Nations for gender equality and women empowerment accords with the invitation of Derridean Deconstruction announcing the erosion of biased, oppressive, and unjustified hierarchical structures such that equality may reign over all other structures. Derridean deconstruction calls for the placing of men and women on a par, especially in terms of dignity and opportunities (Okuyade, 2009). But Dame Stephanie Shirley recently suggested a clarification of the latter by arguing for the erasure of sexism, even 'reverse sexism' (whether in favour of the males or the females) as a criterion for job placements. In her view, employment and reward at the workplace ought to be performance-based, she underscores this point in the light of attempts by the European Union for Boards to introduce quotas for female employment (Shirley, 2014). This position is in alignment with Derridean deconstruction's disposition for equality, especially in regard to

her call for a complete resistance to and abolition of every form of unfair exaltation of any sex. But if, as she argues, contemporary feminism champions female rights on the bases of chivalry and/or tokenism, then a critical purpose of feminism to bring more women into top level of organizational hierarchies – would have been undermined; because, as she notes, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) are not functions of 'special treatment' but of discipline, smart and hard work. Gleaning through Shirley's blunt points in "The Myth of the Glass Ceiling," feminism seems to imply, at least up to this point, a subtle exaltation of the female above the male (a form of 'reverse sexism'), on any bases exclusive of merit and performance. If true, would this not be a systematic nurturing of a section of society to develop a claim-consciousness (even if spurious) against rights' abuse? Again, if this is true and if this was to serve as a social justice or redressing principle for discontented persons/groups of persons such as former colonies of some western nations, descendants of former slaves, terrorists such as Boko Haram, ISIS, and Al Qaeda, or a child claiming abuse by the mother demanding some chores be done, how should different societies of the world or the United Nations address such demands equitably and fairly? Or, how affirmative is the affirmative action policy? While these questions are beyond the purview of this paper, Derrida's deconstructive strategy may yet serve as a theoretical mechanism for understanding power-balance and advocating for a paradigm shift aimed at entrenching a civility of equality across board.

According to Emenyonu (1988), "it is important for any reader of fiction in Nigeria to realize that no matter how much the author denies or disguises it, every Nigerian who writes fiction in English today has his foundation in the oral heritage of his ethnic group… An authentic study of Nigerian literature must, therefore, began by examining and appreciating the origins

and development of literatures in Nigerian indigenous languages." Interestingly, while not disagreeing with Emenyonu about the importance and place of indigenous language in the development of African literature, literary critic, Jeyifo opines that literature in indigenous language is "limited to a handful of the indigenous languages". His position seems to be premised on seeing prominent writers like Ngugi Wa Thiong'o reversing to writing in English language after abandoning English in favour of their indigenous languages. In spite of the limited readership, however, indigenous literature has thrived with relative success especially in Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo languages till today. After the earliest literature in Hausa written in Arabic and Ajami by Islamic scholars such as Abdullahi Suka and Wali Danmasani Abdulajalil, Hausa literature has continued to flourish. Written Igbo literature, which is equally as illustrious as the Hausa literature, is of much younger origin than either Hausa or Yoruba literatures. So also is Igbo indigenous literature. The first novel in Igbo, *Omenuko*, was published in 1933 by Pita Nwana. It was followed by other works in 1960s such as *Ije Odumodu* by Leopold Bell-Gam and *Ala Bingo* by D.N Achara. According to Emenyonu, Igbo literature attained her maturity with the works of Uchenna Tony Ubesie, the leading novelist in Igbo language. The works include *Ukwa Ruo Oge Ya Odaa*, *Isi Akwu Dara Nala*, *Ukpana Okpoko Buuru* and *Juo Obinna*.

According to Keith M. Booker (2003), Achebe in his second set of novels, *No Longer at Ease, A Man of the People,* and *Anthills of the Savannah,* turns his attention from the past to diagnose and narrate the crisis of decolonization. While the novels dealing with the past have been influential for showing that Africans had a culture with its own internal logic and set of contradictions, and hence derive their authority from their capacity to imagine an African past derided or negated in the colonial text, the second set of novels have been popular

because of their keen sense of the crisis of postcoloniality and, in some cases, a prophetic sense of African history, the attendant promise of decolonization and its failure or sense of discontent. This is occasioned by high level of corrupt practices, economic and political instability, social, economic and political violence in spite of the natural endowment of the country. Not liking what they see but loving their country, Achebe like other Nigerian authors regard themselves as bearing witness to the confusion in Nigeria, they used the expression "bearing witness" repeatedly when they talk about the role of the novelist in order to help bring about the transition to a better future.

According to Oladele Taiwo (1976), critics of the African literature started to concern themselves in a professional way with their individual writings, to enumerate the individuals and regional characteristics discernable in certain works and to look at a writer or a group of works from a particular angle or point of view. The result has been a growing number of volumes devoted to the writings of authors like Armah, Achebe, Ngugi, Mwangi and Peter Abrahams. Thus, literary critics such as Abiola Irele, Bernth Lindfors, Eustace Palmer, Shatto Gakwandi and Ernest Emenyonu have continued the tradition of writing about these African novelists. Doubtlessly, Achebe remains the most frequently studied author of African literature in modern history, and several dozen book-length studies devote themselves to his oeuvre. Abubakar (2002: 202) identifies the concerns of these writers in these words: "African literature is basically a signification of the transformation of the continent by such epochal historical experiences as colonialism, neo-colonialism and its integration into and subordination to the capitalist system and the attendant schism that these entail". This "schism" is reflected in the political and socio-economic problems that characterised the developmental stages of the African novel. It is important to add that these

social problems transcend cultural interactions to include, as Abubakar observes, issues such as governance, national integration, identity crisis and behavioural interactions. These issues are also explored by notable African novelists such as Chinua Achebe, Ayi Kwei Armah, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Meja Mwangi.

Studies by Ojimmah (1991), Gareth Griffiths (1971) and Gerald Moore (1982) also deserve attention, especially with regards to the focus on governance and Achebe's preoccupation as a writer. These efforts are significant for the insight about the important issues of politics and the roles of individuals in the society as exemplified by the characters of their texts. Ojimmah (1991) regards Achebe as one obsessed with the themes of power and responsibility particularly as they affect political governance. Similarly, Gareth Griffiths (1971) fails to explain the psychoanalytic dimension of Achebe's novels but rather focused on the political imperatives of Achebe's works. Gerald Moore (1982) is also guilty of this missing link – the psychological dimension to which Achebe's novel could also be explained. It is interesting to note that Gerald Moore's criticism of Achebe's novels dwells on the major characters; and in these characters, there are psychoanalytical elements such as the id, ego and superego, the unconscious acts and psychical traits that would have been explored which Gerald Moore failed to capitalise on. Rather, he chooses to devote a significant attention to the tragic dimension of the major characters. While dismissing Obi Okonkwo in *No Longer at Ease* as unfit to be classified as a tragic hero, he sees Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* as a true reflection of a tragic hero and explains that "the forces that destroyed Okonkwo were mysterious and inexorable but still largely external and dramatic, "He could see his enemies and fighting them" (p. 5). He further states that *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are popular because of Achebe's ability to document societal values and

retrieve what Africa had lost in the past.

Similarly, Oladele Taiwo (1976) and Margaret Lawrence (1989) focus on the tragic perspectives of Achebe's novels. Margaret Lawrence in her consideration of *Arrow of God* strongly affirms that Ezeulu is a classic tragic hero and still evokes some sympathy despite his headstrong approach to issues. On the other hand, Oladele Taiwo sees Ezeulu as the scapegoat in a fight of giants – the gods Ulu and Idemili. Illuminating as these comments are which invariably provide us the tragic dimensions of Achebe's characters, however, it must be stated that these characters cannot merely be reduced to tragic figures. These are elites saddled with the responsibility of carrying the burden of their societies. In this context, therefore, these critics fail to explore how, in their exercise of hegemonic power, these elites come face to face with tragedy. In view of the above, it is important to re-conceptualise the elite in the light of its function and as an instrument of colonial hegemony. This is precisely because they are vested with the overt political responsibility which bestows on them accountability to their nation states. Implicit in this assumption is a contradiction regarding how these elites came to acquire colonial hegemony traits despite their essentially native origins. However, it is possible to see how this development impacted on the political situation in African nation states.

Besides, Keston Odiwo in his *The Representation of the Elite in the Novels of Chinua Achebe, Bessie Head, Ayi Kwei Armah and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: A Psychoanalytic Study* (2009) contends that Achebe's novels need to be explored beyond the critical dimensions ascribed to them above to include psychoanalytical representation of the major characters. He went further to opine that one area in which Achebe's novels have received critical responses at the expense of psychological dimension are in the relationship between man and

gods. Criticisms of Achebe's works are awash with the relationship between man and his personal God – his "chi". Abiola Irele (1975) in an analysis of *Arrow of God* sees the gods as being in control of man's destiny, man being only used as an arrow in the war of the gods. He sees all the characters in the novel as tools in the hands of the gods. With regards to *Things Fall Apart*, Irele sees man's destiny as partly of his own making and partly of outside forces which he has to contend with. These forces, to Irele, constitute man's flaws that precipitate his tragedy. Okonkwo's tragedy is seen as both the refusal of his 'chi' to work in tune with him and the warped meaning he attaches to his society's view on manliness. Bernth Lindfors (1971:52) similarly argues that Okonkwo's tragedy is a result of working against his 'chi'. According to him:

> When Okonkwo returns from exile, he makes the mistake of believing that if he says yes strongly enough, his 'chi' and his clan will agree. No doubt, he should have known better. He should have accepted his years in exile as warning from his 'chi'.

Obviously, some of Achebe's critiques are more concerned with the sociological content of his works while neglecting the relationship between psychology, literary creativity and socio-economic development. Undeniably, Achebe devotes a significant amount of attention in his novels to the elites and their exercise of power and authority in African society whether in the pre-colonial time or the post-independent era. In his novels, Achebe demonstrates underlying motives behind the behaviour of his major characters which can be subjected to psychoanalytic explanation. Thus, while most critics have explored virtually all areas in the criticisms of his works, they have ignored the psychological as well as the post-structural dimensions. This presupposes that critical discourses of African literature especially of the African novel are not exhaustive. As Ohaegbu (2000) argues that, "African literature is constantly under pressure to define itself, as it does not carry out its own identity with it... authenticity and literary identity embody the ability to recreate literary experiences from

diverse literary, social and cultural experiences and conditions". This position agrees with Northrop Frye (1969:406) theory of archetypes in literature, which labels the creative process as a symbiosis of text originality and the preceding texts pedigree. According to him:

> Every poem is a member of the class of things called poems. Some poems... proclaim that they are conventional, in other words, that their primary context is in literature. Other poems leave the inference to the critic.

The focus of the African novel, therefore, is not located only in the employment of myths and the sociological and literary discourse but in creating newer myths, principles and other perceptions of the society and those that govern it in literary fictions. The perspective of the African novel in this dissertation is that it continuously reveals newer or other forms of reassessment concerning the totality of African socio-political experience and psychoanalytic dimension.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

In this study, the post-structuralist method of criticism and analysis has been employed. As the name implies, post-structuralism is a reaction to structuralism and works in seeing language as a stable, closed system. The debate about the emergence of post-structuralism can be traced to 1966 at an International Symposium titled "The Language of Criticism and the Sciences of Man" held at Hopkins University in Baltimore, USA. However, the word "post-structuralism" came into widespread use between 1979 and 1981. Three anthologies of criticism, one American and the other two British, which between them collected some representative articles of (or in one case about) continental, largely French, literary criticism and theory, serve as a kind of historical signpost to the emergence of the idea of post-structuralism (Phillips, 2007). It is a shift from seeing the literary works as closed entities, equipped with definite meanings, but also open truth to the realities of the fictional stories. Now, it is the critiques' task to interpret, to see literature as irreducibly plural, an endless

play of signifiers which can never be finally nailed down to a single centre, essence, or meaning (Eagleton, 2008:120). Similarly, Barthes (1975) refuses “unity” or “totality” and instead reads the text in its fragmentary, inter-textual density. The reader is now responsible for the arbitrary division of the text (Phillips, 2007).

Jacques Derrida's paper on "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (delivered in 1966), at the above mentioned International Symposium proved particularly influential in the creation of post-structuralism. Derrida argues the notion of a knowable centre (the Western ideal of logo-centrism), a structure that could organize the differential play of language or thought but somehow remain immune to the same "play" it depicts (Abrams, 2008: 258-9). Derrida's critique of structuralism also heralded the advent of deconstruction that debates the notion of "origin" built into structuralism. In negative terms, deconstruction- particularly as articulated by Derrida- has often come to be interpreted as "anything goes" since nothing has any real meaning or truth. More positively, it shows that Derrida, like Paul de Man and other post-structuralists, asks for rigour, constancy and “ruthlessness” in the interpretation of a text. Similarly, Christopher Norris (1990) launches a cogent argument against simplistic attacks on Derrida's theories. Consequently, Christopher Norris argues thus:

> On this question, the tendency of critics to read deconstruction "as a species of all-licensing sophistical 'freeplay'", as on so many others, the issue has been obscured by a failure to grasp Derrida's point when he identifies those problematic factors in language (catachreses, slippages between 'literal' and 'figural' sense, subliminal metaphors mistaken for determinate concepts) whose effect--as in Husserl--is to complicate the passage from what the text manifestly means to say to what it actually says when read with an eye to its latent or covert signifying structures. This 'free-play' has nothing whatsoever to do with that notion of an out-and-out hermeneutic license which would finally come down to a series of slogans like "all reading is misreading," "all interpretation is misinterpretation," etc. If Derrida's texts have been read that way--most often by literary critics in quest of more adventurous hermeneutic models--this is just one sign of the widespread deformation

professionelle that has attended the advent of deconstruction as a new arrival on the US academic scene.

The argument that lend itself to the idea of a text as basically open to all kinds of interpretation, therefore, negated because post-structuralism as a theory rather emphasizes the need to understand the difference between what the "text manifestly means to say to what it actually says when read with an eye to its latent or covert signifying structure" (Jacques Derrida, 1966).

In addition to Jacques Derrida, other key poststructuralist and deconstructive figures include Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Helene Cixous, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, Jacques Lacan, and Barbara Johnson (Phillips, 2007). However, M. Sarup, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault constitute the leading post-structuralists. They share anti-scientific positions and question the status of science itself, and the possibility of objectivity of any language of description or analysis. Their rejection of the Saussurian model of linguistics (on which structuralism is based) creates a particular difference with Structuralism (Sarup, 1993).

While Structuralism believes in the explanation of all phenomena through the science of signs, Post-structuralism objects to this position. The post-structuralists view is hung on what Harry Blamires (1991) refers to as the "instability of signification". Because a signifier is not confined to a single entity but many, arguing that, it is not safe to depend only on signs as a means of eliciting the meaning of a concept; which is compounded by the attempt to decode the meaning of such a concept, where another meaning emerges. Jacques Derrida acknowledges this as he subscribes to "a fusion between the signifier and the signified" (Blamires 1991: 363). Derrida further posits that it is elusive to think of a structure devoid of its centre. The argument of the Post-structuralist is that a meaning is not entirely contained in

a signifier, but rather in a chain of related issues within which signifiers function and gives primacy to the 'when' and 'where' there is a textual deflection from the original pattern (Velibeyoglu, 1999).

Even though African literature is unique in both its form and contents, there was a lot of discussion as to what theory and set of theories were appropriate for the discussion and analysis of African literature. There has not been a clear understanding and agreement as to what should be the generally accepted theory. The debate is still going on about the changing face and nature of African literature, particularly with the new writings from writers like Ben Okri, Niyi Osundare, Biyi Bandele, Helon Habila, Ngozi Adichie, among others. Even with the coming of new styles and forms of African literature, African literature is still influenced by the Western traditions with some of its affiliated varieties and change, this influence is reflected in the works of the new and young writers.

The ideological framework suggested by Ogude (cited in Emenyonu, 1990), which reflects black aesthetics ruled by the experiences of black slaves and colonialism that serve as a basis for ideological debates offer little explanations as to the basis for literary criticism. Modern African literary experience started with the development of the Western school system and education. Therefore, the relationship between African written literature and Western literary aesthetics cannot be overemphasized. Thus, it is imperative to identify and discuss modernism as one of the theories that have defined the canons over the years for the proper understanding of literature in modern times. Modernism (which is another term for post-structuralism) in this context is with reference to those theories of criticism that have flourished from the twentieth century up to date. Modernism could be delineated in two respects, the early modern and later modern theories, to the development of theories of

literature. However, the modernists, in general, appears to be preferred because it provides a platform that discusses current and concrete issues that are germane to the overall sustainability of human history. The profundity of the modernist perspective is expressed by David Ker (2001:5) thus:

> modernism's consciousness of disorder, despair and anarchy is the perfect medium for the African novelist for conveying on the one hand his nostalgia for the past, with all its imperfections and on the other hand his bitterly ironic indictments of the present.

This study deploys the two divisions of theories by Graham Hough as a framework. In his book, *An Essay on Criticism* (1966), he distinguishes two categories of literary theory. The first category which he calls the intrinsic theories is concerned with the moral nature of literature. Theories in this category primarily emphasise the total essence of literature. The second is what he describes as the extrinsic theories, which talks about the formal nature of literature and more specifically what it is (Balogun, p 2).The intrinsically inclined criticism is also a subjective judgment of literature. This kind of approach isolates a work of literature from its external reality. The adherents of this classification see a text of literature as having no relationship intended or implied with its external world; that such a work is in its own 'world'.

On the other hand, the extrinsically inspired literary theories tend to associate a literary piece with its external world. Here, there is a departure from the isolationist philosophy propounded by the ideology of the intrinsically inclined criticism. Rather extrinsic criticism is sometimes more objective; meaning that a work of literature is essentially:

(i) a representation of the spirit of the age and

(ii) a reflection of the 'world' in which it operates. It goes further to see a text of literature as a product of the producer's (poet, novelist, playwright, essayist)

> imagination, vision and sensibility in the external world. Also, in this kind of criticism, the artist does not only focus on his external reality but he is inside the literary production and creates a principal character and other characters to carry out his mission (Balogun, p. 3).

Thus, in this study, post-structuralism which is the extrinsically inclined method of criticism or analysis would be employed because it favours the employment of metaphysics as an important instrument for studying a work of literature. This metaphysical view sees literature functioning beyond the surface but rather associates every human phenomenon with supernaturalism. Hence, as inherent in Eagleton's assertion, the human quest for the utopia that is always the preoccupation of literature is the prerogative of such variables as drawing: "Rigid boundaries between what is acceptable and what is not, between self and non-self, truth and falsity, sense and nonsense, reason and madness, central and marginal, surface and depth" (Eagleton, 1996: 114). In essence, post-structuralist authors all present different critiques of structuralism, but common themes include the rejection of the self-sufficiency of structuralism and an interrogation of the binary oppositions that constitute those structures.

It is these variables that define the concern of post-structuralism as the need to go beyond all structures and see the text for itself and find what the text manifestly means and what it actually says when reading with an eye to its latent or covert signifying structures. Thus, in deconstructing the three texts, an attempt is made to utilise the feminist point of view, irony (verbal irony, irony of situation, dramatic irony and trans-cultural irony), différance, differences and oppositions, the intertextual theory (intratextual and extratextual), principle of duality and difference, and contest of text and context.

CHAPTER THREE
Apocalyptic Vision of the Colonized Igbo Society in *Things Fall Apart*

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
- W.B Yeats: 'The Second Coming'

3.0 Introduction

The above quotation summarizes the events in Things Fall Apart even though the poem is ironically a product of European thought. While Yeats describes an apocalyptic vision in which the world collapses into anarchy because of an internal flaw in humanity, Things Fall Apart illustrates this vision by showing what happened in the Igbo society of Nigeria at the time of its colonization by the British. Achebe opines that because of internal weaknesses within the native structure and the structural arrangement within the Igbo society, the community of Umuofia is unable to withstand the tidal wave of the foreign religion, commerce, technology and government.

In Patrick Brantlinger's essay "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent" which is one of the most widely cited, quoted, and reprinted essays on the Western "image of Africa" a trope that Brantlinger clearly takes from Achebe but translates into a post-structuralist idiom for Anglo-American academia, he indicated how Europeans felt that they were obligated to take over the African continent because of their "savage" customs. Predictably he begins the essay by invoking Conrad when he said: "Marlow is right: Africa grew dark as Victorian explorers, missionaries, and scientists flooded it with light because the light was reflected through an imperialist ideology that urged the abolition

of savage customs in the name of civilization." He stressed that the motives behind colonizing Africa were because of the "success of the antislavery movement, the impact of the great Victorian explorers and the merger of racist and evolutionary doctrines in the social sciences" (Brantlinger, 167). However, Chinua Achebe's novel, Things Fall Apart, includes details about the interactions between European settlers and the Igbo tribes. The novel's purpose is to shatter the myth of the Dark Continent and the idea that their culture was full of savage beliefs. Achebe shatters the myth by demonstrating they have a richly diverse culture, but he reinforces it by including their unsavoury customs.

The myth was reinforced by the abolition of slavery because it led upper and middle-class Victorians to believe that Africans needed to be saved. The imperialists created an idea that there was a "right" and "wrong" in the way civilizations live, stating that the European way of living was the "right one" and that everyone should be like them. Knowing Africans only through slavery, they had a racist view that Africans were "a natural labouring class, suited only for performing the dirty work of civilization" (Brantlinger, 181). The Victorians believed Africans were inferior, only seen for labour working; they did not see them as part of a civilization.

In Achebe's novel, the reader sees that imperialism is not morally correct because it is biased and controlling. Europeans thought African culture as primitive and barbaric which was not the case because they also are full of impressive traditions. In the novel, Things Fall Apart, the Igbo culture celebrates Week of Peace which is "a week in which man does not say harsh word to his neighbour. They live in peace with their fellows…" (Achebe, 30). This shows that people do not need Europeans to change their way of living. However, the fact that

Okonkwo beats his second wife during the Week of Peace does question the violence that the people are accustomed to and their strength of overpowering the urge. Yet, Okonkwo is punished for breaching the peace during this yearly tradition. The punishment meted out to Okonkwo brings back the integrity of the society as one that does not need Europeans to change their way of living as earlier mentioned. While not justifying Okonkwo's act of violence, it is pertinent to point out that there are impulsive acts of violence that occur in every society including the European missionaries (Houseboy, Old Man & The Medal), as they mistreat other cultures.

Things Fall Apart describes the missionaries' arrival as both positive and negative towards the Igbo people. Brantlinger's essay, "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent" characterizes Africans as "amusing or dangerous obstacles or an object of curiosity, while missionaries usually portray Africans as weak, pitiable, inferior mortals who need to be shown the light" (Brantlinger, 176/178). They both have a negative aspect in describing Africans and both missionaries and explorers believe they are superior to Africans. Brantlinger's essay portrays the European's arrival in Africa as positive. Interestingly, Things Fall Apart both supports and shatter the idea of imperialism. The purpose of imperialism as described in Brantlinger's essay was for it to be beneficial to Africans such as "commerce and Christianity" (Brantlinger, 178). The Christians were very cruel to the Igbo men, and in this situation do not seem to be "saving" them but instead of bullying them. The very reason for the presence of the Christians is thus contradictory to the outcome of their influence. Although the missionaries did set up a church and set a system of currency, the Igbo culture did not need colonization because they operated their system of currency using yams and cowries. The purpose of imperialism to the Africans was very

different than the effects of imperialism.

Achebe does, however, explain that sometimes colonization can be helpful but not necessarily to everyone because of different beliefs; while the introduction of Christianity was a deathblow to the indigenous religions of Africa, but then, literacy was another attack that aimed at a radical transformation of the African societies. Hence, the Igbo culture is a major factor in deciding whether or not Africa is the Dark Continent. An example where Achebe's novel shatters this idea is when describing the relationship between Okonkwo and Ikemefuna, the reader feels that they have a strong relationship that also could be described as being better than that of relationships found in other cultures particularly the European culture. Okonkwo treats Ikemefuna as a son and even loves him as a son. The Igbo people, as surprisingly as it might seem to Europeans, also have emotions and perform actions of compassion rather than just being "savage".

Implicitly, many cultures share similar customs; for instance, the Igbo and Europeans have a comparable structure in punishment as they both have a system of justice. The Igbo culture presents many customs showing the beauty of their cultural values such as the importance of palm wine and the feast of new yams, but just like any other culture it also has some negative aspects like violence, gender roles and obsession with one strict traditional beliefs, particularly viewed in the light of contemporary thought or certain cultural paradigms.

3.1 Ironical Trans-Cultural Truth and the Woman Perspective

> Achebe does not tell African women 'where the rain began to beat them'. Nor does he attempt to restore 'dignity and self-respect' to African women. However, although women have been explicitly excluded from Achebe's constituency of readers, they have, in contrast to his female characters, refused to remain

silent.–(Florence Stratton, 1994).

Irony enacts a relation between truth and falsehood. By saying one thing while meaning another, the true sense of an utterance not only transcends its false meaning but adds to that meaning extra-linguistically. This aspect of irony gains significance in post/colonial texts. For irony to 'work', that is, for the reader to apprehend its true sense, the reader must apprehend its false or limited meaning. Just as there is no monolithic or singular way of 'being' post/colonial, so too is there no monolithic post/colonial form of irony. In order to preserve this recognition of multiplicity, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* which dramatizes the conflict between Igbo and British civilisation and ways of life reveal in many ways the clash of binary opposites. In *Things Fall Apart*, the extra-linguistic sense with which the different and oppositional meanings of the situation are overcome is the reader's own.

Meanwhile, the traditional approach to the study of women in the writings by Chinua Achebe usually also centres on evaluating the manner and role of the female characterisation as male appendages are located within the thematic framework and socio-cultural context of his texts. However, recent developments, occasioned particularly in feminist circles, probe deeper and ask questions about the process through which meanings are created in a literary text, and something new can be taken from each re-reading of a text. At first, one may read *Things Fall Apart* and find it to be a nice book with an interesting plot about an Igbo warrior who is temporarily banished from his home village, and through his constant struggles eventually kills himself as the British takes over Nigeria or that area that will become part of the country that the British created called Nigeria. However, there is so much more that can be pulled from the text, where each additional reading, one would focus on the intricate development

of each character throughout the story, or even the undeveloped characters and why Achebe has chosen to do so.

Gender plays a large role in the text; upon an initial reading of *Things Fall Apart*, one may come to the conclusion that it is a heavily male gendered text. Yet upon each new reading, one can focus on the role gender plays through Okonkwo's mother, even though much is not said about her, the Igbo stories recounted throughout the text, the culture of the Igbo community (as seen through the importance of "male" foods versus "female" foods), to eventually finding the re-centring of females within the text. An interesting way to reread the text stems from Eugene B. McCarthy's analysis of Things Fall Apart as a rhythmical story. It may take three separate readings of *Things Fall Apart* to find each distinct rhythmical setup. Achebe's work in *Things Fall Apart* most definitely allows readers to find new elements during each re-reading or critques.

Does "reading as a woman" change one's perspective of a text? Can a woman read as a woman after being conditioned, generally, to read as a man? In his On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism, Jonathan Culler (1982) addresses these issues and arrives at several interesting conclusions. What does it mean to read as a woman? Culler's answer is brief and relatively problematic: "to read as a woman is to avoid reading as a man, to identify the specific differences and distortions of male readings and provide correctives" (Culler, 1982: 54).

Though Culler fails to outline these defences and distortions, he does provide some fundamental guidelines for such a reading. Accordingly, to read as a woman requires that one approaches a work from the "feminist" viewpoint and therefore, with the intent to point out instances of patriarchy and where women characters are situated in the narration of the

thematics of a text. Consequently, in order to read Chinua Achebe's literary enterprise, *Things Fall Apart*, as a woman, one must query readings which suggest that Okonkwo is the only major figure in the novel, and alternately analyze the motivations of principal female characters who are thoroughly developed within the work (Achebe, 1958).

As Iyasere (1969) notes, reading Achebe's conventional world as a woman, one cannot merely subscribe to the view that "one of Achebe's great achievements is his ability to keep alive our sympathy for Okonkwo despite the moral revulsion from some of his violent, inhuman acts" (Iyasere, Solomon in Killam, 1969: 98). Instead, we query whether this sympathy may remain intact for those reading through a post-structuralist feminist lens. Although, many critics explicate regarding the horrors and injustices Okonkwo inflicts upon the men in his life, (mainly his son Nwoye, his other 'son' Ikemefuna), most omit any discussion of the abuse suffered by Okonkwo's wives. However, this critique re-evaluates the significance of not only the pains of these women but also their importance as individuals within their community. Therefore, "by providing a different point of departure (this feminist reading) brings into focus the identification of male critics with one character and permits the analysis of male misreadings" (Culler, 1982: 55). Hence, this work challenges these misreadings and positions the female characters at the centre of the text. Instead of focusing on Okonkwo, as most critics have, this reading is focused on three major female characters, Ekwefi, Chielo and Ezinma, and one minor figure, Ojiugo. They are mentioned only briefly, if at all, by most critics of the text, and even when referred to, are examined only in relation to Okonkwo's actions or motivations. Reading this text as a post-structural feminist, she analyzes the characters according to their self-perceptions, as well as redears' and/or society's perception of them as "women", "wives", "mothers" and "daughters". Exploring

the relationships between these women, for instance between Ekwefi and Ezinma, reveals not only alliances between mothers and their offspring, but also alliances between comrades in arms.

