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Stylistic and Literary Analysis of Chinua Achebe's First Five Novels

التحليل الأسلوبي والأدبي لروايات أتشينو أجيبى الخمس الأولى

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Dedication

To the soul of my beloved father.

To my beloved mother

To my wife and kids

To my brothers and sisters.

To all of teachers , through all of my stages of Education, especially those who taught me English language.

Acknowledgement

First my praises, thanks gratitude be to God almightiness who created me, educated greatly and widely.

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المستخلص

تناولت الدراسة شرح وتحليل روايات الكاتب والأديب النيجيري الشهير تشينو أجيبي الخمسة الأولى تحليلاً أدبياً وأسلوبياً بنكهة وثقافة شعب الإقبو التي استوطنت في الجزء الجنوبي الشرقي لنيجيريا. تمثلت مشكلة الدراسة في أن الجهات الاستعمارية الغربية التي ولجت القارة الأفريقية في نهاية القرن التاسع عشر لم تحترم ثقافة وطريقة عيش الأمة الأفريقية ، بل بطريقة غير مقبولة حيث وصفتهم بالحيوانات المتوحشة وبالهمج، وفي السؤال هل تعتبر روايات تشينو أجيبي الخمسة الدروع الواقية للشعب والأمة الأفريقية والحجة والدليل أمام الهجمات الإمبريالية الاستعمارية الغربية التي اجتاحت القارة الأفريقية في نهاية القرن التاسع عشر؟ نبعت أهمية الدراسة من التحليل الأدبي والأسلوبي لروايات الكاتب النيجيري الشهير تشينو أجيبي الخمسة الأولى تقدم مزاجاً عالمية أدبية ولغوية في إطار الفهم العلمي الأدبي واللغوي لباحثي الأدب الإنجليزي في الجامعات والمعاهد العليا. هدفت الدراسة إلى توضيح مفهوم الأدب الإنجليزي عن طريق تحليل الروايات تحليلاً نقدياً أدبياً وأسلوبياً، وكيفية التعامل معه وسط الثقافة الأفريقية الممتلئة في شعب الإقبو بالحقائق الأدبية والعلمية الموجودة في الروايات التي دحضت كل ما قالته الصحافة والكتاب الإنجليزي في حق الأفارقة بالصورة العلمية الممزوجة بالأدب والعملية والأسلوب اللغوي الراقي. اتبعت الدراسة المنهج التاريخي والمنهج الوصفي وتقنيات التحليل الأدبي والأسلوبي في شرح هذه النصوص الأدبية الخمسة بالإضافة إلى استعمال أدوات المقارنة والتباين التي تسهل الفهم. خرجت الدراسة بعدة نتائج أهمها أن روايات جينو أجيبي الخمسة الأولى أكدت أن الأمة الأفريقية موهوبة تاريخياً واثراً، وضحت روايات جينو أجيبي على أنها قد كتبت بروح وبمزاج مجتمع الإقبو ، قدرات ومهارات وموهبة جينو أجيبي الأدبية العالية التي تجلت بوضوح في جميع رواياته الخمسة الأولى ، ووضعت في مصاف ومقدمة الأدب العالمي. أوصت الدراسة بضرورة البحث قدماً في جميع روايات جينو أجيبي لأنها جديرة بالبحث الدقيق مستقبلاً لما فيها من لغة وتقنيات أدبية عالية المستوى والدور الكبير الذي يمكن أن تلعبها في نقل وعكس ثقافة الأمة الأفريقية للعالم الخارجي ، عن حقيقة تصوير الكتاب البيض للأفارقة في جميع روايات جينو أجيبي الخمسة الأولى بالفساد والحيوانات المتوحشة.

Abstract

The study handled an expression and explanation and analyzing Chinua Achebe's five novels literary and stylistic with Igbo flavor and culture which inhabited in the north east of Nigeria. The study presented to that , the western colonization which penetrated to African continent at the end of nineteenth century did not respect African nations culture and their life methodology, but expressed about them in unacceptable way at which described them as barbarous and savages, and in the question can Chinua Achebe's five Novels consider a protected armaments for African people and nation, an argument and evidence under western colonialism and imperialism which invaded Africa continent at the end of ninetieth century. The importance of the study flowed on the literary and stylistic analysis of Nigeria famous writer Chinua Achebe first five Novels which introduced scientific literary and linguistic coupling in a scientific linguistic and literary understanding for English literature researcher from around the world. The study aimed to clarify the English literature comprehension via Novels analysis method critically, literary and stylistically and how it was expressed in the middle of the African culture which represented in Igbo nation with a scientific and literary facts which were founded in the novels which reflected all of which some of English and Westerns writers unaccepted allegations towards Africans in a scientific way mingled respect and scientism. The study followed historical and descriptive methods and literary and stylistic analysis techniques. The study came out with many results , the most important of them was that, Chinua Achebe's first five Novels were affirmed that African was endowed heritage and historically, and explained that they were written by Igbo's spirit and mood society Chinua Achebe's highest abilities, skills and endowment which was appeared precisely in all of his five Novels put him in forefront of the global literature. The study recommended about the necessity of deep research for all of Achebe's Novels, duets they are worthwhile of accurate research in the future, because they have an iterated linguistic and literary techniques and role which they can play to covey and reflect African nation culture to the outside world. The fact and reality of some white writers depiction to the Africans in all Achebe's five Novels, in the base of their describing them savages and wild animals and corrupted people.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Overview :

Albert Chinual Mogue Achebe is the patriarch of the African Novel. He is a publisher, an author, poet and educator. This Nigerian novelist acclaimed for his unsentimental depiction of the social and psychological disorientation accompanying the imposition of western customs and values upon traditional African society. His particular concern was with emergent Africa at its moment of crises. His novels range in subject matter from the first contact of an African village with a white man to the educated African attempt to create a firm moral order out of the changing values in a large city.

He has a prolific of a prominent literary figure whose reputation has sprung from the fact that he was the pioneer who set the trend of what to be known as African novel. Indeed, from a historical point of view, he was preceded by Amos Tutila's surreal "The palm Wine Drunkard" and Cyprian Ekwensi's novel of contemporary Lagos "People of the city".

Despite this fact, most critics do not pay attention to this chronicle, not because they are not aware of diachronically set of events. But the fact is that, they hold that the literary production of the previously mentioned writers, are not a patch on the highly worldwide appraised novels of the writer in question. Therefore, he held to be the father of the African fiction, altogether. He cut his teeth on unrivalled novel. "Things Fall Apart", which was not considered as his magnum opus, the most widely read book in modern African literature, a ground breaking novel, the book was a starting success and has become a required reading in many schools across the world. It was published in 1958 followed by No longer

at *Ease* in (1960), *Arrow of God* in (1964), *A man of the people* (1996) and finally *Anthills of the Savannah* in (1987). The Nigerian genius managed for himself a career that paved the way for a series of great Africans who follow suit. Being as the father of African fiction, he is always put in a focus of admiration tinged with awe and sacrosanct. This does not imply that he stops short of that prestigious mould. On the contrary he deserves kudos and accolade by virtue of not only being a herald of this genre in Africa but also by dint of creativity and ingenuity. It is this creativity which placed him on the crest of the wave and set him apart as a unique name to conjure with. As a matter of fact Achebe is distinguished by the fact that he has a peculiar merit of incorporating the indigenous lore of Igbo community in his writings. It is observed that this tendency is prevalent to the extent as to be a kind of deliberate manipulation, so to speak. This is the rub which one sets great store by! The ingrained phenomenon of mingling the ethos and heritage of his people in his novels painted his style with a peculiar flavor which would initiate him as a novelist in his own right.

It is this extraordinary faculty of utilizing magnificently a multitude of strings of religious proverbial, cultural, superstitious and traditional aspects that galvanize the desire of research and discovery. It is important to be clearly stated from the outset that the concern of this thesis is to analyze the stylistic features which make Achebe to stand out a mile as a unique literary pillar. The amazing thing, however, is that when one embarks on reading Achebe's novels, one would be overwhelmingly captured by the meticulous usage of the Igbo's cultural elements.

It is worth mentioning in this respect that this thesis is an attempt to discern and establish in a systematic approach of what may be a peculiar trait that characterized the style of the writer in question. Moreover, this tentative study

would make allowances for the fact that Achebe initiates this genre with no precedent to draw from universal heritage other than this mother continent. It is also important to draw attention to the fact that Achebe responded to the writings of colonizers who tend to depict Africans in images that are far removed from actual reality and pales in comparison with the true characterization. Those writings of British administrators are composed in bad faith only to tarnish and denigrate the native character and augur ill for exploitation and depletion of Africa rich natural resources. It is this prejudice and bias against Africans that prompted Achebe to be at the bottom of the inimitable literary works that in sync with African credence and tempo of life. Against this background which foisted Achebe to begin writing what has to be termed as African novel. Achebe reacted to the tendentious literary works of the white colonizers such as Joyce Cary and Joseph Conrad whose novels bear grudge against Africa as a people and culture. On the strength of this context Achebe decides to take the initiative of writing his own stories. These stories are written with a view that they exhibit the authentic image of Africa from the perspective of its genuine sons.

Achebe was not a copious novels writer, he has only written five novels. Moreover, his artistic creation includes short stories, poems and critical essays. This study aims to deal only with the first five novels and submit them to scrupulous scrutiny so as to institute on a new basis those intrinsic stylistic features. It is the concern of this dissertation to investigate how the complicated cultural aspects related to Igbo community of south -eastern Nigeria turned out to be a part and parcel of the legitimate crap of the universal human heritage.

It is important to note in this regard that when Europeans first came into contact with Africa, all the traditional heritage of Africa is challenged by Christian intrusion as well as imperial institutions. The corollary of this encounter is the

disintegration and dissolution of the historically well- established traditions, religions and the social order of the Africans all in one fell swoop. And as such, all Africans and their rich natural resources are to wait on hand and foot to render sumptuous luxury to the new conquerors.

The confrontation between the diametrically opposed civilizations of Europe and Africa has been a popular common theme dealt with by a swathe of many writers. The cultural conflict has a ripple effect on a wide range of novelists from Africa as well as from Europe. Chinua Achebe takes on his responsibility the onus of making Igbo community to have a high -pitched voice on the contemporary ubiquitous of the milieu of the most sophisticated art.

1.1 Statement of the study

When one engages in reading the novels of Achebe it would not escape one's senses that the whole atmosphere is redolent with some kind of peculiar aroma. This aura is replete with stuffed idioms generated from Igbo's verbal transmitted culture. Moreover, the English used is characterized by mixing indigenous literary patterns with highly standardized language of well- refined modern vernacular. In fact one feels that as if one is put out of countenance before these fascinating allusions to Igbo's legacy. As far as these intriguing intelligent references are concerned, the impact of these is meted out in an indelible leavening. It is this leaven resulted from insinuating and manipulating the rich lore of Igbo's community in these spellbinding stories which ignites the desire of tasking this challenge.

This study is an attempt to furnish a systematic approach in which the stylistic qualities of the target writer would be sorted out as unique phenomena. The other significant facet of this thesis is the overwhelmingly tendency to investigate the drive motive which challenged Achebe to start composing these gripping stories.

As a matter of fact Achebe was puzzled when he read Joyce Cary's Mr. Johnson fiction in which African characters are portrayed as caricature rather than the ordinary people Achebe is well acquainted with. The misrepresentation of Africans is due to the fact that Europeans have a propensity to justify the hegemony over their subjects on the ground that the continent is inhabited by primitive beings rather than humans.

The important feature, however, is that Achebe is neither in a position of defense nor in a mood to suffer of inferior complex when reacted to these defames. On the contrary he is full of equilibrium to the extent that he did not beat his breast to portray his own people in moulds in which others would detect only scruple and opprobrium. In reality Achebe did not seek to draw a picture for his people which go contrary to the exact representation of these amazing people in all gamut of their normal life. It may be for this reason he received notes of recognition and admiration for this sincerity. Also, Achebe has achieved this stunning feat without resorting to malicious measures to fling on Europe characters when he wrote his own stories. Westerners have set parameters by which they measure human demeanor accordingly. Thus when any different comport that does not mesh well in congruent with their cultural mores, is viewed with utmost disapproval and disdain. This belief is stemmed from the deep-seated credo that Europe is the center of the world and as such the prerogative to set up universalities is vested on it. The important phenomenon, however, in this context is that the artistic works of Achebe seem to challenge this stereotype of alleged supremacy. The striking thing however is that despite Achebe is well versed in European's culture and embraces their world's view; he does not bother to appease them. It is better in this regard to take a leaf from the episode of the complicity of Okonkwo in killing his foster son which represents stark example of the writer's complacency and indifference

towards the whites and their moral codes. This is crystal clear of the total rejection of the notion of inferiority that is used to be assigned to races other than Europeans. Consequently, the concept of treating different cultures with respect seems to gain recognition as evidenced by the world wide acceptance of the works of Achebe and his successors. It is indeed a breakthrough in terms of changing the perspectives and in good vantage-ground from which the true images of Africa could be visualized and appreciated. Moreover, it is proved once again that the cultural interaction between different racial groups is the expedient diffusion to influence the other and the result a quantum leap forward towards universal human equalitarianism. Ultimately, in pursuant of these convictions, the writer's depiction of the true nature of his community no matter if this nature does not comply with European's perspectives, is an evident proof of his belief in equality of the entire human learning. So this study is going to investigate your

1.2 Questions of the Study

This stylistic literary and critical analysis is an attempt to find out answers to the following questions;

- a- To what extent that Achebe's novels set on a pedestal in relation to international genre?
- b- To what degree does the creative usage of Igbo's cultural aspects add something new to the style and literary work in general adopted in his novels?
- c- Are his artistic contributions different from his African predecessors as to entitle him to be singled out as the father of African fiction?
- d- Does he really forge the path for other African writers who follow his footsteps?

1.3 Hypotheses of the study:

- a- Achebe's novels are on the same wavelength with the global standard of fiction.
- b- The utilization of Igbo's is a creative addition to the stylistic patterns that characterized Achebe's writings related to fictional industry.
- c- Achebe's artistic works are eligible to entitle him the privilege of the father of African novel.
- e- Achebe paved the way for many talented African artists who emulate -the literary tradition-which he-had laid foundation of.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to scrutinize and criticize written by Chinua Achebe from stylistic perspectives. This will be done through extensive and intensive reading of documents that are pertinent to the domain of this inquiry. The literal analysis of the novels produced by this copious creator will be conducted so as to examine and delve deep into the stylistic patterns that are the concerns of this task. In addition, this study will try to investigate the essential cultural elements that lay the foundation of Achebe's literary creation. Also it is an attempt to evaluate his artistic works in the province of novel in relation to some writings of similar Concern. In so doing, it will provide a deep elucidation to the extent of his influence on the genre within the ensuing African novelists whose writings are delivered in the English language in the first place. By the same token,_this will also single out Achebe's huge contribution as a significant in relation to contemporary international fiction. Moreover it is also an attempt to throw light on the rich cultural elements which play a central role in making him distinguish in his narration capacities.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This contribution is momentous in the sense that it is an attempt to tackle complicated issues related to hectic investigation of the stylistics of a lavish exuberant artistic figure. It is also important because it is an attempt to highlight the peculiar traditional lore pertained to the amazing people of Igbo community of southeastern Nigeria.

1.6 Limits of the Study

This thesis is limited only to the stylistic analysis of the novels fashioned by the versatile Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe. These are:

- 1- Things Fall Apart.
- 2- No Longer at Ease.
- 3- Arrow of God.
- 4- A man of the People
- 5- Anthills of the Savannah.

All these five novels are published by HEINEMANN African Writers Series.

1.7. Methodology

The critical analytical approach adopted in this study will make use of the unanimous accepted key literary norms that are widely used in modern literary criticism. The methods that will be espoused in this inquiry are descriptive and analytical method. In addition to, the device of contrast and comparison will be utilized in order to facilitate comprehension. So the major dependence will rely heavily on contemplation is capable of detecting the minute inklings, tell-tale signs, subtle hints, compelling glimpses and even

reading between the lines. It goes without saying that great art is a production of genius gifted innovators who are endowed by nature with an aptitude and capacity parallel to the esoteric power of revelation.

Therefore, the nature of art is not set above-board, but it seems always shrouded in mystery and that is why critics are there to unravel its enigmatic phenomenon fact, when it comes to the issues concerning human flair and panache, it would be out of place to resort to ready-made proscribed rules.

It may be due to this view that some scholars go as far as to assert that genuine art is drawn from God himself pure and simple. If this was the case, then one would proceed on an even hoping without let or hindrance, on this mission guided only by means of one's intuitive vision the time allotted to this research extend to two or even three years in which the collecting of data, readings of a multitude of documents and analysis would be conducted conveniently.

Chapter two

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction:

One of the most controversial and disputed era of human history is, perhaps, the epoch of colonialist expansion that took place at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth one. As it is known the Continent of Africa, during that Period had been totally divided among the ambitious of Europe countries. Britain and France take the lions share leaving the smallest scrap for the weak Nations such like Italy and Belgium almost every inch of the continent has been trodden upon by those voracious invaders. Nigeria was laid claim to by Britain and consequently British traders as well as missionaries began to loom in the hinterland of the country Nigeria was a British Colony between 1880 and 1960. The several decades of colonization have established nebulous political, economic and cultural actualities that need to be profoundly analyzed in order to be reasonably understood with the advent and introducing of foreign language of the super powers, mode of production and system of colonial type of ruling, the continent has been greatly transformed using colonial language many African writers began to produce literature whose target and concern is to come to terms with the colonial traditions. The outcome is a large body of literary production that referred to, in academia, as colonial literature or postcolonial literature.

2-2 Colonial Discourses on African History:

One of the most noticeable uniqueness of literature that is written by African authors in the dawn of colonization is its assiduous effort to argue against the prejudices obtainable by Europeans about the continent and its population. Denial

and repudiation are one of the essential natures of the nineteenth century colonial discourse. The tendency and attitude of nothingness and negation is visible not only in figures of speech in narratives about the colonized landscape and people, but also in the sphere of history. That the history of the non-western is emptied out is perhaps best seen in Hegel's *The Philosophy of History*. Having discussed the absence of African political institutions which he regards as a major element of historical movements, Hegel (1900:99) states that Africa:

*has no historical part of the World, it has no
movement or development to exhibit.*

*Historical movements in it—that is in its northern part belong to
the Asiatic or European World What we properly
understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit,
still involved.*

The quotation perfectly demonstrates that the Hegelian concept of history is very Eurocentric in that it revolves around the binary mode of Western opinion. The dual opposition between history as a form of human development and nature as a given entity indicates that “the World’s History” Hegel mentions is hierarchical, for it locates Europe at the center and non—Europe on “the threshold.” The center/periphery polarization ultimately legitimates Europe as the subject of history, while Africa, subject to nature and incapable of making historical movements, is rendered the object of history.

The denial of African history is also expressed by Hugh Trevor—Roper, the Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford. In 1963, he made a claim that [perhaps, in the future, there will be some African history. . . . But at present there is none; there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness, and darkness is not a subject of history” (*qtd. in Mazrui, 1972:7*). It is worth—

noticing that, in Trevor—Roper’s view, Africa can enter “the World’s History” only when it is under European colonial rule which makes Africa, the “dark” continent, visible to the rest of the world. In other words, as (Achebe, 1988:251) states, in his criticism of Joseph Conrad’s portrayal of Africa in *Heart of Darkness*, Africa is reduced to merely “setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor”. Since it is envisaged of as having a “condition of blankness—of distance and ignorance, of sleep” as (Miller, 1985:62) calls it, Africa is never the speaking subject of its own history; on the contrary, it functions as a footnote to the history of European colonization. The confusion of the non- existence of African history is well spoken by Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana:

It is said that whereas other countries have shaped history and determined its course, Africa the as stood still, held down by inertia. Africa, it is - said, entered history only as a result of Europeancontact. Its history, therefore, is widely felt to be an extension of European history. (qtd. in Mazrui 1972:3-4)

The British have attempted to establish trade ports and centers of administration. This allowed and facilitated missionaries to be permeated into hinterland so as to exploit the treasures of the continent. Historians have advanced a superfluous of theories to find a convincing justification to account for the European scramble and eventual partitioning of Africa, Nigeria was no exception. But, as (Pakenham, 1991:xxii). Observes, “There is neither general explanation acceptable to historians nor even the agreement whether they should be expected to find one”. One of these theories is what fl is often referred to as the philanthropic motive. Supporters of this hypothesis pose different of opinion that European powers colonized Africa out of the need to civilize the “backward” Africans, the so-called “savages.” For instance, in his famous poem, “The White Man’s

Burden,” Rudyard Kipling, a renowned Nineteenth Century English poet, urges Europeans to take up the white man’s burden:

*Take up the white mans burden-
Send forth the best ye breed-
Go bind your sons to exile,
To serve your captive s needed.*

In their commentary about Kipling’s poem, (Bradshaw and Ozment 2000:197) observe that it was greatly popular in its own time and remained so throughout much of the twentieth century may indicate how completely Kipling gave a popular sentimental expression to an idealized understanding of the responsibilities of a guardianship over colonized people . In other words, many Europeans identified with the ideology of European patronization of African. The philanthropic theory is tricky in many ways. First, its agenda is suspicious considering the attitude the “philanthropists” demonstrated toward the Africans. For instance, in the same poem, Kipling describes Africans as follows: sullen people—Half-devil and half—child.

This kind of mind—set, one that would lead Kipling to portray Africans as “sullen peoples, half—devil and half—children,” makes the real intentions of the “civilizing mission” suspicious and debatable. It worked against the moral character of philanthropy, especially considering that the colonial system forged and simulated this argument and attitude to make lawful the riding shod over Africans and to give good reason for the imposition of its repressive measures and oppressive hegemony on indigenous natives. That is why (Elkins, 2005:5) commenting about the civilizing mission theory, sardonically states;

*For the British, imperialism was not solely about
exploitation: in fact, if one believed the official rhetoric of*

the time, exploitation was hardly a factor at all in motivating Britain global conquests. With their superior race, Christian values, and economic know ho the British instead had a duty, a moral obligation, to redeem the 'backward heathens' of the world. In Africa, the British were going to bring light to the Dark continent by transforming the so -called natives into progressive citizens, ready to take their place in the modern World.

The irony is that philanthropy was a mask for the ulterior motives and the real springs behind European Colonization of Africa. That philanthropy was a rhetorical trope colonizers used to justify Colonization and the oppression that went with it. Otherwise, how would one bring together philanthropy with the oppression and abuse of human rights that characterized the colonial system? For example, describing the British response to the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, (Elkins 2005: xv) states:

An integral reading of all the sources—written oral, and visual- - yields an astonishing portrait of destruction. I've come to believe that during the Mau Mau war British forces wielded their authority with a savagery that betrayed a perverse colonial logic: only by detaining nearly

the entire Kikuyu population of 1.5 million people and physically and Psychologically atomizing its men, women, and children could colonial authority be restored and the civilizing mission rein stated.

In agreement with Elkins' observation, Josiah Kariuki, himself a Mau Mau detainee narrates a frightening account of how the colonial government tortured detainees in their interrogation process about the Mau Mau.

Is it believable such vulgar attitude, bias, and ill—treatment of human rights were motivated by philanthropy?

The strategic factor is the second theory advanced to account for the European colonization of Africa. Those advancing this line of thought argue that the colonization of Africa was driven by European powers' desire to secure and protect territories that were of strategic importance to them. Although this theory accounts for the colonization of what (Elkins 2005:4) refers to as “strategic seaports on the West and East African coasts and colonies in South Africa and Egypt”, it does not explain adequately and satisfactorily the colonization of territories in the African hinterland, areas that one would argue had limited strategic value to the European powers. This argument could be convinced if it is applied across the board. The reality is that colonization did not differentiate between strategic and other less strategic territories. And the devil always takes the hindmost. In fact, (Oliver and Atmore 1972:108) demonstrate convincingly that the strategic factor was economically driven, since “what each [European] power feared was that its rivals would keep the trade of their new colonies to themselves enclosing them with high tariff (or customs) barriers.

The third theory, which seems to be the most reasonable, is the economic factor. Proponents of this theory argue that colonization of Africa was mainly motivated by capitalistic and imperialistic motives; that European countries scrambled for colonies mostly to acquire sources of raw materials and monopolies of markets for manufactured goods following the success of the industrial revolution in Europe by the nineteenth century. However, what causes may be, the fact remains that Africa at the end of the nineteenth century was under direct grip of the super powers of that era and Nigeria is included. Some scholars advanced a different account saying that the motive that drives the British to Africa is to atone for the slave trade. The

evidence for them is that Britain set its slave free and founded the colony of Sierra Leone in order these slaves could live honorable life far removed from their notorious masters. Not only this but they assert that the nature of colonization is to educate and Christianize the African from purely humanitarian purpose. They also draw attention to the fact that missionaries did not dedicate their efforts to merely preaching the gospel but they contributed positively in developing agriculture and commerce. They defend their position by the claim that if promoting of agriculture and commerce is meant to enrich European settlers, why then the missionaries devote considerable resources brought about from Europe to put an end to some social malpractices like sacrificing humans and killing of twin babies. Actually it is for the credit of the missionaries the diffusing of modern knowledge and spreading of new ideas that prove to be at the detriment of the development of indigenous African culture.

In “On National Culture,” (Fanon, 1963:225) argues that since African history, culture and identity have been displaced, disfigured, or destroyed by colonialism, it is the task of the native historians, intellectuals and artists to illustrate “the truths of the nation” in order to confirm the existence of African culture. In order to produce “a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature”, the native intellectual must realize that the truths of a nation are in the first place its realities. She must go on until she has found the boiling pot out of which the erudition of the future could be emerged. What Fanon is suggesting here is that merely to return to the past in a narrative is scarcely sufficient for the artist who aims to evoke a national consciousness in the colonized to encourage them to liberate themselves from the occupying power. The artist must instead delve deep into and interrogate the conflict that colonialism has imposed on the native and thus “write back” to the colonizers not only for the sake

of the present moment but also to reclaim the past in order to forge a national future. It is important in this context to point out that African writers during this phase of African history see themselves as defenders of their nations' culture and history. Achebe's narratives from the start are said to endeavor to achieve that target. But the most outspoken in this regard is (Nugugi, 1996:129) who voiced his role unequivocally as follows:

Writers have no real choices other than to align themselves with the people and articulate their deepest yearnings and struggles for change, real change. Where the state silences, art should give voice to silence. Where, for instance, there is no democracy for the rest of the population, there cannot be democracy for the writer. Where there are prisons, the artist is also in prison. Where people are marginalized into ghettos and slums, the artist is also marginalized. Hence it is obligatory for writers in Africa, Asia, South America, and the world over to keep on fighting with the rest of the population to strengthen civil society, expressed in the capacity for self-organization, against encroachments by the state.

The African writer, therefore, is burdened by the immense responsibility of hoisting the nationalistic consciousness among his community. His role is in stark contrast with conventional role of a European writer. In Europe there is a notion that the artist lives on the edge of society which looks at him with suspicion and does not care about him. In Africa, on the political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow—members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. . . . In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face—to—face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Anderson argues that the “imagined”

community comes into being because of the emergence of “print—capitalism” which helps disseminate the “national” language and ideas.

2.3. Biography

Chinua Achebe was born in 1930 in the village of Ogidi in Eastern Nigeria. His father was among the first elites who converted to Christianity. Nevertheless, he (the father) spent his entire life teaching, propagating the new religion amid the people of Igbo land. No doubt the upbringing of Chinua in a family adopting strict religious life in the midst of a majority of pagan would leave its toll on the young boy in terms of conflicting ideas and psychological trauma experienced by minorities bordered by alien culture. Fortunately the discrepancy of the dual religions existed juxtaposed in one family benefited Achebe extremely as evidenced in his later writings where he tackles dispassionately issues of religious strain.

