Chapter 3

Critical Analysis of Major Themes and Characters

What’s in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet. (Shakespeare II, ii)

Neither one can dare to oppose nor wish to anticipate the great Bard, William Shakespeare, from whose mighty pen these lofty words have promulgated. It is true that the change in name does not amend the innate characteristic of the thing. But in mankind name of the person carries a huge significance. It is not merely a name but an identity that reverberates even after his death.

The very first line of Things Fall Apart introduces Okonkwo, at the age of eighteen, who had made his name eminent throughout the nine villages and beyond them by throwing Amalinze the Cat—a great wrestler who was unbeaten for seven years from Umuofia to Mbaino. Okonkwo’s move in wrestling “was as slippery as a fish in water”; his fame “rested on solid personal achievements” and “had grown like a bushfire in the harmattan” (Things 3). His father Unoka was “unsuccessful”, “loafer” (Things 5), “lazy and improvident” (4). He never planned for future. He spent his earnings on palm-wine leaving his wife and children for starvation. Throughout his life he borrowed money from people and remained enough smart to keep the excuses ready on his fingers’ tips when they used to come for their money. He died with heavy debt and without any title. These made Okonkwo abhor his father. His circumstances made him so insensitive that he did not hesitate to kill Ikemefuna, in spite of knowing that he loved him more than his own son Nwoye. However, in Achebe’s words,
... down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness. It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and capricious gods and of magic... It was not external but lay deep within himself. It was the fear of himself, lest he should be found to resemble his father. (Things 13)

Okonkwo always cared for not to inherit his father’s attributes, especially “gentleness” and “idleness” (13). He was a self-made man. In a very short duration he became a wealthy farmer and earned three wives. He loved war as it provided him a platform to show his valour. He never hesitated to bring home human heads from war. Achebe writes,

...he [Okonkwo] was not afraid of war. He was a man of action, a man of war. Unlike his father he could stand the look of blood. (Things 10)

Ezeulu is the chief protagonist of the novel, Arrow of God. In Igbo Eze means ‘the king’ or ‘the priest’ and Ulu is a God. Hence, he is called Ezeulu—the priest of God Ulu who works as an arbitrator between Ulu and the people of six villages who worship Ulu as their common deity. He possesses power to which responsibility comes simultaneously, so he is answerable for everything that materializes in Umuaro. When the war like situation takes place between Umuaro and Okperi over land, he takes side of the truth and tells Winterbottom that the people of Okperi are the real owner of the land and thus, invites the disappointment of his people.

Okonkwo and Ezeulu are vehicles carrying cultural heritage of the Igbo and Africa. They belong to the colonial period but they respond it differently. For Okonkwo, it is scornful for the Igbo culture and unmanliness of his clan in their acquiescence of the colonial influence, while for Ezeulu nothing is wrong in acquiescing the foreign culture if it does not distort the native culture and makes them
capable to stand by themselves. Thus, culture is a key word to study these two particular characters because Nigeria has a rich heritage of ethnic diversity that makes the life more indigenous. But, unfortunately it was highly affected by intrusion of the colonialists. The heritage of South Africa comprises nothing else but apartheid that has taken shape of culture in the South African society. David is highly influenced by this culture, whereas, Curren, Bheki, John, Lucy and Michael are distressed by it. Micah A. Nanga is introduced in the very first line of the book as “the most approachable politician” (Man 1). His spurious reputation of being “a man of the people” (Man 1) satirizes the man in power after independence. Nanga and Major Samsonite Ossai (Sam) are Machiavellian, interested only in personal gain. They represent the dirty politics and corruption of Nigeria after independence. Odili leaves his noble profession of teaching and joins politics to take revenge as Nanga has hurt his manly ego. Khayyoom considers him a product “of hybrid culture” affiliated with “two worlds” (72) while Ahmed says,