The characterization of Ekwefi, Okonkwo's second wife, almost seems insignificant to one reading from a patriarchal standpoint, but when re-evaluated, one will find that she is a fountain of knowledge, love, and fierce independence. Ekwefi has endured much heartache and stigma from those around her. In *Things Fall Apart* (1958), women are viewed mainly as child bearers and helpmates for their husbands, but the phallocentric notion claims that, women must produce male progenies in order to be valued within their cultural milieu, for example, Ekwefi is considered a cursed woman because after ten live births, only one child - a daughter-survives. Thus, "by the time Onwumbiko was born, Ekwefi was a very bitter woman" (Achebe, 1958:76).

Accordingly, she resents the good fortune of the first wife: her ability to produce healthy, strong male children. In the light of this, therefore, Culler (1982: 46) asserts, "criticism based on the presumption of continuity between the readers' experience and a woman's experience and on a concern with the images of women is likely to become most forceful as a critique of phallocentric assumptions that govern literary works". The conventional perspective of most readings of this text is that Ekwefi has been debilitated by life's harsh circumstances. However, instead of continuing to lament her adversity, Ekwefi devotes her time and energy to the one child who does live and finds solace in her relationship with her daughter.

A casual reading of the text indicates that "the man is the point of reference in this society", Palmer (1983), stresses that as child bearers, women are pivotal to the literal survival of the community and societal norms (Palmer, Eustace in Jones, E. D., 1983: 40). After the death of

her second child, it is Okonkwo, not Ekwefi, who consults the dibia to locate the source of her difficulty. It is also Okonkwo who confers with yet another dibia after the death of Ekwefi's third child, highlighting Palmer's contention that Ekwefi has failed, not because she cannot have a viable child, but because she cannot provide her husband with male progeny who would, then, carry on in his father's name. Okonkwo is concerned about the deaths of the children but impervious to Ekwefi's privation. No one comforts Ekwefi as she is forced to watch the dibia mutilate her child, drag him through the streets by his ankles, and finally lay him to rest in the Evil Forest with other 'obanje' children and outcasts. It is significant, though that Okonkwo does demonstrate concern for the female child, Ezinma, as he follows her into the forest after she is taken by the Priestess, Chielo.

Moreover, a structuralist reading of the novel does not address the brutal beating Ekwefi receives at the hands of Okonkwo: "Who killed this banana tree?" He asked. A hush fell over the compound immediately…. Without further argument, Okonkwo gave her a sound beating and left her and her only daughter weeping" (Achebe, 1969:39). The novel continues with a brief discussion of this continued abuse later when Okonkwo threatens Ekwefi with a gun after hearing her murmur under her breath. Yet, the next day, the New Yam Festival continues without a public outcry for this battered woman. However, reading the text as a post-structuralist, one may understand Ekwefi's resignation, as she recalls how she came to be Okonkwo's second wife:

> Many years ago when she was the village beauty Okonkwo had won her heart by throwing the Cat in the greatest contest within living memory. She did not marry him then because he was too poor to pay her bride-price. But a few years later she ran away from her husband and came to live with Okonkwo (Achebe, 1969:40).

In this singular act, Ekwefi comes across as a strong, calculative, patient and ambitious woman who goes all the way to achieve her goals. She demonstrates strength instead of

weakness, as she is the one who makes it happen for both herself and the revered and so-called strong Okonkwo.

Culler (1982) writes that "women's experience, many feminist critics claims, will lead them to value works differently from their male counterparts, who may regard the problems women characteristically encounter as of limited interest" (Culler, 1982: 45). Therefore, although a male critic may deem these events as minor instances, the post-structuralist feminist reader must note that there is, in this passage, a great sense of irony and regret. Preparing to attend her favourite pastime, the annual wrestling event, Ekwefi recollects her great love for the then impoverished Okonkwo. Although she was married to another man, Ekwefi's desire for Okonkwo is so great that at the first opportunity she abandons her husband to be with Okonkwo. Down the line, Ekwefi's reward and compensation is the highhandedness by Okonkwo that she receives for her love and devotion. Although this brutality does not warrant any attention from the elders, Okonkwo's flogging of his youngest wife, Ojiugo, does. There is a public outcry, not because of the physical battering, but, rather the timing of the occurrence - The Week of Peace: "You have committed a great evil'...It was the first time for many years that a man had broken the sacred peace. Even the oldest men could only remember one or two other occasions somewhere in the dim past" (Achebe, 1958:40). Iyasere notes "the peace of the tribe as a whole takes precedence over personal considerations" (Iyasere, Solomon in Killam, 1969: 94). He could have continued, elaborating that particularly in reference to women, the pride of the patriarchy is the main priority of the community, rather than the physical safety of its women.

Furthermore, there is no concern from the elders about Ojiugo's condition. As a result of the elders' bold assertion that she is at fault, and thus, the beating itself is not the point of

contention. Moreover, because Ekwefi is beaten after this week, there is no outrage beyond the intercession of the other two wives who dare not say anything that would show support for their wounded sister than the intermittent, "It is enough" (Achebe, 1958). Communal events merely continue as normal. The great fight is fought, and new wrestling heroes are born. One may also wonder if while reflecting upon her life, Ekwefi is pondering the life of another young woman who has just decided that the new wrestling hero will become her husband and the possible ramifications of such a decision. However, since Ojiugo is battered during the sacred week, Okonkwo must make a sacrifice to the earth goddess to recompense for himself and the community, which may be punished because of his dishonourable deed; this submission to the argument is also indicative of the distinction place women occupy in the society. The strong bully Okonkwo must bow to the female goddess to complete his retribution. As these events reveal, there are several layers of oppositions and binaries that exist in Things Fall Apart.

Culler (1982) notes that one strategy in the attempt to read as a woman is to "take an author's ideas seriously when … they wish to be taken seriously" (Culler, 1982: 47). If one is to take Things Fall Apart seriously, one must question a society that has no compassion for the brutality that is omnipresent in the lives of Okonkwo's wives through their sufferings in his hands. The reader must also question the patriarchal system that devalues women so much that their feelings are not significant.

Ezinma’s case is equally instructive. She seems to be the only female who elicits pure love from all the lives she touches, even her father, Okonkwo. However, he cannot fully appreciate Ezinma as a person. Instead of admiring her for her strength and disposition as a burgeoning woman, Okonkwo is saddened by the fact that she is not a male. Ezinma is

Ekwefi's only living child and it is demonstrated that her father does, in fact, respect her character. When Okonkwo acknowledges these affections, a male chauvinistic reading may solicit a sense of alliance with him and wish, for his sake, that Ezinma was a male child: "She should have been a boy, he thought as he looked at his ten-year-old daughter . . . If Ezinma had been a boy I would have been happier. She has the right spirit "(Achebe, 1958:61-63). Reading the text from the patriarchal standpoint, one may empathize with Okonkwo whose only son, Nwoye, lacks masculine disposition, a trait needed of any male child worthy of continuing ancestral legacies. But because Ezinma is female, she cannot function in this capacity. Moreover, even a woman, in a patriarchal reading of the text would support this notion. Culler (1982) articulates that "what feminists ignore or deny at their peril . . . is that women share men's anti-female feelings--usually in a mitigated form, but deeply nevertheless." According to Culler, this stems partly from the fact that women "have been steeped in self-derogatory societal stereotypes," while being constantly "pitted against each other for the favours of the reigning sex . . . "(Culler, 1982: 53). While reading as a woman, one must acknowledge that women are also indoctrinated to envision the world from a patriarchal perspective, and that, in Ezinma's case; one must reverse these biases to appreciate her strength, singularity and vibrancy.

Initially believed to be an ‘obanje’ child who had only come to stay for a short period, after Ezinma thrives, she is pampered by her mother, as the child who would be king if she were male. This is large because Ezinma in this novel represents intelligence, vitality, and fortitude. Even in her relationship with her mother, Ezinma exhibits what Okonkwo, through his phallocentric lens, perceives as masculine tendencies:

> Ezinma did not call her mother Nne like all children. She called her by her name, Ekwefi, as her father and other grown-up people did. The relationship between them

> was not only that of mother and child. There was something in it like the companionship of equals, which was strengthened by such little conspiracies as eating eggs in the bedroom" (Achebe, 1958:73).

Ezinma calls her mother by her name, signifying the development of an autonomous, effectual being. Ezinma and Ekwefi share a bond that is unlike most other parental ties in the novel: they virtually equal. Their affiliation is based on mutual love, respect, and understanding. They share secret moments, such as eating eggs in the confines of her bedroom. This solidifies their ‘esprit de corps’, even after Okonkwo threatens them both. Culler (1982; 54) foregrounds in this direction that "Critics identify (the) fear that female solidarity threatens male dominance and the male character". Thus, this maternal connection becomes a caveat for Okonkwo and traditional society because they cannot control the depths of love and the shared enthusiasm between mother and daughter. This is most evident when, for example, Okonkwo forbids Ekwefi to leave her hut after Ezinma is carried off by the chief priestess. Ekwefi ignores her husband and risks a flogging to follow Chielo and her daughter throughout the night until she is certain that her daughter will return home safely. When Okonkwo asks, "Where are you going?" Ekwefi boldly asserts that she is following Chielo (Achebe, 1969:97). But instead of attempting to detain her, Okonkwo joins the journey, following from a safe distance, also to ensure the safety of his beloved child. This mother/daughter alliance is explicated throughout the text, though there is little discussion of it in most analyses of the novel.

Beyond the masculine outlook of Things Fall Apart, there exist powerful female images and stories as exemplified with the Chielo-Ezinma-Ekwefi encounter. In "Chinua Achebe Writing Culture: Representations of Gender and Tradition in Things Fall Apart", Osei-Nyame strives to, “… locate it as an alternative Igbo nationalist tradition within which we can construct a specifically female-centred paradigm of resistance” (157). This is shown to

be the case in a scene toward the end of the book where, "… Okonkwo finally appears with his machete in hand at the end, that his own masculinity has been both literally and symbolically violated." Through the Chielo-Ezinma-Ekwefi encounter, the reader can now understand how this, "… the story also creates processes of reconstruction through which we associate women with heroic values (158). Osei-Nyame explains that it is Okonkwo's displacement from this episode that really shows off the highly read upset over gender found within Things Fall Apart, "… it is important to note also that in a very significant way, the Chielo-Ezinma-Ekwefi episode evidently prefigures the displacement of Okonkwo and to a large degree masculine authority within the clan as a whole." From here one may, "… read the story of the three women and the displaced Okonkwo with all its insistent re-orderings of signification of gender and authority as being of cardinal importance to Achebe's construction of the contested nature of power and authority within the clan" (159). It is his unearthing of the Chielo-Ezinma-Ekwefi episode in a feminist re-reading of Things Fall Apart, along with his other examples that make Osei-Nyame's piece on Things Fall Apart an excellent reference when looking at Achebe's work through a gendered lens.

Another display of independence by Ekwefi is most evident when, for example, Okonkwo forbids Ekwefi to leave her hut after Ezinma is carried off by the chief priestess. Ekwefi ignores her husband and risks a flogging to follow Chielo and her daughter throughout the night until she is certain that her daughter will return home safely. When Okonkwo asks, "Where are you going?" Ekwefi boldly asserts that she is following Chielo (Achebe, 1969:97). But instead of attempting to detain her, Okonkwo joins the journey, following from a safe distance, also to ensure the safety of his beloved child. The fact that Ekwefi insists on following Ezinma and Chielo show that she is indeed strong-minded and can stand

up to her husband if she is convinced about her actions.

Furthermore, nowhere is dramatic irony more apparent than during the locusts' descent upon Umuofia:

> And quite suddenly a shadow fell on the world, and the sun seemed behind a thick cloud. Okonkwo looked up from his work and wondered if it was going to rain at such an unlikely time of the year. But almost immediately a shout of joy broke out in all directions, and Umuofia, which had dozed in the noon-day haze, broke into life and activity. 'Locusts are descending', was joyfully chanted everywhere, and men, women and children left their work or their play and ran into the open to see the unfamiliar sight. The locusts had not come for many, many years, and only the old people had seen them before. At first, a fairly small swarm came. They were the harbingers sent to survey the land. And then appeared on the horizon a slowly-moving mass like a boundless sheet of black cloud drifting towards Umuofia. Soon it covered half the sky, and the solid mass was now broken by the tiny eyes of light like shining star-dust. It was a tremendous sight, full of power and beauty. Everyone was now about, talking excitedly and praying that the locusts should camp in Umoufia for the night. For although locusts had not visited Umuofia for many years, everybody knew by instinct that they were very good to eat (Achebe, 1969:39-40).

This passage loaded with explicit significations is ironic in the most direct sense insofar as its conclusion is directly opposite to what the reader is led to expect by its beginning. Beyond this relatively simple instance of situational irony, however, the passage enables a moment of dramatic irony in which the reader is able to apprehend the relation of the two 'sides' of the conflict between Igbo and British in a manner that exceeds the literal expression given that conflict in the text – in particular, as that conflict is presented as an oppositional binary in the novel's final paragraph.

This dramatic irony is evident in the statement that 'everybody knew by instinct that (locusts) were very good to eat'. While the locusts will make good food, the colonial forces and personnel who appeared shortly afterwards in Igbo land do not pretend to want to co-exist with the Africans peacefully. The joy of having the locusts turns to ashes in the mouths of the Africans upon the arrival of the uninvited Europeans. Also, the following disquisition is equally instructive: throughout the novel, there is the moments in which the Igbo

Storyteller's view of events is directly at odds with the Westernized reader's perceptions, but nowhere is the division between narrator/text and reader made so palpably clear, or so (apparently) unbridgeable. For the Storyteller, human 'instinct' dictates that 'locusts are good to eat'; but the instinct of the (vast majority) of Westernized readers are entirely different. Western forms of mass agriculture are susceptible to locusts in a way that traditional Igbo cultivation is not; more significantly, there are also the Biblical associations of locusts with the wrath of God. The meaning of the passage, then, is to signal to the Westernized reader in as shocking a manner as possible that a full understanding of the Igbo culture encountered in the text is limited. This act of recognition is a salutary and necessary component of the novel, and it removes those readers who have apprehensive perspective posited at the novel's conclusion, which was by the District Commissioner, who is absolutely certain that he knows and is authorized to write down all that is necessary about the 'primitives' under his control.

One must acknowledge as well that male and female roles are societal constructs, and thus, the entire female identity is based more upon societal constructs rather than physiological realities. Women are taught to nurture, while men are conditioned to dominate and control. Hence, it is possible that men may also read as women if they are willing to rethink their positions, as well as women's positions within patriarchal constructs. Culler (1982:64) posits that "For a woman to read as a woman is not to repeat an identity or an experience that is given but to play a role she constructs with reference to her identity as a woman, which is also a construct..."

As the feminist reader analyzes the characters of Ekwefi, Ojiugo, and Ezinma as major figures whose lives are not just affected by the whims of their father/husband, but also as

women who affect their husband/father and each other positively, the significant nature of women cannot be undermined in any society. Therefore, it is only when one consciously attempts to read this text without the gender affiliations, that these formerly peripheral characters may be afforded proper critical attention by male/female readers of the African novel. It is in such reading that one is able to see the changing structures that post-structuralist reading enable the reader will want us to see in every given text.

3.2 Masculine and Feminine Differences

The masculine and feminine gender arrangement which is crafted in a binary manner is central to examining Okonkwo's mindset and actions throughout the novel, Things Fall Apart. His mindset and actions are defined by his fear of being seen as feminine. Throughout his life, Okonkwo fights to remain masculine: to be brave, wealthy, important, and powerful; and to resist the impending colonization by the white Christians. Ironically twisted, in the end, Okonkwo is reduced to a feminine status by the British colonizers who overthrow his power with terror and violence as well, leaving him stripped of power and his masculinity - he becomes transformed into what he feared most: effeminate and powerless like a woman and like his father whom he resented and felt ashamed.

In the world of Umuofia, Achebe took care to present the characters to his readers; as male/female, black/white (African/European) and leader/follower (leader and the ruled). Thus, critiques can deconstruct the masculine/feminine binary to show that the masculine gender typically holds the power in Igbo society as represented by Okonkwo's power and his attempt to control his family with dominant masculine personality and actions while feminine gender represents the weak. The black/white binary is represented by the conflict between the two groups and the conquest of the Igbo by the white missionaries. The binary

of who holds the power and who is powerless shifts through the narrative as Okonkwo's masculinity wanes to femininity. As he loses power in his tribe to the colonialists, he also loses his masculine identity. Achebe provides us as well with a subversive undercurrent which runs through the veins of the novel as an underlying meta-narrative of the blacks resisting the whites with masculine forces; and a parallel feminine metanarrative constructed by the female gendered characters in Okonkwo's world, who through their actions to distance themselves from Okonkwo, slowly erode the male power which Okonkwo clings to so desperately and uses to define his existence throughout the book.

From the beginning of the story, Okonkwo has to fight against these subversive powers which chafe against him and undermine his quest for impervious male domination - from his childhood onward he is haunted by his father's legacy of laziness, peace and music; then he loses the loyalty of his effeminate son to the missionaries and their feminine church and doctrine of acceptance and non-violence. He ultimately loses influence and control over and his entire clan mourns the loss of his society's proud history of war and ultimately is robbed of his defining sense of self to the powers of the colonizing British. Because he is unable to alter his personal identity traits and obsession with controlling masculine power - he, in turn, loses everything – tribe and family, along with his unrelenting pride and ultimately, his life. Although suicide was viewed as a sin and seen as a sign of being weak, he is driven to take his own life when faced with the lack of options left remaining in his post-colonial, oppressor-imposed, feminized gender role. He would rather be remembered as dying in weakness through suicide than allow the colonizers the power and satisfaction of murdering his physical body and defining his tribal status. This is significant in our attempt to understand the masculine/feminine and oppressor/oppressed binaries that Achebe challenges

us with because his choice of suicide could be seen as defiance or weakness. His choice can be viewed as masculine or feminine. It could be a form of retaining control of his destiny or as giving over his memory to the colonizers and the converts. This complexity of gender and power are interwoven power struggle, to show the strata of meta-narratives Achebe created oppressor/male/black, juxtaposed against oppressed/female/black shift in the course of the narratives of the novel, on to the oppressor/female/white, against the challenged and newly subjugated oppressed/male/black in a feminine realignment of power.

In the case of the traditional Igbo society and the dominant men who comprise its power structure - we witness the black/male culture using techniques of instilling fear through domestic violence to oppress the female and feminine/gendered characters into submission. On the other end of this spectrum, the feminine-gendered group of characters composed of Okonkwo's wives,

Chielo, Okonkwo's father and Nwoye, use subtler and sometimes masked subversive techniques of gentleness, acceptance, use of Christian religion, music and proverbs in an attempt to overturn the controlling hand of the dominant masculine power of the tribe. The colonialists also use stereotypical feminine-gendered tactics in their effort to remove power from the black/masculine members of the Igbo tribe, while welcoming in feminine-gendered converts into their mission who were previously shunned by the masculine culture of the dominant Igbo.

Chinua Achebe changes the landscape of preconceived gender identities – specifically that the male gender is, and is "meant to be", the dominant one. It can be argued that the subversive female of the text is exemplified by his father, Unoka; his son, Nwoye; the priestess, Chielo, and in a twist of power subversion, the colonists themselves. These

feminine-gendered characters of Achebe's plan slowly carve away at Okonkwo's power until he is driven to suicide by his anxiety over being perceived as weak and the loss of potency and relevance in his tribe.

Okonkwo's life is defined by his fear of being seen as weak or feminine. From his youth, he is consumed with proving his own worth and gaining success and power. His actions are driven by his intrinsic obsession to be masculine and as different from the legacy of his father as possible. It is of utmost importance to him that others in his clan see him as in charge of his family and in control of his destiny. His main goal in life is to be well respected with titles in his clan and to hold power over his family and be feared by those who wish to harm him or his tribe. The drive within him to be strong and powerful is so strong that in turn it causes him great stress and forces him to make bad decisions out of his anxiety to be seen as a weak woman, or agbala, like his father.

In Okonkwo's world, there is no middle ground between being a man or woman. In adherence to the tribe's customs and social history, the man is considered to be a strong member of society and the woman is considered weak. Men are viewed as warriors while women are expected to raise the children and cook for their husbands. The significance of gender is evident in the Igbo culture as they define even their crops in terms of masculine or feminine. We learn from Okonkwo that the men grow yams, which are considered specifically a man's crop:

> Yam stood for manliness, and he who could feed his family on yams from one harvest to another was a very great man indeed (Achebe, 363).

Due to this belief, Okonkwo measured his own manliness on the failure or success of his yam crop. Women, on the other hand grow food which is considered "easier" to cultivate. According to Okonkwo:

> His mother and sisters worked hard enough, but they grew women's crops, like cocoyams, beans and cassava. Yam, theking of crops, was a man's crop (Achebe, 257).

The Igbo way of life, the societal norms and expectations, ranging from farming to marriage, land ownership to religion, arranged the power structure of the society and created the people's beliefs regarding gender identity literally from the ground up, starting with most important life-giving crop - the yam. Achebe used this masculine/feminine demarcation within the Igbo society to create a deep divide of gender identity within Okonkwo and the tribe as a whole. Considering how important the identities of gender were to the Igbo, the clan's success or failure as a society was ultimately dependent on its historical masculine traditions and demonstrated violent and abusive practices to maintain control over the feminine members of the society. In the following passage, Osei-Nyame describes how Achebe creates the masculine-gendered link between the tribe and Okonkwo:

> Achebe's text links and identifies power and authority with masculinity. Umuofia's masculine traditions are heralded and celebrated and the representation of masculine ideologyis progressively played out mainly through the representation of the legendary Okonkwo and his obsessive pursuit of thefulfilment of personal power and recognition within the clan (150).

Okonkwo's desire to be powerful, respected and in many ways, feared, arises from his childhood and the shame he carries from the history and memory of his father, Unoka. His father was not a violent man like Okonkwo has grown to become. He was neither rich nor a good farmer. He did not control his family with fear. Rather, Unoka loved music and other typically so-called feminine activities. He loved to play the flute, sing songs, orate and rest. As Achebe describes: "He was very good on the flute and his happiest moments were the two or three moons after the harvest...Unoka would play with them, his face beaming with blessedness and peace" (Achebe, 51). These could be considered positive attributes as they suggest a representation of a peaceful man. However, Okonkwo saw only the failure of his

father to provide for his family and judged Unoka's character traits as lazy and effeminate. Okonkwo hated that his father did not give him an inheritance and in the end, before Unoka died, Okonkwo had to take on the paternal role of a farmer to support both his mother and father and feed his entire family. His resentment began building at an early age as he had to make up for his father's ineptitude and provide for his family. In this passage, he describes how hard he had to work from the beginning because of the failure and lack of inheritance from his father:

> Share-cropping was a very slow way of building up a barn of one's own. But for a young man whose father had no yams, there was noother way. And what made it worse in Okonkwo's case was that he had to support his mother and his sisters from his meager harvest. And supporting his mother also meant supporting his father. She could not be expected to cook and eat while her husband starved(Achebe, 256-257).

These lines give us the impression that perhaps Okonkwo could have tolerated providing for his female family members, but the fact that he had to feed his father, who should have been the one to also farm and provide for the family, created the anger and resentment he carried with him the rest of his life towards the failure of his father. This childhood wound was the seed from which his anxiety of and anger toward feminism grew.Okonkwo also begrudged that Unoka owed money. He was poor and had many debts, but Achebe tells us he was the kind of man people continued to lend money to:

> Unoka the grown-up was a failure. He was poor and his wife and children barely had enough to eat. People laughed at him becausehe was a loafer, and they swore never tolend him any more moneybecause he never paid back. But Unoka was such a man that he alwayssucceeded in borrowing more and piling up his debts (Achebe, 64).

Perhaps others lent money to him because they pitied him, or perhaps they were amused or enchanted by his music and his kindness, unfortunately for Unoka, the Igbo held no place in their society for what they viewed as a lazy and effeminate man like him. Although he had many good qualities of an artist, and, in another time and culture, could have been revered for his artistic and hedonistic qualities, in the world of Umuofia, the bottom line was that he

did not farm well and did not provide for his family. He failed the test of being a masculine man that worked hard and was a provider. Instead, he was a taker and a burden on others – most importantly to Okonkwo. The burden of feeding the family, in the end, was shifted onto Okonkwo's shoulders - a consequence of Unoka's femininity that Okonkwo would never forgive. Okonkwo decides for himself that his father is not a respected man early on, to be addressed below.

Unoka differs from Okonkwo with another stereotypically feminine quality - he doesn't like violence: "Unoka was never happy when it came to wars. In fact, he was a coward and could not bear the sight of blood" (Achebe, 78-79). Okonkwo, on the other hand, thrives on violence and tends to seek it out: "He was a man of action, a man of war. Unlike his father, he could stand the look of blood. In Umuofia's latest war, he was the first to bring home a human head" (Achebe, 120). Let's point out that, it is problematic to declare that being violent and enjoying the sight of blood is a masculine trait and not a feminine one, while conversely liking music and being lazy are feminine traits as described in Unoka. But for the purposes of this study, and as outlined in Achebe's own text, these are the stereotypes that have been ingrained in cultures like Okonkwo's. Men were expected to be warriors; women were not. In our culture today, we continue to stereotypically define soldiers as men. Masculine men are expected to be brave, not cry and be willing to fight if needed. Femininity encompasses more compassionate, peaceful attitudes and are still expected to be caretakers of men and children. Readers can acknowledge that in this modern society, these boundaries are morphing as roles shift and feminism promotes more gender equality. For this study, however, in the world of Okonkwo and Unoka, there was no middle ground - the stereotypes do apply and Achebe used them to separate the worlds of his characters. Along these lines,

there was no room for any middle ground of any kind in Achebe's text - no metamorphosing of genders, nor of class, nor of the race - all were created as separate entities and institutions. The coming of the colonizers blurred the lines of acceptance and gender but effectively demarcated the line of a race and black/white relations in colonial Africa. In Okonkwo's life before the colonizers came he learned how to control the reins of ultimate power within his clan - if a man was to be seen as successful and powerful it was imperative to be a warrior - able and willing to cut off an enemy's head as the spoils of war.

Once the colonizers came, however, Okonkwo's efforts at violence are undercut by the strength of the English forces and the disloyalty of his clan. Okonkwo loses his hold on the masculine power he fought his entire life to hold onto. In this example, we can identify the stereotypes Achebe was challenging us within his text: If a man chooses to embrace peace and music over violence and power as a way of life, as did Unoka - then he is condemned as agbala. If a man is a warrior and participates in violent acts - he is a brave leader. In this way, masculine traits are aligned with power and success while feminine traits are aligned with weakness and failure.

Anne McClintock addresses the binary concept of the male savage to the civilized female in her postcolonial reference, Imperial Leather. In an ironic twist to preconceived notions of colonial violence, she argues that the mission of civilizing forays is feminine. In modern western history, we often remember the violence that was waged by the "civilizing mission" of the imperialists against the "savages" of the world in an effort to save, educate and then exploit them. But in an ironic reassignment of gender roles, McClintock suggests that the mission of colonization was one of feminine nature - to bring peace, religion and education, to uplift the "savages" out of the darkness of their ways so they could see the light of the

English way of benevolence and civility. In a reassignment of traditionally held preconceptions of imperialism, Gayatri Spivak also supports this construct:

> ...for feminist individualism in the age of imperialism, is preciselythe making of human beings, the constitution and "interpellation" of the subject not only as individual but as "individualist." This stake is represented on two registers: childbearing and soul making. The first is domestic-society through-sexual-reproduction cathected as "companionate love"; the second is the imperialist project cathected as civil-society-through-social mission (244).

However, attention needs to be drawn to the contradiction of this supposed feminine intentions of colonial intervention and the twin tool of military mightwhich complemented the so called peaceful intentions of colonial rule. According to Ekwe-Ekwe:

> As history has shown, each and every invader of some other person's land is potentially militarily superior to the would-be victims… It is this fact of African history that Chinua Achebe captures so dramatically in Okonkwo's steadfast response to the British invasion of Umuofia".

With this assertion, Ekwe-Ekwe rightly emphasizes the scale and violence of the genocide visited on the Igbo, the Yoruba and other ethnic groups in the era of slavery and later, state colonialism. Meanwhile, Achebe gives very little space to the history of organized resistance among the Igbo even though the story of Nigerian nation-building he tells through the experiences of the Okonkwo family could be seen as "courageous".

Ironically, it is interesting to note that Okonkwo was modeled as a violent colonizer of his own family and people. McClintock understands this dynamic of a familial gender based hierarchy of power as well and we can use it to compare Okonkwo's rule over his family with the colonizer's oppressive hand over the Igbo:

> The metaphoric depiction of social hierarchy as natural and familial —the "national family," the global "family of nations," the colony as a "family of black children ruled over by a white father" depended in this way on the prior naturalizing of the social subordination of women and children within the domestic sphere (McClintock, 358).

This observation is critical to understanding the complexities of Achebe's binaries in that it aligns Okonkwo with the colonizer as a black male ruling over his family with a heavy fist.

The juxtaposition is that the parallel dominant colonizer is white and rules over the natives with a feminist doctrine unless provoked to unleash its masculine prowess. If we look deeper at the underlying metanarrative Achebe has woven for critiques, perhaps not all is as black and white as initially suspected: we see the colonist not as a masculine force that overthrows Okonkwo's power but as a peaceable feminist force that slowly wins the acceptance of those Okonkwo has wronged. Here we see support for the argument that it is the feminine subversive power that tugs at the threads of Okonkwo's masculine persona and culture until it completely unravels both the clan and the man that intended to lead it.