Achebe excelled in his basic education that enabled him to obtain scholarship to study medicine at the newly opened university of Ibadan. And due to his artistic—oriented disposition he shifted to study English literature, resulting in depriving him of his scholarship. This loss caused his family to bear the brunt of funding the expenses of his university studies despite their meager income. It is germane in this respect to accentuate the fact that during this stage Achebe filled his literary and linguistic repository with the storybook works of the giant erudite of both classic and modern literature. He read much in the field of English fiction without developing a critical view by which to judge and evaluate. Not only this, but he seemed mesmerized by the spell of the stories especially those dealing with the encounter between Europe and Africa. The astonishing thing to note is that Achebe was taking sides with the white characters at the expense of the black ones. He used to see white characters as impeccable and innocuous whereas the

black ones are full of malice and pose a threat to the moral integrity of the (super race). This immature position towards literature which has something to do with African portrayal by outsiders is stated by Achebe himself:

(I took sides with the white men against the savages. The white man was good and reasonable and intelligent and courageous. The savages arrayed against him were sinister and stupid or, at the most, cunning. I hated their guts (Chinua Achebe, 199.9, 34,)

In retrospect, Achebe was unaware of the stereotypes that amalgamated and disseminated globally by colonial writers when it comes to tackle issues concerning Africa and its heritage. Moreover, even he was oblivious and remiss about the history of his own homeland. This fact stated by Simon Gikandi

“But it would be a mistake to assume Achebe grew up with a profound understanding and respect for the African past. One of the ironic aspect of being born in a family of African converts to Christianity was that one’s status in society depended on a certain self -alienation from the old culture (T.FA. 1.996,6,).

It is through such self—alienation and underhanded manipulation that colonial rule holds sway over Africans and other nation during the scramble era of colonization. The collision between Europe and Africa was so profound to the extent that even decades after independence Africans seem to be unable to put paid to the lump in the their throat imprinted by that terrible rule.

The striking fact, however, is that when Achebe was at university read the novel of Joyce Cary, Mr. Johnson that was considered by western critics as the most brilliant work that better depicted Africa and its inhabitants. African characters in this novel are dead ringer for the characters of Joseph Conrad in his infamous fiction Heart of Darkness. Joseph Conrad’s depiction of Africans satisfies the arrogance of Europeans and validates the heinous measures inflicted

on them. Fortunately it began to dawn on Achebe that this kind of fiction about Africa pales in comparison with the reality. The playing fast and loose with the actual representation of Africans in fiction written by colonial agents shocked Achebe deeply and compelled him to come to a new realization. It is this new awareness that challenged Achebe to come with the territory to be aware of the dilemma in which he used to live to the extent that he did not accustomed to think of himself as an African. This is stated by (A. C. :1.) *“I did not see myself as an African to begin with. “.*

By courtesy of this episode, a new genuine African fiction composer has come into existence to be on the qui vive to celebrate Africa and its culture. He turned out to transform into a crusader to take exception to the malign pigeonhole description dispensed to Africa by its oppressors. It is during this time Achebe came to the realization that the story of hunt will remain the same as long as the storyteller is Mr. Lion himself. The quarry is denied the honor to state its position and viewpoint towards what is happening concerning its life and destiny. So Achebe decided to write his own stories to act as the mouthpiece of Africa and its heritage.

As significant branch of postcolonial literature, African literatures attempt to turn over the rebellious proud picture of African societies. The African writer makes use of his/her talent to make for the repreSeflatb0n tarnished by the colonialist literature to the image of the pre-colonial African communities which are represented as ‘uncivilized’ ‘barbaric’ and ‘savages’. African literature, more alarmingly, is a negation element intends to answer back the charge of colonialists that the motivation of their intervention in Africa was to lead the native down the path of civilization. Through highlighting and underscoring the golden past of African culture with its splendid civilization’ African writers manage to reverse the

misrepresentation of the colonialist discourse. d this credit goes to Achebe who spearheads the task and pulls the strings over much young generation of African novelists.

Again Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, in this connection, provides the best example. (Achebe 1964:159) states that he was moved to write, initially, by his 'distaste for the patronizing of Africans' in the English novels he had studied in Ibadan University, such as James Cary's *Mister Johnson*. In presenting his protagonist, Okonkwo, he sought to demonstrate that the African conditions might generate a truly tragic character and merely pathetic ones as in Cary's white colonial text. Achebe's novel, like indeed many African novels, has a more enduring message in as much as it is, in a sense, a rewriting of a familiar theme in colonial fiction, the so called 'colonial encounter'. Achebe's purpose of writing as he proclaims was to show that Africans 'did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans' African people, on the contrary that Africans had a philosophy of great depth, strength, value and beauty and on the top of all that' they had dignity.

The first African novel, *Things Fall Apart*, is born to mark the beginning of a new literature that is a far cry from that which was written by the outsiders who tend to denigrate the continent. The novel is a product of a wide range of influences that were etched on the memory of the iter. One of these influences is the stories that he heard frequently at home especially from the women in his homestead when he was a child. Those stories are sated with the folklore, lure and the ethos of Igbo Society. That is why constant allusion to the cultural legacy of his folk is rampant in this novel and his ensuing works. This novel has become the most popular and famous one ever written in English by an African. The paradoxical incident regarding the publish of this novel was that; it was met by harsh rejection on the basis that no one would ever dare to read an article produced

by an African let alone to be a novel ! The irony is that, the novel turned out to be the prestigious icon of African literature that has ever written in English.

This celebrated fiction was conceived in the first place to defend Africa and its culture against a systematic onslaught directed by colonial writers meant to rationalize the domineering attitude of colonizers. It is this new type of writing that forged an alleyway through which acceptance and forbearance towards the diversity and the difference become the norm and thus enlightenment and toleration prevailed. Achebe started composing this novel at the end of his days at the University of Ibadan. After graduating he worked shortly as an English teacher and then joined Nigeria Broadcast Corporation. During this career, he visited London for the first time where he decided to cut short his novel into two parts. The first of which was printed in 1958 as *Things Fall Apart* while the other appeared in 1962 as *No Longer at Ease*. The former is regarded by many critics to be the first African fiction that dealt with the cultural clash imposed on Africa by European invasion. The first novel in terms of not its subject matter and theme but in terms of its viewpoint that represents, for the first time, the viewpoint of the victim. The previous writings related to this domain were conducted exclusively by Europeans who reflect and display the spirit of colonial institutions as well as missionary propaganda. The new novel depicted the life of Igbo community on the cusp of British penetration in the last half of the nineteenth century. It documented the impact of imposing foreign institutions on traditional societies whose entire culture was threatened by instantaneous blackout. The marvelous thing to take note of in this respect is that; the supposedly deep rooted history of Igbo community turned out to be susceptible and vulnerable to a breaking point. The unrelenting resistance of Okonkwo seemed to be gone by the board due to the quick assimilation and adaptation of the majority to the triumphant civilization. It is

indeed strange phenomenon and dramatic rate the speed by which the complete metamorphosis occurred.

While on the other hand, the latter shifted nearly a hundred years to deal with the aspiration of the newly educated generation who fail to come to grips with the gloomy situation created by imperial rule at the dawn of independence. *No Longer at Ease* tells the frustration of Nigerian elites who experienced the pain of lacking in rootedness and belongingness. More alarmingly, they forfeited the respect of their traditional community due to their new lifestyle that go in conjunction with the customs of the colonizers. The irony is that the whites seem to despise more those who cry loudly than the bereaved.

In 1964 *Arrow of God* was published to document the life in Igbo Land during the 1920s. *Arrow of God* tackled the tragedy of a local priest who was faced by sinister circumstances that resulted in the total collapse of all what he lived to uphold and struggle for. *Arrow of God* manifested in an enviable way the detailed nuances of the tradition of that amazing community in tandem with aspects of religious tint. The sacred and profane are mingled in the sense that one could not draw a line at.

In 1966 Achebe published the fourth novel “*A man of the People*” that tackled the politics of Nigeria that comes on the heels of the independence. The publishing of this novel coincided with the first military coup attempt that was led primarily by officers belonging to Igbo Tribe. Consequently, Achebe was accused to be in league with the rebels and he took the rap for this sinister prescience. Achebe went into hiding as a result of punitive pogroms directed against Igbo community. Then Achebe fled east to Igbo land with his family where he took up a post at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

In 1967 the eastern region declared its secession to establish a new state of Biafra. During these incidents, he worked with secessionists as roving ambassador to defend the cause and seeking support of the West. The novel marks a huge transition from the previous work that focus mainly on the historical traditions of Igbo community, to tackle contemporary hot issues such as the deviated politics and corrupted elites of post —independent Nigeria. The novel as a product of fiction mimicked exactly what happened in real politics in that part of the world. So, it could be read as a critical contribution seeking reform and amelioration by exposure of the blunders perpetrated by nationalist politician who came at the heels of the colonial rule.

When the balloon went up between the state and its citizens in the eastern region, Achebe engaged in politics and devoted his capacities to serve the nascent government. This does not mean that he overlooked writing but the fact is that he changed his familiar of interest—the fiction creation. He began to write short stories, poems, political essays as well as delivering lectures and participating in international conferences. This period of turmoil and fluctuation in the political purview in Biafra led Achebe to suffer a great deal of frustration and disappointment.

When the central government managed to crack down the rebels in Biafra, Achebe suffered of retaliation measures taken against scholars who backed the defunct secessionists. His career as a university academic began in 1967 with his appointment as Senior Research Fellow at the University of Nigeria. He was made Emeritus Professor in 1985. And, then, took up posts in United States of America as a professor in literature in many honorable universities. He received numerous honors from different parts of the world, including over twenty honorary doctorates from universities in Britain, the USA, Canada and Nigeria.

In 1987 he published his fifth novel *Anthills of the Savannah* which displays politics in an assumed African country that is comparable to his own homeland. The novel depicted intelligently the military dictatorship upon African nations just after they achieved their political independence from colonial rule. The message that is delivered by such political writings is to contribute positively in finding out better solutions to political crises that Africa is so much suffered from. This is substantiated by a statement taken from the horse's mouth:

To help my society regain belief in itself and put a way the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement (Morning yet, 1966.44,)

Unfortunately Achebe has been rendered to sustainable physical disability due to the terrible accident on the road to airport in his home in late 1990 while he was travelling to America. But the good news was that he regained his entire mental capabilities and now he is an emeritus professor in Bard College in New York in fine fettle and vigorous mettle. And scholars from the whole world visit him to pay homage to the man who contributed admirably and creatively in making African literature on the same wavelength of that of Europe. It must not be understood that the only Endeavour of this resourceful figure is the creation of African novel. But of no less importance is the foundation of African Writers Series which plays a very significant role in disseminating African literature and in making known African writers throughout the globe.

2.4. Stylistics

This thesis attempts to search and explore what has made the style of the famous Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe as distinguished and unique. It is a truth that many critics deem him as the founder of African fiction. The hypothesis suggested accounting for and pointing out to this phenomenon is of multi facets prone to different interpretations and propositions. The most opportune and fitting approach

to importune and pursue in this analysis is by investigating some important elements that seem to have bearing on the style of the case under study. Stylistics is an old genre that seeks to study style as a part of rhetorical tradition. This tradition began more than 2500 years ago. It was first dealt with the analysis of poems. This analysis was conducted from several perspectives. The study of stylistics was first concerned with examination of poems from phonological, syntactic, lexical and rhetorical dimensions. It was also sought to look at such features as the poet use of explosive consonants and stops as crucial devices to shape different meanings. Richard Ohmann defines stylistics as “a way of writing.”(Richard Ohmann, 1967, 135.).

Stylistics in literature is often influenced by linguistics. Linguistically speaking, the style that is studied in this domain figures largely in units like sound, rhythm, vocabulary, diction, register, syntax and semantics as well as figures of speech. For instance, the definition of Ohmann is simply saying that style is the choice of words. Aristotle, asserting that form and content are inseparable because he defines style as ‘an organic position.’(Milic 1971, 77). defines style as unique and idiosyncratic. According to this definition one could not be certain whether this pertained to some social groups or to an individual’s personality. Paul Butler (1985, 345,), defines style as (the deployment of rhetorical resources, in written discourse, to create and express meaning.) Richard Ohmann also assumes that style is: (Choices of verbal formulation).

This definition suggests that form is separate from content. In other words; ideas exist wordlessly and can be dressed in a variety of outfits depending on the need or the occasion. Paul Butler cited (Richard Qhmann;1967, 136), as writing that, (the idea of style implies that words on a page might have been different or differently arranged, without a corresponding difference in substance.) Butler comments on

this view in the following terms: (This view has been predominant in most approaches to style from both classical rhetoric and literary stylistics.). The notion that there is distinction between form and content is prevalent in the field. Butler cited (Joseph M. *William*, 2005, 351). (Most of the words we use to describe style displace our responses to a text into that text or its writer. When we say a sentence is clear, we mean that we understand it easily. When we say a speaker is coherent, we mean that we have no trouble in following him or her. Such qualities are neither in the speaker's language. They are in our responses to particular syntactic, lexical and other features on the page (or in the air), uttered or written and heard or read in a particular context.)

Style, therefore can be considered to affect the process of the understanding the different meanings expressed differently. Butler has discussed the issue of the impact of style on meaning in the following statement:

What most critics claim is at stake is the answer to the apparently intractable question of whether meaning remain the same if something is said in different ways, through different words. If a writer changes even one word in a sentence, has she in effect changed the entire meaning? In other words, scholars have proposed ways to get around the question. I think the best solution might be to frame the problem somewhat differently. First, it seems clear that the distinction falls apart at the point when the study of style leads to meaning. For example, even if we read something that we remark as having certain style, later we generally do not remember what we have read verbatim (unless, of course, we have memorized it). Instead, we recall the meaning. At some point, then, and on some level, it seems we must agree that style and meaning necessarily converge (Out of Style, 1985, 144).

Building on this view, then, meaning can be deduced irrespective of the different styles that expresses it.

Likewise, (Lanham 1983:145) sets forth his idea concerning style in his seminal book, *Literary and the Survival of Humanism*, in which he proposes what he calls the (Clarity- Brevity-Sincerity) or (C-B-S style) in which (language remains ideally passive and transparent) some years ago, the well-known linguist Jean—Jacques Lecercle published a short burdening critique of the aims, methods and rationale of contemporary stylistics. His attack on the discipline, and by implication the entire Endeavour of the present book, was uncompromising. According to Lecercle, nobody has ever really know what the term ‘stylistics’ means, and in any case, hardly anyone seems to care (Lecercle, 1993:14). Stylistics is ‘ailing’; it is ‘on the wane’; and its heyday, alongside that of structuralism, has faded to but a distant memory. More alarming again, few university students are ‘eager to declare an intention to do research in stylistics’. By this account, the death knell of stylistics had been sounded and it looked as though the end of the twentieth century would be accompanied by the inevitable passing of that faltering, moribund discipline. And no one, it seemed, would lament its demise.

2.5. Modern stylistics:

Building on the unrealistic notion postulated by Lecercle, one would see the picture is quite different. Things didn’t seem to turn out in the way Lecercle visualized. Stylistics in modern time is very much alive and kicking. It is taught and researched in university departments of language, literature and’ linguistics the world over. The high academic profile stylistics benefited from is reflected in the number of its devoted book—length publications, research journals, international conferences and symposia, and scholarly associations. Far from declining and ailing, modern stylistics is certainly thriving and fine. The production of sub—disciplines where stylistic methods are developed is crystal clear of its good health.

2.6. Literary Stylistics

Style in fiction refers to the language conventions used to construct the story. A fiction writer can manipulate diction, sentence structure, phrasing, dialogue, tropes, idioms and other aspects of language to create style.

The tradition of literary stylistics is central to the way in which the study of style is developed. Pratt in, *toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse*, was cited by Butler (1971, 37), as saying that: (There is no point in separating a literary stylistics from linguistics stylistics: one is only application of the other) Young—Becker and Pike (1970, 359), are cited by Butler as redefining literary stylistics: (When people think of a *writer's* style, they usually think of the distinctive features of his prose — a distinctive lexicon and syntax and, less often, a distinctive subject matter. That is, style is conventionally defined in terms of characteristics of the finished work. We propose to view style as a particular way of behaving.) Louis Milic cited a French aphorism: (Louis Milic;1975, 222), which states that; (style is the man). Of course, this adage suggests that a writer's style is the true e*pression of his or her personality and, therefore no two writers can write in the same way, leaving no room for imitation.

The author of (*Out of Style*;1976, 542,), has cited Elbow as suggesting: (The culture of literary studies puts a high value on style and on not being like anyone else. I think I can see more mannerism, artifice, and self-consciousness in bearing among literary folk than composition folk. Occasionally I resist, yet I value style and artifice. What can be more wonderful than the pleasure of creating or appreciating forms that are different, amazing, outlandish, and useless—the opposite of ordinary, everyday, pragmatic?). Erasmus cites Quintilian as an example and suggests that words and ideas (style and content) are (so

interconnected in reality that one cannot easily separate one from the other) (1978). He gives the following example of the two:

Richness of expression involves synonyms, heterocyst or enlarge, metaphor, variation in word form, equivalence, and other similar methods of diversifying diction. Richness of subject matter involves the assembling, explaining and amplifying of arguments by the use of examples, comparisons, similarities, dissimilarities, and opposites and other like procedure.

Butler h cited (Lanham, 1983, 140,) as defining style: (in a world where words determine thoughts, style is an essential part of ‘man as fundamentally a role player” who is motivated to play not only for advantage but also for pleasure.). So style, according to this view, becomes an important element of play and game through manipulating language. In conjunction with this view go the writings of the renowned literary scholar, Stanley Fish, who laments the emphasis on content in composition courses because of what he argues is the field’s mistaken belief that if you chew over big ideas long enough, the ability to write about them will (mysteriously) follow. (Fish; 2005:56) This position regarding the importance of form at the expense of content generates strong opposition from many circles of intellectuals. De Borah Brandt (2005:59) states that (What Stanley Fish teaches isn’t writing) this view exorcises the effort of intellectuals and their perceptions and concepts, controversy and the deep reading and everything except how repositions or participles or relative pronouns function.

The preferred object of study in stylistics is literature, whether that be institutionally sanctioned ‘Literature’s high art or more popular ‘no canonical’ forms of writing. The traditional connection between stylistics and literature brings with it two important caveats, though, the first is that creativity and innovation in language use should not be seen as the exclusive preserve of literary writing. The

second caveat is that the techniques of stylistic analysis are as much about deriving insights about linguistic structure and functions as they are about understanding literary texts.

2.7. Folklore.

Folklore is defined by (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary, 1994.) as the traditional beliefs, legends, customs, etc, of a people; lore of a people.) It is relevant that the study will focus on the survey of the traditional verbal art. That is because verbal art constitutes an important element in African cultures. And this art continues to influence modern literary traditions. It is the art that practiced orally and preserved in the memory. That is due to the fact that writing is a modern invention in contrast to verbal speech. Folklore comprises many genres that function for traditional societies as do other types of literature in modern era. Folklore works as the medium through which cumulative wisdom and behavioral values of communities can be passed to present generation and be preserved for posterity. Folkloric elements vary a great deal in their details among the many cultural and ethnical groups in Africa. This variation reflects the diversity and richness of Africa's history, habits and cultural manifestations. The common feature of the elements of the folklore is its feasibility to be performed in ordinary speech. Therefore, the components of folklore were those aspects that can be transmitted by words of mouth. These cultural aspects include proverbs, myths, legends, tales, epic and songs. As a matter of fact these elements constitute the backbone of Achebe's writings, manifested especially in his novels.

2.8. Proverbs

A proverb is defined in (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary,) as short popular saying, usually of unknown and ancient origin, that expresses effectively some commonplace or useful thought. Building on this definition,

proverbs are the most omnipresent elements of folklore. This is due to their universal popularity which enables them to be employed in all levels of discourse. They are short, witty statement which conveys basic truths deduced from meticulous observation of life. They are metaphorical constructs that analogize critical situation to one that similar to it. The philosophy behind it is that there is no uniqueness in nature because whatever seems new, it has been occurred before in one way or another in the tribal experience. Proverbs are widely used partly because of their effectiveness for convincing purposes and partly for the delight they impress on the auditors. The African traditional orator cites proverbs which represent the wisdom reservoir that filled of the experience of the ancestors. A person who is able to employ proverbs is looked at as has complete access to the communally sanctioned code of behavior. And for this reason he or she can be relied upon to give direction to his fellow folk. African communities place heavy emphasis on delicacy in interpersonal relationships. According to the previous view, it is held offensive and rude to offer advices or criticism to another in plain terms. To do so will be understood that the addressee is unable to use reason in his or hers encounter with others. Therefore, resorting to deliver messages in proverbs is considered more delicate and diplomatic. That is because the message lies deep in the code of behavior which theoretically is common property.

Proverbs play a central role in the ordinary speech of the amazing people who inhabit the both sides of Niger River in the south—eastern of Nigeria. These indigenous inhabitants who are belonging mostly to Igbo tribe are legendary in using proverbs and sayings. So it is no wonder that Chinua Achebe synthesizes the whole fuss about these phenomena in his ineffaceable remarks: “*Pro verbs are the palm -oil with which words are eaten*”, this quotation is taken from Achebe’s writings revealing the mindset with which he fails into place when he gets the hang

of the opulent heritage of his folk. This heritage was luxuriantly indoctrinated in him during infancy. Therefore, Achebe used to exploit this extraordinary faculty in his narration. This enables him to draw the typical idiom that best suited the context and struck home. As a matter of fact, Achebe's merit lies in his amazing faculty of drawing the most suited proverbs. That faculty, its quintessence will remain beyond the ken. Proverbs are defined as follows:

*Proverbs are short and pithy sayings that express some traditionally held truth
' They are usually metaphorical and often, for the sake of memo ability.*

It is also important to mention the definition of Chinyeaka Okoli (1996) who states that.

Igbo people of Nigeria use proverbs so frequently that it has become part of their day- to —day speech. There are not less than a million powerful Igbo pro verbs that are known. What some scholars do these days is to group them under categories according to what they mean, or what is figuratively used.

However despite of the fact that these amazing people use these proverbs spontaneously and markedly to the extent that their normal speech could not be devoid of, is considered among the Igbo as a self— evident. And as such, usually listeners are anticipated to react to them positively as if they are trivially cliché that its meaning is taken for granted in terms of comprehension.

As it is shown above, it seems that proverbs are innate capacity endowed to these amazing people to the extent that mere asking of interpretation would cast aspersion on one's sanity. The fusion of proverbs in ordinary speech of these unique amazing people in this part of the globe is a weird and wonderful phenomenon that deserves a lot of investigation and contemplation. It is documented that there are more than million proverbs which are used as if on their

own accord by indigenous Igbo's speakers. The fabulous thing however is that, the listener upon hearing a new proverb could instinctively sense its connotative meaning and never bother over clarification or derivation. It is reckoned to be axiomatic to the extent that any raconteur who deserves his salt, his speech could not be devoid of. The Igbo idioms seem to be unfamiliar expression to the non—native speaker due to the fact that these linguistic patterns are replete with legends, myths, metaphor, proverbs, parable, fables and aphorisms. Consequently, any using of an idiom that is well suited one context to a supposedly related situation may expose the user to sarcasm and mockery. Therefore deep absorbing of the culture in which these amazing linguistic aspects flourished is a necessary prerequisite to qualify a person to engage and take part in the daily communication with these amazing people. This view has its root in the writings of Achebe himself. It is stated by him in the lectures he delivered at Harvard University and published in his seminal book: (Home and Exile;1989:45).

“That those who inhabit the world of pro verbs do not spend sleepless nights worrying over provenance. They know a good proverb when they hear it and simply add it to their stock not spend sleepless nights worrying over provenance. They know a good pro verb when they hear it and simply add it to their stock

It is evident that the usage of proverbs is meant for the most part to enliven a discourse so as to appeal to the addressee in a manner that speeds up comprehension comfortably. This does not mean that proverbs are always a vehicle of facilitation. But it is observed that proverbs could be a factor of debilitation and ambiguity to the extent that they sometimes cast a pall over the intended point. It is observed

by Chinyeaka Okoli when posted twenty translated Igbo proverbs on the Internet, (1966:2)

‘Igbo people of Nigeria use pro verbs so frequently that it has become part of their day-to-day speech. There are not less than a million powerful Igbo proverbs those are known.

The obvious thing to note in this regard is that these indigenous proverbs emanate first and foremost from the experience of the people when interacting with their own environment. One could not but astonish and admire the stunt feat of these amazing non—literate peoples in using such patterns of rhetoric.

A number of scholars in recent years have examined in great or less detail of more modern non—literate peoples. This matter has been surveyed most recently in English by (Golka;1993:30), though he confines his comparison specifically to African tribal societies. His conclusions are that;

“Pro verb is the basic literary form for the expression of wisdom; that proverbs as a genre occur among non-literate peoples.”

It is apparent that such proverbs are principally popular in origin and only at a much later stage in their existence appealing literary contexts. The Russian writer (S. Kuskovskaya; 1987:3), states that:

Proverbs and sayings are short sentences expressing a well known truth or a common fact familiar to experience.

If the case is to contrast proverbs to other verbal folklore genres (i.e., fairy tales, legends, tall tales, jokes, and riddles), the result is that proverbs are more concise but not necessarily the simplest form. Proverbs fulfill the human need to summarize experiences and observations and relate them to suit social affairs and personal concerns in a ready-made structure that could be easily memorized. It is this trait of memorization that made proverbs to be embedded conveniently in the many heads of a whole populace. It may be for this reason that the definition of proverb does not overlook this detail.

It is important to refer to the fact that a narrator with some experience may resort to utilizing some current stylistic devices when narrating a folktale. These devices could take the form of proverbs and sayings. These devices may be incorporated into the framework of the tale itself. Moreover, these devices may constitute a summary of the vital issues in the story. These Proverbs, imagery or symbolism only appear to make the plot of the story more appealing and challenging. More than anything else the impact on the hearer would be more profound especially on children. The result would be positive exercising of the faculties and the potentialities of these children, thus facilitating comprehension. Not the less is the reward of entertainment and cathartic of emotions.

Therefore proverbs, sayings, prayers, invocations are freely used by Achebe. Proverbs are being used to reinforce the character of the hero and other social and political implications. Moreover, they serve as effective rhetorical tools and they are appreciated as rich sources for pleasure. That is because some proverbs are employed purposely to provoke laughter and offer acceptable way to break conventions and taboos. The funniest proverb one may ever come across is: (A mother of twins should harbor no fears of a huge penis.).

2.9. Myths

The term myth is defined by (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary, 1994,) as a traditional or legendary story, usually concerning some superhuman being or some alleged person or even, with or without a determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation, esp. of demigods and the creation of the world and its inhabitants. The author of African Literatures: (An Introduction, 1994, 2,) defines the term myth; saying that the term is often used in an elastic sense to embrace all the non-factual products of folk imagination. Its use here is limited to the accounts of the creation of the universe and events that purportedly took place in primordial times. Myth explains the interrelationships of all things that exist, and provides for the group and its members a necessary sense of their place in relation to their environment and the forces that order events on earth. Since these forces are all pervasive, their nature, likes, and dislikes must be known if man is to accommodate himself to them and possibly to employ them to his advantage. Obviously, myths have religious and magical importance; herein lies the difficulty in categorizing them.