The trouble with Odili is that he himself is not sure of his idealism. He is neither like Okonkwo who had a clear-cut policy towards the colonialists (that they should be driven out of their land at any cost) nor like Ezeulu who had a great vision and foresight that prompts him into action to fortify his clan to successfully face possible attack from the foreign forces; nor is he like Obi who tries to put his idealism into practice. (149)

Christopher Oriko (Chris), the central character of Anthills of the Savannah, is the Commissioner for Information. He embodies Jesus Christ in many senses. In Mwinlaaru’s words, Chris “develops from a powerless character through fear and perplexity to an active and self-reformed one” (intro. 3) and Chitulu describes, “the president [Sam] as a perpetrator of evil and injustice and Chris as a crusader of justice
and fairplay” (96). These speak volumes of Chris’ character. But, Chris says to Beatrice, “I have always been in the middle. Neither as bright as Ikem and not such a social success as Sam. I have always been the lucky one, in a way” (Anthills 62). Thus, he is very intelligent, but he never undervalues other; he has his own perception for the life, however, he never takes others’ opinions for granted; he is a person of high regards, but he considers himself a moderate person and his soul admires the qualities that Beatrice, Sam and Ikem possess.

Ikem Osodi is a poet and a fervent editor of the National Gazette. As a student he was “the brightest in the class” (Anthills 61) and his writing career exhibits that knowledge. He yearns to bring about changes in Kangan state, so he uses his pen as a mighty weapon to fight for the rights of common people and tries to unveil the dirty politics. For his crystal like lucid and satirical writings, he becomes an arch enemy of Sam who considers him an unpatriotic element; gets him assassinated; and finally declares that he was arrested by a team of security officers and when he was being taken in a military vehicle for questioning at the State Research Council, he seized a gun from one of his escorts and was fatally wounded by gunshot during the scuffle between him and his guards. This is how he meets his early death. Major Sam is the Head of State of Kangan. In Chris’s words,

He has all the success. From school to Sandhurst; the first African Second Lieutenant in the Army; ADC to the Governor-General; Royal Equerry during the Queen’s visit; Officer Commanding at Independence; Colonel at the time of the coup; General and His Excellence, the Head of State, after. (Anthills 62)

Sam gets the power without any preparation for political leadership. Reverberating the political history the Civilian politicians are proved to be corrupted
and the young army commander i.e. Sam is invited. Chris and Ikem are the springboards, by the support of which he unswervingly achieves the pinnacle in politics. In his earlier political career, he lives under “irrational and excessive” fear of demonstrations by the delegates of Abazon. But with the passage of time he “mastered his power” (Anthills 12). He is ambitious to become the President-for-Life and when the people of Abazon do not vote him, he discriminates them from their basic right to access water when they are suffering from drought.

Thus, Achebe and Coetzee have toiled much at the traits of their characters that have either enhanced or devastated their names. They exploit others, for instance, Nanga, Joll, Mandel and Sam as they inherit the colonial features; they struggle for their own lives, for instance, Ikem, Lucy, Odili, the barbarian girl, Bheki and John as they want to live at any cost; they escape from their society, for instance, Michael K and David as they are dissatisfied with social norms; they assimilate or reject foreign influence and die, for instance, Ezeulu and Okonkwo respectively, as they love their own name and culture more than anything else. Whereas, Mrs Curren, the Magistrate and Chris contemplate for the well-being of others as they yearn for a meaningful life. Chris’s life reminds me Christ’s fable of a Seed that sprouts, grows and becomes a huge tree. That single seed loses its own existence completely but altruistically gives shadow, shelter, and numerous fruits so that other may survive. Like Christ, Chris too, sacrifices his life for Adamma, a helpless school girl who becomes the victim of sexual hunger of the police and thus saves the dignity of mankind.