As has been mentioned before, Okonkwo's tendency to control his family through stereotypically masculine traits is not of his own choosing but rather based out of internal fear stemming from his experiences as a child. In essence, Achebe pardons Okonkwo for his anger and violence citing the effect that the embarrassment his father caused him to be at the roots of his cruel demeanour towards his own children. This opens a pathway for the fear of a subversive feminist uprising to take place within his own self:

> Perhaps down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his wholelife was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness…It was not external but lay deep within himself. It was the fear of himself, lest he should be found to resemble his father…he still remembered how hehad suffered when a playmate had told him that his fatherwas *agbala*(Achebe, 152).

Here, Okonkwo's drive for power and violence was actually a result of fear and anxiety. As do many individuals who are bullied early in life, Okonkwo suffered from low self-esteem and worried about how others viewed him. Okonkwo's actions were the direct result of a childhood humiliation: another boy made fun of his father. "That was how Okonkwo came to know that agbala was not only another name for a woman, it could also mean a man who had taken no title" (Achebe, 152). Okonkwo was bullied as a child and made to feel embarrassed by his father by another little boy who displayed cruel masculine traits and taunted Okonkwo

for his father's perceived deficiencies. Out of that incident and its subsequent effects on Okonkwo's self-esteem, arose the birth of Okonkwo's masculine insecurity. If we accept this model, Okonkwo can be seen throughout the text as a little boy fighting back using the opposite traits that caused his father humiliation. The terrorist that he is, as he becomes an adult is a mask he has created to hide his fear and his shame - rather than the easily assumed title of maturity or satisfaction with his life. We can recognize this event as the start of a latent undercurrent of femininity in Okonkwo that he spends his life trying to quash. By abusing all those around him for their feminine tendencies, he is able to push down his own weaknesses that threaten to bubble up and shame him by aligning him with his father.

Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, shares many character traits with Okonkwo's father, Unoka. Okonkwo tries to force him to act like a more masculine boy his whole life but Nwoye finds it difficult to inhabit this role that Okonkwo is trying to enforce. Nwoye has to pretend to be masculine to appease Okonkwo and deflect his anger. He hides from Okonkwo the traits within that would bring the disapproval and wrath of his father. For example, instead of enjoying tales of war and violence told by Okonkwo, Nwoye loves listening to mother-lore stories told by the women of the compound: "Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and violent, but somehow he still preferred the stories that his mother used to tell, and which she no doubt still told to the younger children" (Achebe, 578). Achebe outlines the tale of the vulture in this section - a story meant for women and children to hear, not men. The text continues in its description of Nwoye's affinity for his mother and female stories:

> That was the kind of story Nwoye loved. But he now knew they werefor foolish women and children, and he knew that his father wantedhim to be a man. And so he feigned that he no longer cared for women's stories, and when he did thus he saw that his father was pleased andno longer rebuked him or beat him (Achebe, 589).

Nwoye grows up with the demoralizing knowledge that his father disapproves of him from a

very young age:

> Nwoye was then twelve years old but was already causing his fathergreat anxiety for his incipient laziness. At any rate, that was how itlooked to his father, and he sought to correct him by constant nagging and beating. And so, Nwoye was developing into a sad-faced youth (Achebe, 161).

Okonkwo equates incipient laziness with Nwoye's tendency for femininity and it scares Okonkwo because it reminds him of his father. Throughout the text Achebe deliberately chooses the word *anxiety* over anger or disappointment. Okonkwo feels that anxiety bubbling up in his own heart out of fear of the humiliation he felt when teased about his father being *agbala*. He will never escape that shame and so his anxiety carries over to Nwoye's actions as well. If Nwoye becomes *agbala* like Unoka was, perhaps that means Okonkwo is at risk of becoming *agbala* as well.

Okonkwo reacts with violence and severe disapproval if provoked by any femininity shown by his sons by chastising them and beating them. This correlates with the way the natives are treated by the colonizers but in a reverse gender dynamic: the colonizers react with violence if the natives show any masculine tendencies - if they fight back, if they resist, or if they taunt the white colonizers: "The court messengers did not like to be called ashy buttocks, and they beat the men. But the song spread in Umuofia" (Achebe, 1902). The colonized people are praised for feminine traits such as acting submissive and not questioning the power of the church or the new nation.

Nwoye had an important relationship with Okonkwo's adopted son, Ikemefuna. Perhaps, the pivotal action of fear-based violence exhibited by Okonkwo in the entire novel - by killing Ikemefuma –Okonkwo robs Nwoye of his happiness. Nwoye found safety and joy in his experiences with Ikemefuma - something he never got from Okonkwo. Ikemefuma treated Nwoye with kindness, acted as an older brother and possibly a positive father figure and role

model: “He was like an elder brother to Nwoye, and from the very first seemed to have kindled a new fire in the younger boy. He made him feel grown-up.” (574). Okonkwo ruptures their happiness by attempting to frighten the two boys into acting manly. They are forced to feign masculine characteristics to appease their overbearing father. They are encouraged by Okonkwo to “grumble about women and their troubles” (Achebe, 578), initiating within them a disrespect for the women in their world who have loved and cared for them. This is Okonkwo’s tactic of intiating his boys to be masculine - he uses fear and violence to suppress their naturally feminine characteristics while at the same time nudging the idea of considering the women in their lives to be less than worthy of their attention and respect.

In a parallel yet opposite gender construct of imposed gender pressure by the oppressor upon the oppressed, the colonizers, in their quest to shape the attitudes and loyalties of their new nation, taught their converts to dislike the masculine members of their former tribe in order to be embraced by a welcoming, feminine yet undeniably imperialistic power.

Unlike Okonkwo, Nwoye questions many of the societal traditions of his clan and the masculine constructs of his society that are seen as status quo. He grapples with the religious traditions of his tribe and does not blindly accept certain acts of cruelty as justifiable simply because they are the accepted tradition of the Igbo. He does not understand why the tribal medicine leaders would leave crying newborn twins in the bush to die as is their custom. “Nwoye had heard that twins had been put in earthenware pots and thrown into the forest, but he had never yet come across them” (Achebe, 677). He does not understand familial violence nor wish to partake in it. In a climax of inter-family violence acted out by Okonkwo, Nwoye is devastated by the loss of Ikemefuma at the hands of his father and does

not understand why Ikemefuna has to be sacrificed to solve the matter of the grievance between the Igbo and Ikemefuna's tribe. In this passage, Ezuedu informs Okonkwo that Ikemefuna is to be killed:

> Yes, Umuofia has decided to kill him. The Oracle of the Hills and theCaves has pronounced it. They will take him outside Umuofia as is thecustom, and kill him there. But I want you to have nothing to do with it.He calls you father (Achebe, 628).

But Okonkwo cannot hold back and strikes Ikemefuna down. He did not have to because another man had already struck Ikemefuna as they walked along the path. Earlier, Okonkwo was explicitly told not to by Ezuedu: "Do not bear a hand in his death" (Achebe, 628). Despite all this admonition not to strike Ikemefuna, Okonkwo cannot help himself and in the end, he is the one who spearheads the murder of Ikemefuna. He could not help his actions, but because he is too afraid to be seen as weak. But his people would not have seen him as weak - they would have known that killing his own adopted son was a crime that would anger the Earth goddess. This much Obierika tells Okonkwo: "If I were you I would have stayed at home. What you have done will not please the Earth. It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families" (Achebe, 735). To this Okonkwo tries to claim that it was not really his decision to make, that he was just a messenger of what the Oracle commanded: "A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm" (Achebe, 735). But the cold truth is that Okonkwo did not need to strike him. Another member of the party had already hit him with his machete explaining why Ikemefuna cries to Okonkwo to save him: "My father they have killed me!" as he ran towards him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak" (Achebe, 671). In this exchange, we see the real reason Okonkwo acts with violence against his own adopted son - fear - fear of his own femininity, of his own weakness, his own terror of being seen as agbala.

Okonkwo's anxiety causes him to act against his rational reasoning and restrictions for his behaviour. He cannot control himself or the anxiety from his father's legacy which haunts him. The colonizers, on the other hand, only use violence when "necessary". They do not use it reactively, as Okonkwo often does, but as a calculated tool to control those that they wish to convert and control. Whichever way, both colonizers and Okonkwo equally deploy violence.

In this major event of the novel, out of his anti-feminine fear, we see the lengths Okonkwo is driven to. This unnecessary action, in which Okonkwo kills a member of the family, creates an irreparable wound and instils distrust between Nwoye and Okonkwo. There is a change in Nwoye - like something breaking inside his heart - which is never to be reversed. "As soon as his father walked in, that night, Nwoye knew Ikemefuna had been killed, and something seemed to give way inside him, like the snapping of a tightened bow. He did not cry. He just hung limp" (Achebe, 677). Nwoye's suspicion of his father as a violent oppressor has shifted to evidence-based fear. By killing Nwoye's brother and best friend Ikemefuna, Okonkwo has crossed a line which Nwoye cannot forgive and eventually causes Nwoye to seek answers and protection from the missionaries. Okonkwo loses Nwoye's loyalty when he kills Ikemefuma. By the time the missionaries enter their world, Nwoye's mind was already open and available to be influenced by a religion that was advertised as feminine and gentle. With the introduction to a Christian God, Nwoye was able to find the answers he was looking for that Okonkwo and the Igbo could never provide.

It is interesting to note how Okonkwo lets Nwoye go to the colonizers without killing him and the question becomes: what did Achebe want to tell us by having Okonkwo let go of control in this way? It could be argued that he surrenders power over him because he knows

he has already lost him. It would be more shameful to fight to keep him and lose rather than let go and blame Nwoye and his traits as a bad son for the loss. Okonkwo knows he risks embarrassment in his tribe and may be seen as a weak, impotent father who could not control his family. Therefore, Okonkwo decides to accept the loss, turn the other cheek and chastise Nwoye as a "woman" and an abomination. In this scene, he brings his other remaining sons into his obi and warns them not to be like Nwoye:

> You have all seen the great abomination of your brother.Now he is no longer my son or your brother. I will only have a son who is a man, who will hold his head up among my people. If any one of you prefers to be a woman, let him follow Nwoye now while I am alive so that I can curse him. If you turn against me when I am dead I will visit you andbreak your neck(Achebe, 20.7).

In this manner, Okonkwo instils fear in his other children and reassures himself that Nwoye was flawed - not he Okonkwo or his actions. He retains his perceived power by assigning the guilt to Nwoye instead of himself. One could argue that Okonkwo does not kill Nwoye because of the guilt he carries for killing one's son keeps him from killing another. Unfortunately for Okonkwo, losing Nwoye to the colonizers sets off a downward spiral which ultimately brings about his humiliation and death. This loss of Nwoye signifies the beginning of the end for Okonkwo – he never regains the control that he depended on to maintain the role of oppressor within his family.

Okonkwo envisions an intolerable scenario after the loss of Nwoye where he himself would be dead and his whole family would be converted with Nwoye to the coloniser's religion: "Suppose when he died all his male children decided to follow Nwoye's steps and abandon their ancestors? Okonkwo felt a cold shudder run through him at the terrible prospect, like the prospect of annihilation." Okonkwo then imagines himself and his tribe around a fire of ash while his children pray to a white man's god. With this image, he declares: "If such a things were ever to happen, he, Okonkwo, would wipe them off the face of the earth"

(Achebe, 1694). At this moment Achebe foreshadows for us the ending of the story while Okonkwo foresees his own demise: “And immediately Okonkwo’s eyes were opened and he saw the whole matter clearly. Living fire begets cold impotent ash. He sighed again, deeply” (Achebe, 1694). We can infer from Okonkwo’s earlier reminder to us that he himself represents fire. He was called “a flaming fire” (Achebe, 1694). As such, fire gave life to a son, Nwoye, who to him represents cold ash, an abomination, a child that as far as Okonkwo is concerned is dead. But on a deeper plane, we can read that Okonkwo’s life of fire can only end in one way: cold ash - like a body hung from a rafter -powerless in death after becoming powerless to invoke change in life.

Like Nwoye, but unlike Okonkwo, the English missionaries are also against violence and use it only when they deem it is necessary to protect themselves. The missionaries view the men of the Igbo as violent people and consider their civilizing mission to be the conversion of the clan to a peaceful, benevolent society with white rule. The missionaries use feminine tactics to begin to gain trust and usurp power over the Igbo men and people by converting first the members of the clan who had been ostracized by their own society. They take in the feminine-gendered members of the tribe: mothers who had given birth to and suffered the loss of twins, the outcasts or osu of the tribe, and some of the effeminate men looking for peace and answers, like Nwoye. If we explore the idea that by welcoming those who were unwelcome in their tribe, the colonists effectively usurped the power from the male dominant members of the clan without even having to confront them or use violence. Thus, the colonists gain masculine power by using subversive feminine actions (Jeyifo, 847-858).

Once the mission is established we find a disillusioned Nwoye walking by the white man’s church, hearing its welcoming music and unable to resist the temptation to go inside to be a

part of it. Nwoye's search for answers in reaction to the disagreement he feels for the spiritual actions of his religious elders and disjunction he feels with the morals of his tribe begins his meeting of Mr. Kiaga and his interest in a Christian education. He is intrigued by the idea of a benevolent god who does not punish his disciples. Nwoye finds a father figure in Mr. Kiaga and the welcome safety in the open arms of the church. Nwoye had never been accepted for who he was by his father and had been bullied and beaten by Okonkwo for his personality. He had pretended his whole life to be masculine like Okonkwo and was made to fear for his life if he failed to feign dislike for all things feminine. Once Ikemefuma was gone, Nwoye knew his life was at risk as well at the hands of his father. Nwoye was more like Unoka and his mother than Okonkwo – a peace-loving, gentle soul looking for acceptance instead of ostracization in his own clan. Because he could not find a place in his own society - he searches and finally finds safety and acceptance in the church of the colonial power. In this model of Achebe's binaries, we again see the feminine subversive power usurp power from the masculine oppressor, Okonkwo. The winning power structure in this interaction is the church and the missionaries: accepting a feminine-gendered Nwoye into its feminine mission out of the hands of a black oppressor- Okonkwo loses his last stroke of power to the new oppressor - the feminine white gains strength over the masculine black. A new oppressor over Nwoye is taking shape.

In Achebe's metanarrative of oppression and gender binaries, we do see evidence of masculine actions being used by the colonists in certain instances through the ruthless imperialistic project (personified in the novel by the District Commissioner) which regards the autochthonous cultures as "primitive" (148). To achieve this, "feminine kindness and open-mindedness" were used to entice converts from the Igbo while the main intention is to

subjugate the indigenous peoples to British colonial rule. For example, if a member of the clan comes peacefully and without resistance, they are welcomed into the arms of a God who exhibits feminine traits and is all accepting. However, if they come to the whites with an itinerary of anger or violence, they are at risk of being captured, jailed, humiliated, tortured, and possibly killed. Nwoye comes in peace and is accepted into the female space of the mission. Okonkwo comes in violence and is shut out by violence. Once this happens - he realizes his clan will not stand in violence with him against the colonizers - he knows he is no longer in charge of his own destiny if he stays alive. If he were to survive, it would mean adjusting and acting as a feminine-gendered member of the new society. The only way he knows to preserve his masculine heritage is to end things with him still in charge. Armed with this as his only acceptable option, he chooses the "cowardly" act of killing himself instead of subjecting himself to the fate of the white, feminine civilizing mission despite its obvious masculine and violent traits as well. We can infer from this model that if Okonkwo had been able to accept a feminine relationship with the colonizers, as did Nwoye, he could have been accepted and survived. But we know Okonkwo had lived his entire life in fear of becoming like his father, like his son, like a woman - like the feminine tactics of the imperial mission. He chooses to hold out as a "savage" and dies alone in a final action of the violent and masculine history of his people. After his death, there is no more clan, no more "men". We see that instead of the memory of a proud warrior, he will become just a story for the DC, while Nwoye and his wives and family are embraced and swallowed up by the feminine mission. This was Okonkwo's worst nightmare, and he himself foretold it in chilling realism: "Fire begets cold ash." (Achebe, 1694). Ultimately, he knew what his life of fire would elicit and in the end, his own body of infamous masculine fire was the one to lie in the cold ash of

the earth - not his father's, not the missionaries, not Nwoye's - but his own.

The heart of the problem in Things Fall Apart lies the question of how to interpret the reasons for Okonkwo's downfall or fate. The novel seems, from a narrowly historicist standpoint, to propose that Okonkwo's demise is the direct result of the material fact of the British colonial enterprise. Yet the text also invites one to view Okonkwo's story through the prism of tragedy, whether classical or not, and then to consider what this reveals about the kind of universe humankind inhabits. Such consideration necessarily leads to the examination of a number of other pertinent aspects of the novel, which are liable to complicate the picture still further. However, it is important to acknowledge that the primary motive or cause for Okonkwo's destruction must be located in the fact of British colonisation of Igboland. Put bluntly, if the British had not come to Umuofia, the clan would not have fallen apart and Okonkwo would not have been led to commit suicide. Of course, it is true that there are flaws and contradictions in Umuofian clan tradition which give rise to internal tensions and which alienate certain members of the society. These include such specific instances as the throwing away of twins, the 'irrational', as it will seem now, taboo of the osu or outcasts, as well as, at times, the apparently "senseless" decrees of the gods and oracle, which produce fear and uncertainty rather than stability in the society. More generally, there is the societal privileging of masculine, warrior-like qualities which leads to the marginalisation of the gentle and the weak, such as Unoka and Nwoye; of the unsuccessful, who are labelled efulefu, or worthless men; and, most notably, of women, who are everywhere rendered subordinate to patriarchal domination. There is also the instance of Okonkwo's seven-year banishment from the clan, which seems an overly harsh penalty for an inadvertent crime, and which causes Obierika, at least, to question the fitness of the

punishment.

In essence, one of the major reasons why the Igbo society was unable to protect its culture, traditions and religion from missionaries and colonialism was its rigid conception of masculinity. Christianity assimilated everything that was considered odious, cancerous, throwaway by the Igbos—the outcast (osu), women who had been the most compromising victims of patriarchy, and tortured souls like Nwoye who finally found a space which gave a voice for the criticism of sinister practices. Everything that was broken, battered and overridden by the obsessive exaltation of masculinity, found a space to accumulate and build up. The Igbo society failed to recognise the cracks within. It failed to remedy its diseased state and reinvent. It never relented its grasp on individuals like Okonkwo who grew, lived and got distorted in its calcified cell. The chief conclusion here is that although the overall perspective of the novel is highly complex, it does not necessarily exonerate both the colonizer and the colonized from the contradictions found in *Things Fall Apart*.

CHAPTER FOUR
Deconstruction of the Instabilities of Meanings in *No Longer at Ease*

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

- T.S Elliot*: 'The Journey of the Magi'*

4.0 Introduction

The above quotation summarises the events in *NoLongeratEase*. It epitomizes the cultural conflicts of the old and the new 'dispensation' and this restlessness is resolved with a wish for another 'death'. This wish suggests that already the 'characters' have suffered some other 'death'. The novel, *NoLongeratEase* is a story that carries on from Things Fall Apart; it

appeared in 1960 as a sequel to *ThingsFallApart*. While *Things Fall Apart* talked partly about sexism in traditional society and how the coming of missionaries to Nigeria completely challenged and changed the Nigerian (Eastern) way of life, consequent upon which a lot of people were unable to adapt, by clearly showing how the effects of colonization and racism affect people. Here, Obi Okonkwo, the grandson of Okonkwo; the son of a Nigerian catechist in the Anglican Church, the central figure of Things Fall Apart. Whilst grandfather Okonkwo had resisted the incursion of Christianity and colonialism in Umuofia, the village of which he was an elder, Obi Okonkwo is the product of that incursion; missionary school education and the beneficiary of a local scholarship which enabled him to study abroad in Great Britain. Obi Okonkwo's scholarship is paid for by the Umuofia Progressive Union (UPU), a collective of Umuofians who have moved out into the burgeoning urban centres of Nigeria. They realize that to have an Umuofian voice in Nigerian politics and administration they must ensure that the brightest of the next generation receives a British education, thereby gaining access to the colonial civil service. That brightest is Obi Okonkwo, the first recipient of the UPU's educational scholarship.

The UPU had intended Obi Okonkwo to read the law, 'so that when he returned he would handle all their land cases against their neighbours' (8), but instead he chose to read English. Returning to Nigeria Obi Okonkwo settles in Lagos and takes up a position in the civil service following his examination by the Public Service Commission. He also had a sexual relationship with a girl, Clara, whom he falls in love with but who is an Osu, an outcast. Obi Okonkwo is determined to marry her despite the fact that both the UPU and his family oppose the marriage on the basis of her Osu status. Meanwhile, Obi Okonkwo falls into debt as his costs mount up – tax returns, financial support for his family, running costs for his car.

When Clara becomes pregnant he pays for her abortion but the couple split up. At the same time, his mother dies and soon after he begins to accept bribes from those wishing for their children to be considered by the board for scholarships.

The overt cause for Obi Okonkwo taking the bribes is as a result of the financial situation, which Achebe takes pains to enumerate throughout the novel, demonstrating how the high salary he earns, with high expectations from his family and the UPU, both expecting financial support (he is expected to pay back his scholarship in instalments) and with regard to his dress and deportment (for example owning a car). Clara too loans him £50, which is promptly stolen from the glove compartment of the car, leaving him in even greater debt. However, throughout the novel, Obi Okonkwo has always argued against accepting bribes of any kind and prides himself early in the novel on his refusal to accept them. He had even read a paper at the Nigerian Students' Union in London against corruption among the older generation of Nigerians in administrative power (44). Why then does Obi Okonkwo capitulate? We might take into consideration the recent loss of Clara and his mother, the two women most important to him. Or we might argue, as various critics have done, that the dilettante environment of Lagos has had a deleterious effect on his morals. But neither of these explanations seems satisfactory. Clearly, corruption is seen as the central theme of this novel. Ironically, however, everyone loves to joke about Nigerian scams and the daily corruption spread over third world countries. But why did this happen? This question is beautifully answered in *No Longer at Ease*. However, the question left in my mind is: was bribery hard-wired into this society from the time of creation (the current 419 scams don't help dispel that feeling) or was it brought about by the inequality that was deliberately

fostered, first by tribal chieftains and later by colonial masters, where an expanding divide between the rulers and the ruled was allowed to develop for generations?

Giving the above brief outline of the novel's story is necessary in order to examine Achebe's engagement with questions of judgment and precedents: legal, literary, popular, esoteric, fictional and factual precedents. This would also help in analysing this text from triple dimensions: primarily, the issue of regarding corruption and its concept in the two conflicting cultures, the Western and the African, and how the central character and people around him view the issue of corruption. In the end, it is hoped that the link between the incessant mention of 'bribery' as rooted in the 'African culture', which is seen as normal appeasement but abnormal and even a crime in the Western value system will become obvious. These differences and opposition in cultural value push Obi Okonkwo into the trade that destroys him; furthermore, there is father and son conflict expressed in the question of marriage and the issue of the caste system of the Igbo people. Obi Okonkwo decides to fight, tooth and nail, any opposition against his decision to marry an Osu - Clara. Lastly, it is important to look at Obi Okonkwo's tragedy as not only personal to him but again to the people of Umuofia whose only son occupying the highest position in a new world is crumbling.

4.1 Judging the Judgement

Gilles Deleuze (18 January 1925 – 4 November 1995) was a French philosopher who, from the early 1960s until his death in 1995, wrote on philosophy, literature, film, and fine art. His most popular works were the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), both co-written with the Psychoanalyst, Félix Guattari. His metaphysical treatise *Difference and Repetition* (1968) is considered by many

scholars to be his masterpiece. A. W. Moore(1969) citing Bernard Williams's criteria for a great thinker, ranks Deleuze among the "greatest philosophers". His work has influenced a variety of disciplines across philosophy and art, including literary theory, post-structuralism and postmodernism. Deleuze's poststructuralist process philosophy has a stronger emphasis upon the singular, and a notably more radical slant – foregrounding as it does notions of transformation, creativity and difference. For Deleuze, it is primarily innovation that should be taken as the mark of thought (Deleuze, 2008, p.15).

Deleuze approach is diverse, ranging from incisive methodological critique to highly performative texts in which language is used in an effective fashion to engage and stir the reader - enticing and provoking them to feel the force of a problem (Williams, 2008, p.14). To Deleuze, all identities are effects of difference. Identities are neither logically nor metaphysically prior to the difference, Deleuze argues, "given that there exist differences of nature between things of the same genus." (Desert Island, p. 33). That is, not only are no two things ever the same, the categories we use to identify individuals in the first place derive from differences. Accordingly, he suggests that philosophies oriented by communication have 'never produced a single concept.' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.6). With this in mind, it paves way for an application of the post-structuralist thought of Deleuze to the discourse on judging the judgement in Achebe's No Longer at Ease.

To do this, Alexandre Lefebvre's (2008) exploration of the creativity of jurisprudence in The Image of Law: Deleuze, Bergson, Spinoza which is the first book to examine law through the thought of twentieth-century French philosopher Gilles Deleuze will be examined. Lefebvre challenges the truism that judges must apply and not create law. In a plain and lucid style, he

activates Deleuze's key themes, his critique of dogmatic thought, the theory of time, and the concept of the encounter within the context of adjudication in order to claim that judgment has an inherent, and not an accidental or wilful, creativity. The book begins with a critique of the neo-Kantian tradition in legal theory (Hart, Dworkin, and Habermas) and proceeds to draw on Bergson's theory of perception and memory and Spinoza's conception of ethics in order to frame creativity as a necessary feature of judgment.

Essentially, Lefebvre's (2008) idea of this creativity revolves around what he calls, in Bergsonian fashion, an 'encounter'. This encounter occurs where a potential case cannot be readily subsumed to the precedents of case law and therefore demands an imaginative spiral of association, circling through the information presented and back into the judge's repertoire of precedents in order to construct a (new) case. Creativity occurs in this formation of the case: in the judge's associative manoeuvres to fix the facts presented into the form of a case that is available for resolution. Rather than identifying creativity in the resolution of a given case, Lefebvre argues that in fact, the resolution is inherent in the recognizable case. Once the case has been formed it contains within it the formula for its resolution – a case is something that can be judged. Creativity, therefore, occurs not in the judgment itself but in the construction of something judge-able. Structuring his argument around an examination of Deleuze's various writings on law and judgment, Lefebvre thus reads Deleuze against the grain to demonstrate the creativity of jurisprudence. Lefebvre's argument then is twofold: firstly, that the law can be, and at times inevitably is, creative; and secondly that despite Deleuze's particular critique of the law as wholly uncreative, in fact, his writings gesture to how and where that creativity takes place.

Whilst Lefebvre's arguments about Deleuze are appreciably innovative, his argument about the creativity of jurisprudence is rather less startling to anyone with even limited familiarity with the colonial law. His argument recalls, in particular, the many discussions in legal journals at the mid-century over the interpretation of the 'reasonable man' in the administration of law in the colonies. Who is the 'reasonable man' in the colonies, they ask? The reasonable man, whose paradigmatic status was itself a contested subject for English law was all the more problematic for the colonial law when the idea of a 'reasonable native' was presumed in and of itself to be questionable. Should the 'native' be held to the same standard of reasonableness as the Englishman? And if not, what standard of the reason was valid? This question became even more complicated if the parties involved came from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds as could often be the case in places such as Nigeria, whose shifting borders encompassed multiple languages, religions, and cultures so that even the application of the customary law could be problematic.

Furthermore, the idea of the reasonable man, as a paradigm for Nigerian law was given another twist by the fact that despite a series of legal reforms that coincided with the various changes to geographical administrative boundaries (as indicated in Galloway's jurisdiction of 'Lagos and the Southern Cameroons') the law that was to be applied was English law as it stood in 1900. Thus the law to which the reasonable man was bound was a law that remained fixed in time even as reasonable men changed and were changed by their temporally evolving contexts. As a result, the reasonable man of Nigeria in 1956 could still be held to an English law of 1900 that, in England, might have already been altered or abolished altogether. The dissonance of such a situation is self-evident.

Thus, the idea and the legal ideal of the reasonable man are in many ways at the root of Achebe's No Longer at Ease. For instance, Obi wants to embody that legal ideal of the reasonable man, as he appears in English law. His failure to do so provokes us to engage with his story as a Lefebvrian judge engages with an encounter. Achebe presents us with a figure whose crime demands to be judged but because of the evidence laid before us, it cannot be easily subsumed to a singular family of precedent(s). We read the novel looping back repeatedly in order to make a case – that is to say something that can be judged and therefore something that can be resolved – from the material narrated and from the precedents to which that material gestures or which it causes us to recall. Lefebvre's model of creative judgment helps us to recognize this process in Achebe's novel.

The frame-setting of Obi's trial encourages us to read the life narrated within it for evidence, by which to construct his case better than his judge. Galloway's statement of incomprehension that he 'cannot comprehend' how Obi 'could have done this' (p.2) implies his failure to construct a meaningful, a 'comprehensible', a case from the evidence laid before him. Achebe invites us to assume that rather than entering into a Lefebvrian creative process the judge gives up, unable to resolve the fact that, a man such as Obi could actirrationally. A further challenge to us is presented in the judgment of Obi's boss, Green, who claims to understand Obi's actions perfectly: 'the African (Obi) is corrupt through and through' (p.3). However, Green's explanation of why this is so being cut short and we are left only with his racist generalization and a lack of corroboration for the claim. Achebe invites us to do better. Achebe goes further to suggest not simply that we attempt to judge Obi more attentively, but that we turn our judgment on Nigeria's legal system itself. This point is a crucial one for Achebe at the moment of independence, the same year in which *No*

Longer at Ease was published. With independence came the potential for and the challenge of a creative response to the judicial process. Inherited from the colonial administration was a legal system that had been patched together and repeatedly reworked from English law and a colonial pastiche of indigenous legal processes. This inheritance itself presented an 'encounter', a legal system that was not like any other, however much it had drawn on aspects of English law and colonial law in other colonies. The Nigerian legal system at the moment of independence demanded, an encounter, the exercise of imaginative response, creative judgment as to its own nature.