It is important to mention the fact that Africans believe in an all powerful deity who is the founder of the universe. This infinite power does not directly intervene in the life of the people but did so by delegating its authority to specialized divinities who serve as intermediaries. So, one divine would be responsible of rain, another of fertility, another for medicinal herbs and so on. And because of the importance of such deities, those cults have been established and worships regularly offered.

2.10. Legends:

A legend is defined by (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary, 1994,) as a non historical or unverifiable story handed down by tradition from

earlier times and popularly accepted as historical. Oyekan Owomoyela defined legends in his book (*African Literatures: An Introduction*, 1979, 4,) legends differ from myth in two respects: they deal with humans rather than divinities, and the activities they describe are supposed to have occurred in a less remote past. They occupy a realm halfway between myth and actual occurrence. The characters who replace the divinities in these legends are themselves larger than life, and in fact perform superhuman feats like single-handedly, in a matter of days, digging moats around large cities to thwart an approaching enemy. The closeness of the divine and mundane in the African scheme and the porosity of the partition between them can be seen in the frequent deification of heroic ancestors who were the subjects of legends. When this happens, the pertinent legends are elevated to the status of myth which is performed as parts of their cults.

2.11. Songs:

Songs in African traditional culture play a significant role in all aspects of ordinary life. It is said that there is hardly any occasion that does not involve singing and dancing. Songs are composed to sing praises to the beauty of a bride and women in general. Songs are dedicated to highlight the position of the tribal warrior. Workers create an atmosphere replete with songs to alleviate toil and chores. Quarrelling women employ songs to fling shame and scorn on their rivals. Festival of harvest, communal works, circumcision occasions and any occupation cannot be conducted without singing and merry. However, songs can be composed at any time, even on the spur of the moment. Some songs remain without change for a long time and as thus become sanctioned by communal reserves.

2.12. Achebe's Style:

To study Achebe's novels from stylistic perspective is not merely a play or at least is no mean feat. In fact, submitting the novels to meticulous scrutiny and analysis demands a lot of endurance and diligence. That is because the style

adopted is so suffused and imbued with the legacy of Igbo community of south eastern Nigeria. To disentangle the mystery of the intricacy of the references to the cultural aspects pertained to that unique community; one has to deal with those elements responsible for seeping an air of conviviality that obtained throughout the novels. The amazing phenomena are that the utilizing of the conventional elements of that society comes at the author's beck and call without being ostentatious or showy. The fact is that the author is saturated to the brim with the societal mores of his people. This overpowering penchant to portray blow-by-blow the real life of his community suggests that the writer is so immersed in the folklore, rituals, proverbs and the inveterate ethos of Igbo people in that neck of global wood. The author is in the eye of the storm when it comes to coming to grips with the rich heritage that characterized the daily life of these amazing people. The important thing to observe in this respect is that; these the very same people were depicted in the literary works of some British novelists as a people devoid of any sense of humanity. That is to say that they are incapable of speech let alone to possess a linguistic system that would enable them to utter mere bubble of echo like words. The major reason of writing these narratives was to challenge these stereotypes. Achebe was suffering great pain when he sees his own people depicted as like our dumb friends. His literary works have managed to counter these prejudices and correct and restore the true image of his folk. It is important to emphasize that Igbo's folklore is the powerhouse from which the Achebe's stamina is drawn. This stamina generated from a resourceful people endowed by nature with unparalleled traditions

Achebe embarks on narrating stories whose aim is to reveal how rich his people are in terms of eloquence and conversation. The obvious outcome of these narrations is that, these supposedly reticent dumb turned out to be the most highly vocal people. They are proved to be highly fluent in addressing complicate issues

that need complicate expressions. They spontaneously insinuate complex literary patterns even in their ordinary communication of conversational nature. The real wonder is that; one is used to encounter these figurative elements at every nook and cranny throughout the pages to the extent that one learns how to play them off the cuff. This does not to imply that; these saturated idioms with the rich legacy of Igbo are mere 'soup to lick in hurry!' On the contrary, one always finds oneself on the wrong tack but thanks are due to the multiple tools one well equipped with. Achebe's style is characterized by the heavy usage of Igbo's cultural aspects. He draws legends, myths, songs and proverbs of his community and incorporated them in his stories. The employment of such traditions serves two purposes. The first one is to challenge the white novelists; that his people are possessed with rich heritage of depth and value. The second is to create an aura of scent and beauty pertained only to his people. The latter is taken out by critics as adding aesthetic value to the style used. The goal of the writer is to use 'Language of portray how Igbo visualize their world. And for this reason a bunch of Igbo words and phrases appear here and there. Also the rhythm and content choice are of Igbo's origin. Achebe uses a myriad of proverbs that are indicative of Igbo's traditional oral mores. In addition, he utilizes stories that are shared among his community. These stories are meant to give explanation to some perplex natural phenomenon. Moreover, the stories are serving to indicate how these people are inheritors of glorious history and complicated civilization.

However, the style of Achebe could be described as typically aping the landscape and the ethos of the Igbo. This does not mean to say that the language is not good direct English. The language is standard vernacular colored to reflect African verbal style. The blend of Nigerian pidgin with the narrator's Received Standard English and other varieties are what make Achebe's style distinctive and unique.

2.13. Significance of the choice of Achebe's titles

Achebe has chosen titles for his novels that sum up the entire story in a nutshell conclusion. The first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, for example, its title summarizes the results of the incidents. It indicates to the chaos and dilapidation that ensued after imposing foreign culture on Igbo population. In the same way the title of the second novella, *No Longer at Ease*, reveals the bitter fact that the elites who inherited the British rule were frustrated because their expectations turned out to be a damp squib. And therefore, they were not able to enjoy the dividends of the independence. *Arrow of God*, is the title of the third novel which depicts the high priest in the culmination of his grief, imagines himself as an arrow of his god to inflict vengeance on his clan and the white man simultaneously. It needless to say that the *A man of the People* is the typical title of the novella that emphasizes the true nature of its protagonist. Finally the fifth novel *Anthills of the Savannah* describes the corruption of the dictator that eventually leads to the collapse of the country. Ants of the savannah are notorious of their eating the roots of the trees. The simile is obvious between the dictatorship and land worms all lead to destruction.

Chapter Three

3.1. Chinua Achebe as a novelist

Chinua Achebe is the first African novelist who entered the world of fiction that is written in English language out of the blue in a time that is not witnessed a harbinger to pave the way. Because, the experience of Amos Tutuila and Cyprian Ekwensi who published novels prior to Achebe, is overlooked on the basis that they stop short of the novel of Achebe. And that is why they are never seriously appreciated by critics. While on the other hand, from its onset T.F.A. is met by high esteem and appraisal. The meteoric rise of Achebe may be fairly ascribed to the utilization of African heritage to stand boldly as something new and unique which amazed the European critics. It is better, in this context, to take cognizance of the common Knowledge that Africa is always set as a foil and antithesis to Europe by European scholars. Africa is pictured as the exotic, remote and fantastic far-fetched world. And for this reason, almost any writing dealing with African aspects conducted by a European is frequently full- charged with such stuff that is incompatible with the authenticity. It is that drawing from African traditions, religion, lore and history that persuaded critics to appreciate the feat of this talented author. Achebe's unsentimental portrayal of the Igbo characters, traditions, culture and the subliminal traits are exclusively pertained. These unique characteristics are the attribute that may draw the attention of the critics to value this highly artistic pillar. The fusion of European forms with indigenous African oral traditions is what makes Achebe's style different from the technique of his counterparts. However, the *modus operandi* of the writing of this marvelous originator is by no means a product of pretentious intruder. This is substantiated by the fact that this style overwhelmingly pervaded through all his subsequent fictional and non fictional works. The relying heavily on the lore of Igbo is the real

grounds of making Achebe's tradition far and away the best in contrast with his generation. It is this dexterity of utilization of indigenous patterns which convinced critics who classify Achebe as a force to be reckoned with. Subsequently, after the publication of his first novel, T.F.A., which sold more than eight million copies, the name of Achebe becomes a global phenomenon.

It is banal but nonetheless true that Achebe sprung out as a novelist in full bloom without witnessing the usual preparation professionals need to train before showing a clean pair of heels to eminence. This does not imply that the dazzling rise of Achebe in the world of letters is simply the rub of the green. On the contrary, due to his extraordinary perseverance together with the innate faculty he could attain this reputation. And then he is world widely considered as the forerunner of African literature. So it is no wonder that T.F.A. becomes the most widely read novel in Africa to the extent that it is taught in secondary schools and colleges in his country and many parts of the world. Moreover, the Magnus opus of the author in question is considered one of the most highly valued novels of global refined literature. The evidence of this claim may rest assured on the accolade with which respectful critics' positive response is •showered on the fiction and its author simultaneously. Donald Hedrick, (1996, 17), stated that

Things Fall Apart is certainly not the first African novel, but it was probably the first work in which the author set out to represent the African experience in a narrative that sought, self— consciously, to be different from the colonial novel. Since its publication in 1958, Achebe's novel has served as a model for other African writers, and indeed, for a different kind of literature in English.

T.F.A. displays the confrontation involving colonial religious and political institutions with the tradition and culture of African communities. The cultural clash, as it has been noted in the first chapter, is regarded as a common theme

treated frequently by novelists from all over the world. The treatment of the subject is liable to many facets of social and political dimensions according to the perspective from which the issue is being viewed. This is quite normal since the world view of every distinct society is not necessary to be on the nod with another society. That is diametrically opposed to it in terms of social, religious and political orientations. Even now there are a wide variety of scholars who theorize about the clash between civilizations. The contemporary presumptuous American philosopher of Japanese origin Francis Fukuyama went as far as to declare that the occidental civilization has come to stay. And as thus, history has ended with the perpetual and eternal triumph of that civilization. It is obvious for Fukuyama and his adherents that the liberal democracy and capitalism may signal the end point of humanity. That is in its long pursuit for perfection. Fortunately in less than two decades since the dissemination of such racial chauvinism that is meant to perpetuate the ultimate supremacy of western domination, however, recent developments proved him wrong. With the economic crises that exposed America and Europe to unprecedented financial collapse and the emergence of the gigantic economy of China, any such assertions seem unable to cut much ground. The above seemingly diversion from the subject under study is quite relevant to the concern of this thesis. Taking into consideration the fact that White culture's allege of preponderance seems a hardy perennial. Has it not for such same view that Achebe responded to the hostilities directed against people's identities other than Europeans? it has been claimed that the world would never have heard of a person named Achebe, had it not been due to the mutilation of African characters in fictional works fashioned by colonial writers such like Conrad and Cary. The researcher could not take such immature cliché for granted. Great talented artists are endowed by nature with inborn capacities that together with apprenticeship are accountable for yielding such great geniuses. However, one does not believe that

mere offensive insult is justifiable enough to reproduce a transcendental artistic figure. One will remain sticking to one's guns despite the fact that Achebe himself indicates faintly to the notion that he became a novelist after seeing scorn flung to African characters in Joyce Cary's novel *Mr. Johnson*. Achebe states that:

I know around '51, '52, I was 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 the most superficial picture of - not only of the country - but even of the Nigerian character, and so I thought if this is famous, then perhaps someone ought to try and look at this from the inside. (Achebe, 1999, 12,).

Therefore, such stuff could be only taken with a pinch of salt. This may be true if it is only taken as an ignite factor that accelerates and expedites the pace and tempo of his premature success and precocious is ascension. The malicious misrepresentation of African characters in fictional work written by colonial writers is systematic policy adopted and encouraged to justify the penetration of Europeans in Africa to rob it of all its valuable treasures. It would be cogent and rational act to exploit the raw materials since the land is devoid of humans. Those beings that inhabit Africa could not be deemed on a par with Europeans in terms of intellectuality and worth. So the portrayal of Africans in the mould of primitive creatures is meant to relieve Europe of scruple and prick of conscience.

However, when Achebe feels that it is his duty to correct the image of Africa that is deliberately distorted in order to serve the selfish agenda of the Europeans, he does that without showing any figment of unreality. It is detected that the approach used by the writer is devoid of any sense of inferiority felt by the composer when it comes to exposition of African traditions that seem primordial

according to European's norms. Not only this, but also he does not resort to dirty means to revenge quid pro quo. At any rate, sheer practical necessity would have allowed him to do so. Despite all the scorn, mutilation and the smear campaign directed to damage African dignity, the writer managed to convey his message to his readers without belittling white characters. The intended point is that different people have different customs and cultures and no culture has the prerogative to judge other culture using its own criterion as a model. Moreover, Achebe aims to convince the world and his own folk that Africans have their own history, culture and worth before Europeans set foot on the soil of the continent. Yes, his own folk because even his colleagues in university seem to be victims of pulling a fast one on them. His colleagues reiterated the same view held by the colonizers concerning the presentation of African character in work of art. One of Achebe's classmates pronounced without making any bones about his admiration of the scene in which the white man shot dead Mr. Johnson. This is actually the same depiction of Mr. Johnson as a lackey and sycophant who is fond of rendering servitude to his white master. More surprisingly, Mr. Johnson himself enjoyed to serve his master to the point of being extremely pleased to be killed by him when he says:

Do you mind, Sah about dis-hanging. I don't Care about it on the bit. Why- he laughs with a Ai of surprise and disco very- I know fit nutty About it- he too quick. Only I like you do him yourself sah, If you not fit to shoot me. I don't agree for dem sergeant do it, too much. But you My friend' You may father and my mother. I think you hang me yourself (Achebe, 1999,28,)

This episode reveals the unrealistic view held by Europeans that Africans enjoy and welcome whatever rendered by the white race even fatal acts. Achebe corrected the picture in his equivalent story saying that Ikemefuna instinctively turns to Okonkwo for salvation whereas Johnson encourages joyfully Rudbeck to

carry out the execution. It is obvious that Achebe's view is more down to the earth and typically fits in with the manners of the Africans.

Moreover the episode also reflects clearly the racial perception which was dominant and pervasive in many of European circles. Such belief is ingrained deeply and manifested unanimously by majority of intellectuals who feign in vain to camouflage the clandestine springs of colonization. All in all, such assertion is all boils down to perpetuate the notion of African inferiority.

Consequently, the hollow boast that Europeans have come purposely to rescue the primitives seem only sheer arrogance devoid of any substance. It is obvious that such assertions are intended to deviate and conceal the ulterior motives of colonizers to batten on their subjects. The significance of Achebe as a novelist may lie typically in the fact that he does not depict his folk and their tradition as they ought to be, to fit western standard of accepted norms and manners. It is indeed quite normal for the western reader to find African traditions weird and bizarre. By the same token, Africans were dumbfounded by the color, speech, religion and every aspect of European's code of behavior. Achebe himself was encountered with such superfluous inchoate beliefs that in order to find superstitions that existed in T.FA an American should make a trip to Africa. Achebe pointed out that the game is not worth the candle by referring that such superstition resides lurked and latent in the very core of American culture but the laity could not detect. Even one of onlookers who happened to know that Achebe is a professor of African literature, expressed doubt and astonishment of hearing that there is an immanence of such stuff. It is palpable that such view is embedded lurk and laden unconsciously. This view is shared by a large section of American and European alike. These people are drawing from inherent widow's cruse of deep rooted

propaganda. White culture perceives Africans as a sign of misunderstanding, despise and hatred to whatever has something to do with them.

When Achebe began to write fiction using English language, English critics were deeply impressed by this kind of new literature that does not bear a resemblance to what has been written before. That has not written before in terms of tackle African issues from the perspective of insider who uses the same vernacular of the white man mixed with expressive idioms of African origin. Once such positive reactions emanated from conspicuous and reputable critics began to loom on the offing that means a turning point of public awareness seem to gain a ground. It is a breakthrough that signals a beginning of altering public opinion to regard such works from a purely artistic measure far removed from the old stereotyped illusion. Consequently, the new novel could be marked as an attempt to correct erroneous views and set the record straight once and for all. The blockbuster of T.F.A. has managed to bring home the bacon, and come off with the flying colors, is a few and far between incident. The success of the novel may at heart due to the honesty of not pulling any punches when it comes to the depiction of African characters and their beliefs.

The production of Achebe in the genre of fiction came successively bearing the same flavor manifested in his first novel. *No Longer at Ease* published in 1960 seems to divert from the trajectory of focusing on historical oral traditions of Igbo as opposed to European modernity. The content and the theme of the novel seem out of gear in relation to the former *Magnus opus*. The seemingly apparent discrepancy suggests there is a shift in theme and the subject matter of the artist's concern. But the deep scrutiny to both novels would reveal the fact that the theme did not change any more. The confrontation between African traditions and European's could not be avoided. The introducing of modernity which displayed in

the first work has its ripple effect to pervade and extend to the time of post independence. The latter novel simply states that what has been broken of African institutions and replaced by European ones, did not bring about a better model to the indigenous natives. So, it is the same common theme of documenting the impact of imposing foreign culture on a people who are proud of having a culture that is deep rooted in the annals of history. The colonial rule after decades of cultivating the seeds of the supposed civilized lifestyle among the indigenous educated elites, the outcome proved to be a failure and tragedy. The fate of the grandson of the legendary hero of T.F.A. is by no means conforming better than his grandfather. Both of them could not adapt to the new institutions. Okonkwo kept his nose to the grindstone to resist the conversion of his folk to Christianity to the extent that he repudiates his own son. Not only had this but he continued desperately to embroil his community against the new rule. However, when he saw that his people were prone to accept the new situation, Okonkwo took his own life, thus committed the most obnoxious abomination. It is important to fix the fact that the bloody minded Okonkwo decided intentionally to commit suicide despite his faith in his people's rituals and taboos. However, the previous violations like the snapping his wife's head off to the extent to take a bead on, on the New Yam Festival were perpetrated inadvertently.

While on the other hand the tragedy of Obi could be fairly attributed to the imposition of alien comport that favors British lifestyle over the Africans' norms. The youth of Africa were undergone a systematic program of formal education whose aim is to inculcate ideas, conduct and a *way* of thinking that have nothing to do with their needs and far removed from their legacy. That is why Obi despite his respectable salary has failed to make ends meet because adopting strange way of life that is contrary to African's traditions.

The third work *Arrow of God* is the novel which is most likely to be found that Achebe himself is caught to read regularly. If this is the position of the author, what will be the case when it comes to the readers? Readers have to do more reading in order to come to grips with the novel's intricacies. As a matter of fact this novel is so fraught with Igbo's worldview and saturated with their fantastic idiomatic expressions.

The satirical novel *A Man of the People* focuses on Nigeria's politics and its aftermath that characterized by instability, corruption and confusion. The fifth novel *Anthills of the Savannah* comes after more than two decades from the publication of the former, to engage with the African political affairs. Its theme is of despotism and dictatorial nature. The previous brief synopsis of the five novels is meant to limit and highlight the domain of this critical study. The study's course will be directed to the investigation of the underline influences of these few novels on African literature. In addition, these few literary works will be contrasted with the plethora production of the craftsmen of the great literature. They are regarded as highly universal endeavor. The comparison between these targeted novels would be carried out through the themes of modernity represented by other writers about their indigenous traditions. This study aims to reveal the position of Achebe claiming about different cultures, whether they belong to advanced modernize folk or those which are seemingly primitive. Both of them are malodorous with the same superstition of different source. Europe is supposed to be looked upon as the center of the world representing the civilized approved behavioral code of universal relevance. On the other hand, it is taken as a fact that Africa is the natural home for whatsoever characterized by fallacy and lack of rationale. The western values that heighten the worth of man could not be applied to include those who are lacking in such civilized norms. Therefore, due to this view those European

scholars, politicians, religious and the common citizens consensually do not see any infringement with respect to the policy adopted in Africa and other regions which suffered the same doom. If this is the case, then fictional writers are not to be blamed alone, because they reflect honestly what is believed by the whole stratum of European populations. So, these prejudices, which view Africans with hostile eye and replete despise, are the current norm in default of a crusader to take up the cudgels for when the coast is clear. However, every dog has his days; Africa will no longer become vulnerable because it manages to produce a writer in the person of Achebe. The perspicacious Achebe clears the decks by publishing in 1958 his first novel. This masterpiece signifies to be at concert pitch to launch a systematic fictional and non fictional works. These writings are directed to revive and revamp African traditions in such a way that they seem novel and fresh, although they are old as the ancient history of the continent. Africa has found its voice in the student of Ibadan University. Since of his studying days he has absorbed and mastered well all grist that comes to his mill. This artistic work can be considered as a biased fiction or a legend drawn from Igbo's legacy.

Achebe's work, as it has been stated previously, is met from the start with high esteem and regard. The prestigious literary newspapers: such like Sunday Herald, the Observer, New Statesman, just to name a few, have welcomed all or sundry the literary production of the writer. Critics comment in favor of his works ungrudgingly without any demur. However, as long as the affable ambiance created by the advent of such because a figure such like Mandela, despite his huge responsibilities and who has enough troubles of his own, can find a time to read novels written by an African. Mandela could not waste his precious time if he sees the enterprise as a wild goose chase. Surely, there would have been a substance, if not .Mandela would have never stepped up to the plate.

The votary of Human Rights and Nobel Prize laureate in literature (1986) Nadine Gordimer hurls praise on Achebe's work and holds him in high esteem and regard. She writes in *Man Booker International Judge* when she says a joy and an illumination to read. If no one pays attention to Achebe's work except these two great South African pillars, it would be sufficient enough for Achebe to be set on a pedestal of honor and glory. Nadine Gordimer's judgment should be highly appreciated and considerably evaluated on the ground that she herself sincerely engaged in sophisticated production of fictional aspire. Her works are charged with the concerns related to humanity in its broadest sense. These universal human concerns are preached and delivered throughout her artistic works to make her one of the most influential people in Africa and the whole world at large. The testimony of a person such like Gordimer who is in the same boat with Achebe in terms of their similar concerns would be an ace in the hole. One would not be considered drawing the long bow if one asserts that the acknowledgement emanated from such a pillar is quite enough to set Achebe on the sky.

The works of Achebe in the world of fiction are very few in contrast of the great novelists whose production is copious and versatile. Achebe has written five novels which are very moderate in length. It appears that what is mattered is not the profuse or width and girth but the manner in which the subject matter is treated. The treatments of the issues tackled by Achebe are done in such a way that they reflect the African traditions as glaring daringly to the supposed advanced European mores unabashedly. Moreover, one could not notice any sign that shows Achebe is paying attention to the white man. What is meant is that; no attention is made to the white man in terms of expressing emotion of gratitude or deference. It is supposed that a young African who newly graduated from a white man's university would be generous enough to show gratefulness and appreciation to the

empire. if one seeks to detect something like this in Achebe's novels, his or hers efforts surely will be gone by the board. Achebe is amazingly reckless and remiss to acknowledge any act of kindness delivered by colonial rule towards the native of Africa. The apparent position of the writer reveals clearly that he is chiefly concerned with those lost traditions and vandalism resulting by measures taken by the advent of the white man.

The elaborate meticulously on traditional aspects also discloses that he is saying to his readers that Africa has its own culture which he is defending and supporting up to the hilt. Also he is asserting that African traditions, despite the fact that he himself repudiates the lifestyle of his own community and identified with the western norms, have intrinsic value on its own right. It seems that this position is not clear and contradictory how one praises old traditions and fossil beliefs while practically throwing in one's lot with the opposed culture. This is one thing to be taken against Achebe's credibility in assuming that African traditions have a value and lamenting its demise. The other thing is that Achebe's novels especially the three first ones celebrate all stuff relating to the heritage and legacy of the continent, but the sad thing is that this celebration is delivered in the tongue of the enemy. One could pose questions how Achebe is fulfilling his commitment to satisfy his society's concerns in his artistic work. What are the problems facing him when composing in a foreign language? Could he effectively communicate Igbo thoughts and feelings in that alien tongue? The answer comes directly from Achebe himself:

The English that emerges must be new in the way that can carry the weight Of the African writer's experience. African writers are to use English language i½ a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of

international exchange will be lost. (The Rise of Igbo Novel, 1978, 156,)

Also Achebe argues that the British did not push language into his face while he was growing up. He says that he chooses English as a means of infiltrating the ranks of the enemy and destroying him from within. It is obvious that Achebe regards the issue of language as a weapon in the struggle. This view goes in conjunction with the notion that Achebe becomes a writer when he sees the incomplete and distorted envisage of African culture. This position of defending his culture enjoins and entails him to use English. Also English enables him to address a Nigerian audience. This is due to the fact that Nigerians have no one standardized language but multiple tribal tongues such as Igbo, Yorba and Hausa. Achebe is quite aware of the knowledge that English is symbolically and politically connected with the despoiler of the traditional culture and with the intolerance and bigotry. Despite this fact, Achebe sees there is no point in fighting a language. The usage of English is simply because it is a mere effective weapon in challenging the enemy, and that is why he uses it.

However, it seems that Achebe does not feel at ease when he found himself compelling to write in English rather than his mother tongue. Achebe tries to seek for himself an excuse to Ward off the sense of the guilt he suffered from. He once points out that it is only out of necessity that he uses English. He once expressed his justification of using that tongue:

It is not right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else is for locks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for ne there is no other choice. I

*have been given the language and intended to use it. (Achebe
1.975:62,)*

It is important in this context to refer to the position taken by other writers who feel sincerely that it is their patriotic commitment to use their own languages. Ngũgĩ decided in 1980 to repudiate English in favor of his own mother tongue. Ngũgĩ put his argument in the following terms:

What fate a waits a community when its keepers of memory have been subjected to the West s' linguistic means of production and storage of memory — English, French and Portuguese — so that those who should have been keepers of the sacred word can now only see themselves and the different possibilities for the community within the linguistic boundaries of memory incorporated? We have languages but our keepers of memory feel that they cannot store knowledge, emotions, intellect, in African languages. It is like having a granary but at harvest you store your produce in somebody else s granary. The result is that ninety percent of intellectual production in Africa is stored in European languages, a continuation of the colonial project where not even a single treaty between Europe and Africa exists in any African language. We do not exist in these languages!

It is obvious that this writer used English first and that is why he gained fame and prestigious place among the great writers of Africa. It is also crystal clear that this position is secured only due to the usage of English whose universality Achebe preferred to err on the side of caution to relieve him from risking losing the fame and honor brought about by writing in English. He attempts to release himself of commitment with the views he once voiced that seems to categorize him as supporter to jettison English. Achebe attacked Ngũgĩ and his adherents as communists:

It is interesting that people who are saying this in Kenya and elsewhere are those who see themselves as radicals, as Marxist. So what are seeing are people who are politicking with language. They are Mixing their political ambition with literature We need to dispose with the

language question what we need is to ensure development of this multiplicity of these languages.
(Achebe, 1992, 77)

One would be suspicious that did Achebe want to distance himself from these zealous lest to be considered a leftist? Because in those times the cold war was in its full swing and it is evident that the status he enjoyed in the circles of western literary institutions was due primarily to the fact that the political stance exhibited in his novels has nothing to do with communism and its orientations.

The former deliberation over the language which should be used to display African literature is quite relevant to the theme of the range to which the influence of Achebe has impacted literature and writers alike. Many critics agree that the influence both as a creative author and a critic has been considerably acknowledged. Moreover, critics acknowledge the fact that Achebe is a man who is truly concerned to reclaim African glorious past and heritage. Therefore his artistic contribution could be read as an attempt to set the record straight when it comes to challenging colonial version of African history. Because Colonial scholars and even the common people of Europe hold the notion that Africa is a continent without history and culture. According to this prejudice, Africa is considered one of the white man's burden whose enlightenment is the responsibility of the Sons of Europe.