The male protagonists of selected novels share a common power and weakness i.e. ‘women’. The barbarian girl was the victim of sexual harassment by Joll and his people. In the very beginning of the novel Disgrace, Coetzee writes, “FOR A MAN of his age, fifty-two, divorced, he [David] has, to his mind, solved the problem
of sex rather well” (1). David, the professor of Communication skills at Cape Town Technical University, is twice divorced, and prostitutes are the ways out of his problems. Soraya, the prostitute, Dawn, the new secretary of his department, Melanie Isaacs, his student, Bev and so on, are subjected to his physical hunger. Once while returning home he finds Melanie and brings her at his home. He invites her to spend a night with him. When she asks the reason, he says, “Because you ought to. . . . Because a woman’s beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it” (Disgrace 16). Like Nanga and Sam, David too, is a Lothario. For him Melanie’s beauty is a natural entity, accessible to all and if she already shares her beauty then, “From fairest creatures we desire increase” he says, “that thereby beauty’s rose might never die” (Disgrace 16). This is how he uses his dexterity to fulfil his sexual hunger and seduces her, which in his words was,

Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core. As though she had decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration, like a rabbit when the jaws of the fox close on its neck. So that everything done to her might be done, as it were, far away. (Disgrace 25)

David violates the social, professional, institutional, generational and ethical norms and brings disgrace to the sanctimonious relationship between the teacher and the disciple. He makes an outrageous confession to the inquiry committee in the following words:

Very well, he says, let me confess. The story begins one evening, I forget the date, but not long past. I was walking through the old college gardens and so, it happened, was the young woman in question, Ms Isaacs. Our paths crossed. Words passed between us, and at that moment something happened
which, not being a poet, I will not try to describe. Suffice it to say that Eros entered. After that I was not the same. (Disgrace 52)

Thus, David is like a savage. He disobeys the ban on intimacy across the generations, a ban of mixing power relations with sexual relations by mechanizing Melanie an object to fulfil his hunger. He capitulates himself to the “Ungovernable impulse” and says, “I was not myself. I was no longer a fifty-year-old divorce at a loose end. I became a servant of Eros” (Disgrace 52). He does not feel shame when he is dismissed from the university. The following dialogue between a journalist and David divulges that he neither regrets nor feels sorry for what he has done.

‘Are you sorry?’ says the girl. The recorder is thrust closer. ‘Do you regret what you did?’ ‘No,’ he says. ‘I was enriched by the experience.’ . . . ‘So would you do it again?’‘I don’t think I will have another chance’. (Disgrace 56)

David’s confession and realization bring no change to his persona. David and the Magistrate both are educated. The Magistrate belongs to the judicial system while David belongs to the educational institution of South Africa and they both represent the failure of the system they belong to. They possess a high status in the society, but they both fail to justify it. They both are aged. David is fifty-two and the Magistrate is waiting for the retirement, however, age and experience have taught no lesson to David, but a little bit to the Magistrate. They both fail to govern their impulses and cross the generational boundaries to satisfy them. Redemption after disgrace is the hub of both the novels, but the Magistrate’s effort for it is sometimes seemed to be superficial and questionable in the case of David. Therefore, the categorization of them into protagonists or antagonists is very difficult. Like David, Mr Nanga and Sam are also misguided by their education. They are corrupt in their profession. Education
has not brought any change in their psyche. Nanga and Sam are the worms of dirty politics. They are by nature, fraud, corrupt, greedy, vulture like, betrayal etc. For them the body of a woman is a site of joy and to explore and exploit it is a matter of adventure. They change the women as if they were dresses. For instance, Elsie is substituted by Edna, in the case of Nanga and Soraya is substituted by another Soraya, Dawn, Melanie, Bev, etc. in the case of David. This is how they show their manliness. Women are their weakness, at the same time objects to show their power. This sexual perversion of these characters is the consequence of their spiritual degradation. They keep the trigger in their hands to control other, but unable to control their own animal spirit. They ignore the fact that there is a power, though invisible, that governs the cosmos. Comparing to them, Okonkwo, Ezeulu, Michael and Vercueil are not educated. But they are prudent. They can govern their impulses because they are more concerned with the life around them.