To understand this, turn in the novel it is first necessary to examine the presentation of Obi, and how that presentation demands our attentive judgment. Consequently, an attempt will be made to focus on three possible sets of precedents – extratextual, internal and literal precedents – from which we might construct a judge-able case for Obi's life and actions. It is worth pausing for a moment, however, to consider the work that the term precedent is doing in this context. Following Lefebvre, a precedent is to be established through the act of judgment. If the act of judgment is what defines a case as such, that is to say, identifies a case from the competing versions of events presented for judgment, then a precedent emerges as a product of this process: a precedent is established in the mutual formation of case and judgment. When we refer to the precedent we are therefore referring to a paradigm for judgment that has been defined in a prior judgment of a similar case. Commonly, however, the fact that the case itself only emerges as a case in the process of judgment goes unseen. Instead, the case is understood as auxiliary to its judgment in the establishment of precedent. By contrast, following the implications of Lefebvre's argument, the term will be recalibrated

here to focus attention on the case itself as a source of precedent, which demands a creative response in judgment.

In establishing an extra-textual precedent, it is instructive to examine how far Obi's story conforms to the reality of Lagos and civil service life in the final years of the colonial administration. One useful source of information comes from a qualitative survey of the text on the context of the civil service employees conducted by George D. Jenkins in the first years of independence. All those surveyed were in the service prior to independence and so their answers give a good idea of the backgrounds, education, training, and interests of civil servants at the time in which the novel is set (i.e. 1956–7). What their answers show is that while Obi conforms to some of the norms of the civil service, Achebe ensures he is recognizably out of the ordinary as well. Not that he is unrealistic or unbelievable, rather he is shown to be of an unusual kind. For example, of the 35 men surveyed the only one has a father in the ministry, although the overwhelming majority note Protestantism under faith (their choices are Protestant, Catholic or Muslim). Interestingly this respondent is one of the few who have no written Yoruba (or, in his case, any other written Nigerian language), indicating a mission school education from the start (presumably Anglican although his 'some written' French could potentially indicate a Jesuit education – his mark over the religious affiliation question seems to denote either Catholic or a rejection of all listed religions). By far the most common paternal profession is farming, with others in the trade, and several in some form of the administrative post (from Prison Warden to School Inspector).

All but one of the men surveyed who indicate what subjects they studied (and almost all of them do) pursued vocational or at least vocationally relevant degrees of some kind or another, whether Economics, Law, or Agriculture, and so on. Even the one Humanities scholar of the group, who studied History at Edinburgh following the war, continued on to do a PGCE in London before returning to take up a position as an education officer in the Ministry of Education at Ibadan. Obi's choice to study English is thus clearly an unusual one. However, despite these differences Obi is shown in other respects to be an average civil servant: almost all of those surveyed by Jenkins took some form of further or higher education qualification overseas, many joined the Nigerian Union of Students or other associations, and a good number were members of other local organisations back in Nigeria similar to the novel's Umuofia Progressive Union. Obi's crucial differences then are his church background and his choice of degree.

Obi Okonkwo's predicament with Clara's pregnancy is also not unheard of at this time, although pregnancy out of wedlock was neither sought nor approved. Thus, Obi and Clara's trouble is not simply a matter of star-crossed lovers, with Clara's abortion they risk tangling with the law. This is spelt out to them very clearly by the first doctor whom they approach and who turns them down:

> I cannot help you. What you are asking me to do is a criminal offence for which I could go to jail and lose my license. But apart from that I have my reputation to safeguard – twenty years' practice without a single blot. … And in all those years I have not had anything to do with these shady dealings (p. 165).

A second, younger doctor is rather more pragmatic: he said he had no taste for the kind of job they were asking him to do.

> It is not medicine, he said. I did not spend seven years in England to study that.

> However, I shall do it for you if you are prepared to pay my fee. Thirty pounds. To be paid before I do anything. No checks. Raw cash (p. 166).

The pride expressed here is of a different kind to that of the older doctor who had turned them down. The younger doctor believes his reputation is established by his English degree, not 'twenty years' practice without a single blot', and perhaps since blot or no blot the fact of his English degree cannot change he is more willing to take the risk for 'raw cash'. The Daily Express article makes manifest the risks that all parties take in proceeding with the abortion, not least Clara.

Clara herself tends to fare poorly at the hands of those critiques who read the novel as a satirical critique of the immorality of Lagos life. Certainly, Achebe presents her as typically susceptible to the delights of Lagos. However, her typicality is primarily constructed in relation to popular fiction rather than to popular culture, more broadly speaking. Clara's honesty about her Osu status, her willingness to persist with Obi despite their problems, and her clarity about these, present her as rather more complex than the stereotypical Lagosian wily harlot (commercial sex workers) of popular culture. However, the typicality of Clara's interests is born out by the regular and extensive cinema listings carried in Lagos newspapers of the time and, for example, by the prizes on offer at the Miss Ijebu Competition advertised in the Daily Express just eleven days after the article about Sadatu Ehimai's death. The competition, held to coincide with a 'fabulous dance' at the opening of the Paramount Hotel, offered prizes of "£100 cash, Sewing Machines, Lady Bicycles, Trinkets, free trips and free Cinema tickets for a year" (p. 6). The combination of dancing, cinema tickets, cash and the means to make dresses is a potent one that appeals to the stereotypical Lagosian girl, and one which tallies closely with Clara's mores in the novel.

What these various examples from the Daily Express and Jenkins' survey illustrate is the ways in which Obi and his life's story is both plausible and yet not wholly conventional: he is different enough to engage our interest; his predicament with Clara's abortion is risky yet hardly unheard of; Clara herself conforms to type as much as she goes beyond it. In this way, these examples establish the kinds of precedent, defined above, which rest not on the judgment of a case but on the facts of the case itself. These precedents rather than establishing a response inform creative judgment. Whilst the examples given are not chronological precedents, since their dates are slightly later than those of the novel, in so far as they are roughly contemporaneous they provide synchronic precedents to which we can refer as aids to our comprehension of Obi and his crime. These synchronic precedents inform our judgment, modify our position, and lead us to cross-examine the character Obi, like the Lefebvrian judge, we cycle through these precedents creatively in an attempt to discern the contours of Obi's case.

The second of precedents for Obi are those within the novels. As Obi is well aware, bribery and corruption are hardly unknown within the administration and Achebe underlines this with multiple examples throughout the text. When Obi arrives back from England at the beginning of the text, his very negotiation of entry into Nigeria is marked by an instance of attempted bribery when a boyish customs official attempts to bargain with him over the customs due on his radio. Obi's response, having dismissed the lad without negotiation, is telling: 'Dear Old Nigeria' (35). For Obi bribery is part of old Nigeria, a Nigeria which his generation will reform with the benefit of their (European) education. As noted above, while in London Obi presented a paper at the Nigerian Students' Union outlining his theory that 'the public service of Nigeria would remain corrupt until the old Africans at the top were

replaced by young men from the universities' (p. 43). Obi elaborates elsewhere:

> take one of these old men. He probably left school thirty years ago in Standard Six. He has worked steadily to the top through bribery – an ordeal by bribery. To him the bribe is natural … [whereas to the young men] bribery is no problem. They come straight to the top without bribing anyone. It's not that they're necessarily better than others, it's simply that they can afford to be virtuous. But even that kind of virtue can become a habit (p. 23).

These 'old men' export into the colonial system the indigenous practice of gift-giving. However, whilst gift-giving operates effectively in the indigenous system it is incongruous within the colonial system becoming, by force of context, bribery. Obi's argument is not that the older generation is wilfully corrupt but that their actions are naturally so in the context of the colonial administration. The younger generation, men such as himself, are disconnected from the old indigenous systems by virtue of their university education and therefore will not, indeed cannot, make the same mistakes as their elders. Their rise to power has been through education and not through bribery and therefore they are already removed from the practice. Obi himself, then, invites us to judge him against and differentiate him from these elder statesmen.

A secondary elder figure to note briefly at this juncture is Obi's grandfather, Okonkwo, with whom Obi shares various similarities, in particular, his inarticulacy and his anxiety to avoid showing emotion. This particular precedent is essentially intertextual since little is said of Okonkwo in No Longer at Ease. However, the several mentions made of him by various Umuofians prompt the reader to recognise that we are being invited to read the younger in the light of the older. Obi's desire to differentiate himself from the older generation of uneducated Nigerian leaders is thus undermined on two counts: despite his university education in English (that is, in particular, the study of words and how they are used) he fails

to escape the family trait of clumsiness that marked his grandfather. Furthermore, his university education singularly fails to save him from the temptations of bribery, which he thinks are only natural in the less educated, older generation. It is the very financial burden of paying back the scholarship, which had paid for his education that places pressure upon him to accept bribes.

Obi's naturalising arguments about these older men is consistent with the opinion held more generally by his boss, Mr. Green. Green claims, as we have noted, that 'The African is corrupt through and through' (p.2), applying an essentially miasmic theory of moral corruption for this phenomenon: 'the African has been the victim of the worst climate in the world' (p.3, 4). However, it is clear from the start that Green's position is not simply a British colonial perspective. Unlike Green, Galloway claims he cannot understand why Obi accepted the bribe. Furthermore, when Green makes his declaration his auditors look about anxiously in case any of the Nigerian staff are near enough to hear (indicating that even if they are in agreement with Green they recognise that the position is a debatable, if not an inflammatory, one). Moreover, Green's attitude is reproduced in the text, as the figure of a Nigerian sitting on the committee that interviews Obi for the Public Service Commission job. Having slept through most of the interview, in which Obi had been discussing the finer points of British and West African literature with the 'Chairman of the Commission, a jolly Englishman', the Nigerian committee member wakes up to ask, 'Why do you want a job in the civil service? So that you can take bribes?' (p. 46). This question affirms Obi's view of the board member as one of the old generation of Nigerian officials, that is to say, one for whom accepting bribes is natural. He fails to comprehend the real challenge it offers to his own integrity. What the question, in fact, points up is the assumption, shared by Obi, the

Nigerian committee member and Mr. Green, that bribery is something that the other does: the older generation, the younger generation, the African.

This brings us to the final aspect of the internal precedents, which is Obi Okonkwo's own outspoken principle. His stance against bribery is made evident from the start, with his dismissal of the customs boy. It is reiterated through his debates on the topic with friends and underscored by his paper to the Nigerian Students' Union. As Achebe notes 'unlike most theories formed by students in London, this one survived the first impact of homecoming' (p.44). Obi Okonkwo initially congratulates himself on his capacity to withstand offers of bribes, he feels 'strangely elated' and even 'like a tiger' (p. 100). However, he notes 'One should not … be unduly arrogant … the temptation was not really overwhelming' (p. 101). Obi presumes himself to be one of the young men he had theorised in his Nigerian Students' Union paper, one who can afford to refuse bribes. He fails to recognise fully the implications of this case, the fact that it is exactly when the temptation is overwhelming that one's morals are tested. Furthermore, Obi Okonkwo expresses the same incomprehension as Galloway when early in the novel he is presented with the example of another young civil servant sentenced for bribery. For Obi, this man is 'an exception' that proves his rule (p. 23). Rather than engaging attentively with this instance of a Land Officer, 'straight from the university', Obi Okonkwo dismisses it as anomalous and without cause for creative adjudication. The dramatic irony of Obi Okonkwo's response is yet another instigation on the reader, in order to readers to draw out the series of faults on his case. First of all, he is trapped in the dialectic of the difference of identity; he finds that he cannot completely dislocate himself from the colonial culture, which had been adopted by his father Isaac Okonkwo, nor can he totally differ from the traditional Igbo culture of his ancestors. Secondly, his ideology is based on

the western sense through the books so he tried to impose moral codes on reality. Thirdly, he tries to reconstruct reality by imagery existence and the unrealised ideals. The questions of the reality and the moral codes of Obi Okonkwo trapped him into the dilemma. He was only able to construct his moral identity by refusing to see those realities that might have questioned his desire for transcendence.

The final sets of precedents are those suggested by the literary allusions of the novel. What is noticeable immediately about the first of these kinds, which are taken from English literature, is their marked Christian character and Christo-logical interest. The novel's title and epigraph are taken from Eliot's 'Journey of the Magi', and we are told that Obi's favourite poem is 'Easter Hymn' by A.E. Housman, a poet to whom he turns at moments of anxiety. Furthermore, his interview with the Public Service Commission involves an extended debate with the chairman of the committee about the nature of tragedy in Graham Greene's The Heart of the Matter (p. 121).

All three works involve questions of faith and death and express considerable ambivalence about both. Whilst not suggesting a Christological model for Obi Okonkwo, what these texts reflect is a particular experience of alienation that results from a Christological awareness. Implicitly, Obi Okonkwo is caught in-between the two religions namely the traditional religion of Igbo and the Christianity that was adopted by his father long back when he was a child. Obi's education in England is another aspect of the Christian influence on him. Before he left Nigeria, he had been a true Nigerian and had known only his village. But his father, Nwoye – the son of Okonkwo who converted to Christianity and rejected his father – strictly condemned the old religion and brought up his children as Christians. Though Obi Okonkwo has his own opinion of religion but is afraid of telling his parents. The confusion of Obi

about the two religions is stated by Achebe, thus:

> Father, I no longer believe in your God?He knew it was impossible for him to do it, but he just wondered what would happen if he did. He often wondered like that. A few weeks ago in London he had wondered what would have happened if he had stood up and shouted to the smooth M.P. lecturing to African students on the Central African Federation: 'Go away, you are all bloody hypocrites!' It was not quite the same thing, though. His father believed fervently in God; the smooth M.P. was just a bloody hypocrite(NLAE: 45).

Given the above, Obi Okonkwo's feelings of revolt against Christianity and traditional ethics of Igbo people is an outcome of the generation gap between his father and himself. The M.P. calls him the 'bloody hypocrite'. It makes an impact on him to challenge the unnerving wrongs of the Nigerian society. The influence of missionaries and their religion changed the villages and the people there so much during the years when Obi Okonkwo was in England. He comes to know that the Nigeria he came back to after four years of being in England is not the same country of his dreams. The drastic change in Nigeria and his country makes the difference in the outlook of Obi Okonkwo, he thinks that the Igbo society in his country was no longer created by the old African traditions and culture, but a huge impact of colonial society was seen. This situation is captured in the magi of the epigraph, for example, return more certain of death than of life, with a sense that nothing can ever be the same. Back in their home country they are 'no longer at ease' - a familiar sensation for the diasporic returnee such as Obi and his generation.

The suggestiveness of this literary allusions throws shadow on Obi's two poems celebrating Nigeria, written while away in London. The first is semi-pastoral (p. 19), the second takes its cue from the negritude poetics and politics practised by francophone writers such as Leon Dumas (although the poem marries this with a distinctly British inflected patriotism: 'May

we preserve our purity, / Our zest for life and jollity' (118)). However, both poems lose their light, so to speak, under the long shadows of doubt cast by the European literature to which the novel alludes. The possibility of beneficent tranquillity or positive change (which each of Obi's poems represents respectively) becomes ambiguous, ambivalent, and troubled when considered within the context of the literary precedents, which Achebe gives them. This takes us back to Lefebvre and his characterisation of Deleuze's thinking of repetition, law and change.

For Deleuze, Lefebvre argues, the law changes incident into particularity, which can then be subsumed. This change from singularity to particularity is what moves the incident into the chain of repetition on which the law relies for its processes of subsumption: 'A particular … can never be encountered, for it is always already recognized by the law it incarnates; a particular can only ever be recognized.' (Lefebvre: 67). What we have here, in the literary allusions of the novel, is a Lefebvrian moment that reads with and against Deleuze. On the one hand Obi's poems become mere particular repetitions of their literary precedents to which they are subsumed – they are poems whose rhetoric makes evident their conformity to a given tradition; on the other hand, the change articulated by these precedents, particularly in 'Journey of the Magi' with its expression of existential unease, is one that disrupts rather than acquiesces to processes of conformity. The rupture that Eliot articulates, and to which Achebe directs us through the novel's allusions, is one which demands, in a Lefebvrian sense, a creative response because it does not and cannot conform to prior experience: 'this Birth was / Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death. / … I should be glad of another death' (p. 69). In Eliot's poem Christ's birth is transformative, creative, an encounter rather than a recognition. Similarly, the radical doubt, which the two verses of Housman's

‘Easter Hymn’ express, presents a refusal to subsume one vision (of a mortal, buried Christ) in another (of an immortal, risen Christ). Thus, these literary precedents are ones that at once position Obi Okonkwo’s poetry as a particular example within a Europeanized canon and that at the same time, in their articulation of an irresolvable encounter, call into question the celebrative surety of his two poems.

These Anglophone literary precedents are mirrored in Achebe’s inclusion of Igbo songs, highlife songs, Igbo church hymns and, more importantly, proverbs. Before turning to the proverbs it is worth examining the songs in a little detail. Achebe writes some of these songs in full, using both Igbo and silent translation into English. Each song; a church hymn sung to Obi Okonkwo as he leaves to London (p. 13), a song sung by traders on his return home (p. 53), the songs sung by a nightclub singer (particularly ‘Gentleman Bobby’) (128 - 9), and a song sung by the local women on Obi’s second trip home (p. 146-7) indicates in one way or another ‘the world turned upside down’ (p. 53). However, Obi does not recognise this immediately and takes an act of self-proclaimed ‘exegesis’ to understand the song of the traders. Obi’s periodic alienation from his culture is indicated by his response: ‘he was pleased with his exegesis and began to search his mind for other songs that could be given the same treatment’ (p. 53). This treatment becomes an end in itself, rather than the production of meaning to be applied. It extracts the song from its social context and treats it to a New Critical exercise in close reading, such as Obi would have been required to produce in his 1950s British literary education.

Obi’s disconnection from the relevance of the poetry of his hometown is further evident in his desire to write Dumasian, revolutionary poetry, as if the ideas were not already spoken in

the songs of his people. Yet, the last song of the novel makes quite clear there are lessons of fraternity to be had in Umuofian songs more than equal to Obi's poetic exhortations to national unity (p. 118). Moreover, this last song conveys other, more pointed lessons for Obi in particular: 'He that has a brother must hold him to his heart / For a kinsman cannot be bought in the market, / Neither is a brother bought with money' (p. 146 - 7). Achebe ends Chapter Thirteen with this song, giving no account of Obi's response to the message in the song on the value of family over wealth. It is left to the reader to discern its pertinence.

The lessons of the girls' song bring us to the lessons of the Igbo proverbs, which Achebe introduces strategically throughout the novel. These proverbs are significant because their purpose in a social context matches that of legal precedent in a juridical context. Whether metaphorical or allegorical the proverbs delineate the case to which a particular situation can be subsumed for judgment. Achebe has drawn attention to this similarity himself:

> A proverb is a very careful observation of reality and the world, and then a distillation into the wisdom of an elegant statement … there is a whole repertory of these statements made by my people across the millennia. … And part of the training, of socialization of young people in this society, is to become familiar with these statements from our immemorial past. So that when we are dealing with a contemporary situation … we have the opportunity to draw from the proverbial repertory to support or refute what is said. It's like citing the precedents in law (Rowell: 98).

Throughout the novel, Obi is held to account and judged in various ways by the Umuofians through the application of proverbs, which act as a framework of social precedent within Umuofia and which the Umuofians take with them into the urban centres such as Lagos. For example, when Obi is about to leave for England and university he is warned: 'Do not be in a hurry to rush into the pleasures of the world like the young antelope who danced herself lame when the main dance was yet to come' (p. 12). Although never made explicit in the novel

Obi's choice to read English indicates a rejection of the Umuofian literary tradition of oral proverbs for the European lyrical tradition of letters. This rejection parallels at the cultural level his desire to reject the ways of the older generation at the political level. And just as Obi's desire to be exceptional in government cannot exempt him from temptation or the law, neither can the Anglicisation of his literary culture exempt him from Umuofian proverbial precedent.

A final literary precedent for Obi is that presented in the fiction of Onitsha market literature. Onitsha, the Igbo capital of the Eastern region from which Obi hails, is home to one of the largest markets in Africa. This market was and is famous for its popular fiction and it remains a major site of popular fiction production – writing, publishing, and sales. Onitsha book production and marketing is quite different from the popular market in Europe and North America: books are printed in small quantities often at the author's expense and the author and publisher will frequently be involved in the direct marketing of the volume – to the extent of selling the book door-to-door. The books themselves are written and read with a lesson in mind, for example how to make money or how to avoid heartbreak. Authors may claim in their introduction that the story is their own and that their reason for telling it is to help others avoid their fate or learn their lessons for success. Once more we can relate this back to Lefebvre's idea of the 'encounter': the author has experience of or has imagined a situation that can be characterised as an encounter, in which the protagonist is faced with a set of unprecedented circumstances that require imaginative judgment (for example, the uniqueness of love). The story is told in order to provide the missing precedent by which others can learn to judge (more wisely than the original author/ protagonist), through the transformation of their own experience into a recognisable particular. Such narratives

become, in fact, more elaborate versions of the proverb, through their construction of precedent.

Common in these publications is the story of star-crossed lovers, where the relationship between boy and girl is opposed by one or both families. Such stories either end happily, with the family or families capitulating to true love, or they end sadly, with the lovers separating and ruing their fate. These latter stories are often presented as warnings to either boys or girls about the dangers of becoming involved with an unsuitable or unapproved suitor. The correlation between such stories and Obi's relationship with Clara is evident. Once again, Obi's interest in European literature cuts him off from this local repository of fiction from which he might have taken guidance. Instead, ironically, his story becomes, in Achebe's rendering of it, a version of Onitsha literature reconstructed for a different and more European audience.

The correspondence of No Longer at Ease to the formula of Onitsha market fiction takes us back to our original question: what case are we to make of Obi given the evidence that Achebe sets before us? However, what the model of Onitsha market fiction makes more apparent is the way in which we as readers become imbricated in the novel and in Obi's story. Achebe acknowledges this point when he explains that literature should 'give us a second handle on reality so that when it becomes necessary to do so, we can turn to art and find a way out' (Rowell: 88). The question that we are left with, in fact, is less one of what case are we to make of Obi, and therefore how are we to judge him? But rather, what case are we to make of our own judgment, how are we to judge that judgment?

According to Ilyas Omar Abukar (2010), Achebe utilizes *No Longer at Ease* to argue back to

Europe that the African savage is an invention. In his work, he constructs a complex Africa dealing with the burden of colonial take-over; most specifically the heavyweight of Western cultural hegemony. His argument testifies that Obi Okonkwo is not inherently corrupt. In other words, Achebe demonstrates that bribery is not inherent in Igbo society but it is something whose need is fostered by colonial culture. However, Obi is presented with no choice by his society but to self-destruct since the colonial system set in place by England proves to be inherently flawed. Hence, Obi Okonkwo's downfall is as a result of his misguided attempt at performing the role of a European in a colonial Africa. Unfortunately, the colonial administrative system does not recognize the African citizen in which it is meant to govern. It is a machine for Europeans to govern.

Similarly, Paul D. Ocheje in his analysis of Nigeria's Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act (2000), points out that 'the corruption of public office has arguably existed in Nigeria since the establishment of modern structures of public administration in the country by the British colonial government' (174 fn.9). Ocheje cites The Storey Report (1954), which dealt with bribery in Lagos, as well as reports for Port Harcourt (1956) and the Eastern Region of Nigeria (1957) (Ocheje: 174). In No Longer at Ease, Achebe dramatizes this aspect of the late colonial Nigerian administration in order to call his audience into critical engagement with the problem. Rather than present Obi and his crime as recognizable particulars immediately accessible for judgement, Achebe makes him familiar, even common (in the light of Jenkins' survey), yet just different enough to require a creative response of the kind Lefebvre elucidates. Moreover, he turns our judgement from Obi onto the legal system itself. Achebe offers no ready answer to the question implicitly posed in the novel: how might the newly independent Nigerian administration rid itself of its corruptions, its

anachronisms, its lack of self-reflexivity? Instead, we are faced with multiple realms of judgement, each requiring the attentiveness that Lefebvre calls for in creative jurisprudence. Achebe presents an archive of precedentsof legal, literary, popular, esoteric, fictional and factual stories to which he encourages his readers to turn in the encounter of judgment at the moment of independence.

4.2 Trans-Cultural Irony and Différance in Context

Deconstruction-and-religion operates actively when it theorizes in a new way. Deconstruction-and-religion begins from a deconstructive framework that is both post-structuralist and post-phenomenological. The framework provides a means of identifying and exposing illegitimate doctrines or interpretations from within monotheistic traditions. Through the use of careful historical analysis, linguistic critique, and logical scrutiny, deconstruction-and-religion resolves interpretive tensions from within theological discourses while at the same time creating space for unforeseen developments in theological expression.

Deconstruction and religion operates passively when it takes a historical and descriptive approach to analyze the corpora of various traditions of theology. In its passive mode, deconstruction-and-religion examines theological traditions to take note of documented instances of reified or unnatural theological concepts expanding only to later be dismissed or significantly transformed. An example of an unnatural concept rising and falling is the medieval Christian understanding of indulgences. The historical deterioration or mutation of theological concepts is referred to as "self-deconstruction" by Jean-Luc Nancy. The idea of self-deconstruction echoes Friedrich Nietzsche's idea that,“the highest Western values devalue themselves”.

Central to deconstruction is the idea of différance. Différance is an anarchic non-concept that makes a conception of language-as-a-play-of-signifiers possible. This French neologism means both "differing" and "deferring," describing in its name its own operation in setting deconstructive language in motion. Prior to différance, all Western conceptual schemes relied on one form or another of a "transcendental signifier". A transcendental signifier is any metaphysical, hierarchical principle that presumes to determine which constructions of signifiers are "natural" or "proper." Some examples of transcendental signifiers include Truth, God, Allah, Reason, Being, and various political ideologies. Différance is an alternative to an escape from the logic of the transcendental signifier.

In the African sense (particularly the Igbo, Nigerian culture), bribery does not exist and does not hold such serious social ills in 'African tradition'. Bribery is a Western concept. In Africa and among the practitioners of traditional religion, there is always appeasement. This appeasement runs through No Longer at Ease and the two other texts under study. The gods are appeased, the individuals, from whom the favour is sought, are also appeased. The issue of Bribery as corruption comes with Western culture. It is seen differently and is in the 'African culture' to appease (not bribe) someone from whom the favour is sought, is normal. The middleman (the court messengers, the corporals, the guards, etc) between the Africans and the Whiteman always seeks to exploit this without the knowledge of the Whiteman.

In Things Fall Apart, for instance, there is the reference to a lot of 'sacrifices' that have to be made to different gods to appease them for the purpose of one thing or the other. Unoka says to Chika, the priestess of the Oracle Agbala:

> Every year…before I put any crop in the earth, I sacrifice a cock to Ani, the owner of all land. It was the law of our fathers. I also kill a cock at the shrine of Ifejioku, the

> god of yams. I clear the bush and set fire to it when it is dry. I saw the yam when the first rain has fallen, and stake them when the young tendrils appear (Achebe, 1969: 12-13).

In the quotation above, it is obvious that the duty of the gods in protecting and serving man in the traditional ways at various capacities have to be appeased by sacrifices to gain favour and to get them to perform their ordained duties' So also in terms of committing other offences against the cultural expectations or taboos, the gods have to be appeased in order to avoid their wrath:

> the evil you have done can ruin the whole clan. The earth Goddess whom you have insulted may refuse to give us her increase, and we shall all perish…. You will bring to the shrine of Ani tomorrow one she- goat, one hen, a length of cloth and hundred cowries (Achebe, 1969: 12-13).

This punishment is given to Okonkwo for beating his wife during the week of peace. The quotation is a pointer to the fact that the gods have be appeased for any expected 'protection' or service they would render. This runs through the texts of *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. In *Arrow of God* the crisis is surrounding a sacrifice to the oracle or deity of Ulu before yam harvest could commence. Sacrifice and appeasement to the gods is still very important in Igbo culture as depicted in *Arrow of God.*

Individuals also have to be appeased before they could give or show any favour. Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* has to appease Nwakibie and his family before he could get a favour of getting yam tubers for planting and as well getting trained under the same person. He took a pot of palm -wine and a cock to Nwakibie, two elderly neighbours were sent for and Nwakibie's two grown-up sons were also present. He presented a kola nut and an alligator pepper…. After the kolanut had been eaten Okonkwo brought his palm wine from the corner of the hut… he addressed Nwakibie, calling him 'our father':

> Nna ayi…I have brought you this little kola. As our people say, a man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness. I have come to pay you my respects and also to ask a favour. But let us drink the wine first (Achebe, 1969: 14).

The wine is drunk by the neighbours, Nwakibie's two sons and his wives and after exchanging some pleasantries and jokes Nwakibie replies to Okonkwo's request thus:

> It pleases me to see a young man like you these days when our youth have gone so soft. Many young men have come to me to ask for yams but I have refused because I knew they would just dump them in the earth and leave them to be choked by weeds... But I can trust you. I know it as I look at you. As our fathers said, you can tell a ripe corn by its look. I shall give you twice four hundred yams. Go ahead and prepare your farm (Achebe, 1969: 16).

The traditional concept of giving and receiving 'little kola' for a favour is practiced even with the coming of white man. In fact, the messengers of the court in Umofia have to inflate the charges of the court (fine) against six elders of the clan from two hundred bags of cowries (Achebe, 1969: 137) to two hundred and fifty bags of cowries (Achebe, 1969: 138). This runs also into *Arrow of God* where Mr. Winterbottom's messenger (the corporal) seeks for a 'little kola' for a better treatment of Ezeulu and for the favour of seeing the District Commissioner in good time. The corporal says:

> But we cannot come and go for nothing. When a masked spirit visits you, you have to appease its footprint with presents. The white man (or rather the corporal) is the masked spirit of today.