It is obvious that this pretext is meant only to justify the appropriation of Africans and their valuable resources. So, the significance of Achebe lies in the fact that he is the pioneer who draws the attention of the young generation of African writers to the importance of the novel as an instrumental gizmo. The theme of Achebe that is spontaneously stemming is that African peoples not hear of culture or the first time from Europeans that their societies were not mindless but the fact is that Africans were fully endowed with philosophy full of all the gory

details of value and beauty and the sad thing is that by the advent of Europeans all that glory was lost. Therefore, the responsibility of the African writer was to restore and reclaim that iconoclasm and vandalism.

Achebe's influence extended to include writers outside Nigeria such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Nuruddin Farah. His influence may be very salient in the works of younger Igbo novelists such as Nken: Nwankwo, John Munonye, Chukwueka Ike and Flora Nwapa, who follow Achebe in choosing for their settings traditional or changing rural communities, exploring the theme of the conflict between old and new traditions. The apparent feature of using African English that is saturated with proverbs, tales and idiom of a traditional Igbo culture is the idiosyncratic pertained only to Achebe. This characteristic becomes the common feature shared by the young generation who mimic Achebe and acknowledge his importance. That is because Achebe's success and appeal are ascribed to his utilization and influence of Igbo native tradition. The ensuing novelists imitate Achebe in using proverbs, sayings, riddles and songs. Achebe refers to these devices as the palm oil with which words are eaten. Proverbs serve to deepen the force of the intended meaning without resorting to using many words. And for this reason proverbs are indispensable element of instruction among Igbo. Achebe is an artist who gains the fame of ushering in the usage of proverbs in modern literature in English. Therefore, he contributes positively to shape the European fiction with traditional Igbo narrative formula. The language and style of Achebe become distinguished in such a way that they could be a characteristic feature.

Although Ngũgĩ does not use *the* language *in* quite the same way as Achebe and the Nigerian who followed him, but he followed his footsteps in espousing the themes of Colonial encounter the tension between African and Western Cultures

and values More importantly the former emulates the latter in the emphasis on the novel as a means of Political awareness and a tool for radical social and Political change. it is important to refer i this respect to the fact that Nugugi referred to Things Fall Apart as a key work for particular character in his novel Munjira) in Petals of Blood.

The important thing regarding the debate Over language *is* that Sengho took a side that is completel, at odds with Nugugi. The former argued that French was a beautiful, clear and universal language and that is why he resorted to it as a medium in Which he Chose to write. While Nugugi took the view that English holds the world view of the Colonizer who used to ride rough⁵⁰ over the populace of Africa. d for this reason Nugugi appeals to African artists to cut all the ties with the Colonization and above all their languages Achebe took a Position in this debate between the lines awn by Sengho and Nugugi viewing English as imposing rather than being freely chosen but there is no way to dispose of. In a lecture given in 1964 at University of Ghana, he asserted that English African literature could take its Place among other African literature in indigenous languages. It is quite obvious that Achebe equates the foreign languages with the genuine African languages. The traditions that Achebe established in the domain of African fiction are a litmus test to his deep assimilation to Igbo's legacy. Those traditions have become the norm assumed by young novelists throughout Africa. These traditions are suggested by him such as the multiplicity of voices and perspectives, oral narrative forms, blending past and present and much more in his call upon readers to be intellectually participants so as to pass judgment and be committed to the real cause of their communities. The central concern of Achebe is the didactic and pedagogic disposition of his writings. (Achebe; 1974:51) comments;

I would be satisfied if my novels (especially the ones set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their- past — with all its

imperfections — was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them.

The significance of Achebe in the realm of fiction may lie primarily in the tendency to teach and correct wrong assumptions meant to defame Africans. It is this disposition to diffuse knowledge about Africa from within that plays as a smoke signals to young writers who decipher the code and distribute it in every turn and pass. It is indeed a revolution in terms of instituting traditions that favor indigenous literary patterns over those relate to Europe. Achebe's literary traditions awaken the continent from its deep slumber to produce writers of novels who looked upon him as a paragon. The theme of Achebe that is recurring occasionally in his writings; Africans did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans, has become the popular theme among the ensuing generation.

The paramount effect that affects African literature as a whole is the establishment of the influential African Writers Series whose first book was *Things Fall Apart*. In 1962 Achebe was invited to be its founding editor. The prestigious literary body made available for African and other readers the work of some hundred and fifty writers from all over Africa.

It is obvious that Achebe is the man who set the foundation of that tradition of drawing heavily from the oral literature of Igbo's culture. One can detect that the using of terms that has to do with Igbo's tradition are meant to inform his readers about issues that pertained only to his own culture. So these novels can be read and interpreted as a means to render service to his community and the whole world at large. The service is that, according to Achebe, art is, and always was, at service of man. For this reason, Achebe believes that 'any good story, any good novel, should have a message, should have a purpose.

Chapter Four

Analysis of the novels

4. I. Introduction:

This chapter endeavors to analyze the five novels stipulated in the first chapter from literary, historical and political dimensions. The five novels of the subject matter are respectively TFA, NLAE, AOG, AMOP and AOS. This thesis is concerned with analyzing many areas in them. To begin with is to put the first novel T.F.A. in focus because it is the first and masterpiece of these mentioned novels. Moreover, the novel in question is widely dealt with by many critics. Chinua Achebe starts writing it in early 1950th as a response to the novel written by the famous Irish writer Joyce Cary entitled Mister Johnson. It is significant to notify that Achebe has borrowed the title of this novel from W.B. Yeast's poem The Second Coming. Turning and turning in the widening gyre. The falcon cannot hear the falconer. Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

Johnson, as the hero of Joyce Cary's fiction, is a Nigerian clerk in the service of the British colony of Nigeria. He has been depicted as an improvident person whose concern is only to sow his own wild oats. He would resort to any means to keep the pot boiling. To satisfy this compelling necessity, he makes no bones about the perversely and aberration of having an itching palm. It is important to mention the fact that bribery has become the norm among the indigenous public service employees. That is due to the introduction of the European lifestyle manifested in the increase of everyday expenditure of modern living that does not comply with their income. So there is no wonder that Johnson is notoriously branded for taking bribes in order to have money so as to continue making merry. The young Johnson is engaged in dirty actions such as embezzlement to make

funds available to appease his master Rudbeck so as to build a road in the district. Throughout the novel, Johnson's behavior and his entire actions are characterized and distinguished by irrational propensity.

When Achebe has read the novel, he felt that there are smacks behind the picture in which the African character is exposed. He also noticed that African characters in this fiction bear no resemblance to the actual people in their real life which he is so acquainted with. Achebe wondered in perplexity how a sane person would admire his tormenter to the extent that to be grateful when he is being executed by him and called him a father. C.L. Innes documents this episode by saying:

Johnson, seeing his gloom and depression ,exerts himself . 'Don 'you mind, sah, about dis hanging. I do not care for it one fit bit Why'— he laughs with an air of surprise and discovery- I know fit nutting about it —he to quick. Only I like you do him yourself sah, if you no fit to shoot me I don agree for dem sergeant do it, too much. He no my friend. But you my Friend. You my father and my mother. I think you hang me yourself (Chinua Achebe, 199.9,28,).

So Achebe sees it as a compelling necessity to try to depict a converse picture that reflects the true image of reality. Therefore, T.F.A. can be viewed as the product of that determination.

4.2. Okonkwo & his father

In T.F.A. One Can deduce and infer that the novel and its setting as well as its characters are chosen carefully in such a way that they seem parallel to that of Mister Johnson to some extent The setting is introduced in the opening of the novel as a limited area that includes only the nine villages in Which the Protagonist and his community settle The adumbration that this territory has its extension is

implied by the vague term ‘beyond’. The demarcation of the territory in Which the events take Place by the implied narrator is of highly significant. This significance lies in the fact that Joyce Cary does not identify any specific land assigned to the people whom he alleges to Portray. Also this negligence to assign such a land could be attributed to the parochial view that Africans and their Issues do not worth a rap. Consequently the land allotted to the People in T.F.A is to say that the inhabitants have their origin deep rooted in a land that belongs to them by the nature of things.

It is made mown from the start that Okonkwo is a wrestler whose challenger is not born yet. *He* manages to throw the legendary wrestler Amalinze the cat Whose strength and bravery are seen as a miracle. It is appropriate, in this respect, to mention the fact that Okonkwo at that time is only eighteen years old. And for this reason, he is held by his community in a high esteem and regard. As a result of this extraordinary encounter, he occupies a high position in his community. Not only he is just a famous wrestler, but also he is a renowned one of prowess in hard work and diligence. The extraordinary thing to contemplate in this juncture is that Okonkwo gains respect and secures for himself a seat among the most ranked prestigious chiefs of the clan when he was too young. It is relevant to say in this context that he acquired titles and accumulated wealth relying almost only on his own efforts without a help brought about on someone’s coat—tails. Among the Igbo climbing the rungs of social eminence is up for grabs. That is why Okonkwo has risen to the highest status despite his inferior background. The Igbo communities do not have a central government that enjoys the privilege to impose its authority on the people as it was a tradition among most of their neighbors. Moreover, the indigenous society values the personal achievements and praises the success of the individuals. That is why Okonkwo is considered as one of the elders,

despite his young age. He manages to fend for himself and his family when his counterparts are playing naked in the backyard of their homes.

Unoka who is Okonkwo's father is weak, lazy and hardly affords a living for his family. He relies heavily on obtaining money through debts which he would never repay. It seems that he can continue in borrowing despite his notorious reputation as being one who can never fulfill his debts. That is because he is endowed by nature with witty spirit and humorous behavior. This wonderful feat of sleight of mouth always affects his creditors to the extent that they often turn out to be tolerant and even sympathetic to let him off the hook. He loves music to the extent that he devotes a considerable time to tour the villages diffusing merry, peace and tolerated view. He is also depicted as a man who is full of vim and vigor, life and peace and he has no flatterer except to war and bloodshed. It is relevant in this occasion to refer to the incident when one of his debtors comes to ask reimbursement of his money. During the conversation, the debtor mentions the impending war which is about to happen. Unoka at once changes the subject to music. This is apparent in the following utterance which reflects his character traits.

When they had eaten they talked about many things: about the heavy rains which were drowning the yams, about the next ancestral feast and the impending war with the village of Mbaino. Unoka was never happy when it came to wars. He was in fact a coward and could not bear the sight of blood. And so he changed the subject and talked about music. (T.F.A. 1966, 5.)

Being inundated and snowed under with such spirit, it is normal for such a person to seek no titles or to indulge in such deeds that are valued by his community. Because the values that have weight and respect relate to war and violence. The attitude of the narrator towards Unoka is biased rather than to be

ambivalent. From the start to the end he has been put under focus of criticism and everything has something to do with him seem out of all proportion. His entire conduct and work are characterized by despise and rejection. Even this state of failure and denigration follows him to his grave. He is denied honorable life and given a shameful demise. In his last days he is inflicted o the most abhorred disease. And that is why his body is casted into the evil forest. The interesting thing to be mentioned in this respect is that he goes to his death good and proper in concomitant with his flute.

According to what has been stated about the doom of Unoka, his only son Okonkwo grows up to have a very low profile about him. His hate towards his father becomes something of obsession. Okonkwo struggles desperately all his life to be quite different of his father. In pursuing such notion, he goes to grabble with the extremes. He despises anything that may make him remember his father. He dislikes weakness and never tolerates actions of tenderness. He develops a strange criterion with which he judges things. Everything that seems weak and lenient, he used to give it attributes of feminine. While those positive attitudes seem strong and violent are described as manly and masculine. He holds sway over his family and often resorts to chastisement an retribution. His wives are under continuous threat and alarm always expecting the worst. His tough behavior affects negatively his household to make them as if always treading on eggshells and waiting for the other shoe to drop. It is important to stress on the idea that Okonkwo is given the lad Ikemefuna because he is the most powerful man in the clan. This boy has been given to Okonkwo's clan as a compensation of their murdered daughter. This act of offering the lad is a recognition marked the completion of Okonkwo's growth of power and prestige. At the same time, Ikemefuna's entry into Okonkwo's household augurs ill to the beginning of the tragic decline of Okonkwo. He

participated in killing Ikemefuna, his foster son, despite a sincere advice of Ezeudu, the oldest man in Umuofia when he says: (T.F.A. 1966, 32,). That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death. The response which the experienced old man receives is a short shrift. In lieu of toeing the line Okonkwo gives the fatal strike to the boy lest to be accused of fear and clemency. The hero used to regret sadly that his intelligent and initiative daughter, Ezinma, is not a boy. And he grieves over and laments that his son Nwoye seems to bear resemblance to his grandfather. The traits that his son seems to share with his grandfather are what aggravate the consternation and worry of Okonkwo. And for this reason he tries to do the impossibility so as to rescue him from that sinister fate. He always wants to separate him from his mother and women for fear that he will be attracted to their foolish womanly stories. So he used to force him to stay with him in his obi so as to narrate to him stories about war and bloodshed. Also he inculcates the notorious literature of how to rule women with the iron fist. He seems to be devoid of the natural feeling towards women like the aesthetic value which natural men highly prize. He is overwhelmingly controlled by strong urge to act vehemently violent. This is clearly shown in his interaction and engagement with women. His true relationship with women is characterized by the drive of sex to which he usually responds as if to take umbrage. This is evident in the way that he consummates his marriage to Ekwefi without billing and cooing when she comes to him escaping from her husband. This episode is described as follows:

Ekwefi's mind went back to the days when they were young. She had married Ariene because Okonkwo was too poor then to marry. Two years after her Marriage to Anene she could bear no longer and she ran away to Okonkwo. It had been early in the morning. The moon was shining. She was going to the Stream to fetch water. Okonkwo's house was on the way to the stream. She knocked at his door and he came out.

Even in those day, he was not a man of many words. He just carried her into his bed and in the darkness began to feel around her waist for the loose end of her cloth. (T.F.A. 1966, 67.).

It is a truth commonly acknowledged that a person is a product of his society in terms of upbringing and culture that he or she embraces. Applying this view to Okonkwo, however, he is a genuine type of a true Igbo member. But the members of this community are a far cry from the behavior of Okonkwo. Okonkwo shares his society all its established traditions, dispositions and their lifestyle and has his own idiosyncratic syndrome. His character seems to be ordained to violate sacred traditions. When he beats his wife in the week of peace, this act is recorded to be the first of its kind in the living memory of the Umuofians. As it is said that the participation in killing his foster son has created confusion without parallel in the tradition of these amazing folk. Much of the apparent traits that seem extreme are pertained only to Okonkwo due to his complicated character which suffers from psychological trauma. His father causes him a gigantic pain in the neck and labels shame because of his laziness and seemingly womanly character. The father for him is no more than a disgrace and that is why he wishes to cut all ties with him. His life is controlled by fear and obsession lest people could detect a trait that his father is famous for. Bearing this fixation in mind, he behaves contrary to his father to the degree of stretching a point.

Okonkwo enjoys reputable status among his community because Igbo judges its members according to their deeds not to their breeds. He becomes influential and usually people hold him in high regard and admiration. He has been chosen to act as a chief negotiator to settle a dispute with their neighbor Mbaino which dared to murder a daughter of Umuofia. The conclusion of that errand resulted in bringing the lad Ikemefuna whose tragic death left an indelible impact on the whole course of life of the elder son of Okonkwo. As a matter of fact, the two lads develop

friendly relationship to the range of being joined at the hip. This incident may be responsible for Nwoye to divorce the religious traditions of his clan and to embrace the religion of the white man which seems more humane. The conversion of the elder son to Christianity marks the portent of the potential dilapidation and ruin of all traditions and legacy of Igbo community. The work of missionaries among the indigenous residents yields its fruit and begins to pay off. Considerable attention is being paid to this phenomenon of the conversion of Igbo to Christianity despite their deep belief in the traditions of their ancestors. History reveals that Igbo people trace their origin to the times that seem primordial. They postulate a theory of how creation first has started parallel to the Genesis in the holy Testament. Don Ohadike states that:

An Igbo creation myth relates that in the beginning the surface of the earth was covered by water and no humans lived on it. Then one day Chukwu(God) created the first family, composed human of Eze Nri his wife, his sons, and his daughters. Eze Nri and his family stood on the top of anthill and had nowhere to go because the land was submerged. They were also hungry. Chukwu looked down and took pity on their condition. He gave Eze Nri a piece of yam and said, 'Take this, it is edible. 'Eze Nri and his family ate the yam and found it was good. (Chinua Achebe: 1966, 16.)

The expected disposition for such people is to be rigid and recalcitrant when it comes to religious beliefs. This is true, concerning their counterpart who has developed the theory of creation. Jews, in the past and present are observed and detected to be the most stubborn to accept new dogmas. And that is why they retain their ancestral religion despite centuries of suppression, persecution and pogrom.

What has been stated relates to the contrast between Igbo and Jews is typically pertinent and strikes home. Contemporary studies have found out some similarities

between the two targeted ethnics. Igbo shares with Jews the celebration of religious rituals and festivals in addition to adopting male circumcision. While Jews remain loyal and faithful to their roots, their equivalent, Igbo, turn out to be susceptible to get rid of their religions by leaps and bounds. It is not to be understood that the Igbo has surrendered to the victorious civilization without showing any resistance. Actually, Igbo gave the British a run for their money. The truth is that Igbo at first were gullible and naïve thinking that welcoming of these strangers would never cause them harm. And when the new comers guarantee a place among the natives, they launched a systematic smear campaign. The aim of this campaign is to spread their religion and impose their authority as well as disposing of all Igbo's inheritance. Unoka is set as a foil to his son in the sense that his whole life is viewed as complete failure, and even as skeleton in the cupboard. The researcher believes that Unoka represents the true character of the majority of ordinary folk. It is evident that great wrestlers are few and far between. By the same token not all people are warrior or sanguinary. Moreover, ordinary men respect women as partners who have worth and dignity in their own right. To be ruthless all the time and to despise the weak is no something to brag about. Commitment in arts and literature always boils down to side with the downtrodden and underdog not to spit at them. The character of Okonkwo violates most natural human agreed upon characteristics like clemency, kindness, and respect to parents. The natural conduct towards parents which accepted and adopted universally is to show gratitude and even admiration, despite the fact that not all parents are impeccable. Some parents may be below the par in terms of caring and meeting the standard required by the society's convention. Even the victim children normally try to hide this from the public eye let alone to make a fuss about it. It is dastard behavior to be ashamed of one's father because of the wrong assumptions that are taken for granted. The study comes to clarify that Unoka is neither a coward character nor a failure.

As a matter of fact he may be judged as the most practical and successful person within the remit of that society. He seems to be the most perspicacious when it comes to deal with life. He develops a sensible worldview that its slogan is to seize every possible opportunity for enjoying life to the brim. He used to say that whenever he saw a dead man's mouth he saw the folly of not eating of what one had in one's own lifetime. By and large, this view emanates from a philosopher who voices invitations to his folk for engaging life indulgently seeking only pleasure and to shun from difficulties. His point of view can be understood as fully charged with cheery, peace and consumption. He visualizes the world as a place suited for music, songs and feasts not for bloodshed and wrestling. He also has a vision regarding money of how it should be distributed and used. Money should be a means by which happiness and pleasure lead to satisfaction. That is why whenever money comes to his hands, he immediately resorts to buy gourds of wine and invites his neighbors to make merry. He also regards money as a common property and never hesitates to play ducks and drakes with. He does not acknowledge that money has any intrinsic value and privacy but should be obtained by any means as long as it is squandered lavishly on pleasure for all for and sundry.

The evidence for this claim rests assured on his behavior that ties theory with application. His technique of accruing money through deception of borrowing has become a rule of thumb. He would never keep money for tomorrow because he believes that there is no tomorrow. It is obvious that such a person is living in consistent with himself and his beliefs. In other words there is no contradiction between what he performs and what he believes in. C. L. Innes described Unoka as follows:

An Igbo creation myth relates that the beginning the surface of the earth was covered by water and no humans lived on it. Then one lay Chukwu(God.) created the first human family, composed of Eze Vri his wife, his sons, and his daughters. Eze Nri and his family stood on the top of anthill and had nowhere to go because the land was submerged. They were also hungry. Chukwu looked down and took pity on their condition. He gave Eze Nri a piece of yam and said, 'Take this, it is edible. 'Eze Nri and his family ate the yam and found it was good. (Chirnia Achebe. 1966, 16.)

On the other hand, Okonkwo lives his whole life in total conflict between his actual self and the false one he used to masquerade. All the time he tries to suppress his natural emotions of love, tenderness and compassion on the basis that he would be deemed effeminate. This person is a victim of hapless circumstance to which he used to respond in cold blood. Killing a young lad who is being brought up in his own family without batting an eyelash and for whom he developed emotion of love is crystal clear to that such circumstance. Even if such natural human emotions spring on the surface, he used to nip them on the bud for fear that he may be regarded weak or to be a dead ringer for his father. Okonkwo is described in the following terms:

Even Okonkwo himself became very fond of the boy inwardly of course Okonkwo never showed any emotion openly, unless it is the emotion of Anger. To show affection was a sign of weakness, the only thing worth demonstrating was strength. He therefore treated Ikemefuna as he treated everybody else-with a heavy hand. But there was no doubt that he liked the boy. Sometimes when he went to big village meetings or communal ancestral feasts he allowed Ikemefuna to accompany him, like a son, carrying his stool and his goatskin bag. And, indeed Ikemefuna called him a father. (Chinua Achebe:1996,20.).

As it has been hinted to, that fear of being similar to his father, then it may be responsible of all deform, distort and perverseness that characterized the life of this poor man. These calculations are based on the psychological level that seems no better when it comes to his engagement in political and social career. His whole social life is shadowed by constraint of failure and frustration. He suffered a lot of the fact that his elder son does not meet the standard of masculinity of which the manifestations are for him just to be tough with women and to behave contrarily to their issues.

Moreover, the disappointment over his daughter, Ezinma, because of his unfortunate fate she is not a boy, rendered him in long sorrow and misery. And what aggravates his despair and despondency is that his son embraced the religion of the intruder. In addition to this unhappy circumstance, it is relevant to refer to the stressed relationship with his wives, especially once he blazes a trail to beat one of them on a sacred day devoted only to lionize the earth and its fecundity. This incident indicates the inherent tendency of blasphemy which Okonkwo is notoriously prone to. The evidence of this calumny lies in the fact that he continues in beating his wife despite it was drawn to his attention the holiness of the occasion. It seems that he is ordained by proclivity of hapless fortune. Fate does not satisfied with the violations that he committed against his community's taboos; it adds salt to the insult by making him a victim of shooting a man to death inadvertently. According to his society's conventions, the punishment for such crime is to send the perpetrator into exile for several years.

It is indispensable that banish of the protagonist is a prerequisite to clearing the decks for the implementation of the planned policies regarding the process of diffusing Christianity and cementing the foundation of British rule. As if the charisma of Okonkwo is considered as stark obstacle in the face of foreign

penetration. So, the scene is prepared to make the process proceed on an even keel without any hindrance by distancing Okonkwo from the stage. The missionaries have found the ground well furnished and consequently their business was not a hard nut to crack. Therefore, the exodus of Okonkwo to the land of his mother could be read as a catalyst that speeds up the operation without taking positive part. Mere disappearance of Okonkwo is viewed as a shot in the arm. That is to say this absence leads to the mutation of considerable sections of the society of Umuofia in spades who embraced the new religion voluntarily. For Okonkwo it seems that curses come home to roost for the fact that his elder son follows suit those who converted to the new religion. The conversion of Nwoye could be seen as the tip of the iceberg but Okonkwo fails to get the drift. Moreover, the attitude of having guts for garters proved to be wide of the mark for the son deserted his community for good. Okonkwo has no way other than to accept the new development. And instead he stops dead in his tracks and grits his teeth. Consequently, it seems that he lost his moorings and proves to be such a person who can not react wisely and come to terms with challenges. Instead, he tries in vain to embroil his clan to wage war and chase out the foreigners. Consequently, his political efforts prove to be a failure because all hearts seem to be gone out of the struggle. Okonkwo seems to be blind and shut off the reality. When he realizes the huge changes that take place during his absence, he feels that he has been caught off his guard. As a result of this disability to conform to the recent developments he has no choice to resort to except committing suicide. Had he been realistic he would have figured out that it is no good kicking against the pricks.

This hero's political and social work do not succeed to achieve its intended goals. The result may be attributed to the naïve belief that time always remains the same. It is this ignorance of social, economic and political dimensions that make

Okonkwo diehard and stubborn to dig his heels in and resist the change. Those dimensions are responsible for making the Igbo population wash their hands off their traditions and affiliate and identify with the culture that seems to be the victorious. A bird's— eye view would disclose the fact that Igbo would never reject their ethos, had it not proved to them that their deities have failed them. These people, despite the apparent feature of blending religious and secular attitudes in their daily life, they would not hesitate to sacrifice the former at the expense of the latter. Many incidents have been narrated in the novel revealing the fact that when deities seem to fail in fulfilling their duties of protection they were smashed and deserted. People could even reject their gods and adopt deities of others. If this was the case, then it could be acceptable for Igbo community to give cold shoulder to their ancestors' religion on the understanding that they follow established traditions their societies were across history accustomed to.

The striking thing in the mood of the narration is that the implied narrator seems to bear grudge against Unoka. This tendency to cast aspersion on the father, from the start is meant to hijack the reader's awareness. In this case one can infer that these readers are immature and have no ability to evaluate and pass judgment. Here the narrator has the right to create the characters and shape them in the way he or she likes. Also it is for him or her to give those voices so as their views are heard. But the narrator does not satisfy by this privilege; he goes as far as possible to give evaluation and judgment. He tries to impress the reader by emphasizing continuously that Unoka is lazy, weak, coward and battens on others. These negative traits should be better arrived at by the reader not to be imposed arbitrary by the narrator. The researcher holds the opinion that the readers are legitimate partners and therefore they should be allowed to participate positively in evaluating and expressing their opinions.

All in all, when it comes to evaluating the opposing characters of Okonkwo and his father, one would feel that he finds himself siding and sympathizing with the father. It goes without saying that the father represents much of the positive qualities that are of universal adoption. The qualities that are amiable speak for themselves: such like clemency, love, peace and happiness which are what the father seeks. On the other hand, these amicable traits are the most despised and ridiculed by the son. Consequently, the study would not let the point rest; the father by all parameters could run rings around his son in terms of the auspicious spirits that prefer life over the doom.

4.3. Women in Igbo Culture

In *Things Fall Apart*, male characters are put on the spotlight and their deeds and speech are highly acknowledged and celebrated. This is due to the male chauvinism and patriarchal society which assumes that accomplishments of men were and are of first class, in contrast of women's. This view meshes well in conjunction with the tenor and the mood of the narrator. The narration is drawing from the oral transmission of traditions of Igbo's history and culture. The traditions of Igbo, like most old mores of the old world, are redolent, submerged and fraught with biases and bigotry. This is quite apparent if one considers women and their issues in terms of dignity and the roles that they play. It should not be understood that the coming analysis is suggested to reflect the position of feminism, nor the interpretation is expected to impersonate a woman as a reader. The researcher thinks that women are the best representative of their own selves. Even he goes as far as to articulate that most of the stuff written by male writers with reference to women and their issues could only be regarded as a point of view taken mostly of biased perspective. In addition to the former notion it can be viewed at least in good faith but shadowed by lack of knowledge of women's

mind—set. Women have voices and pens which allow them to express themselves genuinely better than anyone who tries to speak on their behalf. Therefore, the following attempt is to analyze the role of women in the narrative that is demonstrated in *Things Fall Apart* could only be taken as standpoint of a sympathizer rather than proxy speaker.