There is a similarity between the way the Magistrate consummates his relationship with the barbarian girl before he hands her over to her community and Chris consummates his relationship with Beatrice before he leaves Kangan for Abazon forever. In both the cases it is a mistake done consciously, however, it carries significance. All the four know that their past was full of hardship and future is going to be very thorny. What they have with them is present. In both the cases it is the desire and effort of female characters to credit that night to their own account so that they may reminisce it as the sweet memory in their lives in future.

Discontentment of the period for the established social norms is revealed by many characters. Okonkwo’s wide spread name and fame in the society is one reality and another is his punishment of exile for seven years by his clan, when he unknowingly shot a dead man’s sixteen-year-old-son who was dancing the traditional
farewell to his father. After exile, when he returns Umuofia, he realizes that his vacate place in his clan has been already filled by someone else. In Achebe’s words, “A man’s place was not always there, waiting for him. As soon as he left, someone else rose and filled it. The clan was like a lizard; if it lost its tail it soon grew another” (Things 161). He realizes that now he has lost the chance to lead his warlike clan against the new religion entrenched in Umuofia in his absence. He cannot see his people assimilating the foreign culture. First he resists the both, his native and the foreign influence. When he falls short to protect his cherished culture, he cuts himself off from his society. Eventually, he cuddles unnatural death instead of capitulation.

Similarly K resists the life imposed on him by the society during the Civil War and cuts himself off from that society by choosing an isolated life in mountains, in lap of the Nature. Mrs Curren’s daughter also prefers a separate life in America. She has firmly decided that she would come back only when the authorities of South Africa will be hanged by their heels from the lampposts. So she would come to throw stones at their bodies and dance in the street. This is how she expresses her dissatisfaction and resentment for the South African government and society.

Age can never be a hurdle when the heart is throbbing with the life. In spite of their decaying age Okonkwo, Mrs Curren and Ezeulu lead a one man army. Okonkwo is the only person in Umuofia who tells Obierika that they must give a fight to the white men and drive them out from their land. Ezeulu goes against his wives and people, and sends his son Oduche, as his eyes to learn “the secrets of the white man’s magic” (Arrow 126). He tells his people that it is foolish to defy the white man. His son and his people start assimilating the foreign culture. But with the passage of time Ezeulu realizes that “When a handshake goes beyond the elbow . . . it has turned to another thing” (Arrow 13). Later he amends his opinion and tells them to challenge
the white man. He always remains alone in his struggles, first with his own clan to enrich their culture and to make them capable to stand with the changing world, secondly with the white man to protect his cultural life and power from them. Mrs Curren, 80 year old, a retired professor of Classical Language, struggles alone from within and from without. She accepts the reality that death is at her threshold and she would die without seeing her daughter in her crucial period. In a letter to her daughter she writes,

How I longed for you to be here, to hold me, comfort me! I begin to understand the true meaning of the embrace. We embrace to be embraced. We embrace our children to be folded in the arms of the future, to pass ourselves on beyond death, to be transported. That is how it was when I embraced you, always. We bear children in order to be mothered by them.

(Age 5)

This reality nibbles Mrs Curren with every proceeding moment like her cancer from within. On the other hand, she has a face-to-face experience of apartheid. She realizes that the privileges the white South Africans are enjoying actually belong to their fellow black South Africans. She says, “The land that is presented to me is a land of smiling neighbors” (Age 54). She strives to give justice to the black South Africans, to Bheki and John. The Magistrate is stirred on seeing manoeuvring of the barbarians by Joll’s well designed senseless method of interrogation. He strives to change the wrong notion of the Third Bureau for the barbarians, but in vain. However, his seizure for his help to the barbarian girl brings a drastic change in his personality. In that solitude of the cell he brings with him “a world of thoughts and memories” (Waiting 93) that teaches him the true meaning of freedom. He thinks,
If I was the object of an injustice, a minor injustice, when they locked me in here, I am now no more than a pile of blood, bone and meat that is unhappy.