At the end the corporal ate and drank and was given two live cocks and two shillings. This is the beginning of 'corruption' noticed in the texts among the blacks working for the white man.

The Church in its earlier days also exploits this traditional appeasement in *Arrow of God*. Mr. Goodcountry exploits the refusal of Ezeulu to make sacrifice and announce the date for the commencement of the New Yam Festival to the advantage of the Church:

> Now Mr. Goodcountry saw in the present crisis over New Yam feast an opportunity

> for fruitful intervention. He had planned his Church's harvest service for the second Sunday in November the proceeds from which would go into the fund for building a place of worship more worthy of God and of Umuaro. The new Yam Festival was the attempt of misguided heathen to show gratitude to God, the giver of all good things. This was God's hour to save, them from their error which was now threatening to ruin them. They could be told that if they made their thank - offering to God they could harvest their crops without fear of Ulu. So we can tell our heathen brethren to bring their one yam to church instead of giving it to Ulu (AG, 2150).

It is against the background of the belief in appeasement to the gods that the heathens have accepted to send their children with sacrifice to the Church, first to check the activities of the Church, and secondly, to get the promised protection or immunity against the anger of Ulu. It is not because they believe in the God of the Church:

> The Christian harvest which took place a few days after Obika's death saw more people than even Goodcountry could have dreamed. In his extremity many a man sent his son with a yam or two to offer the new religion and to bring back the promised immunity.

The Africans and particularly the characters in Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God and No Longer at Ease do not see this 'little kola' as 'bribery' or as an aspect of corruption. In fact, the Africans depicted in NLAE do not see anything wrong in taking and giving this 'little kola' for a favour. Corruption in the western sense runs through the text of NLAE. Thus, when Mr. Green comments that 'the African (Obi) is corrupt through and through' it is a Western value judgment. For the 'African', appeasement is normal in his culture. In a sharp contrast, the European concept "demonises" the concept and thus those who have learnt the European ways feel and see it as corruption. In essence, it is only in the coloniser's system that it becomes a crime - something Obi Okonkwo understands. Because Obi is educated in England and has learnt a lot of the Whiteman concept of corruption it keeps ringing in his mind from the lectures he received as a student in London. In the same vein, the concept of corruption in Africa is understood by Obi Okonkwo but he refused to accept it, even after it

is explained to him by his friend Christopher:

> To him (African) bribe is natural. He gave it and he expects it. Our people say that if you pay homage to the man on top, others will pay homage to you when it is your turn to be on top (*Arrow of God*,1969: 18).

Christopher's explanation is the same with the explanation given by Okonkwo when he visits Nwakibie (Achebe, 1969:13-16). The refusal of Obi Okonkwo to understand or identify with this explanation is the same with the refusal of Okonkwo to understand Obierika's explanation over the changes in Umuofia and which consequently leads to their downfall. Obi Okonkwo in particular, is forced to accept the African concept of this 'little kola not because he believes in it but because he is pressed economically and as a self-willed young man, initially refuses to agree to take the fifty pounds offered him by Clara and to ask for Umuofia Progressive Union to extend his payment. Mr Okonkwo is proud and arrogant and this causes him lots of problem with his kinsmen. He would rather bend to take 'bribe' against his will than to lower down his pride and get things done legitimately.

Unfortunately, Mr. Okonkwo forgets his other system of values (Western), and he is not being cautious, does what everybody is doing without finding out how it is done. He is like the proverbial (Igbo) house rat who went swimming with his friend the lizard and died from cold, for while the lizard's scales kept him dry the rat's hairy body remained wet (NLAE, 5). Most people around Obi could not understand why Obi should either go to jail for doing what others are doing or why an educated young man should take bribes. The member of Umuofia Progressive Union who has not seen anything bad in this issues of bribery rally round to hire a lawyer for their only 'son' in the Civil Service despite the problems and rudeness of Okonkwo towards the President of Union and its members.

Obi Okonkwo's misfortune springs from two angles, both opposing each other. In the traditional African concept and social structure, there is nothing wrong in 'propitiating' somebody to do a favour. This is a culture that breeds Mr. Okonkwo and to which he belongs. It is people from the same culture whose expectation he is expected to meet, that fail to understand him in his attempt to marry an Osu and the same people who 'push' him into bribery'. Although it seems so by their expectations, it is actually Obi's pride that pushes him into a financial mess in his refusal to do 'legitimate asking and taking'. Again, in the other opposing situation, the western culture gave Mr. Okonkwo a different and opposing concept of corruption, especially where bribery is concerned. It is obviously wrong, in the Western value system, for one after receiving his legitimate wage to seek for an illegitimate gratis. But in the new dispensation, every duty performed is paid for. The question then is why should one take advantage of his position to take gratification from those who get one's services? In the old dispensation it is seen as compensation for the service, yet as a favour, it is seen in the relationship of giving and taking. Obi Okonkwo plays double roles with a dual personality; belonging to two cultures of which he does not perfectly understand how they operate (in a melting bowl syndrome). Obi Okonkwo tries to rob the western value system to pay the African value system but unfortunately, he is caught by the fangs of the demon of corruption in the new system of operation.

The clash of values is what brought about the downfall of Obi Okonkwo. His Western learning has put him on the fence between the demands of the traditional society and modern society. Mr. Okonkwo could not meet the double demand despite trying to satisfy the two at the same time. What Obi Okonkwo fails to realize is that he either belongs to the Western value system or does completely as the white man; this would rather put him in another

serious problem with his kinsmen. But the corruption of the capital city is stronger than the self-will of Obi Okonkwo. Meanwhile, the demands of the ends are too unbearable while the sweetness of bribery in solving financial problems is irresistible. On the whole Mr. Okonkwo should have learnt the way it is done after resolving to do like the Africans' in the word of Mr. Green.

4.3 Differences and Oppositions

The problems of Obi Okonkwo do not stop at his involvement in the bribery and corruption case which he gets involved in. It bears in his relationship with his father, his mother and his kinsmen over his affairs with Clara - an Osu. The double personality which characterises Obi's life by belonging to two different value systems bears on the issue of his marriage. He proposes to marry an Osu, in the person of Clara. His kinsmen, his father and his mother are all against it. Even though he claims to belong to the new dispensation, Obi's father, a Christian, and a catechist, objects to his marrying Clara. He goes as far as quoting the Bible to defend his opposition:

> I know Josiah Okeke very well he is a good man and a great Christian but he is *Osu*. Naaman, captain of the Host of Syria, was a great man and honourable, he was also a mighty man of valour, but he was a leper….*Osu* is like a leprosy in the mind of our people. I beg you, my son, not to bring the mark of shame and leprosy into our family. If you do, your children and your children's children unto the third and fourth generation would curse your memory.… You will bring sorrow on your head and on the head of your children. Who will marry your daughters? Think of that, my son. WE ARE CHRISTIANS, but we cannot marry our own daughters? (p.121)

The argument of Isaac Okonkwo against Obi's is very weak. In fact, it carries, with it, its own weakness and defect; by asserting that 'we are Christians' gives Obi the courage to disagree with him. He has already given his own position as a Christian and Joseph himself would talk to the heathens about such artificial and baseless omen in *Osu* caste system (p.

120-121) but the most touching and heartfelt opposition comes from Obi's mother:

> I have nothing to tell you in this matter expect one thing. If you want to marry this girl, you must wait until I am no more. If God hears my prayers, you will not wait long. But if you will do the thing while I am alive, you will have my blood on your head, because I shall kill myself (p. 123).

These are the sad words and warning of Obi's mother to her ever battle-ready son, Obi Okonkwo. Even though he feels a sense of victory over his father, he could not feel the same with the threat of his mother. Obi cannot bear those harsh words and threats; he cannot as well abandon his course of changing his society even if it is in the wrong way.

The conflict between the old and the new dispensation with the foreign people still clutching their gods' (their traditional value system), Isaac Okonkwo remembers his own differences and oppositions with his father, Okonkwo the roaring flame of Umuofia, and he tells Obi Okonkwo of the differences and oppositions thus:

> I was no more than a boy when I left my father house and with the missionaries. He placed a curse on me. I was not there but my brother told me it was true. When a man curses his own child it is a terrible thing. And I was his first son.

This confession hangs some kind of sympathy in the mind of Obi for his father for the first time. The story is meant to move Obi but not in the direction of sympathizing with his father, it is meant to make him understand why he should abandon the idea of marrying an Osu, less the curse of his parents befall him. Although this point is not emphasized, it is understood that this is what Isaac Okonkwo is indirectly referring to, for he mentions the consequences of Obi's grandfather's curse on his father.

Obi does not yield to his threat. He goes back to the city, meets Clara and things get from bad to worse in their relationship - she returns the 'engagement' ring and tells him she is

pregnant. Obi's problem is compounded with the sickness of his mother and other socio-economic demands. Ultimately, Obi gives into the corruption of the city. He takes a bribe and takes advantage of a young girl.

Obi Okonkwo ends up in court, perhaps the curse of his father or grandfather bears on him. It is in another way the fate of the Roaring Flame that bears on him. For it is Igbo saying that "when you plant an orange, it bears orange." It is the blood in him; one can go to England and become a doctor or something it will not change his blood. It is like a bird that flies off the earth and lands on an anthill. It is still on earth (NLAE 145 - 146).

In conclusion, it can be asserted that in each generation there is bound to be father and son conflict, and this runs through the three texts. In *ThingsFallApart* there is conflict between Okonkwo and Unoka, and between Okonkwo and Nwoye; in Arrow of God there is conflict between Ezeulu and his children, first between Ezeulu and Oduche who is sent to learn the new way of the Whiteman, even though it died down in a different manner, there is also not emphasized conflict between Edogo and Ezeulu over who is expected to take over the priesthood of the deity of Ulu; in *NoLongeratEase*, there is also a conflict between Isaac Okonkwo and his son Okonkwo over the issues of marrying an Osu.

4.4 Multiplicity of Meanings and Indeterminate Zones of Representation

Achebe's *NoLongeratEase* (1960) has been used as a reference point for arguing that the application of intertextual theory to postcolonial literature in such groundbreaking studies by Wolfgang Klooss's collection *Across the Lines* (1998) and Monika Reif-Hulser's *Borderlands* (1999) runs the risk of suppressing the critical multidimensionality of some postcolonial

texts. These additional dimensions can be described as "intratextual" and "extratextual," borrowing the latter term from Robert Scholes (1981) who defines it as situating a text "in relation to culture, society, the world," to which can be added: *in relation to the life experience of the writer*. Hence, in Achebe's work the inter-, intra-, and extratextual dimensions exist in a dynamic relationship, producing a mutually deconstructive tension that permits authority to no single textual dimension, creating instead a textual dynamic which continually challenges and subverts critical efforts to "fix" its position as a literary text.

Simon Gikandi, in Reading Chinua Achebe, makes a similar point in observing that Achebe's narrative strategies are intended to stress a "multiplicity of meanings and indeterminate zones of representation." Gikandi's acute analysis of Achebe's intratextual narrative strategies, however, is premised on what is an extratextual assumption: that the author's project is to resist the "fetishization" within which Africa has been fixed by "the discourse of the Western world." Gikandi's position, therefore, illustrates the risk of assigning primacy to a single textual dimension from which further critical comment is to be generated.

Clearly, there is no way to prove that an extratextual dimension, whether biographical, ideological, or political, is determinative. The postcolonial critic, however, may have an agenda that includes assigning to the subject work a high degree of moral or political intentionality. Achebe's most consistent theme, Gikandi argues, is the idea of affirming a "national community," and his pessimism is "an expression of his anxieties about the transference of his discourse on an African destiny from the imaginative realm, the mythical space, to the practices of everyday life." By assigning primacy to the extratextual, and to one facet of the extratextual at that, namely, the historical/political, Gikandi must continually

slight the textual wrestling match that is being advanced here as the most productive way of viewing the Achebean narrative environment, or "mediatope" a term borrowed from Bernd Schulte and, argue, that of some other postcolonial writers such as Nuruddin Farah, whose work has also been subject to incisive treatment by Gikandi (Munro, 2004).

Gikandi's treatment of Farah's use of modernism is similarly predicated on extratextual claims about Farah's intention of providing "a critique of the idea of the Somali nation and the traditions associated with it." In short, Farah's narrative is elucidated by Gikandi in the same terms as Achebe's, illustrating a pitfall of assigning primacy to historical/political intentionalities: postcolonial writers come to be viewed through a similar lens, except for an apostate few, like V. S. Naipaul, whose work cannot be fitted within the extratextual parameters the critic has drawn. While Robert Scholes does not regard "extratextuality" as a form of narrative textuality, it is clear that his situating a text "in relation to culture, society, the world," and to the author's construction of his personal experience articulates a creative act occurring within a narrative teleology of some kind, such as "empowerment," "liberation," "decolonization," or even "tragedy" (cited in Munro, 2004).

This critique of postcolonial criticism based on extratextual assumptions can also be made of criticism based on intertextual premises. Intertextuality premised, in Julia Kristeva's definition, on the assumption that "every text builds upon itself as a mosaic of quotations ... [and] is the absorption and transformation of another text" have become a theoretical battleground in postcolonial criticism (cited in Munro, 2004). Julie Newman, for example, cites Arun Mukherjee in maintaining that "writing back to the centre" perpetuates a binary relationship in which European discourse is forever the "other" of postcolonial writing (cited

in Munro, 2004).

Newman argues in the Bakhtinian mode for an alternative "dialogic relation with other social discourses circulating in (postcolonial) society, rather than those at the centre." Discussions of intertextuality, she writes, need to take account of the fact that "postcolonial societies may have their own internal centres and peripheries, dominants and marginals, that the postcolonial subject is not a unitary subject, and that there are nationalisms within nationalism." Newman offers as a solution a "broader heteroglossic strategy": the "re-reading [and] creative adaptation from at least two traditions" represented by Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel*, in which E. M. Forster's Passage to India is retold within the framework of the Mahabarata, the parodic interaction of the two texts simultaneously desacralizing both the European "imperial text" and Indian "cultural epic" (cited in Munro, 2004).

Newman's strategy restricts Kristeva's concept of intertextuality to literary texts, but as Frank Schulze-Engler points out, Kristeva's original concept of intertextuality deals not just with relations between literary texts but with relationships between literature and various types of social texts, approximating Schulte's "media type." "In her eyes," writes Schulze-Engler, citing Hans-Peter Mai, "it is a politically transformative practice. In the last resort, hers is a political concept which aims at empowering the reader/critic to oppose the literary and social tradition at large" (cited in Munro, 2004). Schulze-Engler is surely correct in critiquing "writing back" concepts of intertextuality such as those of Helen Tiffin for constructing an essentialist "imperial textuality" against which the postcolonial writer, from an equally essentialist "postcolonial textuality," is presumed to be writing. However, he fails to recognize that the "political concept of empowerment" he identifies in Kristeva's critical

project is also narrative in form, with extra-textual including biographical provenance. Terms like "transformative" and "empowering" underline the narrative framework within which Schulze-Engler is viewing postcolonial texts (cited in Munro, 2004).

This novel has attracted relatively little critical attention in comparison to *ThingsFallApart*, *ArrowofGod*, or even *AnthillsoftheSavannah*. What criticism it has received tends to assign primacy to a single textual dimension. Yet perhaps no other of Achebe's fictional texts raises so clearly questions of textual primacy and authority. The title, for example, comes from T. S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi," a poem which transposes a "secondary" narrative, that of the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem, into primary position, displacing the culturally authoritative narrative of the birth of Christ into third position: The witnessing of the baby, the speaker recounts, was no more than "satisfactory." Yet, it left the viewers placeless, "no longer at ease ... in the old dispensation, with an alien people clutching their gods...." Thus, another narrative line is initiated: an implied narrative of alienation and placelessness. The position of Eliot's poem in the novel's title and epigraph appears to confer on this poet and on modernism, in general, an authoritative intertextual status, in the view of some critiques, Philip Rogers, for example, in an article entitled "*NoLongeratEase*: Chinua Achebe's 'Heart of Whiteness'," argues that *NoLongeratEase* parodies Conrad's *HeartofDarkness* and is a critique of Western influence on the world of its characters. Rogers sees Obi in the role of a black Kurtz: an idealist with optimistic theories, but in reality a hollow man.

Rogers has constructed a parallel narrative placing No Longer at Ease in an extratextual relationship to a European modernist narrative, Heart of Darkness, as Catherine Innes's reading treats it as a parody of Cary's Mister Johnson. Rogers's narrative treats Obi's "fall" as

parodically equivalent to Kurtz's: while Kurtz falls because he succumbs to the uncivilized "heart of darkness" within, Rogers argues that Obi succumbs to the putatively civilized "heart of whiteness" he encounters in England, taking on English traits including a devotion to notions of efficiency and utilitarianism that alienate him from the realities of colonial Nigeria.

Rogers's and Innes's approaches create a suggestive equivalency that nevertheless slights the complex nature of the novel's intratextual approach to modernism. If the citation of T. S. Eliot in the title and epigraph seems to confer authority on Rogers's characterization of Obi as a "hollow man," Obi's pedantic affectations of modernist style, his interpretation of Heart of the Matter, for example, or veiling of Lagos street life behind an Eliotic allusion to "putrid flesh in the spoon" suggests that modernism legitimates a narrative track of withdrawal, alienation, and individualism in contest not only with intratextual and extratextual dimensions of the novel but also with other intertextual allusions to Things Fall Apart. Obi, for example, unknowingly cites a crucial proverb from the earlier novel when he remarks cynically to his friend Christopher on "what the old men say": "if you pay homage to the man on top, others will pay homage to you when it is your turn to be on top."

The proverb rewrites Okonkwo's statement to Nwakibie in Things Fall Apart that "a man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness" in a form which corresponds with Obi's individualist view, substituting a social position, "on top," for a morally recognized one, "greatness." The concept of a social covenant based on mutual obligations has been displaced by a grasping for the privilege in which Obi is a participant, though he is convinced that younger men will not be corrupted since they "can afford to be

virtuous" (NLAE 23).

Obi has created a fanciful historical narrative of social renewal and rebirth; in which he is the protagonist. He imagines himself becoming a writer, although the only subject he can imagine is "the tragedy of the Greens of this country" (NLAE 122). His narrative trajectory is prefigured in his poem "Nigeria," written while he was in England. The poem contained within the pages of a book of A. E. Housman's poems, call on "God" to "bless our noble fatherland," and to "teach [our noble countrymen] to walk in unity/To build our nation dear; Forgetting region, tribe or speech, / But caring always each for each" (NLAE 171-172). The poem, repeated twice at full length in the novel, allowing the reader to re-read it in light of events, reduces Obi's countrymen to passive roles in the creation of a new covenant, corresponding to Obi's conviction that only "one man with vision, an enlightened dictator" (NLAE 50) can achieve social reform.

The confinement of the poem "Nigeria" within the pages of Housman's book, and in close proximity to Housman's "Easter Hymn," Obi's favourite poem, underlines the depiction of a protagonist trapped unwittingly within webs of conflicting narrative of the texts. Against Obi's narrative of a God teaching and blessing, mirroring Obi's continual assumption of the role of teacher, Housman's posits a world without God, with the voice of the poem embarking on a journey that is the reverse of that of Israel out of Egypt: "To my inheritance amid / The nation that is not" a wasteland. The contrary mythic journeys to Promised Land and desert contribute to the creation of the characteristic Achebean "mediatope" alluded to earlier: the wrestling counter-text.

From the beginning of No Longer at Ease, Obi is the locus for conflicting extratextual,

intratextual, and intertextual narrative discourse. Extra-textually, he is among the first fruits of the colonial grand récit of leading "the backward races into line" through immersion in European culture and education. This narrative has written Obi, so he can only echo the colonizer's judgment, "Our people have a long way to go" (NLAE, 41), without having in mind a concept of destination. Like the autobiographical narrator of Home and Exile, the character of Obi is developed as the locus of inter-, intra-, and extratextual narrative tropes of journey, road, and quest, none assuming dominance in the novel.

The novel begins at the end of Obi's personal heroic quest. The texts failure is that, it is interpreted through four narrative lenses, each implicitly questioning the legitimacy of the others' claim to truth. First narrative, it is that of the colonial court judge, who, framing his narrative within the colonizer's myth of the "been to" as the hope of the colonized, "cannot comprehend how a young man of your education and brilliant promise could have done this." His judgment is preceded by a reproof of one of the court counsels related to "the problem of locomotion" (NL 2), an intratextual reference not only to the importance of automobiles in the novel but also to the journey and the nature of its ultimate destination. Secondly, it is that of Mr. Greene, amidst his cohorts at the European club, who poses a tragic narrative against the judge's comic one: Colonialism could never have succeeded, in Greene's view, because "The African is corrupt through and through" (NL 32). Greene's narrative of decline ("over countless centuries the African has been sapped mentally and physically," NL 5) is evenly balanced with the court judge's tale of "brilliant promise" betrayed. The third narrative line is that of the Umuofians, both those in Lagos and those back in Umuofia, who embed Obi within a mythic line of heroes extending back to his grandfather and who have visited distant places and wrestled with spirits in order to preserve their communities. The Umuofian

narrative line evolves amidst a continual ironic intertextual play of oral and written texts, the Old Testament and New Testament and the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, all rewritten to conform to a self-serving ideology of kinship. Even the saying "Wherever something stands, another thing stands beside it" (NL 181), which Achebe uses as a foundation for his articulation of an Igbo epistemology in his essay "Chi in Igbo Cosmology," is yoked by a speaker at a Umuofia Progressive Union to "this thing called blood" and in turn to Obi's failure to attend his mother's funeral, though the reader is aware that the "pompous man" has completely misunderstood Obi's motives.

Each of these narrative constructions of Obi Okonkwo is complete in itself, and each eclipse and erases the other. The characters of the novel are caught within webs of monologic narrative, and one could include in this examination the abundance of songs, stories, and proverbs to flesh out the picture of the mediatope that exercise authority over them. Much of the novel's comic effect lies in their solemn efforts to rewrite texts to bring them into conformity with that dominant narrative. The Umuofians rewrite the history of Okonkwo into one of a hero who fought the English, and the Anglican Book of Common Prayer's phrase "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end" (NL 60) into an affirmation of the traditional Igbo concept of the rebirth of titled men.

Given his status at the centre of competing for narrative constructions, it is not surprising that Obi himself seems bare to exist as a character at all. The continual rewriting and erasure of texts clustering around him mark him not as the hero of a piece of realistic fiction but as an artefact of his culture, or of an aspect of his culture, as his grandfather was the artefact of an aspect of his.

As suggested earlier, it is this epic wrestling match of narratives that shape a continually evolving epistemological narrative held in tension between what Achebe has called "continual struggle" and "anarchy." It is not simply a dichotomous vision of the type that Julie Newman refers to in Taroor's Great Indian Novel a meeting of two texts from contrary traditions but a "mediatope" of multiple narratives arriving from all three textual dimensions and affirming.

CHAPTER FIVE

Duality and Differences Necessary for Conditions of Coexistence in *Arrow of God*

> Wherever something stands, something else will stand beside it. Nothing is absolute. *I am the truth, the way, and the life* would be called blasphemous or simply absurd, for it is not well known that a man may worship Ogwugwu to perfection and yet killed by Udo?
>
> **-Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet On Creation Day***

5.0 Introduction

Here, Achebe returns again and again to the principle which is at the core of Igbo philosophy and cultural traditions; that is the principle of duality and differences necessary for conditions of coexistence. He interprets the Igbo proverb ‘Wherever something stands, something else will stand beside it’ to mean that there is no one way to anything. The Igbo people who made that proverb are very insistent on this, there is no absolute anything. They

are against excess; their world is a world of dualities. Achebe broadens his explanation to cover spiritual and religious beliefs: '… if there is one God, fine. There will be others as well. If there is one point of view, fine. There will be a second point of view' (Moyers, 1989: 333).

What emerges in this conception of the nation is the problematic nature of truth itself? Truth is not a transcendental given to be decoded on the basis of a universal history of nationalism as in Bruce King or an original sense of source or culture as in Nnolim (cited in Udumukwu, 2011). On the contrary, truth manifests as something that the people of the nation work to produce for themselves. Achebe's *Arrow of God* (1964) is exemplary of how the people of the Nigerian nation go about producing their own truth; how they use it and demand that it serves their fundamental needs rather than their needs of conforming to a fixed pattern of truth.

The absence of a homogenous sense of truth, to which all subscribe even within a national boundary such as Nigeria, is testimony to the different things people are doing with signs as subjects in ideology - how the people of the Nigerian nation go about producing their own truth; how they use it and demand that it serves their fundamental needs rather than their needs conforming to a fixed pattern of truth. What emerges in this conception of the nation is the problematic nature of truth itself? The implication according to Esonwane (1993) is that the nation emerges as a "contested referent" or as a "contested construct" as Yewah (2001) puts it. However, the obvious advantages are the demystification of the nation as a unitary essence and the understanding of the nation beyond the limit set by the power-elite and even the colonial founders of the country called Nigeria.

Because literature is ideological, the tendency is to limit its perceptives structure to themes.

Yet more than anything, form (of discourse) is the primary feature of perception, and it is the last feature of any society, period or tradition. Societies have, thus, always placed great premium on quality literature because it is the only monument that sings about an age to posterity (see Shakespeare's "Sonnet 55"). Good literary works to state the obvious is good form. Any good form, innovative and fresh, is the hallmark of culture and civilization. For instance, Post-colonial African needed the works of Senghor, Achebe, Okigbo, Soyinka and others at a particular time in history to impress upon Europe that Africans have minds. What is often forgotten in the contemplation of the works of these authors is the fact that it is their (commitment to) craft is foregrounded.

In an ideological sense, therefore, the literary form defines the nature of the artists' society as well as the way the artists perceives order or disorder in a society. A poem with a neat structural arrangement may deal with a subject of disorder in order to show how a structural order can reflect and have clearly demonstrated the necessity of arresting the backsliding movement of society through a paradox of confronting the reality of evil in man. Yet these metaphorical confrontations with evil possess, ironically a religious/spiritual emptiness, which has rendered them suspect in Africa. Therefore, the next course to follow is to revert to another kind of ideological approach that could best contextualize the post-modern structures of our society as well as the persistent neocolonial attitudes of African leaders. This would also determine how the salutary themes, which arise from post-modern literature, could form a basis of African political thought and ideology.

In a way, the works of established and accomplished writers; Soyinka, Achebe, Okigbo, Laye and Okpewho provides a clear-cut path of approach; that is an African value, must be seen in terms of its cultural relevance; and if any ideological position is to be arrived at, it

must be seen through culturally integrative forces of values. In other words, if the neocolonialist argument in literature is geared towards an understanding of how Africans became slaves of foreign values, post-colonialist thrusts in literature then seek to recover these lost values which are largely responsible for the continuous disintegration of African nations. One of such values is the African metaphysics of transcendence, which in practical everyday experience has provided a more reliable source than the imported western and Arabic metaphysics. While Camara Laye, *African Child* in all his works reactivated the spiritual force which lies behind every social and economic activity in Africa, it is Achebe more than any other African writer, especially in *ArrowofGod*, where according to Soyinka (1976):

> The struggle among the gods has been placed squarely in the province of the political, and although the spiritual and the mysterious are never absent or invalidated – certainly the affective or responsive in the lives of the community is constantly used to reinforce this dimension of reality (p. 89).

Clearly, this has shown how the pressure of colonialism can make a society an instrument of the subversion of its own god. Nevertheless, despite the well-planned dethronement of the African god, Ulu, it is incontestable that allowing a strange god to take over is the greatest tragedy of the Igbo community. According to Soyinka by secularizing the African god while deifying the Christian God, Achebe becomes the arrow of the deconstruction of "the Igbo being and becoming":

> The strongest argument in favour of a divinefactor in the life of Umuaro is deliberately subverted by impure associations insinuated through the manipulations of language, contradicting situations, or the preponderant claims of secular wisdom (Soyinka 1976: 89).

Though not much attention is given to the Church as a separate agent from the Government Hill, as Colonial Government, their impact on the issues of differences and oppositions in *Arrow of God* could be felt indirectly.

In the Igbo proverb, the Church and the colonial government are the strangers who reap the harvest from the fighting of the two brothers - Nwaka and Ezeulu, otherwise Ulu and Idemili, the two deities. Mr. Goodcountry, a teacher to Oduche in the Church, exploits the fight of the gods:

> There was one man who saw the mounting crises in Umuaro as a blessing and an opportunity sent by God… Although he had been in Umuaro only a year he could show as much progress in his Church and school as many other teachers and pastors would have been proud to record after five or more years **(**Arrow of God, 196:213**)**.

Unknown to Mr. Goodcountry, the success of his Church is reinforced not only by the crisis but also by the effort of Moses Unachukwu's petition and the reply Ezidemili got from the Bishop. The natives exalt Unachukwu and feel that the only way to check the whiteman's excesses is to have more people like Moses Unachukwu to learn the whiteman's ways. For this, they resolve to send their children to the Church, including Nwaka (214-215).However, the success of the Church and Mr. Goodcountry is further heightened by the crisis over the New Yam Feast. Mr. Goodcountry plans to exploits the crisis by organizing his Church's harvest service for the second Sunday in November. According to him:

> The New Yam Festival was the attempt of misguided heathen to show gratitude to God the giver of all good things. This was God's hour to save them from their error which was now threatening to ruin them. They must be told that if they made their thank-offering to God they could harvest their crops without fear of Ulu.(AoG, 1964:215)

The decision of the Church's harvest festival is accepted and further supported by Moses Unachukwu who says: 'If Ulu who is a false god can eat one yam, the living God who owns the whole world should beentitled to eat more than one'. The news spread and because the 'heathens' are weary and hungry; the decision is accepted fully:

> The Christian harvest, which took place a few days after Obika's death saw more people than even Goodcountry could have dreamed. In his extremity many a man sent his son with a yam or two to offer to the new religion and to bring back the promised immunity**.(**AoG, 1964:230).