Women in *Things Fall Apart* vary in their roles that they play in the society, their worth and fundamental nature. When one embarks on reading the novel, s/he puzzles at the discovery that Igbo community does not discriminate against its members according to their ethnic or social background. Therefore, a person's status has nothing to do with what one's father does in terms of his social rank. That means a person is a product of his own making, so to speak. The puzzlement increases because it is proved that this state of affair is also true concerning women and the role they play in society. If a woman doubles her toils and exerts efforts, she could enjoy a prestigious position. This will allow her even to marry women and act socially and politically in a way that is tantamount to that one enjoyed by men. Don C. Ohadike wrote in his seminal introduction, *Igbo Culture and History*:

Igbo women had their own clubs, age -group association and titles associations that complemented those of men. Women controlled certain spheres of community life, Just as men controlled other spheres. Women were perceived to possess superior spiritual well-being and headed many of the traditional cults and shrines. In Achebe novel, for example, the oracle is served by a priestess. Women also gained status by amassing wealth through trading, farming in certain districts, wealthy women married other women, and 'fathered' their own children (T. F.A. 1966,11,)

It is clear that Igbo community could be all but classified as a zero biased when it comes to the status of women. The first impression that women, in Igbo culture, are similar to the position of other women in the old history of the world is due to the centrality of Okonkwo in the forefront of the narration. It is a strange thing; however, if the de facto reality as this one can find that Okonkwo has a very low profile about women to the extent that he sees them synonymous to shame, inferiority and whatever could be a back—handed compliment. Meticulous reading would reveal the fact that women, in that peculiar society, are not kept in tight leash as it is the tradition in the rest of Africa. Moreover, Okonkwo's judgment related to women could be ascribed to his perverted character. That is rather than to be taken as authentic characterization which includes all Igbo women. There are many incidents in the narration which record views about women. This can be regarded as contrary to the distorted picture delivered by that obdurate and insular warrior.

In the novel, one could encounter many women who occupy important spheres ranging from just ordinary housewife to the prestigious position of chief priestess. Not only this fact, but they as well enjoy the privilege of exercising a leverage and influence in the political affairs that affect their towns and villages. They used to control markets and engage directly in trade and business. They are also considered the prop and stay of their families because they bear the brunt of toiling heavily in the farms. That means in the perception of modern time, they are, socially, politically and financially free citizens. If one tries to apply modern terms relating to the criterion by which the equality and independence is being measured, s/he would come to conclude that Igbo women meet that standard. In fact, when one comes to contrast between the situations of modern women living in advanced

countries and Igbo women, one could confidently take the notion that the latter would knock the former off their perch. It is significant to notice the rip—roaring success of the novel grips the attention of both critics and readers. It is due to the corresponding and meshing well with the narration and the reality. The proposal of this thesis tries to reveal Achebe's cult that Africa should be allowed and given a chance to tell its own story.

This is why Achebe's fictions resonate with actual representation because the recorder is living inside not intruder like Cary and Conrad. In the narrative of the first novel *Things Fall Apart*, women are depicted as vividly active participants and share with men all the weal and woe as well as the toils of living. Moreover, they are represented in the structure of the social and political organizations. More surprisingly, Igbo women straddle proudly on the most holy shrines like the goddess of the earth. Oracle women are charged with the shrines and the responsibility of receiving messages from the dead relatives and passing them on to the living. These oracles exercise power over individuals and for this reason they are feared and respected. It is an exciting phenomenon to observe the relevance of the major religions of the world which presumably view women as profane in regard to some ritual practices. These oracles are consulted to find solutions to problems ranging from trivial issues to more complex ones. Unoka, for example, consults the oracle of earth so as to find justification for his seemingly bad luck. It is stated that:

Many years ago when Okonkwo was still a boy His father, Unoka, had gone to consult Agbala. The Priestess on those days was a woman called Chika. She was full of power of her god, and she was greatly feared. Unoka stood before her and began his story 'Every year' he said sadly, 'before I put any crop in the earth, I sacrifice a cock to Ani, the owner of the land. It is the law of our fathers. I also kill a cock

at the shrine of Unoku, the god of the yams. I clear the bush and set fire to it when it is dry. I sow Yams when the first rain has fallen, and stake them when the young tendrils appear. I weed- (T.F.A.966, 18,).

The above mentioned quotation reveals a strange established custom to seek the advice and wisdom of these highly prominent women, even when they appear as masquerade of acting as oracles. These holy women are recognized as ordinary women and known by their true identities. The reader can discover that the oracle Agbala, in her ordinary life, is a trader and a close friend to Ekwefi as well as having special relation with Ezinma. Despite the knowledge of the identity of these venerated women, people still have fear tinged with respect towards them. The evidence for this view could be taken from the episode in which Agbala comes to the compound of Okonkwo to take his daughter Ezinma. The notorious valiant and pugnacious father gets cold feet and does not dare to act violently off the bat as he used to. Okonkwo is portrayed, 'throughout the narration, as a stubborn that has strong belief in power as a sole decisive factor to solve problems. It is a strange thing; however, that Okonkwo's response in this occasion in contrast to his usual behavior is as wide asunder as the poles. This man is expected to use his strong muscles not to haul down his flag and let her go scot— free. What makes him change his behavior is ascribed to the supernatural and mystic power vested on these women who could leave Okonkwo and those who are like him to hoist with their own petard. This is the first battle in which Okonkwo is drastically defeated and ironically by a woman.

The novel clarifies an amazing couple whose lifestyle generates a strong despise, contempt and snide remarks by the high—handed warrior. This couple is renowned to lead a life based on love, mutual understanding and collaboration in all ins and outs of their affairs. It is relevant in this respect to mention the fact that the husband Nduu is a paramount military leader who spearheads his community in

its most honorable wars when Okonkwo's parents do not get hitched. Okonkwo knows this man as a warrior but does not expect him by any stretch of imagination to act as women. The acting as women in terms of expressing feelings of affection and showing respect and gratitude to one's own spouse, these traits are what Okonkwo lacks. In this respect Achebe states that:

It was always the Ndulue and Ozoemeria had one mind,' said Obierika 'I remember when I was a young boy there was a song about them- He could not do anything without telling her. I did not know that, 'said Okonkwo. 'I thought he was a strong 'man in his youth. (T. F. A., p.47-48)

This story validates the suggestion that Igbo women have no strings attached in their engagement throughout their social life. There are no laws or traditions that could inhibit the participation of Igbo women in all spheres of their social interaction. Therefore, the traditional depiction of women as damsel distress is not spotted. It is clear that the Igbo people could be taken as the best model of perfect society that ever known by humanity. Women's exact portrayal rings true with the picture exhibited through the episode of the veteran old warrior and his wife. Also this incident reveals the fact that great warriors like Ndulu can have one mind with their wives. Moreover, Ndulu would never take a decision without the consultation and consent of his wife. Accordingly, it is made quite lucid that the matrimonial bond is not based on arbitrary balance which favors the hegemony of men at the cost of women. That is why this seasoned and qualified warrior is a target of Okonkwo's attack.

The character of the protagonist, in the center of the novel, has contributed greatly in obliterating the true images of Igbo women. This is due to the fact that he has been given a voice and space to project his own thoughts. And as it has been

demonstrated, his actions and judgments are at loggerheads with all aspects of women. Therefore, the portrait of Igbo women should not be taken from Okonkwo because he has been proved as unreliable source and may be has a bone to pick with them.

The true picture of Women lies elsewhere in the narrative and far removed from Okonkwo and his prejudices. Despite the fact that he knows the world is large, therefore there are different cultures and traditions, he frowned at the traditions of some tribes where children belong to their mothers. Okonkwo expressed his disapproval as stated by the author;

The world is large' said Okonkwo 'I have even heard that in some tribes a man's children belong to his wife and her family. (TF.A.1966, 51)

This episode substantiates the assumption that Igbo women enjoy extraordinary privileges like marrying other women and fathering their own children. The married women, even, have the right to engage in sexual activities with lovers. During the trial of Uzowulu and his wife Mgbafo, the husband is accused of beating her. And as a result she miscarries. The husband refutes the crime and asserts that the miscarriage happens due to her habit of having a roll in the hay with her lover. According to her husband's accusation, the following quotation reinforces it: (1966:56) it is a lie. She miscarried after she had gone to sleep with her lover.

It is important to accentuate the fact that this defense aims to exonerate him of the indictment not to haul her over the coals! The brothers of the wife and the families of both sides as well as the spectators see nothing unusual in this argument. The unusual for them is not the affair of the lover but the act of carnal knowledge when someone is up the spout. To bear this, seemingly weird story out, it is better to

draw the incident during which Okonkwo beats one of his wives on a holy occasion. The priest of the earth goddess debunks the Violation of the sacred day and refuses to accept the justification of Okonkwo. He even goes as far as saying that if Okonkwo enters his obi and finds the lover of his wife on top of her, he still will not be pardoned. As the priest states (1966:62) you still have committed the great evil to beat her.

The evidence in this incident is that the revered religious man alludes to the lover. This means that lovers of married wives are the norm among these amazing people. Also it is narrated that one of the wealthiest men with two wives failed to have children of his own because he is sterile. The whole community is in cahoots with the wives and other men to act as lovers in order this rich man could have children. It is self-evident that a bioethical father is not the only lawful practice for children to be legitimately accepted. These people regard highly children and they do not make an issue and fuss about the method by which they come into the existence. There are glimpses in the novel that women could leave their husbands for any reason. This is apparent in the following utterance;

The law of Umuofia is that if a woman runs away from her husband her bride-price is returned. (TFA; 1966, 52.).

According to what has been mentioned, then, it could be understood why Ekwefi and her elope barely causes a ripple. The beauty of her times is swept off her feet by the greatest wrestler of eighteen. She could not marry him at that time on the basis that he is very poor to meet the expenses of her wedding. Love alone is not enough justification for such intelligent and initiative woman to be married. She prefers a rich man instead. It is obvious that this woman chooses to marry a rich man at the expense of her love. Ekwefi spends two years with her husband during which she waits on tenterhooks anticipating some change in the offing. During this

time Okonkwo- manages amazingly to accumulate a substantial wealth relying heavily on his own labor. Ekwefi could not forget her love because she determinedly sets her cap at the miraculous wrestler consequently she used to keep taps on him. When she becomes quite assured of the financial ability of her first lover, she simply deserts her husband and comes to live with the man whom she has a soft spot for.

It is simply as that because as it has been illustrated that laws of this community are lenient and tolerant towards Women. It has been emphasized that the Igbo nation does not have a central government Moreover, according to the universal fact, govem⁵ need to impose taxes to run the institutions such like Police, military civil service and others Laws and regu⁵ are fashioned to administer and preserve the system Consequently according to the dialectic relation between the governed and the governor many complicated tensions and conflicts crop up. As such human history is so strewn with injustice and bloodshed that characterized the entire human life. Indeed the Position of Igbo women copes with the general atmosphere where the heavy rule of central government is completely absent and not adopted. This society runs its social and Political affairs on the unanimous consent and approval of its members and the women included. It is observed that when societies experience a great measure of freedom and democracy, women enjoy a great deal of high status, emancipation and the other way round is true. The one significant reason of composing this enthralling masterpiece is to challenge the false notion that Africa knows the ropes of civilization by the advent of the Europeans. If the Igbo nation taken to represent the whole continent, then, it is obvious that Africa practices true democracy in its full sense. Building on this notion, the African version of democracy could have the edge over Europe's. Freedom of individuals as well as the true equality of the two sexes is reality

among the Africans. It is crystal clear that democracy is a rooted practice in the continent before the existence of the Europeans is never being conceivable. According to the former analysis of the stance of women in their authentic survival, then, the labyrinth and meanderings are Okonkwo's fancy. His fancy has been vindicated away from belief. Okonkwo's terrible oppressive attitude to rule his household with a heavy hand is evidence of his callous temperament. When one describes the relationship between Okonkwo and his wives, one can detect there is an undertow challenge and defiance between Ekwefi and her imperious husband. Ekwefi differs from the other wives in that she could risk life and limb to cause her husband to be at the end of his tether. One day the husband gives vent to his feelings of anger through beating Ekwefi. Her rebellious nature is the cause of her continuous punishment. Okonkwo leaves his house immediately after his satisfaction of giving vent to his anger. Then he goes on hunting. At this occasion the wife who had just been beaten murmurs something as poking fun at her husband about guns that never shot. Unfortunately Okonkwo hears her comment and she escapes death by the skin of her teeth because he immediately draws his gun and shoots her.

Ekwefi is a brave woman and knows well the character of her husband. Despite of this knowledge of what pleases him and what the things that can make his gorge rise, she prefers to tease him. The previous reference of the gun that never shoots is a stark example. That is despite of her foreshadowing that the reaction would be to jump down her throat. Ekwefi has been inflicted with a sinister fate of having an ogbanje. This syndrome is one of those wicked children who enter their mother's wombs to be born again when they died. She undergoes several cases of these wicked infants. The only child that survives is her beloved daughter Ezinma. Ekwefi and her daughter have a strange relationship in contrast to the conventions

that govern the way of upbringing children of this community. According to the conventions of Igbo, children are not allowed to call their parents by their names. Ezinma does not pay attention to that custom and her mother does not put her nose out of joint. This bad behavior is seemingly trivial emanated from a child and should not to be taken as such. As a matter of fact it may be read as one of the most salient indicators of the rebellious and blasphemous character of Ekwefi. This society has laid down the foundation of solid customs and traditions. The observation of these customs should be strictly adopted and their violation is not to be put up with. One can argue that Ekwefi is a victim of being played into her hands by spoiled daughter who is playing the role of the tail that is wagging the dog. The analysis of her character is based on incidents drawn from the narration emphasized the tendency of encroachment. Ekwefi's propensity to violate these taboos is a characteristics she is accustomed and prone to. Taking into account, the deliberate act of neglecting her duty leads her not to prepare her husband's meals. Nevertheless, her way of revolting to carry out his orders like preserve the trees and let them sprout not to be uprooted. Among the rest of Okonkwo's wives, Ekwefi alone is always in high dudgeon with her husband. No single felony is recorded to be committed by any other wife. That means Ekwefi is notorious by nature in this respect. She is branded as blasphemous who does not pay attention to consecrated obligation ordained by oracles and the ritual taboos of her community. It is important to refer to Ekwefi's violation of her people's taboo that children should not be allowed to eat eggs during the night. She does not conform to and comply with this obligation. And more alarmingly she encourages her daughter to eat them red in tooth and claw.

In addition to the violation of her people's conventions relating to the restrictions imposed on individual behavior, she as well continues to fly in the face of the

commands of deity. Ekwefi b11ows Agbala when the latter comes to take her daughter to the house of hills and caves despite the disapproval and curses of the mighty Agbala. Ekwefi proves, once again, that she is defiant and sacrilegious to the holy injunction of gods. She follows the footsteps of Agbala in sheer defiance while her warrior husband creeps into his obi fetching for his snuff —bottle. This proves again that Ekwefi outpaces and has the edge over her husband in her heretical disposition to tarnish what is held as to be the most sacred. It is obvious that Okonkwo lives his whole life in total failure to conform to his familial bond. He is pictured as discontented with his children and wives. He seems to suffer of blighted hopes and care stricken. For instance, it is assumed that this man should be in a transport of delight for he achieves unparalleled success when his peers lead supercilious life. His whole life gives the impression that this seemingly the topnotch wrestler is always smoldering with anger and frustration. He does not accept his children and usually runs amok and his composure is easily ruffled when he is confronted with minor problems. This man's state of behavior is quite different when it comes to compare him with his wife. Ekwefi is contrary like that; she loves her daughter and accepts her despite the apparent ebb and flow of her daughter's health. Moreover, she seems to be happy enjoying life and paying no body a grudge. Likewise, she also dotes on her husband irrespective of his aggressive mood and the quarrels that characterize their entire relationship. The evidence for the latter claim is that Ekwefi is a kind of a person who simply walks the plank and abjures husbands when the life with them seems detrimental. Her love to the wrestling matches never subsides despite the passage of time and that may be the persuasive reason for her stay in this relationship. The evidence for this assumption is that Ekwefi is not the person who can strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

4.4. Post Colonial Period: Obi the hero of No Longer at Ease.

No Longer at Ease is the second novel published by Achebe in 1960 at the cusp of Nigerian Independence. The novel is actually written as extension to the first novel, T.F.A. When the author goes to London he sees the necessity that the last theme should be a novel in its own right. Because the theme in question is tackling and dealing with the dilemma and frustration of the newly graduated elites who fail to cope and adapt toward the new development. The indigenous employees of the civil service find themselves victims of problems that in fact they have no part or lot in. The fact is that they have been created by alien culture. The trouble of these elites lies in the fact that there is no a precedent to follow suit so as to learn from. Therefore, these elites are the pioneers who lead the way by drawing a bow at a venture. In this incident, the sad thing is that they are trying to emulate the way of life of the white man despite their meager salaries. The difference is that the royally white employees are earning big wages and other precious amenities while an indigenous staff is deprived of. Also these harbingers are reared up to be the inheritors of the colonial rule. And as such, they are likely expected to carry the Union Jack of the empire when its direct hegemony becomes null and void. So the way is paved for them to continue preserving the values and culture of their notorious masters. As a matter of fact, these staff members are suffering the teething problems from the first day they recruited in the civil service. Every effort exerted to turn up the heat to make their life better comes to a dead duck. Every time they plan to take a different route so as to divert from mimicking the life of the white man, they find themselves compelled to stay in the same spot. Their misfortune is that; these employees seem to be caught and jailed in strait—jacket of traditions that are deemed to be foreign to their hearts and expectations. That is why the grandson of the hero of the T.F.A., after the passage of nearly eight

decades, feels that as if the wheel has come full circle. The circumstances remain the same in the manner of the invidious policies that act in favor to the interests of the intruder at the expense of the original. So the native civil servant, who is put in the forefront of the narration in this novella, could not arrive at satisfaction. More importantly, he fails to appease the community that exhausted every lead and avenue to give him a first rate of education. The fact is that, Igbo community uses to devote and earmark a part of its communal resources for the benefit of its members especially the promising students. Obi, the grandson of Okonkwo, is the first student who is being sent to England by the Umuofia Progressive Union, Lagos Board. The scholarship is offered to him in stringent pledge that when he graduates and takes an honorable job, he would counterbalance his community and throw it in for good measure. Moreover, it is made quite clear that Obi should dedicate his energies to his mission and keep the white women at bay. Instead of pulling out all the stops for his success and to appreciate the good favor rendered to him by his community, Obi seems to cock a smoke at them. This ungratefulness is described as follows:

Remember you are the one and only Umuofia son to be educated overseas. We do not want to be like the unfortunate child who grows his first tooth and grows a decayed one. What sort of encouragement will your action give to the poor men and women who collected the money. (N.L.E. 1966, 86.)

The first setback—back is the shifting from studying law as it is agreed upon to major in English. The second encroachment is that he is badly smitten by an outcast girl who is considered as smirch on the family name and stark insult to all community. The girl is belonging to an ethnic group which is regarded as the most decadent and inferior. And what makes matters shoddier and worse, is the turning a deaf ear to all sincere advices to steer clear from this repugnance and shameful scandal. The

elders of his clan see their investment to educate this prodigal boy as wasted and foolish venture. They say:

We paid eight hundred pounds to travel him in England. But instead of being grateful he insults us because of a useless girl. (NL.E. 1.966, 58.).

Even he fails to convince his mother to pull strings over his father and the rest of the community. The rejection of this marriage is due to the agreed upon cliché that when one finger brings oil it soils the others. It is this fear of mixing Igbo blood with the most abhorred and denigrated race. The reason is that the girl whom he befriends is an Osu and she is never known by these weird and wonderful people. It is demonstrated that these people do not have any invidiousness based on preferential measures when it comes to the rights of individuals to occupy any prestigious office. There is no discrepancy in this position because it has been publicized that these people have much in common with their counterpart, the Jews. The Jews were and are notoriously known as having double standard measure when it comes to the rights of Jews and the gentile. The gentile is not treated on equal terms before the common law in contrast to Jews. So, according to the former analysis that finds Igbo and Jews are the dead spit of each other, then, Igbo view themselves as the chosen people in their own right and that is why they do not treat others as they do to themselves.

Obi seems to have a very hard time in the way he administers his private expenditure. He is weighed down heavily with debt from the first day when he joins the civil service. He seems to be struck in a rut for he could not extricate himself from this vicious evil circle of not to be able to make ends meet. The interesting thing to note is that he, from the start, behaves cautiously for there is an English woman who works as a secretary in the same office with him. This white woman is believed by many people to be implanted as a spy whose job is to keep a

tap on the native and report to the concerned authority any infringement perpetrated to undermine the system. It is also interesting to mention in this respect, that the English secretary tries to build a friendly relation with Obi while the latter always holds her at arm's length. She is notoriously interloper to the extent that she seems to have a finger in every pie concerning his private life. She uses to follow the news of Clara, the Osu, and seizes every possible opportunity to sing praises to her beauty. She always tries to prevail on him so as to hasten the marriage. Obi feels that there are ulterior motives behind this friendly overtures and that is why whenever a visitor comes to his office, he makes sure that the subject of his visit remains obscure and shrouded in mystery. This is revealed clearly when Mr. Mark pays a visit in order to have the papers of his sister pass muster and be set before the committee. It is essential to hint that this demand is presented on the understanding of the foregone conclusion. Obi will be given the whole works. Suddenly he shifts to English so as to let the English woman hear that he will not hear of it. It seems that Mark either does not take the decision of the rebuff seriously or fails to catch the drift. Because he throws caution to the wind and sends his sister to approach Obi in his residence. The girl approaches Obi and gives him a sultry look and tells him implicitly and explicitly that no holds barred. The interesting thing is that the visit of the young girl coincides with the unexpected call of Obi's fiancé. The strange thing is that the presence of a young beautiful girl in a room with a young youth does not cause any fracas as it is expected in the main. It is supposed that this occasion would be considered as if the fiancé catches her man red-handedly. This does not seem so, because different cultures have their own perspectives through which such happenings could be seen differently. Great literature has its unique criterion by which differences of traditions, conventions and outlooks could be coexisted juxtaposed and peacefully reconciled. The girl of Obi sees nothing unusual in this coincidence

because it seems that the indigenous culture does not make an issue about the nature of the encounter between people in terms of their gender. It is also important to illustrate that when the Obi's girl is kept posted about the nuance details of the subject of the rival errand, his girl comments that:

After all offering money is not as bad as offering oneself you gave her a drink and a lift back to town. (N.L.E. 996,8)

The researcher could take this response with a pinch of salt. The rejection of the girl's comment is based on the discovery that Igbo's views, regarding issues of marriage and sex, prove to have been far away from being on the same wavelength with European. So this comment indicates unequivocally to the mutation and effacement of Igbo's tradition in good turn of the European norms. The traditions of Igbo, when come face to face with the traditions of Europe, the encounter results in walk over for the latter. The interpretation for *Winning* this clash hands down may be attributed to the flexible disposition and open— minded of these unique amazing people Thus, that is how Igbo' inherent ethos begin to phase out off the stage. These people prove to be practical and they do not hesitate to Spouse and identify with the victorious Civilization. Consequently this is as a result of jumping on the bandwagon and Cutting the ties with their roots.

The novel reflects and Points out the fundamental changes that happen to Igbo's social structure it indicates the emerging cities that hold opportunities for jobs that promise for a better living standard for the Younger generation who favor to settle in these attractive centers This emigration to urban centers impacts the social fabric Profoundly because the youths are exposed to new ideas and a foreign style of life, On the other hand, old men and Women stay in their villages and the hiatus between them becomes acute and perilous. More alarmingly, the new generation starts to act in such a way that encourages these youths to question the

very authenticity of their fathers' views and judgment. The sad thing is that the old generation tends to judge their educated progeny through their traditionally sanctioned standards of their fossil demeanor. The youngsters are no longer venerated or espoused their elders' traditions. This is the tragedy of Obi and Umuofia Progressive Union which sees rebellion and ingratitude in his attitude which attributed to the white man's imparted education and influences of western outlooks. The Umuofians regret their sacrifices and efforts in giving these children an education as wasted and foolish investment:

We paid eight pounds to train him in England. But instead of being grateful he insults us Because of a useless girl. (NL. F. 1966, 43,).

The paradoxical situation which Obi suffers from is that he sees himself as espousing different views according to his exposure to European culture during his study in England. He pretends to act and behave contrary to his community especially on marriage. He believes that he could marry an Osu in sheer defiance to his people's conventions and taboos. One could sense that Obi's proclamation of embracing modern views and principles is not based on truly solid convictions. He seems to be a dreamer and romantic who fancies unrealistic venture which he could never be able to put into practice. The evidence of this claim could be attested from his easy withdrawal from the entire enterprise on the pretext that his mother does not approve of it. This seems to be a silly excuse because it is not a new knowledge; for it is well known established custom all but decided once and for all. It is important to refer to the fact that even Christianity which attacks and manages to damage local traditions does not dare to confront the taboo of Osu issue. This is confirmed by the fact that both parents of Obi are Christians and both

oppose the marriage not because of religious reasons but in accordance with their tribal belief.

However, these hopeless native staff imitates the lifestyle of their English matching part to the range that they spend their nights going out on the tiles. Their life is balmy to the extent that every day for them is seen as a red—letter day and consequently they are always painting the town red. These belied elites seem blind and far from being down to the earth. Real life is not like that. Actually these youths sit on a powder keg for the sting always lies in the tail. Obi is selected to represent these damned employees. So, according to these circumstances, Obi fails to come to grips with the intricacy of the gloom reality; accordingly, he finds himself left in the lurch on the dock to be tried of bribery. This episode could be read to overlap a true illustration to the policies adopted at the times when Nigeria stands on threshold of independence. The indigenous elites of the country work hard to chase out the British. But unfortunately, they rise to the bait of taking bad with good from their masters. They want to keep all the privileges for themselves that are considered royal prerogatives of the colonizer and simultaneously twist the lion's tail. This sheer hypocrisy pretends to side with one's folk, while to be every inch a British is merely a snake in the grass. It is proved that the policy adopted by these elites hold the rein of the nation after dismissing the British, is good and proper debacle and a fiasco. So, this novella could be interpreted as a political contribution to diagnose the ill—fated destiny of the Africans after the independence in order to prescribe a treatment. According to the analysis of the experience of the political elites, who are entrusted with the leadership that results, is found to be the bleeding dry of all the potentials of the nation. However, Obi has neither succeeded to consummate his marriage to the ostracized girl, nor retained the good relation with his community. Moreover, the unborn child is disposed off

in a risky illegal abortion. And ironically, Obi has been given the elbow by that sinister girl whom he had laid his life for. Therefore, Obi and his peers could stew in their own juice for the fact these miserable elites are in the pay of the enemy. Africa invests to educate these failures in the hope that they will use the modern knowledge to rescue the continent. That is from its decadent and primitive state and speed up the movement of the development and progress. Things seem to turn out to be absolutely different from what they expected to be. For, as it is demonstrated that these elites are corrupted to the bone and core. They adopt the policy of the end justifies the means and that is why the destiny of the country is going to the dogs.