(Waiting 93)

The words mentioned above provoke the reader to rethink about the existence of human beings. Man is not merely a pile of blood, bone and meat. It is reason that has made the man unique—a rational being. The continuous evolution has taught man to seek right and follow duty. Man has learned to claim for a just life and developed audacity to give a vigorous fight to injustice. Here, it is The Magistrate who leads a one man army for the barbarians who have no courage to “stand up and fight” (Waiting 108) against Joll and his men. Only he, from the mass gathered to enjoy the commotion of the humiliation of twelve barbarians, raises his voice and stops Joll from using a hammer on them. He screams,

Look! . . . We are the great miracle of creation! But from some blows this miraculous body cannot repair itself! How –! . . . Look at these men! . . .

*Men!* (Waiting 117).

Here, the word ‘Men’ carries a great significance. God has taken a great toil in the creation of human being, so perfect in shape and size, and what a miraculous function heart, eyes, tongue and other parts of the body do. Therefore, the first duty of the human being is to love, honour, justify and dignify this great creation. Without this realization human being is nothing but a beast. The barbarians described in the novel have not yet realized this subtle lesson and their torturers are interested only in demonstrating to the Magistrate,

. . . what it meant to live in a body, as a body, a body which can entertain notions of justice only as long as it is whole and well, which very soon forgets them when its head is gripped and a pipe is pushed down its gullet
and pints of salt water are poured into it till it coughs and retches and flails and voids itself. (Waiting 126)

Demand for justice itself proves the empire of injustice, and puts the so-called civilization on one scale and evolution on another. The words mentioned above shows that it is very difficult to fight for and adhere with justice, while in the case of the Magistrate, is a goal, the certainty for which he himself is uncertain. In his words,

. . . what do I stand against except the new science of degradation that kills people on their knees, confused and disgraced in their own eyes? Would I have dared to face the crowd to demand justice for these ridiculous barbarian prisoners with their backsides in the air? (Waiting 118)

Despite this confused mental state regarding his own role in this noble fight, knowing that the working of justice is often obscure and that he is “plodding through endless space towards an obscure goal” (Waiting 86), the Magistrate raises his voice for justice. He believes that it should be continued until a perfect civilization is established. For that one needs a keen desire that “I want to live. As every man wants to live. To live and live and live. No matter what” (Waiting 130). This desire may lead the man for a just life and then the “darkness gives way to the first dove-grey light” (Waiting 87). The Magistrate fights against two things: one the ridiculous method of interrogation and secondly to the wrong notion regarding the barbarians. The day comes when Joll, endangered by the barbarians, has to leave the town.

Thus, these four characters struggle for justice as they know that it is the ultimate goal of the humanity. They prefer to do what Christ, Mahavir, Buddha, Krishna, Vivekananda, etc. did. They show the way to the humanity so that a just society can be established. For instance, Krishna encouraged Pandavas for the war. War was not his aim. Instead it was injustice in the form of Kauravas that he wanted
to end. Justice says that everyone must have bread, but in reality what we find is asymmetrical growth of the society. The well developed countries spend lots of money on missiles and atomic power ignoring the mass dying of starvation. That proves that civilization is questionable and evolution is yet under the process. A complete evolution means a transformation of mankind from savage to the civilized. Then only we can have a just society for which Plato had dreamt. People would live with peace, harmony, equality and fraternity; where no individual will strive to survive or struggle against injustice and no one would ever need to commit suicide. Achebe and Coetzee aim to achieve this state of life. Their characters indirectly show where the change is required and to bring about that change they lead a one man army, without thinking about the consequence.