This brings the total collapse of the traditional Igbo society, which starts in *Things Fall*

*Apart. Arrow of God*itself ends with this sentence:

> Thereafter any yam harvested in his fields was harvested in the name of the son."(AoG, 1964:230)

Thus, 'the traditional religion' that refuses to grant (or submit to) the will of the people eventually submit to the 'burial mat'.

On the part of the colonial rule in the Government Hill in Okperi, the development gives an ample opportunity for more impact and for the control of the Africans.Thus, one can assert that both Ulu and his priest call for themselves the inevitable destruction they have drawn upon themselves by their misconception and misunderstanding. This is further curtailed by their refusal to serve and save the people they are traditionally meant to serve and save. Ezeulu refuses to identify with his people, even after leaders from the six villages appeal to him and agree to bear the consequences of what they are asking.

Ezeulu miscalculated both the traditional values and the new values he seeks to understand. Like Okonkwo, he failed to identify with the changing values of his society and to act accordingly. As a result, Ezeulu tries to be greater than his people and tries to judge them. Consequently, he fails. Like Okonkwo, Ezeulu lives to see a total rejection of his deity Ulu and inevitably, would turn out to be nothing in the new socio-cultural dispensation, even though he struggles to retain it. Had Ezeulu and Ulu known, the Chief Priest would have accepted "Wintabota's" proposal. Instead, the deity of Ulu and his priest 'submit to the burial mat'. Thus, giving a vivid description of how the cultural values of the Igbos are changed from its 'glorified' past unaffected by foreign influence to the destruction of individuals who try to uphold the culture against all odds and finally to total collapse of the bedrock of the cultural values, the traditional religious values in *Arrow of God.*

5.1 The Body as a Cultural Signifier

The intention here is to focus on the human structure as a signifier that encodes movement iconographically as a condition of culture. According to McDougall Russell, the complex kinetics of *Arrow of God* relates directly to a theory of action, from which develops a hermeneutic practice: reading as a dance of attitudes, criticism as participation.This is opposed to the Eurocentric appropriation of Achebe's 'canon' for the metropolitan 'Great Tradition' and the purpose here is to consider in detail the counter assertion, often announced but rarely argued on the evidence. If this is a truly decolonizing fiction, the case cannot be argued simply at the level of content (by authenticating social setting, folklore, the use of proverbs, etc.); meaning needs to be explored in terms of mode. Our focus is in the *attitudes* of the image, the *strategies* of the narrative, the *placing* of the reader, the *cultural coding* of those aesthetic principles that inform the whole process of the fiction.

When Ezeulu, Chief Priest of Ulu, decides to send Oduche to learn the ways of the whiteman it is as an extension of himself, saying: 'I want one of my sons to…be my eye there' (*Arrow of God, 1964* 45). But it is also as a sacrifice:

> ...it may even happen to an unfortunate generation that they are pushed beyond the end of things, and their back is broken and hung over a fire. When this happens they may sacrifice their own blood. This is what our sages meant when they said that a man who has nowhere else to put his hand for support puts it on his own knee. (Achebe, 1988: 456 – 457)

Oduche is not only the eye; he is also the knee. But it is not only vision and sacrifice that are linked in the duality of Ezeulu's motive for sending his son to join the white man: the eye is to see, so that he may know the secret of the Whiteman's power, and the knee is to lend support to the arm put upon it in order to stabilize a collective body on the brink of collapse. The connection between the two is inescapable. The knowledge that is to come from what

the eye sees and to stabilize the traditional power-base of the villages of Umuaro is correlated with a physical gesture, and that is aimed at maintaining the vertical position and balance of the body under the severe stress of imperialism.

It is changing, in the form of the Whiteman, that poses the external threat. The world is changing,' Ezeulu tells Oduche. 'I do not like it. But I am like the bird Eneke-nti-oba. When his friends asked him why he was always on the wing he replied: "Men of today have learnt to shoot without missing and so I have learnt to fly without perching"' (p.45). This is Ezeulu's explanation of why he wants Oduche to be his eye. Of particular interest is the concept associated with Oduche-the-eye of adjusting to change by being constantly on the move; for, at the same time, the response to change that is embodied in Oduche-the-leg (upon which the hand seeks support) is the arrest of motion. This latter response is ritualized in the sacrifice of Oduche, while the ritual counterpart of the former is the dance: 'If anyone asks you why you should be sent to learn these new things tell him that a man must dance the dance prevalent in his time' (p.89). The attitude to change, then, is a complex one, of neutralizing it by embracing it, or of arresting it by making a sacrifice to the god that is bringing it about. Dance bridges the poles of opposition embodied in this complexity of response to change.

If the image for responding to change by moving with it is the dancer, it must be admitted that the significant point, flexibility, focus to a great degree on the legs. Peggy Harper (1969:289) writes, 'A characteristic body posture in [Nigerian] dance consists of a straight-backed torso with the legs used as springs, the knees bending and stretching in fluidly executing the rhythmic action patterns of the dance, and feet placed firmly on the ground'. The hand which seeks body-support upon the leg, then, implies the arrest of motion; not only

is this ‘logical’, it refers as well to the traditional principle of ‘supporting’ as a stabilizing mode. This particular ‘supporting’ image requires the leg to bend, to provide a plane against which the hand can push, in order to gain the vertical impulse of stability. This seems obvious and pedantic perhaps; but it is worth stressing that the ultimate intention is ‘straightness’, so that, although motion is arrested, the image is underlined by an active potentialitystraightening. The iconography of the bended knee in sculpture often suggests the same context. The implication, centring on the knee, is of flexibilitywhich moves considerably closer to the image of the dancer than the apparent contradiction in Ezeulu’s responses to change might at first suggest. Although the African ideal of stability is generally vested in a flat-footed approach to the dance and embodied in performance by a straight-backed torso, the complementary ideal of flexibility relies upon bent ‘buoyant knees over stable feet’ (Thompson 1979:10). As the image of the dancer and the image of the ‘supporting’ knee is seen to merge, so do the respectively associated poles of Ezeulu’s apparently contradictory responses to change, in accord with the traditional dance dialectic relating flexibility to stability.

In sending Oduche to learn the Whiteman’s ways, Ezeulu bases his response to change upon the principle of flexibility, or, in other words, innovation; but the principle behind sacrificing the boy to the Whiteman’s god is one of stability or tradition. One might even see the two responses as relating to two different perceptions of time, ‘real’ and ‘mythic’, the one permitting individual innovation and the other sacrificing the individual to the tradition of community. If this is so then it is no surprise that the image of the dancer and the image of the ‘supporting’ knee is not so polarized as Ezeulu’s responses to change at first seem: as ‘real’ and ‘mythic’ time mesh. Positive proof of this is given in the form of call-and-response

(and solo-and-circle), which provides a potent organizational metaphor throughout the novel. As Thompson writes, there is an 'overlap situation' in call-and-response that:

> combines innovative calls (or innovative steps, of the leader) with tradition *(the choral round, by definition blurring individuality). Soloensemble work, among the many other things it seems to accomplish, is the presentation of the individual as a figure on the ground of custom. It is the very perception of real and mythic time.* (Thompson 1979:43)

That Oduche is sent to the whiteman as both a sacrifice and 'to learn a new dance' (169) in fact suggests the mesh of tradition and innovation that is at the core of Ezeulu's response to the threat of the whiteman. This becomes most apparent when he makes use of the whiteman's attitude to time, an attitude expressed first in the Assistant District Officer's keeping the Priest waiting (as the ADO himself had been kept waiting while being 'broken in' at the Lieutenant Governor's dinner) and then by his imprisoning him. Imprisonment and other forms of coercive waiting enslave one to a future that makes the present meaningless—as Camus, Beckett and other Absurdists have demonstrated. But Ezeulu attempts to exploit the temporal condition of meaningless imprisonment (a symbolic condition of Western life, tyrannized as it is by imperial structure) so as to manipulate the traditional year of his people, in revenge for their disrespect: 'his real struggle was with his own people and the white man was, without knowing it, his ally. The longer he was kept in Okperi the greater his grievance and his resources for the fight' (176). The Whiteman is *not* his ally, and so in the end he fails (and falls). If one is to move with the rhythm of change as the dancer to the drum, one must contribute one's own rhythm and not merely mark time.

To say that innovation and tradition mesh in the overall motivation for sending Oduche to the whiteman is another way of saying that he is expected 'to learn a new dance' while maintaining in his mind the rhythm of the old. In other words, what Ezeulu requires of him is conceived by Achebe in the same terms as 'apart-playing': in the terms of cross-rhythmic

interpretation. Oduche is to learn the ways of the whiteman without losing his commitment to the ways of his people. Unfortunately, however, the rhythm of the whiteman is not merely different in kind. The Western 'approach to rhythm is called divisive because it divides the music into standard units of time', Chernoff tells us:

> As we mark the time by tapping or clapping our hands, we are separating the music into easily comprehensible units of time…. It is this fact, that Western musicians count together from the same starting point, which enables a conductor to stand in front of more than a hundred men and women playing in an orchestra and keep them together with his baton. Rhythm is something we follow (Thompson 1979:41–42).

Accordingly, Oduche is unable to cross the rhythm of the 'new dance' with the rhythm of his people; instead, he takes it on its own terms, and follows it. The next time Oduche appears, after his father's command to tell the whiteman the old custom even as he learns the new, instead he is seen 'speak[ing] up for the Lord' (49) against the Sacred Python—following instead of interpreting. The irony of his subsequent Christian naming (an imperial act of claiming), as the rock upon which the Church will be built ('Peter'), is that it is an image of solid inflexibility totally alien to African notions of support and stability.

The hermeneutic principle of *Arrow of God* is one of fluid movement from one position to another, a dancing of attitudes which, in the reader's way of relating them, composes his/her own contribution to what the novel is *doing*. A sense of rhythm and of balance is needed to activate the shifting patterns of metaphor and to relate the different faces of truth, where truth is 'like a Mask dancing' and its 'characters' are permutations of its essence.

The potential and the limits of individual participation in the communal context are dramatized as they are encoded by idiom in *Arrow of God*. At the core of the colonial relationship, as T.O. Ranger declares, is 'the successful manipulation and control of symbols' (Ranger 1975:166). Ezeulu undoubtedly fails in this power struggle; but the novel does not. Nor does Idemili. Implicit in much 'criticism' of Achebe's fiction is the honorific judgement

that it extends the Great Tradition of the Nineteenth-Century Novel in its European Heyday; were this true, from a postcolonial point of view it would be an accusation, for, as Gayatri Spivak and others have demonstrated, that form of fiction encodes the ideal of Empire (by investing narrative authority in omniscient or centralized perspective, by proposing concepts of universalized value, etc.) (Spivak 1987). The accusation, of course, is false. Achebe has captured the symbolic form of the novel from the 'central' tradition, and grounded it upon an aesthetic of movement and motion and agility—which, as he says, 'inform the Igbo concept of existence' and so, by a paradigm shift, reconstitute the nature and experience of fiction. The reader must engage with a kinetic performance, must participate in a process: *'Ada-akwu ofu ebe enene* mmoo; you do not stand in one place to watch a masquerade. You must imitate its motion' (Address given by Achebe at Guelph University, Ontario, 1984). The process is one of socialization and constant renewal, functioning by an 'overlap' of multiple perspectives—individual and communal, call-and-response, solo-and-circle—that redefines the imperial concept of the centre in African terms, in terms of slippage: as that blank space where innovation inscribes itself on the ground of tradition.

5.2 Absolutism in Western Rationality and The Relativity in Igbo Rationality

Rationality is an invisible undergirding of every person's and every culture's value system, morality, economy, material practice, pragmatic habitsit is a process and a practice that informs almost everything any culture or member thereof thinks or does, although the rational system itself is not often reflected upon, because of its invisibility.The intersection of two cultures, however, does make the rational structure of each culture visible; these structures are exposed by contrast. Thus, the purpose here is to engage the issues of rationality in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, making rational issues in the colonial structure

more visible. Specific elements in Achebe's book that will be used to draw out the positions of the conflicting rationalities are the Native Court, the road the British build, and the context of "indirect rule" in which those two institutions are administered.

To understand the hubris of the British colonizers in their subjugation of their colonial subjects, it's useful to explore the assumptions behind the enlightenment. One justification of the Colonial administration was the premise that the colonial subjects were inferior to their Western colonizers (Brooker 135). The way they defined the nature of that inferiority ranged from race, to religion, to rationality, and often was a construct in which all three of those characteristics were linked. The premise of inferiority as a function of race and religion are familiar enough. The premise of inferiority as a function of rationality was couched in rhetoric which used words such as "backward" to describe the cultural and mental condition of the colonial subjects, a term that survived in unofficial political usage into the mid-nineteenth century (as in the case of Kennan's Long Telegram, available on a web-search, which used the word interchangeably with "dependent" to describe third-world countries). The British found this backwardness substantiated firstly in the subjects' brutality (in *Arrow of God*, one of Winterbottom's cardinal justifications for his authority in Nigeria, is the brutality he witnessed in the Igbo people leaving a man in the dessert to die), and secondly, in their lack of modernization. Both of these lacks are offences against cherished Western values that had their origins in the Enlightenment. The colonial subjects' brutality transgressed the values of Enlightenment humanism's rationally constructed concepts of human rights, social justice, and the individual (Chakrabarty, 4). The "primitive" condition of the colonized existed, in the minds of the colonizers, as a binary opposite to their own condition of modern progress, a condition founded on scientific progress, which was in turn

founded upon the principles of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason, which had established a logical vehicle that facilitated the West's departure from its own primitive condition in the Dark Ages. The Western view of its own Enlightenment-based progress was of a movement upwards on a linear, hierarchical scale. The irony in these two categories of colonial disapproval, however, is evident in the replacement of the "humanist episteme" with the "machinic episteme" in the West that occurred when humanism was replaced by modernism (Lash, 7). In essence, the British object to their colonial subjects on the grounds of the subjects' lack in two incompatible areas.

Max Weber's work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* effectively characterizes the ways Western culture thought about its own progress. Weber's work creates the categories by which a truly rational culture can be identified. These categories, of course, include the West and exclude all other cultures. Weber's categories, or those of his colleagues in social science, have been used further to inscribe the limits of modernity, of what conditions a society must meet to be "modern" (Lash, 1). Most relevant to this chapter is Weber's differentiation between rationalism and true rationality. All societies have developed forms of rational behaviour, behaviour designed to accomplish a certain end. Such behaviour is what Weber calls rationalism. Weber argues that this type of behaviour is different from the peculiar type of rationality found in Western culture. "What distinguishes rationality from rationalism is that rationalism is oriented to immediate goals, while rationality involves goals which are ordered, arranged, and even chosen in relation to some larger, conscious system of meanings, ideas, and values" (Swidler, 35-36). This systematization of rationality denies the validity of a non-Western culture's truth claims and relegates that culture to the realm of the irrational and pre-modern.Dipesh Chakrabarty

describes humanism as a group of:

> categories and concepts, the genealogy of which go deep into the intellectual and even theological traditions of Europe. Concepts such as citizenship, the state, civil society, public sphere, human rights, equality before the law, the individual, distinctions between public and private, the idea of the subject, democracy, popular sovereignty, social justice, scientific rationality … all bear the burden of European thought and history. (4)

These values that normally carry positive connotations are a part of the Western mindset that led to the outrages of colonialism. The colonialist subjection of the colonized, justified by the colonizers' possession of and the colonized subjects' lack of this humanist inheritance, is one of the great hypocrisies of modern history. As Chakrabarty observes, "The European colonizer of the nineteenth century both preached this Enlightenment humanism at the colonized and at the same time denied it in practice" (4). Part of the colonizers' justification for this paradox was in a very limited definition of the term "human." "European imperialism had reduced that idea to the figure of the settler-colonial white man," Chakrabarty says (5). The view of modernity described by Lash, in which a "machinic episteme" comes to replace a "humanist episteme," which was "inscribed in a rationality of the same" with a "constitutive and constituting inside …which excludes … all otherness to the outside, where it is to be grasped and studied and controlled as an object" is contrary to the tenets of humanism (7). It is thus arguable to opine that the rise of this modernist episteme contributes to both the paradoxical role of humanism in colonialism and to the justification of colonialism on the grounds of the lack existing in the colonized.As noted above, humanism at some point gave way to modernism, as Lash notes:

> Here a predifferentiated humanism – whether classical or Renaissance – develops into a modernism based on a machinic or systemic model. In premodernist humanism, humans circulate freely with non-humans, as architectural columns are models of man, as nature is seen to be filled with signs, as semiotic and hermeneutic as humanity. With the rise of architectural-urbanistic and sociological modernism (positivism), a humanistic episteme yields to a machinic episteme (7).

This machinic episteme contains what Horkheimer and Adornoattacked in their critique of the Enlightenment, namely fascism and the domination of nature and other men (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002:4). If it is understood that the rational system that provided the foundation for the morality of human rights and equality became a system in which everything (nature and humans) became a resource for man's progress, it becomes easier to understand how the colonialist could preach his Enlightenment humanism while at the same time denying it in practice.

LewisCarroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass* is groundbreaking in that it proposes, whether purposely or not, that the rational system which structured the British world may be arbitrary that it may be just one way of structuring the world. Carroll's work in his British context was amusing, not threatening, because of the firmness of the British belief that Western rationality was the *only* rationality that to think in a different manner was *ir*-rational, located lower on the hierarchical scale of progress mentioned above. It was to be *un*-Enlightened, and therefore inferior. That view sees Enlightenment rationality as a movement on a linear scale that elevates the Westerner above the rest of the world. For example, see Kant's "What is Enlightenment," in which he defines enlightenment as "man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity" (Kant). Carroll's creation of an autonomous "other" rationality calls that view into question and suggests that perhaps rationalities inhabit parallel and equally legitimate planesthat the scale of "enlightenment" may be non-linear. The colonial/imperial view claims the privileged position of "Rationality;" Achebe's *Arrow of God* suggests that there is no such thing, only "rationalities."

Arrow of God takes place in colonial Nigeria, a site of colonial conflict. The conflict is

framed mainly in the relationship between the British Administrator, Captain Winterbottom, and the Chief Priest Ezeulu of Umuaro, an Igbo village under Winterbottom's colonial jurisdiction. The conflict also exists in the Igbo's internal dissonance, which is heightened as a function of the British Administration's presence in Nigeria. Ezeulu is challenged by other would-be leaders of Umuaro who voice opposition to Ezeulu's policy of dealing with the British Administration. The conflict comes to a head when Ezeulu is summoned to Winterbottom's headquarters, which appears to all of Umuaro as an insult. Ezeulu's resulting conflict with the people in his village culminates in his refusal to initiate the harvest ritual, an action which leaves the villagers starving and the village's economy seriously impaired. It is unclear if this refusal on Ezeulu's part is prompted by the village's deity, as Ezeulu wants to believe, or whether it is as a result of Ezeulu's pride and stubbornness. Ezeulu loses his mind at the end of the book when his son dies, an event for which the cause, like Ezeulu's refusal of his ritual duty, is ambiguous.

Recent critical works on Achebe's novels have focused on the postcolonial aspect of the novels and situated that aspect in contemporary conversations about the postcolonial state. All three critical writers cited in this chapter, agreed that Achebe's works, despite being published in 1964, remains relevant for its trenchant critique of the faulty colonial project. The book's longevity as a relevant statement is remarkable because of the internal dissonance in postcolonial politics and the massive revisions the field of study has undergone, all since the writing of the novels.

Three articles used to treat several themes that are useful to the investigation, namely the *Foreign Nature of Western Institutions in Africa* and *The Important Difference Between the Absolutism at Work in Western Rationality* and *The Relativity at Work in The Igbo*

Rationality. Like Dipesh Chakrabarty above, Olakunle George and Tejumola Olaniyan note that Western institutions are not a natural part of Africa. George argues that "if understood simply as a project of replicating the nation-state form inherited through colonial imposition from Western Europe, the nationalist project of translation was doomed from the outset" (George, 2005:345). Olaniyan complains that "rarely was it pondered that the problem might be primarily a crisis of institutions in their entirety in relation to context, not simply of their performance" (cited in Schultz, 2007). Both writers recognize the fact that to blame the failure of Western government in Africa on poor execution is to blame the Africans and to continue to categorize them as backward, while placing the blame on the original imposition of the institutions is to critique the assumptions of the colonial and post-colonial nationalist projects. Both Olaniyan and George praise Chinua Achebe as a smart and successful writer for his recognition that the blame lies not on the Africans' inability to adopt foreign institutions but rather on the assumption that those institutions belong in Africa, and for his successful portrayal of that fact (cited in Schultz, 2007).

Perhaps more importantly for the argument of this study, George, Olaniyan, and Suzanne Scafe all discuss the problematic intersection between the absolute rationality of the West and the relative rationality of the Igbo people in *Arrow of God*. Scafe, commenting on Achebe's frequent return to this subject in his writing, says that "Achebe interprets the Igbo proverb 'Wherever something stands, something else will stand beside it' to mean: …that there is no one way to anything. The Igbo people who made that proverb are very insistent on this—there is no absolute anything" (119). Olaniyan describes how the relativist Igbo rationality, a "polyvocal," "delicately structure contingency," is dominated by its encounter with absolute Western rationality in *Arrow of God*:

> To a large extent, the crisis in the text results from attempts to unduly tame a delicately structured contingency, to force a monologue upon a polyvocal terrain … [Igbo characters, even those engaged in serious internal conflicts] without distinction are consumed by colonialism and its Christianity whose main distinguishing feature is systemic parochialism. Here, finally, is the vacuum into which is inscribed, simultaneously, the fall of the indigenous, and the rise of the colonial, episteme (26).

Achebe's work beginswith the assertion that no such singularly valid "real world" rationality exists. *Arrow of God* exposes the conflict between the rationalities of two cultures in the larger conflict for dominance, and disputes the dominance of Western 'reason' over the forms of rationality that form its "other." In this context, rationality is seen to be more than an innocuous epistemological tool it becomes very clearly a vehicle for the attainment and exercise of power.

The average Western reader may very well expect, in encountering a novel written about Africa, to encounter a sort of Wonderlanda place which introduces him to irrational, incorrect, "immature," and amusing ways of thinking. Such readers respond to such a novel the same way the Victorian Englishman responded to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Achebe himself relates the tendency for Westerners to approach non-Western literatures from this Orientalist perspective in his famous diatribe against Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*:

> I received two very touching letters from high school children in Yonkers, New York, who -- bless their teacher--had just read *Things Fall Apart*. One of them was particularly happy to learn about the customs and superstitions of an African tribe (251).

Achebe goes on to make a statement that levels the field between New York and the Igbo people by asserting the equal validity of the Igbo rationality and the one existing among the school children in Yonkers:

> The young fellow from Yonkers, perhaps partly on account of his age but I believe also for much deeper and more serious reasons, is obviously unaware that the life of his own tribesmen in Yonkers, New York, is full of odd customs and superstitions and, like everybody else in his culture, imagines that he needs a trip to Africa to

encounter those things (251).

Clearly, Achebe argues here with an assumption with which Westerners are fluent and which Olaniyan, Scafe and George point out in their critiques, namely the assumption that the West is the only culture whose rationality has any validity since the Enlightenment elevated it out of the primordial superstitions that keep the non-Western world in darkness. This absolutism assumes that only the modern, Western world thinks properly and, unlike the Igbo rationality, characterized by the proverb quoted by Scafe, denies the truth-claims of other cultural epistemologies. By referring to the 'enlightened' practices of New Yorkers as "odd customs and superstitions," he disputes that assumption and places the rationality of the West on a plane with all the other rationalities of the cultures of the world.

Achebe's *Arrow of God* is framed to reveal two different rationalities encountering each other. Some examples are as simple as the instance where Winterbottom inhibits the efficiency of the grass-cutters outside his window who sing and swing their machetes in time with the song by telling them to "shut up there!" The result of his interruption: "the blades went up and down haphazardly thereafter" (56), with less efficiency than before, it may be assumed. Some examples of rational conflict, on the other hand, contain deeper implications into structures of power. For example, Winterbottom complains to Clarke about one of the villages, Abame: "In the whole division they are the least co-operative with their Native Court. Throughout last year the court handled less than a dozen cases and not one was brought to it by the natives themselves" (108). The British have apparently established a judicial institution and filled its offices with native people. That the villagers don't use it is an indication, firstly, of the foreignness of that institution, of the villagers' inability to incorporate it as part of their system of living. From the perspective of the reader, the establishment of a court among the villagers seems absurd. Captain Winterbottom

recognizes, at least, that there is a slippage between the British institutions and the native people who are expected to use them. When he recounts the episode of the "Breaking of the Guns," in which he settled the dispute between Okperi and Umuaro, he notes that "every witness who testified before me from both sides without exception perjured themselves. One thing you must remember in dealing with the natives is that like children they are great liars" (37). Perjury is not a concept with which any of the villagers would be familiar. Their rational structure does not include such a thing.

The issue of the villagers not using the court is, secondly, an indication of their ultimate rejection of British authority. It is more than a normal reaction to an obtuse institution that won't fit within a native rationality. The court's existence is a British assertion of the pervasiveness of British authority, authority that is specifically grounded in Western rationality. The imposition of the court into the village's non-Western system of justice is an assertion that the rationality of the British judiciary structure is superior to any system designed to dispense justice that the natives possess. The court's very presence there in the Abame village is a daily act of intellectual force, making present, by the representation of the physical structure, a superior power that holds the keys to moral justification. This assertion hearkens back to the rationally-produced system of moral behaviour in Enlightenment projects such as Kant's, whose past assertions of the universality of their rational projects justified the later arrogation of the Westerner above the non-Westerner on a linear scale of morality. Winterbottom frequently expresses his opinion that the natives are unable to expedite their own justice by making mention of an instance where he had "rescued a man buried alive up to his neck, with a piece of roast yam on his head to attract vultures" (57). He sees this experience especially as the avenue to his unique understanding of the "elemental

cruelty in the psychological makeup of the native" (58). Congruent to this opinion is the implicit one that any native form of justice will be backward because of its grounding in "elemental cruelty" rather than in a rational legal process. That the villagers ignore the court is therefore, in addition to being a sign that the court doesn't fit within the rational system of the village, a rejection of British authority that derives from a rational 'due process.'

The conversation between Winterbottom and Clarke also brings some strange assumptions embedded in Winterbottom's Western rationality into relief. His complaint is that the Abame village had only twelve cases in a year, and that those twelve had been brought to the court by administrators rather than natives. While one interpretation of this statement could imbue Winterbottom with a practicality that understands that disputes and criminal behaviour occur on a regular basis everywhere, and that the lack of activity in the court is a sign not of a peaceful community but rather a lack of submission to British sovereignty, it could also be viewed as an indication of a blind progress-based mentality that sees an empty court as an unsuccessful court regardless of its location and the cause of its inactivity. Such a rationale would also say that a jail is built to be used, and a half-empty jail is a half-failure. When this type of mentality is exposed by an intersection of Western rationality and other rationality, even a Westerner can see a weakness in the Western rational structure.

In concert with the Native Court, the British Administration is in the process of implementing a new policy of "indirect rule," a policy which contains the same implicit assumptions of the Native Court, namely that the Igbo people are 'backward,' and that by converting the Igbo to the structures of Western rationality, the British will be able to most effectively rule Nigeria and enlighten the Igbo people. The letter from headquarters that Winterbottom receives states the goal of "building a higher civilization upon the soundly

rooted native stock … moulding it and establishing it into lines consonant with *modern ideas* and higher standards" (56, italics added). The attempt to indoctrinate the villagers into Western rationality is evident in the words "modern ideas." The concept of "indirect rule" involves the promotion of certain individuals from the village to a status imbued with British authority, giving them the title of "paramount chief." That authority is grounded in their conversion to the British rational structure, and the paramount chief's job would be to work towards modernization and Westernization within his jurisdiction. Winterbottom recognizes from past experience the folly of promoting "some mission educated smart-alec" (59), one who, through his education-based conversion to Western rationality, was already dissimilated from the villagers. However, it is evident from the letter from headquarters that such a recognition does not stem from questioning the propriety of converting the villagers to that rationality, but from the recognition that such a conversion must be accomplished through the gradual process of "moulding" in which the whole village is slowly elevated, rather than indoctrinating one man and giving him power over the whole unenlightened village. Although Winterbottom is ambivalent about the whole concept of appointing paramount chiefs, he believes that he has in Ezeulu a candidate who will fit into the British structure. '"As far as Umuaro is concerned I have found their chief,' he said with one of his rare smiles, 'and they will live happily ever after'" (108).

Umuaro's happiness is only marginally at stake for the British Administration. The real issue, stating it again, is power the goal is to convert Umuaro to Western Rationality in order to keep them subject to it, to raise them to a more privileged level (from a British viewpoint), and a more maintenance-free level, of subjection. The court, by existing to impose the structure of Western rationality on the cultural concept of propriety, of morality, is an

extremely invasive colonial tool. It "blesses" the colonized villagers with order, justice, etc., all the while ensuring that the villagers act in accordance with the rationally acceptable framework of Britain. At least that is the ideal. Winterbottom's frustration with the court at Abame is with its ineffectiveness in accomplishing those ends.