4.5. Comment on Arrow of God

This novel is published in 1964 to document in retrospective the events that take place at the time of the second generation under the British domination. This generation, in question, is that which comes at the heels of Okonkwo's tragic demise. That means it tells about the results and repercussions of the encounter between the two diametrically opposed cultures of Europe and Africa. To put it more precisely, it records the surrender and acquiescence of old traditions to modern European culture. In other words, it tells the story of how the so proud people would be forced to throw in the towel because the spell of the white man's magic is irresistible. Since the first penetration in inlands and the systematic dissemination of Christianity and the introduction of the system of British administration, Africa has been sacrificed on the altar of cupidity. The colonial rule has left no stone unturned to ensure that all old systems had been expunged to give way for modernization. The modernization is to impose the British administration at the cost of African way of ruling as well as to proselytize Christianity. It has been shown elsewhere in this research, that Igbo has its unique system in regard to

running their social and political affairs. Also, it is demonstrated that this system is built on solid conventions that governance has nothing to do with kings or any kind of central polity. The accepted disposition of these amazing people is to give equal opportunities to its citizen to practice their roles in all fields of social and political life. That is according to one's potentiality and ability. So these people have strong aversion to arbitrary authority and duress. That is why the introduction of tribally chiefs system has generated severe opposition and rejection. A.O.G. is concerned primarily to document the dispute over the imposition of this system of governing among Igbo population. Moreover, it is' also considered as a witness to the fundamental mutation that occurred to African civilization. That will occur as a result of being prey to the oldest trick in the book of colonization, In addition, the novel focuses on the inner disputed issues like the competition between the religious and political leaders as well as the rank and file. The dispute and competitions among the natives are being played into the hands by colonial administration to cement their grip and diffuse Christianity. As a matter of fact, this novel could be taken as a history record that contains all the traditions, outlooks, and worldview of Igbo nation. And above all the amazing rhetorical feat of the sleight of mouth that ever known by such illiterate folk. This novel is so saturated with the most eloquent magic of public speech. The western civilization has a despicable boast which brings the origin of all sophisticated arts. And as such, Africa has the right to be laughing up her sleeves at this hollow arrogance.

If Europe traces its primacy in arts to the times of Greece, then Africa has its own culture inherently deep rooted from ancient age in living memory. This novel also challenges the recurring allege that Africa knows civilization for the first time when Europe had sent its Sons to enlighten the primitives. Achebe seems to be not tired of exhibiting the seemingly hidden lore of Africa to appear on the spotlight so

as to be seen and appreciated. Therefore, the novel is truly significant in the sense that it poses challenges to the naïve assumptions that Africa is primitive and has nothing to do with civilized norms.

The central character in this novel is Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu, who encounters crises ranging from minor disputes, within the family, to huge fracas with the whole clan. And what aggravates the situation is the entering of the white man in the scene. The events take place at the time when Britain has managed to secure its grip on the whole districts of Nigeria. The new administration tries to introduce a new system that seeks to share the burden of ruling with the local chiefs. It is needless to say that this idea is absolutely against the established traditions of the people who do not accept any authority that does not legitimized by their own choice. These incidents coincide with a disputed issue over a piece of land with the neighbors of Ezeulu's clan. It seems that the dice are loaded against the chief priest for the trouble catches him while he is unawares. His clan could not understand why their revered priest has sent his son to join strangers to convert to their religion. The son who has been converted recently to Christianity goes off the rails to defile the holiness of the sacred python. This unheard of act is seen by the clan as if chaos 'is loosed upon the world' for the fact that this horrible act has no parallel of in the history of this amazing people. The priest has his own reasons to do so when he says:

He was not sure what to make of it. At first he had thought that since the white man had come with great power and conquest it was necessary that some people should learn some ways of his deity. That was why he had agreed to send his son. Oduche, to learn the new ritual. He also wanted him to learn the white man wisdom. (A. O. G. :1996,42.)

The novel seeks to focus on the racial conflict between the black race and the white people on the issue of impact of modernity on the traditional life of the African tribes. The priest sees himself equivalent to his god because he has the power to control the harvesting of the vital yam crop. These moments of confusion on the part of the priest coincide with the famous offer which has been presented by the representative of the British administration to name him a local chief. The white man's nomination is due to the honesty and integrity of the priest. The priest had attested in favor of the other tribe on the issue of the disputed land. The response of the priest repudiates the offer disdainfully and arrogantly. And that is why he suffers imprisonment. The priest feels that he is abandoned and betrayed by his people. In the same way, Okonkwo has been deserted by the clan in his encounter with the British rule. It is important to emphasize the idea that Ezeulu ascribes the silence and inertia of his people as treason parallel to stabbing him on the back. This belief enrages him so much; so that he decides to punish them before wreaking vengeance on the British administration .

This novel tends to impress upon the readers the idea of universal law of change. It seeks to establish the fact that changes in human civilization are inevitable and irresistible. The protagonist fights against British administration almost representing the whole populace of Africa. That is just as the legendary protagonist of the first novel tries in vain to chase out the British along with their missionaries. Also both of the protagonists, Okonkwo and Ezeulu, represent primitiveness and barbarity of culture. While European characters, represent modernist western culture. The novel focuses on the encounter between the old beliefs and modernity. Moreover, the theme of the influence of Christianity is a central issue because the British missionaries have managed to implant in the mind of the destitute the belief that Christ can bless their crops for a rich harvest. Consequently, the villagers

observe the traditions of Christians and turned a cold shoulder to their ethos. This observance marks the end of the encounter with the British and cessation of the resistance to all forms of change. There colonization seeks to affect the life of the Igbo. The surrender and submission of Igbo to the colonial forces signify the complete wiping out of an old way of life and the birth of a new one.

The tragic death of both protagonists overshadows similar aspects of well woven plots. Just as Okonkwo's death is significant in respect of the demise and dissolution of the primitive culture, the death of Ezeulu represents primitivism in all his worldview and deeds. Thus, in both novels the death of the protagonist presupposes the defeat of primitivism when encountered by the powerful forces of western colonization. This conflict signifies the total triumph of modernism and the effacement of old systems and fossil traditions. The two novels focus on the identical theme of ideological clash between two opposite theories antithetical to each other. The novels assert the universal truth that there can be no compromise or synthesis between the diametrically opposed primitivism and modernism. These two theories are irreconcilable. So the new ideology of modernism prevails over the life of the Igbo.

However, some notable men begin smear campaign against the chief priest accusing him of being in league with the enemies. These accuse gains grounds because the chief priest has attested in favor of their neighbor concerning the quarrel over the disputed land. And *what* makes his clan cautious and suspicious is the praise showered on their priest from the representative of colonial administration. The British administrator proclaims him as a man of truth from all the witnesses. The fact is that the chief priest has been informed by his father that the land in question belongs to the other village not to Amuora. And for this reason the priest is against the war. The priest sees the impending war is not a war of

honor but as thus it is a war of blame and the fathers would never participate in such war. It is important to draw attention to the fact that the testimony of Ezeulu is not meant to appease the British but only relieve his conscience. The priest suffers a trial of being split between his loyalties to his own principles and the interest of his community. The interest of the community is to lay claims on the land not gratuitously concede it. Sheer practical necessity would have allowed him the opportunity to maneuver so as to gain something during the talks to find peaceful settlement. And what exacerbates the tension of his enemies is that the British administration summoned the priest to the headquarters to invest on him the robes of authority. To the puzzle of both British and his clan, the priest refuses to be appointed as a toady warrant chief. The priest sticks to his guns despite the repressive measures and humiliation inflicted on him. The reverential holy man undergoes tragic moments of crises like being handcuffed and rendered in prison.

The strange thing is that Captain Winter bottom who ordered the keep in custody of the high priest, all of a sudden fell ill of hottest fever. Rumors mushroom that a curse has been inflicted upon the white man because the priest maliciously casted spell o magic to destroy him. When the health of the white man seems to make headway, the enemies of the priest see the recuperating as a sight for sore eyes. This retrieval of the white man's health is the last straw that convinces his folk that the priest's guns have been spiked. Moreover, this incident has been taken as a sign that their deity from now on is no longer able to rise to the occasion. It is germane to emphasize the fact that this same person whose curse seems to be laid up by the priest, also he is the same person who sings praises to the credibility of Ezeulu. Moreover, he is also who persuades the priest to send his son to the missionaries. That is why enemies of Ezeulu classify him as a turncoat who throws in his lot with the intruder. Even when the news of Ezeulu's refusal to

accept the white man's job reaches his clan, his bitter enemy and his supporters see the enterprise as a mere device used as a red herring to take the people for a ride. The enemies suspect and question this story arguing that the priest has been working all his life to achieve this goal of being absolute governor. They doubt how a man can spit a sweet morsel fate places into one's mouth especially this opportunity is what such a person has long been waited for.

After the release, the priest suffers a state of uncertainty and confusion to the extent that he begins to believe that he is not only a man but as well he is a spirit. This strange belief drives him to revenge on his whole community to not fix the day of the harvest. The priest refuses to compromise despite implore and plead of prominent leaders among them his faithful friend Akuebue. In the midst of these crises one of the sons of the priest kicks the bucket while performing a holy ritual. The death of the son has been taken by his enemies as a precursor that Ulu has left the priest out on a limb. It is interesting to mention the fact that the priest turns to act as though he is an arrow in the bow of his god. He even goes as far as saying that he himself is siding and sympathizing with his people but he is only working in full accord with the god's will. This idea, in effect, is an instrumental factor to persuade the people that their god is malignant and full of malice. Igbo people are renowned of being a people who could easily renounce and abjure their deities once they prove negligent or remiss to fulfill their duties. In the narrative there are many episodes in which there is swapping of deities. It is relevant to accentuate that Ulu himself is contrived by these amazing people. It is stated:

That is why our ancestors when they were pushed beyond the end of things by the warriors of Abam sacrificed not a stranger but one of themselves and made the great medicine which they called Ulu(4.0. G. ;1966, 134.).

Therefore, there is no amazing thing if these suffering and destitute rise to the bait of the Christians. The whole community undergoes a hard time because there is no way to harvest unless the priest decrees. Consequently, the famine stalks the land and the people could no longer bear the situation. This is a sizeable opportunity for Nwaka, the bitter enemy, to instigate the people against the priest. Nwaka addresses the people:

What I say is this, 'continued Nwaka, 'a man who brings ant—ridden fagots into his hut should expect the visit of lizards. But if Ezeulu is now telling us that he is tired of the white man s friendship our advice to him should be: you tied the knot, you should also know how to undo it. You passed the shit that smells; you should carry it away. (A0.G.:1956, 144.).

As a result of this foolish decision the Christians convince the Igbo to sacrifice their offerings to the god of Christianity in lieu of Ulu. The incitation of the Christians to the people to embrace Christianity and abandon heathen practices seems to gain far-reaching approval, Accordingly, the people unanimously desert the stubborn priest to affiliate with the intruders. The priest unknowingly plays into the hands of the missionaries by insisting to punish his people by not carrying out his duties to fix the day so as the people could harvest their yams. The discrepancy that characterized the life of the high priest is that he wants to preserve his office as revered religious man Not only this, but he works simultaneously to secure a place among the new power of the British administration by sending his son to join the missionaries. The strange thing is that the priest expects everyone- his wives, his children, his friends to approve and follow his decisions and actions without posing questions. He even goes as far as to classify those who oppose him as enemies who deserve to be punished. That is why the priest refused to execute his ritual duties.

The theme of this novel is not typically the same as the first one. In the first novel the theme was dealing directly with the clash between indigenous traditions and

the culture brought about by the incursion of the white man. While here the theme is about conflict between internal doubts of the priest who begins to question his ability and power as a real custodian of his village traditions and representative of Ulu. Ernest N. Emenyonu wrote:

When the novel opens, Ezeulu is musing on His major internal dilemma which gives the novel its theme. He is wondering whether the high office of the priest of Ulu in reality commands as much power as is commonly associated with it. (A. O.G 1966,5,).

The plight of the people reaches its apex when cunning neighbors seem to grow fat out of the people's misfortune. These neighbors used to bring new yams to sell them as if they are precious jewelry. The reality is that; the people laid the blame on Ezeulu and his family and as such the position of the priest has been shaken and his credibility has been rocked to its foundations. In a nutshell, that is how the whole Igbo nation embraces Christianity and the old traditions phase out in a trice in unparalleled circumstance that could only happen once in a blue moon.

4.6. Nanga of A man of the People.

This novel may be considered one of the most satirical political stuff that one has ever read. It is a work of art that is so saturated with witty sights and intelligent references to political and social phenomena. These traits are shared universally and may be simultaneously appreciated differently according to one's social status. The novella is retold by implied narrator who impersonates the role of omniscient authority. It is needless to say that this absolute power of narration affects the way in which things could be shaped and the development of incidents. And consequently readers are expected to be in a position that would rarely allow them the opportunity to contribute freely in passing judgment far removed from the authority of the narration. This seemingly God—like authority is no longer be

acceptable and adopted since there are many rooms available to critics to enter any work of art from any potential access. Modern literary critical schools have provided and enriched the discipline of criticism of much possible aspects that view a literary text from different angles. However, the modern development that characterized the entire human, linguistic and literary sciences have affected greatly the scope and perspective of critics towards their endeavor. One of the major attitudes that are developed recently is the role of the reader as a legitimate partner in the process of evaluation and passing judgment. So the readers' response school of criticism is considered of highly significance trend in the world of modern literary criticism.

The novel tells about the political issues that shadows the political horizon of Nigeria after the country has gained its independence. The elites who are ruling under the tutelage of the nascent political parties proved to be laboring under a delusion in terms of the policies they adopt in order to rescue the country from its tragic fate. Those elites instead of addressing directly the real problems of the country, they seem to be losing their moorings to beat around the bush and keeping clear of where the shoe pinches. Not only this, but they seem also occupied and obsessed in power struggle and competitions between their parties. The leaders of the political parties use every possible dirty means so as to remain in Power. As a matter of fact this ambience is the best hub to spawn terrorism and the good justification for resorting to policies of revenge - and suppression that is what happened in Nigeria at the threshold of its independence. The prime minister of the ruling party in order to be elected in office for the second tenure dismisses the majority of his cabinet who do not agree to the wrong and fatal policy that would ruin the country's economy.

The prime minister goes as far as to start smear campaign to tarnish the repudiation of his opponents consequently the whole engages in demonstrations and riots. This bad policy leads people to suffer greatly from the government's economic measures and could manage only on a shoe—string. The prime minister labels the opposition in the following terms:

let us now and for all the time extract from our body Politics as a dentist extract a stinking tooth all those decadent stooges versed in text—book economics and aping the white man 's mannerism and way of speaking. We are proud to be Africans. Our true leaders are not those intoxicated ted with their Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard Degrees University but those who speak the language of the people.
(A.M.O.P.1966, 4,)

The protagonist who is placed in the forefront of the narration is the sycophant M. Nanga. M. Nanga happened to be the teacher of the narrator in his primary education. It is important to mention the fact that M. Nanga has no formal education beyond Standard Six. The irony is that despite his limited formal education, he is the minister of Culture whereas Peter, Odili's boy who also completed Standard Six, could hardly find a job as a domestic servant. At one's wits end this the same teacher manages through hole and corner to secure a prestigious place among the ruling elites of the country. M. Nanga is portrayed in such a way that he could marvelously attract the admiration and sympathy of readers. He is pictured as a man who is full of life and humors to the extent that most of his words as well as his deeds touch and move deeply the audience and leave them in stitches. That is why from the start emphasis of being the most approachable politician in the whole country is placed upon him. He is introduced in the opening of the novella as a back benched parliament member who is playing the role of the tub-thumper. He is portrayed as being point blank a toady upstart whose actions are based On a vested

interest. In addition, his entire behavior seems to be built on a coat of arms to the degree that he would not do an action unless he has an able to grind with. In other words he is capable of doing anything to achieve his selfish agenda irrespective to the means used. It is obvious that these types of politicians follow the Machiavellian theory that the end justifies the means. It is clear that Nanga and the others, the cut of his jib, are harnessed as a mere pawn in the game by the dictator. Nanga proved to be the good example of the brazen obsequious that would resort to any measures to secure his worldly gains.

It is important to refer to the fact that Odili Samalu is set as a foible to the character of Chief Nanga. in fact he seems to represent Achebe or at least to be his mouthpiece. The sensitive and perceptive Odili discerns from the start the faults of Chief Nanga which the common people fail to discover or may wish to ignore. Odili proves to be perspicacious because when the people awaits the arrival of Chief Nanga with dances and ceremony, Odili observes:

Here were silly ignorant villagers dancing themselves lame and waiting to blow off their guns .A.M.O.P. 1966;. 5;).

However, as far as the relationship between the dictator and miscreant agents is concerned, the agents would turn out to be more harmful than their master. The master has only appeared in the first pages launching the systematic policy of political agitation that creates an atmosphere full of terror and violence. The strange thing, however, is that as the narration progresses, one is dumfounded by the total vanishing and complete withdrawal of the prime minister from the scene. Therefore the coast is completely clear for the stooge Nanga to project his own wicked devices. These wicked devices are delivered and conveyed in such manner that even the most seem rancorous; the receiver would only detect the humorous spirit and shut off of the malignant motive. Even the highbrow people used to take

his scandalous acts and his playing fast and loose with obvious facts for granted and never see infringement looming large. It is narrated that, Chief Nanga was born a politician:

he could get away with almost anything he said or did. And as long as men are swayed By their hearts and stomachs and not their heads the Chief Nangas of this world will continue to get away with anything he had the rare gift of making people feel-even while he was saying harsh things to them -that there was not a drop of ill will in his entire frame It is this light-hearted and funny character (A.M O.P. 1966, 56,)

The previous quotation distinguished Nanga to be the most accepted politician whose bizarre actions, to one's astonishment, always generate sympathy root and branch. The other significant trait is that Nanga is the kind of person who always wears his heart upon his sleeve. In other words he projects himself honestly and transparently according to fair play with his friends. But when it comes to deal with rivals and enemies his attitude will change to the extent that he would pervert justice and behave outside the pale of his jurisdiction to overshoot the mark. This is shown clearly during the harangue of the prime minister before the parliament when he takes the field against his ministers. Nanga is the kind of those men who could not sit on the fence but he is most likely the hound that strains its leash to get on its enemy neck and crop. And for this reason he is exploited by the upper ranks of his party to showdown the chip on their shoulder they bear against their rivals. In other terms he is used as the short straw to be drawn when a demagogue necessity is needed. Nanga carries out the intended policy of his party knowing that he would be rewarded in good measure and that is why he remains passionately dedicated to the party. It is important to refer to the fact that politicians in that era secure their positions not according to their achievements but due to their loyalties to the dictator. Consequently, corruption, deterioration and

nepotism stalk the whole continent of Africa because every country has its own version of Nanga.

However, the new indigenous politicians have added a second string to their bow by introducing the element of sex in the game. Chief Nanga is notoriously reputable in this respect to the extent that whenever a sexual abuse assigned to him, people would not raise their brow for they see these kinds of things naturally belong to him. It is not only known by his own folk but it seems that it is a common knowledge even foreigners are well kept posted off. To bear this claim out, it is better to refer to the incident during which Odili, who is playing the role of the narrator, mentions that Nanga is the man who wrenches his girl friend. The response blurts out spontaneously from a foreigner; Nanga, yes? Said the European and everyone burst laughing. The tradition of Igbo community as it has been noted and emphasized elsewhere in this study is to view women and their role in their societies with utmost respect and appreciation. Women within the remit of that peculiar society are privileged with rights that the rest women of the world have never heard of. It has been proved that Igbo women are the legitimate owners of their destiny, body and property. Sexual factor has never come into play in terms of abusing and defaming the status of women. On the contrary women are allowed to desert husbands and even to engage in sexual activities outside the wedlock without being considered as having done something ignominious. This does not mean to say that Igbo women have never been flogged and beaten by their husbands. Women are abused by their husbands for other reasons, and sex is the least the element. This claim is substantiated by the famous trial in the novel of *Things Fall Apart* when one of Igbo is accused of beating his wife to the extent that the wife miscarriages. The husband denies the crime and attributes the abortion to her funny tendency of sleeping with her lover when having a bun in the oven. The

husband as it has been proved wants only to give a wide berth to being indicted. The act of sexual intercourse out marriage is never being an issue to make a fuss about. If the tradition of the Igbo regarding women and sex has been as it is demonstrated previously, why then, here is great shift in emphasis when it comes to women and their issues? The picture in which women are exhibited in this novella is quite different from that one which depicts women as humans, so to speak. Women in this narrative look most likely like women living in an industrial and civic society rather than the rural country of Igbo land which was the setting of the first novel. It is obvious that the change in perspective in which women are viewed is due primarily to the dissolution of Igbo tradition by the intervention of colonization. It is known that the industrial culture views women as things like any other things that render service to the community.. Thus women in that culture could be treated like goods in the sense that money and other facilities would play a crucial factor in the nature of the relationship between the two sexes.

It is important to notice that the women in this novella bear no resemblance to the women in the first novel. In the first novel women are highly represented in all institutions of the society and they are never regarded as sex objects. Moreover, Igbo women during that era enjoy the full rights entertained by their equivalent partner, the men. While here from the start one could detect that the interest in women is for the most part lies in the fact that they are sexually attractive. Odili gets acquainted to his girl and in less than an hour she goes with him to his rooms. Odili narrated the story; (1966,24).

(Elsie was, and for that matter still is the only girl I met and slept with the same day — the fact within an hour.)

It is also relevant in this context to draw the episode in which Chief Nanga boasted unashamedly that there are so many women available at his disposal.

But anyway I am sorry if you are offended; the mistake is mine. I tender unreserved apology. Does the thing so you go beg say no want again^{1/2}?) If you like I can bring you six girls (A.M. O.?. 1966, 72, 152)

The important lesson that could be drawn from this story is that the women's status and dignity has been marred in a quagmire of humiliation and opprobrium. The strange thing is that; those women seem to be recruited at their own accord to play the field to the extent that they could be brought in groups to be licentiously dishonored. The narrator claims that there is a white woman called Jane whose husband happened to be on an errand which would take him away for two or three days could not stomach her voluptuous desire. She is depicted as a licentious woman that exposes herself to wayfarer gratuitously with no strings attached. She is a woman whose magic could wound men round her little finger and that is why Odili succumbs helplessly to her wile devices. It seems that the business of sex has been a hardy perennial for it occurs whenever a happenstance is propitious and conducive. The narrator asserts that he indulges in sexual intercourse with Jean on the same night of their acquaintance, suggests that this state of affair becomes the norm to be applied across the board. The issue of sex whether money is a motive or not is prevalent among the laity and intellectuals alike. Two American couple working as experts to render advice to Nigerian government on how to better its image to American public, has a strange relationship with Chief Nanga. These couple pays a visit to the minister in the presence of the narrator and to the amazement of the latter Mrs. Nanga. beyond the fringe, withdraws completely from the scene. This withdrawal implies that there is a mutual understanding that her presence would put the mockers on the whole affair. Even the amazement proves to be a slippery slope for it causes the narrator to stop dead in his tracks. That is because the American instantly engages in hot discussion with him in order

to put him off his stride. The hot discussion is meant to camouflage the business that runs between his wife and the minister. And the business turns out to be as the narrator's words succinctly synopsis the affair as an attempt to drag Chief Nanga off to bed in broad daylight. This story is not a figment of imagination if the whole thing is not just a product of fancy! According to the dispensation in which Chief Nanga is portrayed, still the narrative continues to stun with similar fabulous anecdotes. There is equivalent tale where a couple of lawyers who own a firm of solicitors, and despite this sophistication and apparent affluence, the wife uses to approach Nanga regularly to sleep with him in return of money. It is apposite and opportune in this juncture to put heavy emphasis on the fact that the incident is retold to give the impression that one could construe that the affair is not done surreptitiously and beyond the ken of her partner! It seems that wonders would never come to an end concerning Nanga and his notorious adventures. Nanga engages in politics to satisfy only his selfish desire to feather his own nest by appropriating the public funds entrusted in at his disposal. Many incidents in the narrative label him roundly as being indulged in heinous crimes related to embezzlement and scandalous kleptomania. It is better to allude to the project of tarring the road which appeared that Nanga has strong personal axe to grind for he has new ten buses obtained through funny money and underhand fraud. He confessed that, (1966, 43,) (*I am getting them on never-never arrangement from the British Amalgamated.*) So he has strong springs for having the road to be tarred because of the next election and the business of his new buses. Not only the mention of the buses that recurred but also there are many references to the grand house with its four luxury storey. The pity of it is that the grand house is said to be built by a British firm as a reward to the facilities rendered to it by Nanga at the cost of public interest. And more sorrowfully the public opinion admires and encourages those who eat and let other people eat. This is quite evident in the

landslide victory of Nanga in the election despite it is made clear to them that he is submerged in corruption to the bone. The strange thing is that Nanga needs not to refute the accusation by himself because the same people whom he used to cash in on, spearheads the campaign of his defense and innocence. It is difficult task to work among traditional communities to diffuse awareness and enlightenment. The fact is that these communities were suffering of deep rooted fossil ideas and rigid culture. And for this reason all attempts to make the people aware of their interests would be like flogging a dead horse. And as such reformists' efforts would have to go back to the drawing board. And that is why Nanga would never care because he is so certain that he is a dead cert for a historical landslide victory. The campaign of reformists or more precisely revolutionary campaigners try in vain to enlighten the oppressed in order to make them aware of their rights. Odili and his colleague established their new political party to contest and challenge the corrupted ruling party. Unfortunately, they are in sheer ignorance of the dirty means available to the latter. Through these dirty means they manage to secure power and monopolize the national resources. The striking thing is that Odili and his comrades seem to be suffering of severe shortage of the basic tactics and strategies. These are needed to start practical and successful political campaign. Their naïve assumption is that reform would occur by forming a new political party. A party, whose slogan is to rescue the country and serve the interests of the poor, would be the salvation. And this step would lead the whole people to set a great store by on them. This greenhorn in the realm of politics is 'no doubt' the real reason that the nascent party is easily and drastically defeated in one go. Consequently, the incidents turned out to show that any port in a storm is the best option in times of uncertainty and chaos. Multiple options should be available to enable any perspicacious politician. Lacking in such alternatives, lead Odili and his comrades loose one's all due to their novice and armature risk to challenge Nanga and his thugs. Nanga is a

veteran politician who always rides the wave comfortably and on the ball to deal with politics in its dirtiest version. He is admired and well protected by his people. His people believe in the wisdom of allowing your people to exploit you rather than to be trodden on by the white man. This sardonic stance reflects the attitudes of today's masses in Africa. Moreover, it seems that these masses are cynical to a fault even when confronted with matters that have concrete bearing on their destiny. It seems also that their response toward the warning discourse delivered by Odili and his party to influence and make them know their interests is met with a deaf ear.

*Of course not. And where is the all the-powerful-
white man today? He came, he ate and he went. But
we are still around besides, if you survive,
who knows? It may be your turn to eat tomorrow. Your
son may bring home your share. (A. MO.?. 1.966,8.9,)*

The cynicism of the masses together with the hypocrisy of Chief Nanga and his government debilitate the enthusiasm of the leaders of the new party in the cause of the struggle. At this critical moments, the political scene all of a sudden witnesses a taken over of the authority by army officers, thus fulfilling the prophecy hinted to in the fiction. More than anything else is that Achebe attempts to create an atmosphere filled replete of aura of tragic phenomenon. He utilizes cynical tactics to implicate the new elites by making them victims to policies whose essence is foreign to them. These elites who lack the very essential requirements of modern colonial administrations' procedures are unable to produce the kind of leadership that their people expect and demand. Actually these elites are in dire need to be equipped with the tools that could help to safeguard and

preserve democracy and enjoy the dividends of independence. Ernest Emenyonu wrote:

The whole novel suffers perhaps from being too near.

It once again demonstrates the fragility of democracy

in the Absence of the eternal vigilance necessary to preserve it . Take it out of its immediate environment.

Retaining the essential Message and its general applicability is *frightening*. (Eldred Jones, 1971, 15).