Police force is a constituted body, a law enforcement agency that enforces law, protects property and limits civil disorder. It is expected to protect the innocent and bring the culprit to the pillory. This is how peace, security and justice can be established. Unfortunately, after independence this agency has failed to execute its duty. In *Anthills of the Savannah* a police constable confiscates important documents of Ikem for not putting parking light even though there is no need for it. Ikem informs the Superintendent of Traffic about this incident who tells the constable that the person to whom he has arrested is nobody else but Mr Ikem Osodi, the Editor of the *National Gazette*. This incident teaches Ikem a lesson that the justice and security are not meant for the ordinary man. In the end of the novel Chris is shot by a police officer when he rescues a school girl from the sexual harassment by a drunken police officer. Thus, Chris becomes “one great Man” (Milton, Paradise I, IV) i.e. the Messiah, but the police officer brings “disgrace to the force” (Anthills 206).
For Mrs Curren, “... blood is precious, more precious than gold and diamonds. Because blood is one: a pool of life dispersed among us in separate existence, but belonging by nature together: lent, not given: held in common, in trust, to be preserved: seeming to live in us, but only seeming, for in truth we live in it” (Age 63-64). But for the South African police blood of the black South Africans is nothing but dirty water that should be drained away in the cesspool. They deliberately fatally hit John. When Mrs Curren suggests Florence and Bheki that they should call the ambulance and complain against the police, they deny as they do not trust the police force. However, Curren says,

If you don’t complain they will go on behaving as they like. Even if it gets you nowhere, you must stand up to them. I am not talking about the police only. I am talking about men in power. They must see you are not afraid.

This is a serious matter. (Age 66)

Police force, military force, education system, judicial system, political body, etc are constituted bodies. They have to be very active to protect and maintain the sovereignty. They are actually the pillars on which the Nation stands. But, in the words mentioned above we find 80 year old protagonist’s realization that now it is the high time for the people to raise their voice against the men who are in power if they are not satisfied with their performance. Death of John, Bheki, his friends, Ikem, Chris, the old man and the little boy in Waiting for the Barbarians proves that the police “are terrorists” (Age 67). Coetzee criticises the soldiers as they go to the shops, take whatever they want and leave without paying. He writes, “Of what use is it for the shopkeeper to raise the alarm when the criminals and the civil guard are the same people?” (Waiting 135). The shopkeepers complain to Mandel, who is in charge in absence of Joll. He makes promises but does not act. In Disgrace after Lucy’s rape
and burglary at her home, Ettinger suggests her not to trust the police. “The best is, you save yourself, because the police are not going to save you, not any more, you can be sure” (Disgrace 100). In Things Fall Apart when Okonkwo and other five leaders are imprisoned, the judge announces the verdict that they will have to pay two hundred bags of cowries. But, the court messengers tell to the people of Umuofia that their leaders will not be released unless they pay a fine of two hundred and fifty bags of cowries. Achebe draws the reader’s attention towards the corrupt judicial system that demands the loyalty from the ordinary man. In Life and Times of Michael K the greedy police are interested in the money of Anna.

Sedentary mass is a major stumbling block for independent Nations which were colonized once upon a time. It is the most important reason for the failure of the leaders of the one man army in the selected novels. Okonkwo fails because there is no unity and courage among the people for whom he has raised his voice. They are “broken into tumult instead of action” (Things 194). When Okonkwo and other six reach Umuofia after their release, they find that many people of Umuofia have secured their place under the umbrella of the white man. In Waiting for the Barbarians, no one comes forward from the crowd, when the soldiers of Joll beat twelve barbarians at the square. Instead, when they get tired of beating, Joll offers their canes to the spectators. A girl has been pushed forward to seek her chance. There is a roar of applause when she hits the cane on the prisoner’s buttocks and enjoys the scene with shouts, jokes and obscene advice. In Anthills of the Savannah a police sergeant drags and throws a school girl on the dense road of South Abazon. He pulls her by the wrists. A few passengers, mostly women come to her protest. “But most of the men found it very funny indeed” (Anthills 206). Only Chris comes to her rescue for which the police shot him. Braimoh grapples with the sergeant but cannot grip
him. The crowd on the road see all these things, but remain inactive, unconcerned and indifferent.