The idea of a Western court set within the framework of an incompatible rationality is pronounced. The symbols of Western Rationality are there as seen in the court messenger who has converted to the West. The court messenger in *Arrow of God* comes from a Nigerian village, but more importantly, he is in the pay of the British Administration as a "Chief Messenger" (135). His errand to Ezeulu's hut is to summon Ezeulu to appear before Winterbottom. The exchange between the messenger and Ezeulu and his friends is full of posturing for power and authority, including the messenger's taking "a very small book from his breast pocket and open[ing] it in the manner of a white man" (137). The reader gets the feeling that the messenger's paper is as mere, functional. Functionality, however, is not the point. The pen and paper's true function in this case is to represent a rational structure, which is to represent power. The Okperian messenger's pen and paper grant him a certain air of authority through association with Western rationality they have no other context in Ezeulu's tent. Thus, it can be assumed that the effect in Umuaro is the representation of authority as effective, despite its lack of relevance to the rationality of the people over whom the authority is exercised.

The court is not the only Western form that has been transplanted into Nigeria to assert British authority. Another highly visible example is the road more subversive, perhaps, because of the likelihood that even the British are unaware of its subversiveness. The British Administration has built a road "to connect Okperi with its enemy, Umuaro" (76). The subtle

irony in that sentence is evident even to a Westerner reading the book. It is enhanced by the statement that "as the new road did not point in the direction of a stream or a market, (one) did not encounter many villagers, only a few women now and again carrying heavy loads of firewood" (81). The road that the British Administration constructs seems to take a very prominent place on their list of priorities. However, the irrationality of the road from the perspective of the Nigerians is evident. The Administration's difficulty in enlisting workers to construct the road, and the foreman's inability to manage the workers he has, indicate the incompatibility of the project and the world of the Igbo people. Furthermore, the road connects two enemy villages, enabling an interaction that neither village is very accustomed to having, and does not give either village access to the things that they regularly leave their villages for. In fact, the building of any road anywhere seems a foreign and incomprehensible thing to the people of the villages, considering that as a non-industrial people they don't use so much as a wheeled cart to travel. They travel on foot, and their pattern of travel seems to be less established than it would be for Westerners. Early in the story, Ezeulu's dinner is late because of the distance that his wife has to travel for water, one of the things that the people from the villages do travel daily for: "the nearer stream, Ota, had been abandoned since the oracle announced yesterday that the enormous boulder resting on two other rocks at its source was about to fall and would take a softer pillow for its head" (7). The villagers' regular travel to the nearest stream has been diverted to a stream farther away. When the travel patterns of a people can be changed so easily, the construction of a road, a project that makes the travel patterns permanent, takes on a ridiculous cast.

Or perhaps an authoritarian cast. The road is a point of reference for conversion to British authority, as when the native messenger who comes from Winterbottom to summon Ezeulu

to Government Hill armed with his notebook and the very self-conscious sanction of the road on his lips: “Fortunately the new road makes even a cripple hungry for a walk. We set out this morning at the first cock-crow and before we knew where we were we had got here” (138). Those who use the road mostly do so for government purposes; therefore, the road becomes a part of British rationality that stands as a symbol of conversion to and complicity with British authority. Ultimately, the British ideal for the road would be the complete conversion of the villagers to the road; travel would only occur on the circuits sanctioned by British road construction, the rationality that underlies the villagers’ concept of movement would be destroyed, and Western rationality would be one step closer to validation. As Olaniyan said, here is an attempt “to unduly tame a delicately structured contingency, to force a monologue upon a polyvocal terrain” (26). A system of roads would tame and destroy the delicate structure of Igbo rationality.

That rationality really at stake in the existence of the road can be seen through a simple examination of the circumstance involving the rock and the stream mentioned above. With no roads, the villagers are free to change their travel routes according to the prophecies of their oracle. The oracle, of course, is a very important part of the rationality of Umuaro. Their logic says that the oracle has power to predict, or at least to foreshadow, the future. When the oracle has spoken, or when any spiritual phenomena have occurred, the message it contains is paramount in the villagers’ decision-making process. At least it is so when they have the freedom to make decisions. The ability to travel on unestablished routes is important in the case of the stream and the rock. With the construction of roads, however, comes dependency. As the messenger said, “the new road makes even a cripple hungry for a walk” (138). Once the new level of ease is established in travel, the old difficulty of traveling

off-road is unacceptable. In this circumstance, the freedom of the villagers to change travel patterns is removed, and along with it, any power the oracle had to direct those patterns. The rationality of the village is consequently undermined by Western rationality.

Given the above context, *Arrow of God* demonstrates the idea that rationality is not Rationality; that one group's way of reasoning with events in the world has equal validity as another's. Thus, the work is involved in a critique of the imperial notion that the West's rational structure is the only "enlightened" one. It does not argue for the dominance of the villagers' rationality either; it recognizes the parallel nature of different rationalities. To repeat the proverb cited earlier, "Wherever something stands, something else will stand beside it" (Scafe 119). He argues against the imposition of one rationality upon another. The book's ending illustrates the inconclusiveness of either rationality's claim to supremacy. The events that close the narrative of Ezeulu's refusal to perform his ritual duty, the death of his son Obika, and Ezeulu's ensuing madness frustrate the attempt of either rationality to conclusively explain or 'rationalize' their causes. Although the story's narrator is clearly writing from an Igbo perspective, his own tacit ambivalence about the true explanation of and cause for the disaster at the book's end is shown in his overt avoidance of the question. This passivity is, in fact, a characteristic the narrator displays throughout the book. The events that end the narrative are the last in a chain of events that could be possibly rationalized by either of the intersecting rationalities, but which actually can't be rationalized by either, because to do so would dismissively exclude the possibility of the *other's* possible explanation. For example, although a Western reader may be extremely skeptical about Ezeulu's claim to divine guidance in actions that seem very clearly to be selfish and childish, the reader's position is not privileged enough to conclusively rule out such possibilities.

While it seems that Obika's death is easily explained by the fact of his physical exertion during his sickness, the unlikely timing of his death, as well as the possibility of its symbolic purposiveness in relation to the other events at the end of the story, make it impossible for the reader to rule out the hand of a deity in the event. Ezeulu's madness could be explained psychologically by things like stress, but it is impossible to rule out the explanation of the village people, whose inherited wisdom said that "their god had taken sides with them" and that "no one ever won judgment against his clan" (230).

Ezeulu's fate of madness can also be seen as the fate of one who attempts to keep one foot in his relative rationality and the other in an incompatible, absolute rationality. Olaniyan, although overtly speaking of religion, in reality speaks of rationality when he says "Christianity, unlike Igbo religions, is monotheistic and therefore selfish, jealous, violent (its military arm is the colonial administration), absolutist, tyrannical and univocal; it is not a religion you can "share" with other religions" (23). Putting Olaniyan's own parochialism and misunderstanding aside, what he describes in this quote is more a Western mindset than a religious doctrine. He writes these words to explain the disaster that results from Ezeulu's attempt to live in both worlds by sending one of his sons to attend a Christian school, a mistake Olaniyan contextualizes as political, with the short rant quoted above as somewhat of an aside. That aside, however, identifies the central problem in Ezeulu's situation: he tries to occupy a place in two worlds. The new world he attempts to hold a place in is not willing to share with the old; Western rationality is absolute.

Ezeulu's madness, so contextualized, would be a result of his foolhardy attempt to have a prolonged existence in two rationalities at once. He sent his son, Oduche, to Christian school *ostensibly* to act as Ezeulu's spy into the British world, but in reality to provide Ezeulu a

window into a world from which he can strengthen his power. His attempt to use his understanding of the workings of the British administration to place himself in a position of greater power in his village is a project that parallels the colonial project. Unlike the story's narrator, who refrains from drawing conclusions on either side of the rational divide, Ezeulu attempts to live on both sides of that divide. His fate is a message about the incompatibility of the two rational structures.

5.3 Contests of Text and Context in *Arrow of God*

> If there is a common resistance to reading, this is not a realistic fear. It confuses contexts for meaning with disorder. And often it reflects a wish to present an "objective" rhetoric, refusing to locate its own modes of production within inventive culture and historical change(James Clifford, *Writing Culture*).

Proverbs are so conspicuous in Chinua Achebe's novels that, they most times constitute the singular feature of his art studied by critiques. As it were, Achebe's use of proverbs is in itself proverbial. One can speak of two tendencies in this well-traversed area. Bold critics often tend to generate ethnic theories of cognition from the structure and nature of the proverbs, and much of the highly perceptive ones concentrate on the significance of the sayings in Achebe's creative construction of "vernacular" conversation. For the reason that proverbs usually employ concrete images, Cairns suggests, for instance, that the sayings reflect the African predilection for non-abstract thought (16). However, more perceptive Achebe scholars have revealed that he uses proverbs to add distinctively local shade to his settings, depict the speech patterns and conventions of Igbo characters who would not ordinarily speak English, define these characters by particular types of proverbs, and also exercise narrative control by changing "thematic" statements as his plots develop. In addition, such studies revealed that, women and children do not cite proverbs in Igboland and that "educated" people (ironically, like Achebe himself), more often than not, forget or

misuses proverbs. In spite of the large attention paid to his inventiveness in proverb usage, a lack still exists of a "rhetorical" analysis of this all-important aspect of Achebe's work. Two factors could have, in the main, contributed to this neglect. First, paremiology used to be almost exclusively an anthropologist's forte wherein proverbs were defined in terms of the mores of the people that use them. Second, many critics believe that Achebe chooses the proverb as his signature idiom because he is a teacher, his novels are his lesson plans, and no other figure known to literary anthropology helps the teacher better than the proverb (Achebe, "*The Novelist*" 162) Why is the proverb such a good friend of the teacher-novelist? It is an oral and rural manner of speaking, it is highly pragmatic, and it is unavoidably didactic. According to Patnaik:

> cultures that employ the oral mode of communication are more likely to value compressed succinct expression. What better vehicle of communication than the proverb, which by its very nature penetrates to the heart of the situation and character, lending at the same time, to succinct thought a freshness of expression and ingeniousness of idea (68).

While not disregarding the basic assumption of anthropological interpretation, it is also important to note that proverbs are not mere vehicles of thought, they are equated with structures that render thinking perceptible. This is because proverbs are rhetorical not because they are simply figures of speech but because they thematize the possibility of representing speech. Much as they are about political control, the tragic conflicts in *Arrow of God* result from what is almost an endless jostling for superiority between the authorities of message, meaning, and context. The colonial milieu provides the concrete historical and political boundaries within which these "proverbial" contests play themselves out. In the ensuing "literary" reading of one thematic proverb; "a messenger does not choose its message"(158)in *Arrow of God*, the novel dramatizes not just the well-documented monumental disaster that accompanies the colonial incursion into Umuaro but also the role

that disagreements over reading (in this so-called "oral" culture) play in the development of the novel's tragedy.

A messenger's loyalty to its charge first becomes the main focus of a conversation when Ezeulu rejects Tony Clarke's orders to report to the District Headquarters for instruction on becoming a Warrant Chief:

> Do you know what you are saying, my friend? asked the messenger in utter unbelief. "Are you a messenger or not?" asked Ezeulu."Go home and give my message to your master." (Achebe, 1964: 157).

To avert a major confrontation between the cocky imperial messenger and the tradition conscious audience, Akuebue quickly intervenes with a tacit citation of tradition on the appropriate comportment of messengers:

> In Umuaro it is not our custom to refuse a call, although we may refuse to do what the caller asks. Ezeulu does not want to refuse the white man's call and so he is sending his son. (Achebe, 1964: 157)

When the messenger declines this reminder of tradition, Akuebue expresses his surprise with the proverb "I have never heard of a messenger choosing the message he will carry" (*Achebe, 1964:* 158).

The messenger "chooses" his message, as Akuebue implies, not because there is no proverb prohibiting such behaviour where he comes from, but because the messenger believes he speaks for a sovereign Crown that is not subject to "local" laws. He deems it untenable that a local potentate could cite tradition to so dismiss the white master's subpoena. This little skirmish over the importance of a message as determined by the social position of its originator and courier is going to lead to unimaginable implications for Ezeulu and his community as the story unfolds.

In tracing the itinerary of the sad events that ensue, it is obvious that most other key conflicts in the novel even before this encounter involve the cultural control of either messages or

messengers. At several crucial moments, the plot relies on the outcome of struggles for command between the messages and messengers, and on all such occasions, the messengers succeed regardless of what the contestants think. The messengers at each of these turns demonstrate that they have minds of their own independent of the fates of their messages, their senders, and their intended receivers. In almost every instance, the messengers accept all messages dumped on them but deliver only those that suit them. In the wake of what may be called apparent "betrayal," tragic scenarios often result. On most occasions, the messengers appear indifferent to the incessant struggles on how to articulate the dispatchers' intentions with the receivers' wiles.

The first consequential conflict in the novel arises when a delegation, charged with negotiating a choice of the settlement of a land dispute with Okperi, unwittingly botches its mission. One of the elders at the meeting specifically tells Akukalia that "we do not want Okperi to choose war; nobody eats war. If they choose peace we shall rejoice. But whatever they say you are not to dispute with them. Your duty is to bring word back to us “(Achebe, 1964: 19). As Ogbuefi Egonwanne bids here, the emissaries are to be true messengers, though, as Ezeulu argues later, not necessarily messengers of truth. The clan expects Akukalia to be a transparent messenger in whom its message could be easily read, for according to the proverbial injunction, he cannot choose his message.

The message, partly because of the messenger's meddling with his commission, actually miscarries when Akukalia reaches Okperi. First, it is the market day in Okperi, and there are not too many qualified people around to receive the message. Second, Akukalia is impatient and refuses to return at a more convenient time because, according to him, his "mission could not wait"(Achebe, 1964: 25). The urgency, is not part of the message, and there is therefore

little surprise, except for the messenger who has added the urgency, when Ebo, his Okperi host, quotes the traditional saying, "I have not yet heard of a message that could not wait" (Achebe, 1964: 25). A heated argument ensues, and at one point Ebo, presumably innocently, expresses severe disapproval of Akukalia: "'if you want to shout like a castrated bull you must wait until you return to Umuaro'" (Achebe, 1964: 26). Incidentally, Akukalia is an impotent man, "whose two wives were secretíy given to other men to bear his children" (26). At this point, the hitherto wayward message totally falls through. Akukalia runs into Ebo's family shrine and breaks his ikenga, "the strength of his right arm" (Achebe, 1964: 27). By so doing, Akukalia serves Ebo's communication channel with his ancestors. To convince his primogenitors that he is still alive, Ebo murders his assailant. By virtue of this incident, the Okperi people unwittingly choose war because customarily Umuaro must draw equal compensation for Akukalia's death. Akukalia does not live long enough to pass on the options in his charge, but the message got delivered. The messenger's body, even in death, anchors the mission.

Before discussing the major singular conflict in the story, it is important to quickly examine another important episode involving an argument over the supremacy of either the message or the messenger. The colonial administration wants to make Ezeulu its messenger by offering him a warrant chieftaincy. Already, Ezeulu is a messenger of Ulu and the Umuaro community, but Tony Clarke and his superiors in the colonial hierarchy do not perceive him as one. So, after making his offer through an interpreter, Clarke asks, "Well, are you accepting the offer or not?" (Achebe, 1964: 196). Ezeulu replies:

> Tell the white man that Ezeulu will not be anybody's chief [messenger], except Ulu.
> "What!" shouted Tony Clarke. "Is the fellow mad?"
> "I tink so sah," said the interpreter.
> "In that case he goes back to prison." Clarke was now really angry. What cheek! A

> witch-doctor making a fool of the British Administration in public! (Achebe, 1964: 196).

Clarke's detention order spells doom for the community, and greater conflicts over the role of the messenger develops.

Ezeulu already sees himself as a messenger of his god, whose command he does not dispute, but Clarke and Winterbottom read him incorrectly by assuming that he is a transparently honest messenger on whom they could load their own message. They develop the wrong prompt after listening to the chief's testimony against his own clan during the Okperi-Umuaro boundary adjustment inquiries. Somehow, the colonial operatives believe that Ezeulu's deposition, which contradicted his clan's claims, marks him out as an unusually honest African who can be trusted with the Crown's directives to Umuaro citizens. The colonial administrators do not know that Ezeulu is not a dispassionate messenger on whose face they can wilfully inscribe their own messages. This singular misreading engenders the tragic conflict that occurs over the eating of two calendrical yams. Ezeulu's detention for refusing the chieftaincy prevents him from re-marking the communal schedule for two months. As the drama of how to prevent an imminent collapse of the Umuaro economy unfolds, it appears clearly that different sectors of the federation are motivated by vested methods of textual interpretation, negotiations on deciphering the will of the messenger and of the sender vis-à-vis the truthfulness of the message. It is also a battle over the "nature" of nature.

First, Ezeulu's assistants, who also "reckon" the number of months, approached the chief priest after the "twelfth moon" to make arrangements for the next New Yam Feast. One of them says:

> It is now four days since the new moon appeared in the sky; it is already grown big. And yet you have not called us together to tell us the day of the New Yam Feast—

(Achebe, 1964: 232).

And Ezeulu responds, "I see. I thought perhaps I did not hear you well. Since when did you begin to reckon the year for Umuaro?" (*Achebe, 1964:* 233). One of the assistants, Chukwulobe, who thinks Obiesili is tactless, recasts the request: "We do not reckon the year for Umuaro; we are not Chief Priest. But we thought that perhaps you have lost count because of your recent absence"(Achebe, 1964: 233). Ezeulu completely loses his temper:

> Lost count! Did your father tell you that the Chief Priest of Ulu can lose count of the moons? No, my son . . . no Ezeulu can lose count. Rather it is you who count with your fingers who are likely to make a mistake, to forget which finger you counted at the last moon (Achebe, 1964: 233).

There is no doubt that Ezeulu's incarceration in Okperi could not but result in a loss in counting; in fact, that is part of the reason why tradition does not allow the chief priest to stay away from Umuaro for an extended period of time. But if counting the yams is all there is, then he has not lost count, for he has the yams to refer to, and there can be no arguments over that. But one more visit two days later by the titled elders further shows that there is more to this conversation than mere yams. The elders call on Ezeulu to urge him to amend the calendar so as not to change things as they know them to be. But to their gracious entreaties, Ezeulu replies, "'I need not speak in riddles. You all know what our custom is. I only call a new festival when there is only one yam left'" (Achebe, 1964: 236). When the elders insist that Ezeulu should seek a way out, with one of them even suggesting that he eat up the yams, the Priest restates his position saying, "you have spoken well. But what you ask me to do is not done. Those yams are not food and a man does not eat them because he is hungry. You are asking me to eat death" (Achebe, 1964: 237).

Again, Ezeulu is both right and wrong, and the ambiguity is not totally of his own making. The yams are food and, of course, not food. They are food because he eats them; they are not food because these particular yams satisfy more than nutritional needs, and someone will

have to eat them if the entire community is not to starve. In other words, the yams are yams and not yams at the same time. They are markers (or messengers or signifiers) of the communal calendar, and Ezeulu (another marker or signifier) is the designated reader and, arguably, the writer.

Surprisingly, Ezeulu the designated reader now takes an unprecedented stand by refusing to read according to the senders' (the community's) will. He hedges the elders and his assistants because the yams (messengers) have a will of their own (their materiality) that he exploits, knowingly or unknowingly. He denies the elders their wishes by telling them that, although they are the initial creators of the calendar, the yams and whatever they now signify are beyond their direct control. The elders, on the other hand, also recognize the yams' will, and they too seek to bend it to serve the purpose imperilled by current circumstances but for which the yams were originally invented. Ezeulu hides behind the invincibility of the messenger (signifier), and the elders wave the banner of the infallibility of the social will. The elders face a greater difficulty than Ezeulu because they have to contend with two messengers: the yams (the text) and their eater (the reader). The resultant confusion is more disconcerting because ordinary reasoning suggests that this is an open text whose letters everybody can decipher but which no one can now read.

The community expects Ezeulu to count the moons with the aid of the yams and not the yams with the moons. Chukwulobe, therefore, suggests he has lost count, but Ezeulu rejects such counsel because the yams (the messenger, the signifier) say he has not. In a way, the yams carry transparent messages that neither the yams, nor Ezeulu, nor the aides and the elders can choose for them. Ezeulu accordingly rejects the pleas of his aides and the community that he should count moons and not yams. He maintains that it is impossible for

him and anybody else to do so, and anyone who has a contrary opinion must actually be miscounting. The yam counter, he insists, is forever right, and the finger counters incessantly susceptible to miscounting.

The yams are relatively permanent and differentiable, and once eaten they are no more countable. Every yam is eaten (thus counted) disappears, and its absence announces its conspicuousness and thereby determines the value of the remainder. On the other hand, the fingers are not removed; they are always present and so could be recounted. These facts notwithstanding, the community believes that Ezeulu is wrong in the values he assigns to the remaining yams. The citizens do not share Ezeulu's calculations that the yams represent an unalterable ("natural") number of moons. Ezeulu holds everybody to ransom because the yams, like him, though messengers, and contrary to proverbial injunctions, have their own designs that are indifferent to whatever purpose for which the users (the senders and the receivers) might wish to make of them. Ironically, it is also this independence that tethers them to the schemes of whoever deems them useful.

It is also possible for one to see the Ezeulu-Umuaro fiasco as the product of a quarrel over the cultural control of nature and its signs. In Ezeulu's logic (also available to his opponents), there can be no culture (the year, the calendar) beyond the signification of the yams. The year ends only at the mercy of the calendar and not because it has a natural end. That is why, after consulting the deity over whether or not he should announce the New Yam Feast as the elders' demand, he comes out with a negative result (Achebe, 1964: 240). But the arbitrariness of the whole marking system, the lack of organic connection between the yam (the signifier) and the New Yam Feast (the signified, the planting season and, by implication, the fiscal year) is highlighted by the elders' insistence that Ezeulu either eat the yams or

substitute a sacrifice. The elders believe they made Ulu, not because Ulu "gave birth" to the yams or the harvest, but because they made it so. Anichebe Udeozo speaks to this effect when he says to Ezeulu: "I want you to look around this room and tell me what you see. Do you think there is another Umuaro outside this hut now?" (Achebe, 1964: 237). Ezeulu agrees with him that the elders are the creators of the Federation and the tradition. Udeozo then tells him:

> Yes, we are Umuaro. Therefore, listen to what I am going to say. Umuaro is now asking you to go and eat those remaining yams today and name the day of the next harvest . . . and if Ulu says we have committed an abomination let it be on the heads of the ten of us here (Achebe, 1964: 237-38).

Udeozo's plea falls on deaf ears, and Ezeulu's wish partially prevails because the same arbitrariness that the elders' entreaties hang on also permits the chief priest to read the yams his own way. Were Udeozo talking to a messenger that had no interest in his message, his invocation of public interest might have swayed Ezeulu. But the chief priest is prosecuting a personal agenda while furthering Ulu's course. He pursues his grievance under the pretext that he is a mere messenger who does not select his messages, whereas, in fact, he chooses them at every turn. He could not be proved false because, "cultural" (proverbial) prohibition notwithstanding, it appears that all messengers possess the ability to bear their own messages in addition to others latched onto them.

What are the specifics of Ezeulu's grudge? Prior to his detention, Ezeulu has had a long-running disagreement with some sections of his community in the persons of the rival priest of Idemili and his active supporter, the wealthy Nwaka. The high point of this conflict occurs during the land dispute inquiry mentioned above. Ezeulu, the Chief Priest of Umuaro's "highest" deity, almost singlehandedly gives the parcel of land in question to the foreigners, who, by the way, are his mother's people. In this society, historical recollection is a

reconstitution, subject to conjecture and personal interests. Ezeulu, even with his high office, does not possess the right to a correct historical reconstruction and as such has no right to speak for the community. But, acting on the belief that he is the voice of a messenger speaking only for the deity he serves, he testifies against his people. He thereby chooses his message, which he believes belongs to his deity.

Ezeulu also uses the same rationale at the acrimonious pre-war deliberations when he appeals to the people to listen to him because he speaks on behalf of a deity that never endorses unjust courses. "Ulu would not fight an unjust war," he says. To buttress this point, he informs the assembly: "My father said this to me that when our village first came here to live the land belonged to Okperi... This is the story as I heard it from my father" (Achebe, 1964: 17). At this meeting, Ezeulu maintains he does not speak for himself but as a simple messenger of truth, and Nwaka, his most notorious opponent, replies that that does not make him a truthful messenger:

> Wisdom is like a goatskin bag; every man carries his own. Knowledge of the land is also like that. Ezeulu has told us what his father told him about the olden days. We know that a father does not speak falsely to his son. But we also know that the lore of the land is beyond the knowledge of many fathers.... My father told me a different story (Achebe, 1964: 17-18).

Nwaka may be right in several other unstated respects. At the least, Ezeulu's mother, of whom he has fond memories, comes from Okperi. In addition, the priest is also involved in a theological rivalry with Ezidemili. He cannot for these reasons be a messenger of unimpeachable truth.

While taking refuge in the proverb of a messenger not choosing its message, Ezeulu testifies against his people and conveniently forgets another proverb: "no man, however great, can win a judgment against his clan" (*Achebe, 1964:* 148). Henceforth, the community regards itself as set against Ezeulu and so sees nothing heroic in his refusal to be the white man's

chief. As fate would have it, it is this very lack of enthusiasm that Ezeulu, still using the old alibi that he is a mere messenger, now avenges on his people by refusing to bend the message of the yams. At any rate, only in Ezeulu's mind does such a notion exist, because evidence abounds that there is nothing like a mere messenger and that every messenger bears its own message, if only that of a *message bearer.*

The novel's tragedy further takes shape partly because Ezeulu does not understand that even the messenger cannot totally control the messages in its care, his own messages included. This is so because, like their carriers, messages have their own wills, and these wills are messengers in another sense. As dramatized in the pre-war meeting, Ezeulu's anti-war message, for which he claims divine guidance, can easily be interpreted against him, as Nwaka does, as "I am the voice of Okperi that also happens to be the land of your chief priest's mother" (17). In other words, Ezeulu is *not* a mere messenger although he shelters himself behind the proverbial "injunction" that says he is.

To conclude this section on the apparent discrepancy between historical experience as narrated here and cultural "injunction" as "encoded" in the proverb, it is pertinent to cite one incident between Ezeulu and his son, Òduche, whom he has sent to join the local Anglican Church so as, in Ezeulu's words, "to be his eyes" among the people of the new religion. While packaging the boy, as it were, Ezeulu does not think that Oduche may like the new faith and all the benefits and prestige that come with it. Ezeulu, thoughtful as he is, never imagined that the new faith will make his son an inheritor of a legacy that empowers the boy to kill the sacred snake of Idemili (another Umuaro deity and Ulu's archrival), which the local teacher interprets to be a species of the serpent that deceived Adam and Eve. None of Oduche's independent but prohibited actions as a Christian surpasses his not telling his father

that Umuaro citizens, in a desperate attempt to escape hunger and poverty, are sending the sacrificial yams that they normally give to Ulu on the day of the New Yam Feast to Jesus, the Christ. When Ezeulu learns about this development from his friend, he is surprised that his son (his eyes, his messenger) did not alert him earlier. He rebukes the boy:

> Do you remember what I told you when I sent you among those people? ... I called you as a father calls his son and told you to go and be my eye and ear among those people. I did not send Obika or Edogo; I did not send Nwafo, your mother's son. I called you by name and you came here—in this obi—and I sent you to see and hear for me. I did not know at that time that I was sending a goat's skull (Achebe, 1964: 251).

Again, the messenger derails the message. The messenger chooses, because of the comforts of the destination, not to fulfil his commission. He returns no answer to the sender.

One other image that aptly illustrates this itinerary appears in the narration of Ezeulu's first night in detention at Okperi. Ezeulu has vowed not to watch for the moon while he is in detention, "but," the narrator tells us, "the eye is very greedy and will steal a look at something its owner has no wish to see" (179). Ezeulu watches for the moon that night although he did not see anything. The visual imagery, again, demonstrates the inevitable errancy of the messenger. In other words, the messenger has its own business to attend to that often might not coincide with the dispatcher's.

There is greater support for the disparity between the proverb and the narration at the point at which Ezeulu's mind snaps. He seeks explanations for the unfortunate turns of events in proverbs that focus on the non-culpability of the messenger in the effect of its message:

> Why, he asked himself again and again, why had Ulu chosen to deal thus with him, to strike him down and cover him with mud? What was his offence? Had he not divined the god's will and obeyed it? When was it ever heard that a child was scalded by the piece of yam its own mother put in its palm? What man would send his son with a potsherd to bring fire from a neighbor's hut and then unleash rain on him? Whoever sent his son up the palm to gather nuts and then took an axe and felled the tree? But today such a thing had happened before the eyes of all . . .
>
> Perhaps it was the constant, futile throbbing of these thoughts that finally left a crack

> in Ezeulu's mind. Or perhaps his implacable assailant having stood over him for a little while stepped on him as on an insect and crushed him in the dust. But this final act of malevolence proved merciful. It allowed Ezeulu, in his last days, to live in the haughty splendor of a demented high priest and spared him knowledge of the final outcome (Achebe, 1964: 260-261).

One can hastily read these sayings as confirming that Ezeulu is a victim of the social vagaries that invariably determine the fates of messages and messengers. Lindfors, for instance, interprets the sequence of proverbs as Ezeulu's belated regret of not knowing the limits of his powers. He says, "Ezeulu, in trying to adjust to the changing times, takes certain inappropriate actions which later lead him to neglect his duties and responsibilities. Not knowing his limitations, he goes too far and plunges himself and his people into disaster" (Achebe, 1964: 15). Griffiths has said that this interpretation is inadequate. But Griffiths's replacement is equally short on several marks. Although it might be correct to say that Ezeulu seeks help in "proverbial" knowledge and that "frantically he runs through the proverbial wisdom seeking for a clear sign that the relationship of trust which must exist between high priest and god still endures" (Achebe, 1964: 97), it is, however, not true that this so-called proverbial society (as opposed to modern "literate" ones) and its mores succumb to the "irresistible and incomprehensible force of the white man, a force blind to the values and meaning of tribal life" (Achebe, 1964: 97). The invading force is not blind to local values. Indeed, it bends over backwards to understand and manipulate them for its own purpose.