The tragedy of Odili and Max is that they want to fight the ruling party and its corruption while they themselves are not impeccable. In fact Odili merely wants to revenge himself of Chief Nanga because the latter has made love to the former's girl. While Max accepts bribes from the very party he intends to fight and urges Odili to follow suit. Thus the end of the incidents in the way they end is a pessimistic conclusion. This end offers no direction of how the stagnant politics of Nigeria would ever witness any better change and improvement. Ultimately, the way the incidents end seems unconvincing and unexpected and does not any longer float one's boat.

4.7. Illumination on Anthills of the Savannah :

The fifth novel of Achebe emerges after a long hiatus of more than two decades since the publication of A man of the People. The novel, Anthills of the Savannah, has been regarded as the best work of art that ever produced in Africa in 1980th• The novel is set in an imaginary African state that bears resemblance to his home country in terms of political chaos and financial coiuption. Some critics relate the assumed state to be more likely like Uganda under the terrible rule of the notorious dictator Idi Amin. Nevertheless this country could be any African republic that

suffered a tyrannical military dictatorship. It is a fact that during the few decades ago the majority of African countries after independence fall victims to military coups. The military rule in every country leaves an indelible damage those decades of reform seems unable to ameliorate. Likewise, it is not amazing thing that this novel is so near to every African reader because it touches where the shoe pinches. Africans are frustrated by the terrible rule of dictators who hinder the course of development after gaining their hard — won freedom.

The assumed country is ruled by a dictator, Sam, who is seeking presidency for life. Sam manages in ruling his country with the iron fist by the help of his school mates Christopher Oriko and Ikem Osodi. At first these triumvirate friends work collaboratively and seem to accept their roles warts and all. This state of affair would have to continue had the rebellious of Abazan, a drought—stricken region, not been sprung up to the surface. An Abazanian delegation. arrived in the capital to demand meeting his Excellency. Sam would not tolerate this kind of protest to be exhibited before his palace. Moreover, he does not want other groups to follow Abazan in sending delegation for any reason.

The novel opens with a ministerial meeting to tackle the unexpected visit or more accurately the rebellious attitude of these suffering people. The meeting is designated to contrive ways to camouflage and conceal the real intention of the dissenters. To the amazement of his cabinet, the dictator contrives a likely story, saying that it is a goodwill visit to pay homage and demonstrate loyalty. Moreover, he announces that the delegation has come purposely to support him. He also claims that these people are paying a goodwill visit rather than to be protestors or agitators. Therefore, the meeting is to arrange things as if the delegation is coming purposely to support the policies of the president.

This is a loyal delegation though, as I've just told and they have come a long way But disciolthe is a disciothe. If he should agree to see them, what is? To stop the truck ushers of Gelegele Market marching up here tomorrow to see me. They are just as loyal. Or the very loyal market—women organisation trooping to complain about the price of fish imported from Norway. (A.O.S. 1987, 15)

The president orders that the minister:- of information together with professor Okongo should take care of the delegation. Professor Okongo understands his mission and goes forward to carry it out The professor, knowing the weakness of his master and the familiar tendency of gossip mushrooming within the remit of the circles surrounded such dictators, takes the privilege of this situation to conspire against his colleagues. He informs him bluntly that Ikem is in league with this rebellion. Not only this, but h goes as far as to include the editor of the Gazette. The professor spurs his master to take the initiative to nip the plot on the bud. It is clear that the dictator is prone to believe in such figment of fancies. The dictator begins to doubt that there is an impending menace looming large on the offing.

The fact is that the professor feels that this assignment is a trap that would bring trouble and danger. That is why he resorts to implicate the other colleague to ward off the focus upon himself and his mission. So, he sees that the better thing is to bend the rules and to put the dictator off his stride. The professor manages through this wicked wile to save his bacon and focus the attention of the dictator on Ikem and Chris in lieu of himself. That is why the professor points an accusing finger at the commissioner for information. He asserts that both the commissioner and the editor of the Gazette may be working in cahoots with the rebels. As a matter of fact it is a custom for every dictator to embroil his subordinates against each other in order to control them effectively.

Sam becomes obsessed by the idea that his friends from school days are machinating conspiracy against him. The irony is that when he asks the opinion of

the Attorney —General, he becomes more convincing. Despite the fact that the latter says there is no evidence of disloyalty in respect to the assumed mutiny. The testimony is conveyed in the following utterance:

the Excellency's inimitable sense of humor To speak truth, your Excellency I have no evidence of disloyalty on the part of my honorable colleague. He paused for effect. But nothing showed on His Excellency face. But lawyers are also human. I have a personal feeling which may not stand up in court, I agree, but I hold it very strongly and if Chris were here I would say it to his face.

I don't think Chris is one hundred per cent behind you. (A.O.S, 1967, 21.).

It is clear that the dictator relies on the unsubstantiated information generated from the rival competitive rankers of his aids. Moreover, it is apparent that this judgment which is contrived through subjective opinion is taken as concrete evidence against political rivals. The unfounded testimony as such could have cost an accused innocent his/hers life gratuitously. The judgment of the Attorney General is taken as approved evidence against Chris and Ikem. Accordingly, repressive measures have been resorted to in order to quench whatever thought to be a threat to the regime. He even continues to tie up in knots by declaring that he will never receive these grumbling people on the basis that they are not a cut above the rest. He would never set precedence for other groups to seek meeting his Excellency. He used to implicate the high brow of his cabinet like Professor Okong to be drawn as the short straw. That is why he summoned the professor in the presence of the whole cabinet, to order him to act on his behalf to meet the delegation, and before giving him the nuances of the mission, the dictator takes a pot shot at his ministers of a past mistake they had made over the raid launched on Entebbe. He even goes as far as disclosing the bitter fact that he had never worked in accordance with their advice. This brazen behavior to state unabashedly that he never trusts his ministers is a trait that is shared universally among dictators. And to cap it all he confesses that it is the intelligence that he most relies on. Despite Sam has no trust in his

ministers, he insists that the professor and the director of information should entertain the delegation. He instructs them to follow the outrageous claims that he sympathizes with their cause. And had he not been tied up with very important issues concerning the sovereignty of the state, he would have never hesitated to receive them by himself. To create an affable temperament, he assumes that he has been bound to have an urgent telephone with the president of the United States of America. That is because; he knows well the effect and the impression of such things on rustic peasants. It is interesting thing that the, president for life, doesn't escape any gory details to draw the whole envisage of the reception. And the most amazing ride is when he goes on to inform the professor as to how he should shake hands with whom he would be the chief of the delegation. Not only this, but how he ought to stand before the camera when taking photographs for purposes of propaganda in the press. One does not think that the president's obsession on these meticulous details emanates from good faith. On the contrary, they are meant to move the goalposts to make him get hold of the wrong end of the stick. That is because the dictator wishes that his ministers should be always in unfavorable and crest-fallen situation. This tendency to stultify and mortify is a common feature pertains to all tyrannical rulers.

The following events see the escalation in the political disruption in Kangan republic. The dictator becomes suspicious and resorts to using dirty means to revenge on those whom he thinks they pose a threat to his absolute arbitrary power. As a result Ikem is assassinated, while Chris is left in a state of infirm of purpose to seek only a hide to save his life. It is important to record the fact that the dictator relies heavily on information obtained through foreign agents. Beatrice, during the party which was attended by the high officials as well as some Americans, narrated that she asked the American girl who sat near her about the national newspaper, the

Gazette. The American girl said that she has heard that its editor is a Marxist. To the puzzle of the narrator, Sam blurts out as saying something that indicates his acceptance to this accusation. The meeting with the delegation of Kangan was a sizeable opportunity for Ikem to strengthen the ties with these destitute. Moreover, he manages to impress the taxi drivers to the extent that these lament him of not living up to the status of ministers. Ministers used to be entailed by a code that living opulently is an evidence of loyalty to the regime. Those who are in high top offices and lead a modest life devoid of luxury could be considered as dissents. Applying this model upon Ikem, he is typically a rebel in the eyes of the administration. And for this reason Sam assassinated Ikem, his close friend, in cold blood without batting an eye lash. The murder of ikem compelled Chris to seek hide and refuge in the region of Abazan. On his way to that region, Sam has been overthrown by his own Chief of Commander. It is better to refer to the unhappy coincidence that Chris has been killed on the same day of toppling out Sam, the president for life.

The reader is assumed. no doubt, would be disappointed because the story ends abruptly by the death of the three classmates. This end of the life of the leaders signifies that there is no hope for the oppressed to shatter the shackles of their bondage. That means Achebe has left these destitute on the lurch by not indicating any emergence or suggested solution. Abazanians have to continue living with their miserable conditions because a military coup would be like the former. These people experienced the harsh governing of military to the extent they see no light through the tunnel. The demonstration of welcoming the new change could be marked as premonition of natural human longing for good and better circumstance. The end of the story without indicating any way or vision to lead to a better change in the life of the underdog seems a futile unhappy conclusion. But one can deduce

from the structure of the story where there are women who play major roles in the narrative, there is way out. That is because women in contrast to men are considered to be signs of peace and life. The men engage in power struggle that costs them their lives, whereas women stand the difficulties to survive irrespective of the heated battle. This shows that the women are to carry the mission to continue pursuing what the men seek to achieve. And for this purpose, they begin by the traditional ritual of naming the baby girl who metaphorically indicates future. That means optimistic future is looming large in the offing.

Chapter Five

5.1. Stylistic Features

This study is concerned with the examination of the style of Achebe. That is due to the fact that, he is regarded to have an idiosyncratic tradition in terms of the style and technique. Likewise, this technique is said to have impacted greatly the style of the most African novelists that come at the heels of him. Those novelists emulate the tradition and adopt the technique in such a way that it becomes a feature in terms of African literature. Therefore, a man who is capable of forging this amazing difference should be highly acknowledged and profoundly appreciated. And for this reason the study attempts to investigate these features that could be set up as the springboard from which his technique has been catapulted. Moreover, the study aims to spot some of these elements and tries to illuminate the aesthetic value behind these enthralling patterns of rhetorical devices. Consequently, the study would make allowances for these symbolic aspects to figure largely in the ensuing pages.

The first novel *Things Fall Apart*, from its immediate opening delineated and demarcated a piece of land assigned to a proud people. These proud folk consider their survival as unique phenomenon in a world that it is their oyster. This is due to the fact that these people and their only nine villages are barely supposed to be the end of the world. The end of the world in terms these people are unconscious of the existence of any other humans but themselves. The term 'beyond' could not make any difference, for it conceals more than reveals. The previous discourse is meant to say that Achebe wants from the start to challenge the distorted portrayal fashioned by Joyce Cary; that Africa is a home for primitive beings. The introduction of the athletically organized competitive sports of wrestling in the forefront of the novel is also to defy this alleged primitiveness.

The writer from the beginning resorts to the Igbo culture to draw from it folktales, proverbs, riddles, superstition and so forth. Those cultural devices paint his style with distinguished taste and scent. For instance, Unoka, at the season of the rain, like the rest of his folk, is watching the coming of a kite sailing leisurely against the blue sky. He would sing with his whole being, welcoming it back from its long journey, and asking if it had brought home any length of cloth. This superstition is blended in the narration to give it a measure of genuinely Igbo flavor. The famous Igbo saying, that highlights the significance of entertaining guests is drawn occasionally to emphasize the spirit of Igbo regarding receiving guests and friends. 'He who brings kola brings life'. The night represents for these people a source of fear and danger. And for this reason children are warned to not whistle for fear of evil spirits. But a moonlight night summons people to make merriness and hilarity. A vivid proverb is cited to enforce the conviviality of the atmosphere. 'Then the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk'. Achebe demonstrated the status of his tribe as having a powerful position not only in war but as well in magic and medicine. The history of this potent war—medicine was old as the old tribe itself. The famous spiritual doctor was an old woman with one leg. A shrine was set for this woman in the centre of Umuofia. And nobody dared to come near the shrine after dusk for fear to be confronted by her.

It is interesting to note that fact that the neighbors of Umuofia would never engage in war before seeking peaceful settlement. And Umuofians should be careful to consult their oracle to be certain that their case was fair, clear and just. There were some occasions when Umuofians were defeated in war, because they did not conform to and comply with the oracle's disagreement of such a war of blame. The exposition of this legend in details meant to clarify the fact that these

people were not lacking in a source of narrative to draw from. That is to diverse the biased picture that is depicted by European authors; that Africans could hardly considered to have a speech. Achebe by indulging meticulously on these African fables is to elucidate that his people were endowed by nature with rich irrigate. value and dignity.

Achebe was fascinated by the impact of saying, so he would never escape opportunity suited a proper saying. These people seem to have a saying related to every aspect of their daily life. The upbringing of their offspring needs a suitable saying to inculcate the societal norms and the values of the community to be passed from generation to another. 'A man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness.' The rule of cause and effect has its own saying to allude to it. 'A toad does not run in the daytime for nothing'. A proverb is always used to denote the embarrassment of a person when unfavorable incident is cited. 'An old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned'. When Okonkwo goes to a rich man to ask for yams after he has cleared his farm, he addresses the man in a proverb. 'The lizard that jumped from the high iroko tree to the ground said he would praise himself if no one else did.' Through this proverb Okonkwo is bragging that he is an industrial laborer. Moreover, announcing that he is fending for himself and his family at an age when his peers still suck at their mothers' breasts. The wealthy man also responds using a proverb. 'Eneke the bird says that since men have learnt to shoot without missing, he has learnt to fly without perching'. The rich man continues to give interpretation to this proverb have learnt to be stingy with any yams, But I can trust you. I know it as I look at you. Then he immediately draws a proverb that fits the situation. As our fathers said, 'you can tell a ripe corn by its look'

Achebe draws the superstition of how infertile women sit under the shade of ancient silk—cotton tree which is sacred because spirits of good children live in it. It is apparent that Achebe does not feel any kind of humiliation to record these inane notions. These seemingly frivolous tales, at least from advanced sophisticated people's perspective, are meant by Achebe to stress the fact that superstition is universal phenomenon. Achebe incorporates the superstition of the quarrel between Earth and Sky and how Sky withheld rain for seven years, until crops withered and the dead could not be buried because the hoes broke on the stony Earth. This severe drought only could be lessened by the intervention of Vulture. Vulture managed to soften the anger of the Sky by singing for mercy. Ultimately, the Sky was moved to pity and gave vulture rain wrapped in leaves of coco—yam. But as Vulture flew home his long claws pierced the leaves and the rain fell as it had never fallen before. The rain fell so heavily, to the extent that Vulture could not be able to deliver his message. He flew to a distant land from where he spied a fire. The interesting thing is that when Vulture reached the place of the fire, he realized that it is the man making a sacrifice. Vulture warmed himself in the fire and ate the entrails. This folktale tries to give an interpretation to many complicated things confronted early man in dealing with esoteric natural phenomenon. Likewise, the appearance of locusts was also given superstitious explanation. That is because a race 'of stunted men who abide in caves in distant land, were in charge of these locusts. These strange men were responsible for sending these harmful insects to Umuofia once in a life of every generation. A story of this kind relieves the anxiety of these destitute, and giving them hopes that famines would no longer be replaced by abundance and bounty.

When Okonkwo participated in killing his foster son, this act is considered as sinister action for which the goddess wipes out whole families. This view is

uttered by Obierika, the closest friend of Okonkwo, lamenting and blaming the former for taking part in the killing. The strange thing is that Okonkwo defends his position by drawing the following proverb. 'A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which his mother puts into its palm.' Obierika's son Mduka is renowned for doing his duties as quickly as the speed of lightning. And it is always this brisk astonished his people. Okonkwo ascribes this deft to the father of the child in this proverb. 'When mother—cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth.

Igbo attributes every evil happening to an amiss, either be committed by the inflicted or ordained by supernatural forces. According to this light Okonkwo could not find justification for his wife, Ekwefi's successive child death. After the death of the second child, Okonkwo went to a medicine man, to inquire what was amiss. The medicine man told him that the child was an ogbanje, one of these wicked children who, when they died, entered their mother's wombs to be born again. The prescription which the man gave was very strange; he ordered Okonkwo to send his wife to her people just after being pregnant again. The child was born at his mother's land also died just after being circumcised. Okonkwo did not content and accept his fate, but he sought the wisdom of another more powerful doctor. Like the former medicine man the latter ordered Okonkwo to change the place in which he used to sleep with his wife. Okonkwo did as it was prescribed, but with no avail.

When Okonkwo settled in exile among his mother's clan after he has killed a man inadvertently, he decided to give a big feast. Okonkwo ordered three goats to be killed with a number of fowls. Ekwefi protested that two goats were quite sufficient. Okonkwo replied in a proverb. 'I cannot live on the bank of a river and wash my hands with spittle'. There was a man named Enoch who converted to

Christianity and used to be more enthusiastic than Mr. Brown. The villagers called him 'The outsider who wept louder than the bereaved'. Achebe cited the proverb, 'a man danced so the drums were beaten for him'. This proverb is mentioned when Mr. Smith discredited the essence of the stories that mutilation will deter the born of ogbanje children.

In the second novel, *No Longer at Ease*, the community of the Umuofians divided in respect to the trial of Obi Okonkwo. The majority took side with him despite they debunked his stuffed shirt behavior to stand aloof from his folk. The argument that they posed is that as the proverb went to say. 'The fox must be chased away first; after that the hen might be warned against wandering into the bush.' The president of the association went as far as saying that; 'I am against people reaping where they have not sown. But we have a saying that if you want to eat a toad you should look for a fat and juicy one'. The interesting thing, however, is that some of the people defending the accused by drawing a folktale that says; 'the house rat 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.' These cultural literary devices are drawn spontaneously by these tribal folks despite the fact now they are residing in the big city not the rural villages of Umuofians. This usage of such cultural elements in civil society proves the hypothesis that these elements are embedded dormant and expressed instinctively.

The Opposition of the marriage between Obi and the ostracized girl is objected from his entire clan even his Christian parents. His clan argues that the business of marriage is not an issue concerns only the bridegroom but the whole community at large. They have a proverb which says that; 'If one tiger brings oil it soils the others.' Moreover, his people remind Obi that he is the first student to be sent overseas to study at the cost of the clan. And for this reason he should repay

them fairly not by choosing an alienated and cursed wife. They draw a proverb that typically fits with the case of Obi. The proverb goes like this; ‘We don’t want to be like the unfortunate child who grows his first tooth and grows a decayed one.’ The association of Umoufja used to convene meetings in which the problems of its members are discussed and solved. In a meeting devoted to help Joshua because he is without a job, the association has given him ten pounds. The congressional gathering conclude that; ‘That is why we say that he who has people is richer than he who has money.’ They continue to praise the spirit of working collaboratively for even the Psalmist emphasizes the necessity for brethren to meet together in harmony. They cited their fathers saying regarding this case; ‘Our fathers also have a saying about the danger of living apart. They say it is the curse of the snake. If all snakes lived together in one place, who would approach them! But they live every one unto himself and so fall easy prey to man.’ When Obi demanded to be given an extra time of four months before starting to pay back, the meeting approves by drawing a saying; ‘A debt may get moldy, but it never decays’. There is an Ibo messenger in the same department with Obi. This messenger asks Obi to lend him thirty shillings to meet the expenses of his wife’s delivery. Then, he illustrates that the reason that makes him to turn to ask this favor because of the saying; ‘When there is a big tree small ones climb on its back to reach the sun’. Obi despite his difficult financial situation, he decided to send thirty—five pounds to pay for his mother’s treatment in a private hospital. He draws unhappy proverb but nonetheless true; ‘The start of weeping is always hard’. The state of affair that Obi follows is to borrow to pay a previous debt, has been referred to by Clara in this proverb; ‘digging a new pit to fill up an old one.

Achebe is interested in his folk superstitions and fables and that is why he fabricates them in his narratives. During Obi’s illness when he went to visit his

family after coming from abroad, he tried to sleep on his back. But he suddenly remembered his folk's tale that if he slept on his back and spider crossed the ceiling above him he would have bad dreams. Obi and his father have an intimate conversation in which his father discloses for the first time that he has been cursed by his own father. That is due to the fact that the father of Obi is the son of Okonkwo who has been converted to Christianity. Obi's father also tells his son that when the news of his father's hanging himself reached him he refused to attend his burial. He further goes on to say that he told them that those who live by the sword must perish by the sword. It is better to remind the reader that Obi's father in this respect is referring to the participation of his father in killing the lad Ikemefuna. When the relationship of Obi and Clara had come to its expected end, the former contemplated the idea that would the latter be impressed had she known that Obi spent sleepless nights grieving. The author gives this very impressed illustration; what comfort did a dead man derived from the knowledge that his murderer was in sack—cloth and ashes? Christopher the faithful friend of Obi tries to console his friend after the split of his fiancé. He does not find suitable words other than drawing the famous Igbo allegory which says; 'The bedbug was said to have spoken to her children when hot water was poured on them all. She told them not to lose heart because whatever was hot in the end turn cold'. When Obi's mother died, her son did not care. An old man of Umuofian's origin says that; 'Wherever something stands, another thing stands beside it'. In other words, he is saying that the father of Obi did it.

Therefore, this syndrome seems to be a curse on the entire family. The Arrow of God is so replete with the cultural aspects that exhibit Igbo's worldview. Ezeulu's wife, Matefi, when she sees the moon, blurts joyfully, 'may your face meeting mine brings good fortune'. While the younger wife, Ugoye,

seems to dislike the posture of the moon because, 'it sits awkwardly like an evil moon'. The first wife negates the idea that the moon is evil, and she clarifies that; 'a bad moon does not leave anyone in doubt. Like the one under which Okata died. Its legs were up in the air'. At this time Ezeulu goes to his barn to fetch the twelve sacred yams to be roasted on the smoldering fire as sacrifices to the new moon. While he waited for the yams to roast, his mind goes to the festival of the Pumpkin Leaves for which he will send his assistant to tell them to announce the day to the six villages of Umuaro. It seems that the task of Ezeulu, the high priest, depends enormously on watching the new moon. And for this reason he hates the idea that one day he will be dependent on someone else's eyes as his grandfather had done when his sight failed.

Ezeulu when performing his duties as the high priest of Ulu, he begins to doubt his own power. He sees that this assumed power is futile since it could never be put into practice. The humorous thing is that he claims that his position is no more than, 'the power in the anus of the proud dog who sought to put out a furnace with his puny fart'. In the proposal of this thesis, it is stated that Achebe did not beat his breast to portray his people in moulds in which other can only detect scruple and opprobrium. It is for such depiction that Achebe did not try to pull any punches.

One of the strange discourses that have no parallel is the expressiorr that emanates from the high priest when he is angry. The priest tells his son in a bout of indignation; 'If you hear me asking you about it again take my name and give it to a dog'. The strange custom which also astonished Obiageli, the little daughter of Ezeulu is that the latter continues eating the yam without palm oil and does not give her even the smallest crumbs. This is due to the fact that it the custom when it comes to the new moon. Achebe does not feel any kind of reserve to convey the

exact attitude and frame mind of his people. Again, he records the words of the priest who feels that his words are not taken seriously by his progeny. 'To you whatever I say in this house is no more effective than the fart of a dog breaks to put out a fire.'

The endowment of these wonderful people is clearly manifested in their readiness to synopsise every aspect of experience in a saying. When Ojiugo comes to collect the bowls she finds Nwafo polishing off the soup. She tells her mother in anger about this seemingly a symptom of selfishness. Her mother responds in a proverb. 'Do you blame a vulture for perching over a carcass? Ezeulu holds his drunken son highly in regard due to his bravery and fearless. Despite the fact that he knows well the fate of the brave man would be certain death. He cites the following proverb to confirm it. 'The man who has never submitted to anything will soon submit to the burial mat.' There is a belief in superstition that could be a cult that characterized the whole life of the Umuofians. When Obika and his friend Ofoedu bring Akueke's husband on their heads and tied him to a bed, they set him under the Ukwa tree and dared any one to move him. This kind of act represents for the people an ominous violation because the threatening ripe fruit on the tree were as big as water pots. This sign is seen by the people as sinister to bring ruin on the whole clan. Even when Ezeulu arrived confirmed the impending destruction by wailing a lament and ordered his son to set his law free. This reveals that the belief in superstitious practices is common and prevalent to include all the stratum of population.

There is a heated debate after the high priest has attested in favor of Okperi in its right of the disputed land. There is a remarkable leader called Nwaka who spearheads the opposition against Ezeulu. This leader incited the people to refute the justifications of the high priest. He opens his address by a proverb,' Wisdom is

like a goatskin bag; every man carries his own'. Through this proverb, he smashed to smithereens the credibility and infallible position of the high priest. The interesting thing is that Ezeulu does not surrender to this seemingly overwhelming victory. He springs to his feet and salutes the gathering and draws this proverb, 'When an adult in the house the she—goat is not left to suffer the pains of parturition on its tether.' The response of his bitter enemy, Nwaka, was as the saying, 'pulled out their hair and chewed it.'

There is a folktale that teaches a lesson of the importance of being humble and self—effacing. It is narrated, 'Once there was a great wrestler whose back never known the ground. He wrestled from village to village until he had thrown every man in the world. Then he decided that he must go and wrestle in the land of the spirits, and became champion there as well. He rent and beat every spirit that came forward. Some had seven heads, some ten; but he beat them all. His companion who sings his praise on the flute begged him to come away, but he would not, his blood was roused, his ear nailed up. Rather than heed the call to go home he gave a challenge to the spirits to bring out their best and strongest wrestler. So they sent him his personal god, a little wiry spirit who seized him with one hand and smashed him on the stony earth. Achebe draws a suitable proverb to signify the tendency of those who used to inflict but it seems that this violation compelled even the priest of Idemili to intervene. It is better to note that Ezeulu himself was disgusted, but the severe attack of his rivals especially the priest of Idemili, caused him to stand up to defense. In his defense, the high priest resorts to using the proverb, 'unless the wind blows we do not see the fowl's rump.' The meaning of the mentioned proverb is that such a misfortune is good to happen so that one can know the thoughts of his friends and neighbors. When Ezeulu asks the mother of her prodigal son, she refuses to talk. And the priest responds by

answering the wife that she is telling him in her mind proverbially, ‘a man who brings home ant—infested faggots should not complain if he is visited by lizards.’ Edogo’s first child died after three months and his father thought that this child brought sickness with him into the world. This superstitious belief seems to give interpretation to the sickness of the second child. Many people believe that the sickness is due to the milk of its mother. They argue that the milk has got bitter. The treatment for such case according to superstition acknowledged in that society is to squirt some of the milk into a bowl to see if it would kill an ant. But the ant which was dropped into it stayed alive; so the fault was not with the milk.

Ezeulu suffers great deal from the seemingly rebellious attitude of his homefolk. The fault is that he expected them to act according to his wishes. Ezeulu’s Sons attribute this proclivity to the fact their father has disregarded the famous saying of his elders, ‘if a man sought for a companion who acted entirely like himself he would live in solitude.’ The Igbo reveres their fathers to the extent that when one says my father told me, it means that as if one swears the greatest oath. They have a proverb, ‘A man does not speak a lie to his son.’ Also they have another one that confirms the former, ‘A man can swear before the most dreaded deity on what his father told him.’ Moreover, they hold the notion that the greatest liar among men still speaks the truth to his own son. These people lay great value to treating their guests. They use repeatedly the saying that urges the best rendering hospitality to their fellow folk. The recurrence saying in this respect is that; ‘our people say that he is a fool who treats his brother worse than a stranger.’ Presenting kola nut is a prerequisite to qualify a person to be considered a hospitable. There is a tradition among the Igbo, it is that; who breaks the kola nut must be the host and they will not by any means let the guest do the break. They have a saying, ‘That cannot be. We do not bypass a man and enter his compound.’