The conglomerate of proverbs running around in Ezeulu's head all centre on the unjust culpability of the messenger. Ezeulu, the ordinary messenger (though of a deity), struggles within a web of proverbs about message and messenger, and ponders why he must suffer for carrying out his duties "faithfully." His assailant is certainly not just the white man as Griffiths claims. Ezeulu is crushed by the burden of his office as both a message and a

messenger at the time when a "discursive displacement" (Spivak 197) is taking place in his land. Ezeulu does not violate "tradition" if his actions are interpreted according to the letters of the proverb. But as the narration shows, proverbs do not ossify tradition. When perceived as "readable" codes, proverbs expose tradition as textual constructs that can only be successfully and politically, that is—invoked by those with prevailing reading strategies.

We need to ask whether or not the proverb is wrong about the irremediable servitude and muteness of the messenger. The proverb is, therefore, in spite of itself, correct to a very large extent because all the messengers who choose to appoint their messages, consciously or not, regardless of their purpose, lose out because everything they had hitherto perceived as controllable messages slipped out of their grips and became other messengers. The proverb seems to be wrong because each manipulator enjoys temporary successes that events usually negate later. Ezeulu makes of the yams messages of vengeance, but the yams eventually turn into messengers of change in the hands of the famished citizens, the local mission school teacher, and the Anglican catechist. The teacher, in particular, recognizes the "open" letters of the yam and fully exploits them by urging his church members to convince their fellow citizens to substitute the church harvest for the New Yam Feast. He even tells them that if the "dead" Ulu can eat one fine tuber from each family, the "living" god deserves at least two. Both the Feast and the church ceremony inhabit entirely different worlds, but Mr. Goodcountry tears them from their different universes and yokes them together because both the yam and the harvest are so usable; they are independent messengers that, so to say, conventions and trappings of particular epochs cannot hold from circulating.

It is tempting to say that Ezeulu's foresight prevails because Christianity becomes widespread and the colonial administration fully settles down in Umuaro. Yielding to such

temptation will amount to crediting Ezeulu with more than he deserves, for he is certainly not clairvoyant. Events do not happen the way they do simply because Ezeulu wishes them so but in spite of his desires. Events turn around because the traditional calendar markers refuse ironically to obey Ezeulu's wishes and respond to the mission teacher's. It is true many children go to the mission school as Ezeulu suspects they would; even Nwaka, Ezeulu's most vociferous critic sends his laziest son there. Events turn out this way because of the yam text's favourable response to the local teacher's perceptive, though opportunistic, reading. For readers like Ezeulu, the teacher's substituted text is the antithesis of all that the yam was created for.

5.4 Major Findings

i. The notion or view held by the colonizer of the supposedly inherent defects in traditional African civilisation is vagued and based on the opinion of the Europeans or the structuralists writers on the history of Nigeria and Africa at large.

ii. In order to reconstruct notions of Westerner about Africa and Nigeria in particular, the examination of the the binary oppositions of the colonial encounter that led to clashes indicated that, they were obviously a deviation from the culture of the land and imposed adoption of the European culture which brought clash of cultures in most cases and a delegation of the Nigerian Igbo culture.

iii. The linguistic dimensions with which the different and oppositional meanings of situations in Igbo land, Nigeria at large are presented in the “language of the Europeans during the structural era and the reader’s assimilated meanings are not necessarily the truth of the history of the Nigerian and Igbo community at large.

iv. The study reveals that Achebe's works are not seen as a sociological text that bears with history but a literary product that allows readers to re-construct layers of meanings outside of the interplay of structures within the novels.

v. It is asserted that in each generation there is bound to be father and son conflict, and this runs through the three texts. In Things Fall Apart there is conflict between Okonkwo and Unoka, and between Okonkwo and Nwoye; in Arrow of God there is conflict between Ezeulu and his children, first between Ezeulu and Oduche who is sent to learn the new way of the white man, even though it died down in a different manner, there is also not emphasized conflict between Edogo and Ezeulu over who is expected to take over the priesthood of the deity of Ulu; in No Longer At Ease, there is also a conflict between Isaac Okonkwo and his son Okonkwo over the issues of marrying an Osu.

vi. Thus, the novels can be seen as a display of the conflict between the desire to retain traditional values and the recognition that change and assimilation are absolutely necessary for survival.

vii. The 'dynamic, bringing together' enacted by the application of post-structuralist praxis to apprehend Achebe's "African Trilogy" within post/colonial texts entails a relation not just between and among different individuals making meanings but between and amongst different cultural perspectives, thereby allowing the reader to move past (or through) the disturbing and disruptive clash of Igbo and British cultures to a trans-cultural truth within which the two sides of this bipolar historical conflict meet and interact.

viii. All interpretations concerning life, self-identity and knowledge are possible, probable and legitimate, given all meaning and knowledge are based on differences. Hence, all texts as this study is concerned of Achebe's novels illustrated have multiple meanings or interpretations.

CHAPTER SIX
Summary and Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary and conclusion as well as the contribution to knowledge of the current study and well as proferring areas for further study.

6.1 Summary

Chinua Achebe's 'African trilogy', made up of *Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God* and *No Longer at Ease* while an excellent works of literature and a historical account in their own rights could be read as presented in this study by deploying the parameters of post-structuralism. As this study has shown, the essence is to focus on establishing the layers of truth regimes that become apparent from reading the various novels.These include the revisit to history and the many perspectives that are ever contesting for space, and an investigation cum appraisal of the origin of the modern milieu of Nigeria as orchestrated within the novel form amongst other things. One of such dimensions is in terms of the religious conflicts and issues of corruption which give credence to the view that the roots of the present day Nigeria lie in the colonial encounter. Thus, a glance into the past becomes significant because one cannot tell what went wrong unless he/she is aware of the exact point in time '*when the rain has started to beat*'the Afican societies. Consequently, Achebe, in these three novels as well as his other novels, articulates the complexities and ambivalences of postcolonial, the

colonial and experiences of African societies.

As could be seen, the 'dynamic, bringing together' enacted by the application of post-structuralist praxis to apprehend Achebe's "African Trilogy" within post/colonial texts entails a relation not just between and among different individuals making meanings but between and amongst different cultural perspectives, thereby allowing the reader to move past (or through) the disturbing and disruptive clash of Igbo and British cultures to a trans-cultural truth within which the two sides of this bipolar historical conflict meet and interact. These conflicts or binary opposites, which are usually hierarchical in nature, are what this research inverts with the sole intent of gaining new insights into the deploying of language and the use of narrative strategies to apprehend the complexities of life. Meanwhile, all these values have their positive and negative traits which make them either vulnerable or capable of surviving when they intermingle with other forces. However, these trans-cultural truths are neither homogenous nor stable, for they exist upon the protean stage and word of the ironic utterance. The provisionality of these truth regimes do not necessarily condemn them to directionlessness or relativistic play, nor to inconclusive *aporia*.

Achebe may have clearly stated his intentions of analyzing the rapturous clash of cultures in his texts. However, such statements should and must be given little credence. This is so since there is no such thing as "objective reality' because truth itself is relative, depending on the nature and variety of cultural and social influences as propounded by the poststructural tenets which is the intent of this dissertation. Besides, all interpretations concerning life, self-identity and knowledge are possible, probable and legitimate since all meaning and knowledge are based on differences. Thus, no text can simply mean one thing since meaning is derived from differences in a dynamic, context-related, ongoing process. Hence, all texts

as this study of Achebe's novels illustrate have multiple meanings or interpretations.

Within this context, a poststructuralist reading ofAchebe's novels stretches and provides insights beyond studies that deploy sociological analyses with respect to gender conflicts and relationships. Arguably, Achebe's critics' concern with women has made them overlook that Achebe's portrayals of men are far from one-dimensional and are interlocked in a rather more complex way with the situation of women than is commonly assumed. Hence, the attempt of this research to create the balance and demonstrate that Achebe is actually trying to reveal the tangle of constituent factors that go into the making of his male protagonists and that this also implies a critical evaluation of its impact on society. In essence, Achebe does not, as has been alleged, purvey a one-dimensional model of African masculinity – and certainly not an uncritically affirmative one - but that he rather points out the historical fissures and ruptures in its construction and shows that it is not a feasible working model for a modern society. Rather, he shows that pre-colonial societies already contained unresolved tensions between the sexes that ultimately contributed not only to their own downfall but also in no small measure to the difficulties of post-colonial times. In all, the use of irony as a deconstructive tool in this research helps present a position that the tragedies of the protagonists in Achebe's "African Trilogy" is due to the overwhelming power of patriarchy which Achebe purposefully deconstructs, and the masculinist society's evasion of a balancing feminine ethos.

At another level, without prejudice to the tragedy of the dehumanizing effects of cultural arrogance and absolutism of the colonialist, Achebe lays at the door of the elite the duty of salvaging Nigeria from its leadership problems stemming from tribalism, patriotism (or lack of it), the cult of mediocrity, indiscipline and corruption. He went further to opine that part of

the problem is the lack of intellectual rigour in the governance of Nigeria and that, in spite of conventional opinions, Nigeria has been less than fortunate in its leadership. To Achebe, a basic element of this misfortune is the seminal absence of intellectual rigour in the political thought of our founding fathers – a tendency to pious materialistic woolliness and self-centred pedestrianism. However, this could be said to be the goal of the colonialist as Umuaro's happiness is only marginally at stake for the British Administration because what seems paramount to the colonialists is power; power of subjection in order to continually assert British authority. Ironically, Achebe could be said to be of the view that the colonialist as represented by Captain Winterbottom in *Arrow of God* is not too different from the Igbo 'bad leaders'. His actions show the dehumanizing effects of western cultural arrogance that are still at work today.

6.2 Conclusion

In sum therefore, Chinua Achebe's critics often attribute his wide readership to the simplicity and clear-headedness of his language and plots. As this study has demonstrated, a "literary" reading might indicate that such interpretation need not be simplistic. Undoubtedly, Achebe's fiction provides strong tools for unearthing the relationships of language and power in colonial societies and the sociolinguistics of English language in postcolonial Nigeria. In equally poignant terms, Achebe's attempt at historical revisionism does not stop with a mere visit into the past and a critical evaluation of his country's encounter with the British colonizer. He turns his task activelyby a lively extension to the act of searching for the roots of the problems that place the independent Nigeria in a state where the Nigerians are '*no longer at ease'* bydramatizing various levels of interpretation we see operating in the texts examined. In all the "contests" for the manipulation of "textual" meanings in these novels, it

appears as if the victor is the "openness" of reading which post-structuralism provides through the extra-linguistic sense with which the different and oppositional meanings of the situation are produced.

REFERENCES

Primary Texts

Achebe, Chinua (1958). *Things Fall Apart*. New York: Fawcett Crest.
Achebe, Chinua (1960). *No Longer at Ease*. London: Heinemann, Educational Books.
Achebe, Chinua (1964). *Arrow of God*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Secondary Sources

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 6th edition. Fort Worth.
Abubakar, Tanimu (2002). “Marxist Criticism and African Literature” in Fais *Journal of Humanities.* Vol. 2. Kano: Bayero University.
Achebe, Chinua (1964). *Arrow of God*. London: Heinemann, Educational Books.
Achebe, Chinua (1965) “English and the African Writer.” *Transition* 18: 27-30
Achebe, Chinua (1965). "The Novelist as a Teacher." *New Statesman* 29 Jan. 1965.
Achebe, Chinua (1965). "The Novelist as a Teacher." *New Statesman* 29 Jan. 1965.
Achebe, Chinua (1965). “English and the African Writer” *Transition 18*: 27-30.

Achebe, Chinua (1969). *Arrow of God.* New York: Anchor-Doubleday.
Achebe, Chinua (1969). *Things Fall Apart*. New York: Fawcett Crest.
Achebe, Chinua (1975). *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.
Achebe, Chinua (1975). *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays*. London: Heinemann.
Achebe, Chinua (1988). "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness" in *Heart of Darkness, An Authoritative Text, background and Sources Criticism*. 1961. 3rd ed. Ed. Robert Kimbrough, London: W. W Norton and Co. http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/help/foucaul1.htm.
Achebe, Chinua (1997). "An Interview with Chinua Achebe." *Conversations with Chinua Achebe.* by Charles H. Rowell. Ed. Bernth Lindfors. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 165-184.
Adeeko, Adeleke (1992). "Contests of Text and Context in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature.* https//journalhosting.ucalgary.ca > article
Adichie, C. N. (2006). *Half of a yellow sun*. Alfred a Knopf Incorporated.
Adorno, Theodor (1997). *Aesthetic Theory*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P.
African Literature in Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2008. © 1993-2007 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
Agger, Ben (1998). "Post-structuralism" at: http://www.sil.org/humanities/politics/culstudy.html
Aguiar, M. (1999). Somali in: Appiah, A. A. and Gates, H.L. (Junior) (Editors). *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*. New York. Perseus Books.
Aiyejina, F., & Ogunbiyi, Y. (1988). Perspectives on Nigerian Literature: 1700 to the Present.
Ajuwon, B. (1985). Oral and written literature in Nigeria. *Nigerian history and culture*, 306-317.
Alisha, Walters R. (2007). "The English Language and Nigerian Prose Fiction".
Amneh Abussamen K.; Shadi Neimneh S. (2018). "Chinua Achebe and Postcolonial Ambivalence: Gratitude and Revenge in *Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God*". *American Journal of Creative Education*. 1(1): 1 – 12. Online Science Publishing.
Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. (1991). *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Revised and extended. ed.). London: Verso. http://books.google.co.in/books?id=4mmoZFtCpuoC. Retrieved 5 September 2010.
Armah, K. A. (1968). *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. London: Heinemann.
Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (1995). *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.
Azeze, Fekade (1982). "Folklore in Literature: Some Aspects of Achebe's Use of Proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God." Studies & Documents/Etudes & Documents*: 1-14.
Bady, Aaron John (2013). "White Man's Country: The Image of Africa in the American Century". University of California, Berkeley.

Balogun, Jide "Approaches to Modern Literary Theories".

www.unilorin.edu.ng/publications/balogun/Doc5.pdf).
Barthes, Roland (1975). *S/Z*. 1970. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang.

Baxter, Katherine Isobel (2012) "Judging judgment in No Longer at Ease*".* *Reading the Legal Case: Cross-Currents between Law and the Humanities*. New York: Routledge.https://lawexplores.com>judging-judgement-in-chinua-achebes-no-longer-at-ease

Beaty, J. et al (2002). The Norton Introduction to Literature, 8th edition. New York: W.W Norton Company.
Blackmore, John T. *Ernst Mach; His Work, Life, And Influence*, University of California Press.
Blamires, H. (1991). *A History of Literary Criticism.* London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
Bodunde, Charles (1994). *Studies in Comparative Literature. In: New Introduction to Literature*, Olu Obafemi (ed.), Ibadan: Y. Books.
Booker, Keith M. ed. (2003) *The Chinua Achebe's Encyclopedia*. USA: Greenwood Publishing Group.
Booth, James (1981). *Writers and Politics in Nigeria*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
Bressler, Charles E. (2003). *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice.* 3rd ed. USA: Pearson Education, Inc. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.
Brooker, Peter (1999). *Cultural Theory: A Glossary*. New York: Arnold.
Brooks, Jerome (1994). Chinua Achebe, The Art of Fiction No. 139, Paris Review, Winter 1994 No. 133. http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1720/the-art-of-fiction-no-139-chinua-achebe.
Caims, P. (1985). "Style, Structure and the Status of Language in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God." *World Literature Written in English 25:1*
Cary, Joyce (1989). *Mister Johnson*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2000). Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP.
Chuma-Udeh,Ngozi (2014). "Ezeulu in the Binary Systems of Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*". *Okike: An AfricanJournal of New Writing*. No. 52. Nigeria: Anambra State University.
Clayton, J. and Rothstein, E. (1991). Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality in *Influence and Intertextuality inLiterary History*, J. Clayton and E. Rothstein (eds.) Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
Clifford, James (1986). "On Ethnographic Allegory." *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnograph.* Ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Coker, Oluwole (2017). "Theorising Third-Generation Nigerian Novels". *The Guardian.* https://guardian.ng/art/theorising-third-generation-nigerian-novels/
Contributions to the Analysis of the Sensations, 1 vol. by Ernst Mach *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, T. 5, No. 6 (Novembre 1897), http://www.jstor.org/stable/40891904
Cook, David (1977). *African Literature: A Critical View*. London: Longman.
Culler, Jonathan D. (1982). *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*. Ithaca/USA: Cornell University Press.

David, Whittaker and Msiaka Mpalive-Hangson (2007). *Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
De Man, Paul (1979). Allegories of Heading: Figural Language in Rousseau. Nietzsche, Rilke, Proust. New Haven: Yale UP.
Deleuze, Gilles (2004). "Bergson's Conception of Difference" in *Desert Islands of Other Texts1953 – 1974*. Los Angeles: Semiotexte, p. 33.
Derrida, Jacques (1966) "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" DOI: 10.1111/j.0022-3840.1967.0101_1.x
Dreyfus Hubert L., Rabinow P. (1982). "Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics". Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press.
Eagleton, Terry. (1983). *Literary Theory: Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Eagleton, Terry. (1996). *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Second Edition. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.
Edgar, Singer A. (1897) (a Review) "Contributions to the Analysis of the Sensations by Ernst Mach" *Science*, New Series, Vol. 6, No. 152 (Nov. 26, 1897).
Ekwe-Ekwe, Herbert (2014). "Does *Arrow of God* Anticipate the Igbo Genocide?". *Pambazuka News*. https://www.pambazuka.org>human
Emenyonu, E. (1988). The Rise and Development of Igbo Literature. *Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi*, 33-38.

Emenyonu, E. N. ed. (1990). *Literature and Black Aesthetics*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Heinemann.
Fasan, R. O. (2010). Mapping Nigerian Literature. *African Nebula*, *1*(1), 34-43.
Ferrell-Horan, Elisabeth J. (2016) "Okonkwo Between Two Worlds:Investigation of Masculine/Feminine Binariesin *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe".
Foley, Andrew (2001). "Okonkwo's Fate and the Worldview of *Things Fall Apart*." South Africa: Johannesburg College of Education/University of the Witwatersrand.
Fombele, Eunice Fonyuy (2015). "The Function of Irony in Reconstructing Gender/Feminine Ethos in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*". *Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture*. Vol 4, No. 2. http://www.jellic-international-journal.org
Foucault, M. (1976). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Harper & Row.
Frye, N. (1957). Anatomy of Criticism. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
George, O. (2005). The Narrative of Conversion in Chinua Achebe's" Arrow of God". *Comparative Literature Studies*, *42*(4), 344-362.
George, Olakunle (2005). "The Narrative of Conversion in Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God." *Comparative Literature Studies 42:4*.
Gikandi, Simon (1991). Reading Chinua Achebe: Language and Ideology in Fiction. London: James Currey, 10.
Gikandi, Simon (2001). "Chinua Achebe and the Invention of African Culture", *Research in African Literatures, Vol. 32*, No. 3, Fall 2001
Graham, Hough (1966). *An Essay on Criticism* London: Duckworth.
Griffiths, Gareth (1971). "Language and Action in the Novels of Chinua Achebe." *African Literature Today* 5.
Harold, Bloom ed. (2010). *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart*. New York: Infobase Publishing.
Harvey, David (1990). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. England: Blackwell Publishers.
Homi, Bhabha K. (1990). *Nation and Narration*. Ed. New York: Routledge.

Horkheimer, M., Adorno, T. W., & Noeri, G. (2002). *Dialectic of enlightenment*. Stanford University Press.

Horus Publications, 1998, "Michel Foucault's Interpretive Analytics" at: http://www.lucknow.com/horus/guide/cm108.html

Hough, Graham (1966) *An Essay on Criticism*

Ibuot, E. J., & Onunkwo, C. (2017). Derridean Deconstruction and Modernist Influence in African Literature. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, *7*(1).

Ilyas, Omar Abukar (2010). "Re/inventing Africa: Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, and the Question of Representing Cultural Others". USA:The Pennsylvania State University *McNair Journal*. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org>...

Innes, C. L. (1990). *Chinua Achebe*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Isidore, Okpewho (1998). *Once Upon a Kingdom: Myth, Hegemony and Identity*. USA: Indiana University Press.

Iyasere, Solomon (1969)."Narrative Techniques in Things Fall Apart". *Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe*. Ed. Killam, G.D. London: Heyman.

Jago, Morrison (2017). "Chinua Achebe". *Contemporary World Writers Series*. New York: Oxford University Press. https://books.google.com.ng>books

JanMohammed, Abdul (1986). "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature" in *"Race," Writing and Difference*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Jeffares, A. N. (1991) *A History of Literary Criticism*

Jeyifo, Biodun (1996) Oguntoyinbo: "Modernity and the "Rediscovery" Phase of Postcolonial Literature". *Africa Seminar,* Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town.

Jones, J.P. (1998). "Post-structuralism" at:http://www.roga.demon.co.uk/frames.htm

Julien, Eileen (1995) "African Literatures in Comparative Perspective." Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature 43, 15-24.

Kehinde, Ayo (2003). "Intertextuality and the Contemporary African Novel" in *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 12(3): 372–386.

Ker, D. (2000). *The African Novel and the Modernist Tradition*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Klein, Herbert G. (2007). "A Question of Honour: De/constructing Male Identities in Chinua Achebe's Tetralogy". Webdoc.sub.gwdg.de > artic27 > klein03

Klooss, W. (Ed.). (1998). *Across the Lines: Intertextuality and Transcultural Communication in the New Literatures in English* (Vol. 3). Rodopi.

Koponen, Juhani (1993). "The Partition of Africa: A Scramble for a Mirage?" *Nordic Journal of African Studies 2(1): 117–135* University of Helsinki, Finland.

Lane, Richard J. (2006): *The Postcolonial Novel*. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Lash, Scott (1999). *Another Modernity, a Different Rationality*. Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Lawrence, Cunningham S. and Reich J. John (2010) *Culture and Values: A Survey of The Humanities*, Volume Two with Readings. 7th ed. Wadsworh: Clark Baxter.

Lefebvre, A. (2008). *The Image of Law: Deleuze, Bergson, Spinoza*. Stanford University Press.

Lefebvre, Alexandre (2008). *The Image of the Law: Deleuze, Bergson, Spinoza*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Lindfors, Bernth (1967). Heroes and Hero-Worship in Nigerian Chapbooks

Lindfors, Bernth (1968)."The Palm-Oil with which Achebe's Words are Eaten." *African Literature Today* 1.

Mach, Ernst (1897) Trans, Cora May Williams, Contributions *to the Analysis of the Sensations*, Open Court Publishing Company.

Marco, Wan (2012). *Reading the Legal Case: Cross-Currents between Law and the Humanities*. New York: Routledge.

Medansky, David Patrick (2011). *Things Fall Apart*: Deconstructing the Humanities Canon. USA: University of Colorado, Boulder. Pg 94-95.

Menon, Anand (2015). *Post-Colonial Insight to Chinua Achebe's African Trilogy*. Romania: Bridge Centre.

Michael Riffaterre, (1990). Fictional Truth. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Press. 55.

Moore, A. W. (1969). Collectivities: Protest. *Counter-Culture and Political Postmodernism in New York City Artists Organizations, 1985*.

Munro, I. H. (2004). Textual Dynamics in Chinua Achebe's Home and Exile and No Longer at Ease. *International Fiction Review, 31*(1).

Munro, Ian H. (2004). "Textual Dynamics in Chinua Achebe's *Home and Exile* and *No Longer at Ease*". *TheInternational Fiction Review.* USA: William Jewell College. journals.lib.unb.ca

National Open University of Nigeria (2009). URL:www.nou.edu.ng. http://www.scribd.com>document>Eng 113

Newman, J. (1996). The Ballistic Bard: Intertextuality and Postcolonial Fiction. *Goodwin and Zach*, 95-102.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Sallah, Tijan M. (2003). "Chinua Achebe, Teacher of Light: A Biography".

Nnolim, Charles E. (2011). "Chinua Achebe: A Re-assessment". Nigeria: University of Port Harcourt.

Norris, Christopher (1990). *What's Wrong with Postmodernism: Critical Theory and the Ends of Philosophy*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Obiechina, Emmanuel N. (1990). *Language and Theme: Essays on African Literature*. Washington, DC: Howard UP.

Ocheje, Paul D. (2001). "Law and Social Change: A Socio-Legal Analysis of Nigeria's Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2000." *Journal of African Law*.

Odiwo, Keston (2009). *The Representation of the Elite in the Novels of Chinua Achebe, Bessie Head, Ayi Kwei Armah and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: A Psychoanalytic Study*. Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University.

Ogunba, O. (1971). Studying Traditional African Literature. *Black Orpheus, 2*(7), 50.

Ojaide, Tanure (2009) *Examining Canonisation in Modern African Literature.* USA: University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

Okome, Onookome (2000). *Before I am hanged: Ken Saro-Wiwa, Literature, Politics, and Dissent*, Africa World Press.

Okpewho, I. (1992). *African oral literature: Backgrounds, character, and continuity* (Vol. 710). Indiana University Press.

Omoruyi, Omo (2001). *Beyond the Tripod in Nigerian Politics: Lessons from the Past Experiment with NPP*. Benin City, Nigeria Amfitop Book.
Onwuka, E. C. (2010). A critical Review of the impact of literature and history on society. *Journal of Language and Literary Studies, 1*(1), 59-65.
Palmer, Eustace (1983). "The Feminine Point of View in Buchi Emecheta's The Joy of Motherhood."*African Literature Today*. Ed. Eldred Durosimi Jones. New York: Holmes and Meier.
Patnaik, Eira (1982). "Proverbs as Cosmic Truth and Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease." Africana Journal* 13.1-4.
Phillips, John (2007) Post-structuralismLecture Notes **(**courses.nus.edu.sg/course/elljwp/poststructuralism.htm)
Priebe, Richard K. (1988). *Myth, Realism and the West African Writer*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
Quayson, A. (2000). *Postcolonialism: Theory, practice or process*. Polity.
Reynolds, B. (2001*). Setting the Record Straight*. Denver: White Apple Press.
Richard, Lane J. (2006). *The Postcolonial Novel*. UK: Polity Press.
Robert, Young ed.,(1981). *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader. Routledge and Kegan Paul.*
Rodrigues, Ângela Lamas (2007) "The Trauma of a Diminished Existence": Chinua Achebe Revisited, *Postcolonial Text*, Vol 3, No 4.
Rowell, Charles H. (1989). "An Interview with Chinua Achebe". www.jstor.org/stable/2931612
Rowell, Charles H. (1989). "An Interview with Chinua Achebe". (This interview was conducted in Mr. Achebe's quarters at the International House in New York City on Sunday, May 28, 1989).
Rowell, Charles H. (1989). "An Interview with Chinua Achebe". *Callaloo,* 86 -101.
Russell, McDougall (1987). "Achebe's *Arrow of God*: The Kinetic Idiom of an Unmasking". *Kunapipi*, Vol. 9(2). http://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol9/iss2/4
Saro-Wiwa, Ken (1995). *A Month and a Day: A Detention Diary* (New York: Penguin.
Sarup, Madan (1993). "Post-structuralism and Postmodernism", Harvester/Wheatsheaf, UK
Scholes, R. E. (1998). *The rise and fall of English: Reconstructing English as a discipline*. Yale University Press.
Schultz, A. B. (2007). Holmes, Alice, and Ezeulu: Western Rationality in the Context of British Colonialism and Western Modernity.
Segun, Omosule (2011). "African Literature". *Scholarsviews.com.*
Sone, E. M. (2018). African Oral Literature and the Humanities: Challenges and Prospects. *Humanities*, *7*(2), 30.
Spencer, Roberts (2015). "Deleuze, Judgement and Artistic Research". UK: University of Hertfordshire.
Spivak, Gavatri (1988). *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics.* New York and London, Routledge.
Stratton, Florence (1994). *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender.* London: Routledge, p. 3.
Sumaila Isah Umaisha (2010) History of Nigerian literature. retrieved http://everythinliterature.blogspot.com/2010/12/history-of-nigerian-literature.html 14th 7December 2010 by Sumaila Isah Umaisha

Sumaila, Isah Umaisha (2010). “History of Nigerian Literature”. Everythinliterature.blogspot.com.
Thompson, Robert Farris (1979). “African Art History”. *African Art in Motion: Icon and Act*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Velibeyoglu, Koray (1999). "POST-STRUCTURALISM AND FOUCAULT" http://www.angelfire.com/ar/corei/foucault.html.
Veyne, Paul (1998). "Foucault Revolutionizes History", University of Chicago Press.
Walters, Alisha R. (2007). “The English Language and Nigerian Prose Fiction”. http://www.homes.chass.utoronto.ca>eng6365-walters
Wendy, Griswold (2000). *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers, and the Novel in Nigeria*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Internet Sources

http://euacademic.org/BookUpload/20.pdf
http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1720/the-art-of-fiction-no-139-chinua-achebe.
http://www.virginia.edu/sociology/publications/milner%20articles%20for%20web/Milneron Post modernism.pdf
https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1029&context=public_law_an d_legal_th...
https://www.theguardian.com >dec >chi...
Wikipedia (2016). “Deconstruction and Religion”. https://ipfs.io>ipfs>wiki>Deconstruction-and-religion.