And kola nut has always rendered to guests with prayers and ritual practices. Example of this hymn and prayer can be seen in Ezeulu's praising wine; 'May the man who tapped this wine have life to continue his good work. May those of us who drank it also have life, the land of Olu and the land of Igbo.'

Obika, the drunken son of Ezeulu has made a quarrel with white man and his father boasted that he would pronounce a few words on the white man. Had Ezeulu known that it is his son who strikes the first blow, he would make the world to know the power of his mouth. When he is told that it is better to seek the truth before inflicting such horrible condemnation, he responds in a proverb. 'That is true. But let us first chase away the wild cat, afterwards we blame the hen.' Ezeulu has met with opposition from his friends and son regarding the trouble of his drunken son. But he sticks to his guns drawing the proverb that, 'They said when we see an old woman stop in her dance to point again and again in the same direction we can be sure that somewhere there something happened long ago which touched the root of her life. Akuehue, the faithful friend of Ezeulu pointed out that dilemma rests assured in the fact the high priest has great compound. And he draws the proverb that says, 'That is why we say that whatever tunes you play in the compound of a great man there is always someone to dance to it.' But Ezeulu sees things differently, he concludes that the flying into his face will make no change and draws this proverb to accentuate his position, 'The fly that perches on a mound of dung may strut around as it likes, it cannot move the mound. He goes on to say his people will not understand him because,' they cannot know the Thing which beats the drum to which Ezeulu dances. And that is why Ezeulu relies on himself because his people seem to refrain from adopting his line. In a state of frustration the priest finds solace in the old adage, 'a man who has nowhere else to put his hand for support puts it on his own knee.'

Igbo people regards highly work and they do not tolerate interruption of another's occupation. They have a saying, 'a man who visits a craftsman at work finds a sullen host.' Likewise, they also reveres respecting customs and keeping the traditions of their community. Obika praises himself for he has let his pride go unmolested despite temptation during her last visit. This is due to the fact that he behaves in accordance with ancient custom that demands uplong these traffics. d for this reason, in this respect, he is like the lizard that fell down from the high oko tree he felt entitled to praise himself if nobody else did, as the proverb signifies. It is observed that Igbo people live their life in continuous fear of gods, priests, priestess, medicine men as well as the occult power of super flatware forces. In the narrative it is recorded that children ran from the great medicine man that came to the compound of the high priest to perform a sacrifice. The fleeing of the children was ascribed to the superstition that he would turn a person into a dog by slapping him on the buttocks. The relationship between Edogo, the carpenter and his uncle Okeke, the medicine doctor, has always generates disgust and dismay from the part of Ezeulu. He once describes them as, 'a derelict mortar and rotten palm nuts.' Ezeulu says to the policemen who came to arrest him, 'the chief Priest of Umuaro is not a soup you can lick in a hurry.' There is a saying that a person should not delay a work for tomorrow, 'if the rat could not run fast enough it must make way for tortoise.' When things are confused to be defined, Igbo say that, 'Every lizard lies on its belly, so we cannot tell which has a bellyache.' A proverb is drawn to indicate there are many options to resort to, 'there are more ways than one of killing a dog.' It seems that Igbo do not feel shyness to mention terms that may be considered as taboos in other cultures. For instance, Ezeulu describes his haste in the following words; 'I am going out in the rain again, he had said. 'Washing my feet now would be like cleaning the anus before passing excrement.' Quarrel between brothers is detested because it is always seen as a foolish that would play

into enemy's hands, 'when brothers fight to death a stranger inherits their father's estate.' Ezeulu has sent his son, Oduche, among the white people to learn their religion and their way of living not to adopt their religion and customs. By so doing the priest wants his son to report for him whatever he hears or sees. When the mission of the son turned out to be the other way round, the father is full of anger and says that he did not know that he was sending a goat's skull. Moreover, he expels his son to go and rejoice that his father cannot count on him. And he cited a proverb, realized that relined his mother's funeral.' One who never heeds to the wisdom of old people is said that he or she is like, 'the fly that has no one to advise him follows the corpse into the ground.' The high priest could not stomach the miserable plights that seem to be gathered to bring him to his ultimate destiny. A fire began to rage inside his chest and push a dry bitterness up his mouth in a proverbial utterances, "*When a hardshake passes the elbow it becomes another thing. The sleep that lasts from one market day to another has become death. The man who likes the meat of the funeral ram, why does he recover when sickness visits him? The mighty tree falls and the little birds scatter in the bush. The little bird which hops off the ground and lands on an ant—hill may not know it but is still on the ground. A conunon snake which a man sees all alone may become a python in his eyes. The very thing which kills Mother Rat is always there to make sure that its young ones never open their eyes. The boy who persists in asking what happened to his father before he has enough strength to avenge him is asking for his father's fate. The man who belittles the sickness which monkey has suffered should ask to see the eyes which his nurse got from blowing the sick fire. When death wants to take a little dog it prevents it from smelling even excrement.*

When a woman has its baby dead after birth *the* people who visits her to console, they always speak in proverb, 'to dry her eyes because it is better the

water is spilled than the pot broken.’ In case a person sees a harm inflicted upon another he would instinctively prepare himself to meet that circumstance. ‘When one slave sees another cast into a shallow grave he should know that when the time comes he will go the same way.’ There is strange proverb alluding to punching children for showing any kind’ of misbehavior, ‘to slap okro seeds out of his mouth.’ A person with heavy burden of responsibilities is referred to in this proverb,’ Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. Good conduct and respect between people should be mutually reciprocated. And for this reason a proverb is ready to be used in respect of this tradition, ‘if you respect today’s king others will respect you when your turn comes.’ The good idea of making relations in a diversity of contexts is laudable and applauded as it appears in this saying, ‘if you look only in one direction your neck will become stiff. True knowledge and coming to grips with problems is advisable, ‘only when you are close to a man that you can begin to smell his breath. Opportunities in careers should be based on qualifications and expertise and if the other way round prevails, then, the following proverb is drawn to fit with the situation, ‘when those standing have not got their share you are talking about those kneeling.’ The philosophy of being keen to seize the available optimum chance is of highly significance. That is why there is a good proverb to express it,’ if you fail to take away a strong man’s sword when he is on the ground, will you do it when he gets up.’ These marvelous people have a readymade saying concerning almost every aspect of their life. If something is very expensive that requires a lot of money and the person has money to burn, he would use this proverb, ‘It costs water and firewood.’ And if an errand or mission has to be conducted without preparation, people say, ‘Man no fit fight tiger with empty hand.’ There is an interesting saying which highlights the importance of one’s clan and familial bond. ‘When a mad man walks naked it is his kinsmen who feel shame not himself.’ One of the most intriguing proverbs is that cited by Igbo to

advice people to be wary and estimate their own strength before engaging in a dispute, ‘why do not you fall where your pieces could be gathered?’ The amazing thing is that these people find in their environment a widow’s cruse source of rich aspects to draw from. For instance when a task can be achieved by little work and expenses, there is no need to exert huge effort and scattering the resources. So this case can be expressed in this way, ‘if the very herb we go to seek in the forest now grows at our very backyard are we not saved the journey? If one can do things by exerting minimum task, he or she could use, ‘one stone to kill two birds with’.

Chapter Six

Development of Achebe's Writings, Findings and recommendations

Chinua Achebe started writing novels when he was at the threshold of graduating from the prestigious Ibadan University. And the stunning thing is that his first novel was met with appreciation and admiration from both readers and critics alike. This welcome may be attributed to the treatment of the theme of the confrontation between the African with the European's world. The first contact between these different cultures resulted in bitterness and frustration at least on the side of the Africans. The repercussion of which has indelible vestigial marks to this very day. The theme of the antithetical traditions has been adopted by the ensuing generation of African writers. That means Achebe affected to a fault not only the form of African fiction but its content as well. This phenomenon characterizes the whole work of African novelists and thanks of course are due to the pioneer Achebe who has laid down its solid foundation. The cultural conflict in work of art was first brought to attention by Achebe when he assiduously endeavored to reclaim African history with its glorious heritage. As a matter of fact the colonial writers tend to deny that Africa has either past or culture in the first place. The significance

that Achebe has made is that he exposes African traditions to be on the same wavelength with that of Europe. Despite the fact that the novel as a modern genre is an exclusively a European product and Africa did not even envisage its existence until the European came in contact with them in nineteenth century. And the language used is foreign language which is also strange to Africans. But the amazing thing is that Achebe succeeded in conveying his ideas or more precisely

his community's world view in that language without losing the flavor and scent of Igbo traditions. The content and the idiom obviously remain Igbo. The mode of narration reflects every aspect of Igbo ethics and realities. The important feature that could be observed when reading Achebe's stories, is that one would have experienced an esoteric gut feeling or at any rate something like a sixth sense. That is, one perceives Achebe as if there witnessing the incidents when the story is happening.

This is due to his extraordinary faculty to create a work of art synonymous to the authentic realities of that peculiar community. The popular theme of Achebe is the clash between old traditions of Igbo with outside world. The conflict with colonial institutions and missionaries has become the prevalent among the young African writers. Okonkwo is chosen to represent the resistance armed with the sanctity of his community's ideas and views which he wants to preserve in the face of the foreign intrusion. The missionaries have definite purpose to save what they assumed to be a benighted people or rescue those whom they regarded savages. The wonderful phenomenon is that the Christianity brought by the white man managed to gain victory over the ancestral traditions in one fell swoop. The Christians divided the native families and assaulted highly valued beliefs. The son of the protagonist converted to the new religion marked the downfall of his father. The tragic demise of the hero at the end of the novel by committing suicide, is therefore, not just the end of a recalcitrant who thinks he could square the circle, but signals the beginning of obliterating of all the most sacred beliefs of these amazing people. Not only Okonkwo's tragedy symbolizes the disintegration and complete annihilation of all the sacred heritage of so once proud people, but it initializes the ushering in of modernity to replace African old mores. This new reality solidifies and consolidates the theory which asserts that change is inevitable and the whole universe is in continuous metamorphosis.

One could sense that there is development concerning the images in which the characters used to be impersonated. Take for instance the character of Okonkwo; he is being portrayed throughout the narration as a flat character whose disposition never prone to change. Despite the fact that he experienced the bitter alienation in exile, he never benefited from that exodus. The estrangement of the protagonist is a golden opportunity to make him grow and accumulate new sight and enlightenment. The long absence from his village has added nothing in terms of individual's growth to benefit from exposure to different experience. But the sad thing is that he remains as rigid as if he has never left his village. He continues to behave as before and so proved would never come to compromise. Consequently, he seems to be up to his larks again. He believes in hard work as a sole distinctive feature of true masculinity and violence as the perfect way to settle a score with his enemies. That means his character only has static image and his responses and actions could be easily predicted. This view could be easily detected as characteristics pertained only to him.

Moreover, the beginning of Achebe's writings focuses mainly on Igbo's legacy. The interest in Igbo's legacy can be more than just admiration. This interest in reviving his community's legacy can be a concern and worry because he seems to foreshadow the effacement of his tribe's traditions. This unconscious feeling towards losing these traditions becomes something of obsession. That is why the author devotes the first novels to tackle aspects which have something to do with Igbo's culture and history. The creation of the character of Okonkwo in the mould of a stubborn and rigid person is to signify African resistance. That is not to say that Africans have submitted to the new modernity without showing any resistance. In the second novel, *No Longer at Ease* (1960), there is a shift to record the fundamental changes that happened to the Igbo society. This change takes place

due to measures taken by colonial policies meant to westernize African intelligentsia. The colonial authorities in Africa contrive a new device that will help in obliterating African heritage. This is done by sending native students to study in Europe. Scholarships seem to add a second string to the mission of Christian missionaries. Consequently, the British administration manages to uproot Igbo's traditions and implant European's modernity. This is really a new breakthrough because it is dealt with by an African not a colonizer. For the preceding writers are whites who do not see anything detrimental to the Africans and their culture by imposing foreign comport on African natives. These writers used to see themselves as apostles who have a mission and message on behalf of Europe to modernize the primitives. Actually this mission is what is referred to as the white man's burden. It is agreed upon that the depiction of African characters and their deeds by European writers is far removed from reality due to the tendency of being charged with biases and animosity. It is mentioned in the proposal of this thesis that the incentive force that spurs Achebe to write fictions about his community and its culture is to allege these defames. Moreover, he aims to correct false assumptions which are responsible for making Achebe reaching the fever pitch.

The second novel depicts the second generation whose experience is quite different from the realities of the time of Okonkwo at the beginning of the first encounter between Africans and European. The experience of the second generation is the other way round; this time it is the Africans who go to Europe seeking higher education. In Europe the African students are exposed directly to European culture and influences. So, the development in Achebe's writing could be seen clearly in the shift from tackling the impact of colonization to deal with the contradictions brought about by the expatriates to damage their own communities.

The first novel the threat and danger are posed by different foreigners whereas the threat here comes from beloved children. The confrontation now is between Africans vis-à-vis Africans. In other words the struggle turned out to be between westernization brought about by virtue of scholarships rendered to Africans by colonial administration, and traditional indigenous culture. The contradiction emanates from the fact that Obi, the pioneer, who spearheads the reform is delusional by his own fancies. It is important to refer to his arrogant proposal to his fellow students in London 'that the public service of Nigeria would remain corrupt until old Africans at the top were replaced by young men from the universities. It is obvious that this upstart sees himself as a savior and redeemer to purify the civil service from its maladies and tragedies manifested in corruption and bribery. The paradoxical thing is that Obi, the enthusiast who vows to fight these debauched traits, once he comes to practice, turns out to be a damp squib. At first trial he violates the principles he used to profess by committing what he is preaching against. The irony is that his people do not criticize him for taking the bribe but they disparage and deride the smallness of the money involved. They wonder that a man should choose a meaty and juicy game not small and thin one. It is the cheap eating that is being condemned not the essence of the action. Obi is actually a typical reflection to his society which is in transitional phase to cross the bridge from primitive to modern era. The yardsticks for modernity are being Christianity and Western education. People would go to various lengths to assure that they have secured their share in vocations that are about to be vacated. These people would resort to every possible means as the independence draws nearer and the days of the white man are about to become history. The sad thing is that Obi and his likes are not entirely assimilated the western norms. As a matter of fact, they seem to be changed outwardly by pretending ostensibly adopting western lifestyle whereas

inwardly they remain barbarian and savage. It is relevant in this respect to cite Ernest Emenyonu (1978, 129.), who quoted Obi boasting:

It was scandalous that the middle of the twentieth century a man could be barred from marrying a girl simply because her great -great- great-great —grandfather had been dedicated to serve a god, thereby setting himself apart and turning his descendents into a forbidden caste to the end of time. Quite unbelievable not even my mother can stop me.

Despite Obi professes sophisticated modern views, it turned out that he is merely a claimant and hypocrite. The prove of this vision lies in the fact that Obi follows every aspect of old tribal code of behavior to the extent that he refuses to marry his fiancé osu girl on the same grounds of his traditional folk. The contradiction between what one believes and what one practically performs is the real cause of alienation and the downfall of Obi to spend several years in prison for eating small amount of money.

The development in Achebe's writing is not necessarily manifested in transformation of the character's growth and awareness. It is also seen in the treatment of the relatively same themes with a new perspective and vision. Despite the fact that Okonkwo and Obi are differently nurtured and natured, they seem to be typically alike. Both of them do not represent their people at their times, and both of them, when come to their fatal destiny, they come to realize the painful truth that no one sympathizes or grieves over their demise. That is because of their rigid temperament amid so tolerant folk. The essence of these amazing people is to accommodate differences and that is why Okonkwo and his father have room to live juxtaposed less than one roof irrespective to the huge differences and their opposed nature.

The protagonist of *Arrow of God* is the most convincing characterization when it comes to contrast him with the other heroes. This character is legitimately occupies its office as the custodian of the people's tradition by virtue of being the high priest. This privilege is not enjoyed by either Okonkwo or Obi. So their putting themselves in the forefront to lead their people is not ordained by any religious or secular prerogative. While Ezeulu is glibly working for change, his former counterparts seem to resist it on the basis that they want to preserve people's culture. Ezeulu despite his strong belief in his people's sanctioned traditions has sent his own son to join the Christian church. In so doing he is misunderstood by both his clan and the white men in the narrative. The dilemma of the former heroes is that their problems could have found possible solutions. Whereas Ezeulu's conflict is with his own self and his god. And for this reason he argues that he has no grudge against his people. If his clan has suffered from his reluctance and criteria to pronounce the day of the harvest, he would have assumed that he is merely an arrow in the bow of his god. The incidents at the end saw the dispersal of the people from around the priest and affiliation towards Christians. People now have come to the conclusion that their god judges their priest guilty and as thus their standpoint is correct. The conflict of Okonkwo is with outside forces which can be identified and its strength can be estimated. However, this is not true to Ezeulu whose enemy is not a tangible identity to be spotted and confronted. It appears that Ezeulu as a half person managed to perform his duties as a man of truth and integrity. Moreover, he manages to stick- in- the-mud to hold these principles even the results of which are harmful to the welfare of his community like the case of the land issue. Ezeulu as a half spirit, however, suffers of doubt and obsession concerning his god. Despite the fact that the priest sincerely performs his religious duties so as to appease his god, it seems that his god does not appreciate these pious overtures. On the contrary, instead of being rewarded he

is cruelly redeemed by the sudden death of his son coincided with the height of Ezeuku's services to Ulu. Thus the high priest is puzzled by this betrayal and moans in disbelief.

Ulu, were there when this happened to me? Why, he asked himself Again and again, why had Ulu chosen to deal thus with him. 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 m its own mother put into its palm? (A.O.G.:i978, 141.).

These qualms and uncertainties at the end brought about his discredit of his god. The irony is that when the people begin to affiliate with the Christians, it is not that his son who is being sent to be his eyes and ears among Christians, who led the conversion, but another man called Mr. Good country That means the high priest has failed to influence the change while forfeiting the old world. It is obvious that change seems to be a fait accompli, for Okonkwo's adamant resistance fails to hinder its determined course. And the educated grandson of Okonkwo also proved to be out of the mark when he tries to reform the public service applying his own ad hoc devices. While Ezeulu's efforts are not better than the preceding heroes, because he neither succeeds to preserve his traditions nor manage to have a hand in the new development which resulted in a whole conversion of his people to Christianity.

The fourth work deals with African politics when indigenous political nationals undertake the burden of running the destiny of their nations at the heels of the independence. It is needless to say that the concern of Achebe shifted to deal with political issues in modern perspective in a manner that the traditional Igbo did not accustomed to. It is emphasized elsewhere in this thesis that the Igbo do not have a central government and therefore do not experience modern competitive political parties as it's the norm in Europe. The sad thing is that the British when

evacuated Nigeria, they wanted the nascent nation to follow suit their model of governing in terms of western democracy. The British has succeeded to destroy all African traditionally ruling systems without paying attention to the people's needs and their customs.

A man of the people is published in 1966 not a long the military coup which takes the power from the seemingly corrupted elected government. The central character is Chief Honorable M. A. Nanga who is depicted throughout the narrative as a sycophant and demagogic political agitator. He succeeds to be a parliamentarian and minister despite his notorious attitude of riding shod over his tribal destitute. He is introduced in the opening of the novella as a man who is loved and held in great esteem and regard by his tribal folk. He is being depicted in such a way that the natives see him synonymous to affability and hilarity. And his actions and behavior always generate sympathy and appreciations. That is why his folk do not see anything rancorous in his entire frame of mind and doings. This does not seem so when it comes to the picture envisaged by the narrator. The narrator from the start analyzed the character of the chief Nanga in critical and suspicious light. That is why he brags before his colleagues that he would hold Chief Nanga at arm's length. In fact the narrator despises the chief but he finds himself in a position between the devil and the deep blue sea. He is dejected being rendered aloof in the periphery while his peers entertain and enjoy the privileges and the dividends of the independent Therefore, he accepts the good overture of the chief to stay in his grand house to indulge and consume the facilities which he once regards as depletion and wasting of the nation's national resources by a few. Not only this but he is ready to take a scholarship to study abroad obtained through the Chief's coattails. The hypocrisy of the narrator casts doubt on the sincerity and integrity of the entire enterprise. It is important to accentuate the fact that, when a

person endeavors combating corruption, s/h must be clean. The narrator proves to be naïve in his stand of criticizing harshly the chief's behavior, while at the same time acting like him at a fault.

The problems and occupations of the hero of the first novel are devised and entangled to combat foreigners who threaten his community. It is important to stress that the motive of that hero has nothing to do with personal interest but only the welfare of his people. But when it comes to the position of the hero of *A Man of the People*, the picture is quite wrong way up. Nanga's wicked devices are machinated against some of his native folk. And it is obvious fact that his struggle is of personal interest.

Achebe, by creating the seeming opposite characters of Okonkwo and Chief Nanga, is alluding cleverly to the division within elite ranks who are embroiled to achieve worldly gains at the expense of their people. In other words, he laments in grieve the fate of Africa's politics after independence. The creation of the character of Chief Nanga is typically mimicking and fitting with the representation of politicians, Africa witnessed in the aftermath of the colonial rule. The politics of Africa on those time and may be till now is characterized by blackmail, corruption, bribery and repressive measures. Even outstanding political figures can stoop to any immoral means in order to climb to power ruthlessly. It is better to refer to Nanga's way of snarling and yapping like a dog in the parliament to curry favor with the prime minister for the meaty prize. The indigenous politicians, the press, the military and people are driven to power and wealth with no regard to the means used. This is demonstrated clearly when Nanga fails to convince Odili to step down by bribery, he does not hesitate to injure and kill as Odili and Max were injured and killed respectively. It is strange that Nanga exhibits great humility when it comes to white men, whereas his country men are not given this privilege.

There are European couples who greet the Chief by his first name and the reaction of the narrator is:

I was greatly shocked. These two people were not elder than I and yet had the audacity to call Chief i'vanga, he is now almost forgotten Christian name, but white shock at me even more has his reaction. I had turned quickly and anxiously to watch his face contort with fury. But no, He had replied sweetly 'Hi Jane, Hi John, 'I could not understand. I was dead certain that if any of our people for that matter had called him Mich, he would have gone rampaging mad. (A. O.P. 1966,76,).

The fifth novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, is set in a far African country in contrast to the previous ones. Therefore, the setting is far removed from Igbo land which is the backdrop of his early productions. And for this reason the flavor and whiff that are of Igbo's origin are not mottled. So, this novel can be singled out to signify the range of the maturity and completion of Achebe's style and growth. The writer is no longer wants to be in the same line of trying to assert his people's identity and place. The former four fictions have attained and accomplished that purpose beyond measure to the extent that any addition would be considered supererogatory. More importantly, the novel shifts from depicted Igbo issues to deal with contemporary African politics. Despite the fact that the imaginary state that the fiction illustrates its current politics could be Nigeria or Uganda or any African corrupted country, such portrayal rings true at any rate. The former works of Achebe are so immersed in the realities of Nigeria or more precisely on Igbo' worldview that is why the style of this novel does not bear resemblance to the technique adopted in the former four novels. The using of Igbo cultural elements is not resorted to due to the fact that the setting is not as the same as the first ones. The style has come to be similar to the style of any author who uses modern vernacular. The new technique of narration is that the novel is told by multiple

voices. One feature of this multiplicity is the voice of a round character of a woman. Beatrice is a dominant female character who plays her role satisfactorily to a fault. By assigning a central role for a woman it reveals that Achebe's litmus test of a view that women are on the same wavelength as men. One can ascribe this development to the fact that Achebe's first works were recording incidents before permeating and pervading of modernity in Africa. If Achebe has given a full grown character for women in those narratives it would be against authenticity. This is true despite the fact that women within the remit of that society, as it has been proved elsewhere in this study, are equal to men. This equality does mean that women would have been privileged with all prerogatives endowed to men by natural selection. And it is obvious that issues of physical strength and leadership would remain a masculine exclusive sphere. Therefore, one holds the view that Achebe is making balance to give a wide berth to feminist's attack and the actual reality of well established norms in that part of the world. That is because, may be, some feminists would accuse Achebe of siding and sympathizing with his gender at the cost of theirs. That is not true because Achebe depicts what is there in his Society, not his own fancies. In other terms, Achebe is not expressing his opinion, but he is a storyteller who records what he has heard. Achebe was reared in a Christian family and lived for many years in the West. So, he is quite aware of the significance of the number three in Western conscience. The belief in trinity is a major common of the gospel. It is according to this background that Achebe has Created three Principal male characters to take the rein of the leadership in that fictitious state. This is not to say that the three leaders were religion characters. They are secular in their World view but different in their Political Perspectives. Sam is a symbol of a tyrannical Who seeks absolute Power to the detriment of his people. Chris is a Politician who believes in the possibility of reforming the Coupled System by Working inside govern not outside the system. He is a good

man in a bad regime The Position of Ikem is to do everything Possible to change the Whole system, even to resort to Political agitation That is why he delivered heated Political lectures at the campus of the university In those lectures he sought to persuade the Students' Union to take part in the process of Pressuring the regime to change its heinous Policies. The fruit of Ikem's Political enlighten to the students materializes in demonstrations and strikes that ensues those Political lectures This Political incitement brought solutions but palliative after which he situation will come up to its larks again. This evil cycle seems a syndrome that African republics suffered off during post colonial rule. Achebe's disappointment over the African policies can be seen clearly in this novel. Despite the fact that this novel came after a long interval since the publishing of A man of the People, but it does not offer new hope or indicate any possible alternative course. This stance can be attributed to the experience of Achebe during Biafra short—lived state. Achebe has assumed the portfolio of ministry of information and thus acts as the official spokesman of the secessionists. The creation of the character of Ikem was to impersonate the writer himself. As the role played by the minister of information in the nascent government of Biafra has ended in apparent failure, so his parallel matching part proved to be no better than him.

One may argue that the way in which the novel ended does not necessarily indicates that there is no hope for amelioration and recuperation. On the contrary, this seemingly obstructed labor may reproduce a healthier offspring that can hold up the flag of salvation and final victory. This view of good augury has its root in the structure of the story. In the end of the story, it is narrated that the women, Beatrice and Elwa, have been conducted a ritual ceremony of naming the posthumous child of Ikem. Celebration of such occasion in amidst of the internecine war between the oppressive regime and the opposition significances

hope of imminent deliverance. The interesting thing to observe in this regard is that this celebration of naming the baby is carried out according to the traditional norms of the holy conventions of the tribe. The observation of traditional practices by these women indicates that there is a tendency to preserve the nation's values. It could mean also that the sticking to one's heritage and custom is instrumental weapon in the struggle. The survival of women represents resistance and the continuity of the battle. The ceremonial of giving a name to the child according to the traditions clarifies the adoption of the same cause which the father of the child has paid his soul for.

6.2. Research Findings

This long tourism has come to its ultimate finality. The interesting engagement with Achebe and his amazing folk has impacted the researcher with indelible visions and learning. The following listed points are some of the findings:

- 1- Achebe's earlier novels affirm that the Africans are endowed by history, heritage, beauty and dignity.
- 2- Achebe's navels reveal that the style adopted mimics the ethos and temperament of Igbo community. An African communities in general.
- 3- Achebe's narration capabilities put his work in the forefront of the refined global literature.
- 4- Achebe's style impacted African literature to the extent that his tradition is emulated by many ensuing generation of novelists.
- 5- Achebe's novels set the record straight in terms of biases and misrepresentation of African people, history, culture and civilization.
- 6- Achebe's literary prestige qualifies him to be the father of African literature.

These findings roughly answer the queries asked by the researcher when he embarked on this research.

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