We find variation in female characters of the selected novels. Mrs Curren is an eighty year old professor of Classical language, but her fight to the South African government is that of a juvenile freedom fighter, brawling against internal and external enemies. She audaciously accepts the truth regarding her developed cancer and approaching death. The thing that nibbles her from within is her loneliness and from without is exploitation of her fellow black South Africans. She struggles to live and let live. She represents a very simple logic that human beings bear children so that they may not live alone in their old age when they feel an intense need of moral and emotional support. The barbarian girl is found to be a puppet sometimes in the hand of Joll, some other time in the hands of the Magistrate and her community. Her reply “Because there is nowhere else to go” (Waiting 43) to the Magistrate’s question why she is there, reverberates the history of helplessness of the woman.

Lucy’s decision to live a separate life in a town from her divorced parents living in cities contrasts to the barbarian girl’s decision to go back to her community. Her profession and her reputation in Salem of being a self-made girl are the triumph in the male dominated society. However, her gang rape reverberates the history of apartheid in reverse. It sounds like a punishment by the male dominated society for keeping herself away from men, for not yielding to the men’s social, economic and masculine power and for choosing a separate and an independent life. It is a universal masculine tendency that woman is a property of man. David opines that it is the high time for Lucy to take decision either to stay on in a house full of ugly memories and go on brooding on what happened to her, or to put the whole episode behind and start a new chapter elsewhere. She prefers to stay there as she has no hope that things
would ever improve in South Africa where justice and security are illusions, otherwise she would not have to pay the penalty of her ancestors’ deeds. In spite of David’s warning and knowing that Petrus is after her land, she accepts his marriage proposal. She tells David,

    Yes, the road I am following may be the wrong one. But if I leave the farm now I will leave defeated, and will taste that defeat for the rest of my life.

    (Disgrace 161)

Lucy does not want to escape from that place. This perception makes her distinct from Okonkwo, Mrs Curren’s daughter and Michael K. This is the best example of women empowerment. But the consequence of that gang rape, taking form in Lucy’s womb, compels her to seek the social security. The reader feels sorry for her as Petrus, her hand, does not offer her love or security but an alliance, a deal. Lucy says,

    I contribute the land, in return for which I am allowed to creep under his wing. Otherwise, he wants to remind me, I am without protection, I am fair game. (Disgrace 203)

Elsie, Edna and Mrs Nanga also reveal the universal fact that women are always subjected to the sexual harassment, which determines the power of man and limits their own physical capacity. Mr Nanga knows that Elsie is Odili’s girlfriend. However, he seduces her and says to Odili,

    Wonders will never end! Is it about the girl? But you told me you are not serious with her; I asked you because I don’t like any misunderstanding . . .

    (Man 65).

Odili’s temper does not prove his love for Elsie but his ego that is hurt. He says, “You have won today . . . but watch it; I will have the last laugh. I never forget”
(Man 65). Here, we find Odili’s open revolt against Mr Nanga. When Odili loses his temper, Mr Nanga says,

Don’t be childish, Odili . . . After all she is not your wife. What is all this nonsense? She told me there is nothing between you and she, and you told me the same thing ... But anyway I am sorry if you are offended; the mistake is mine . . . . If you like I can bring you six girls this evening. (Man 66)

Thus, Elsie is an object for Nanga and Odili to pass their time and to fulfil their appetite. The role of women in African society is not only to fulfil the physical need of men, but also of machinery to beget as many numbers of sons as they can. Good number of wives and sons is a matter of honour for the masculine gender in Igbo society. For instance, Ezeulu and Okonkwo have three wives and many children; Uchendu has six wives and about twenty-two children, while Nwakibie has nine wives and thirty children. These numbers directly concern to the crop of yams as wives are unpaid hands for the husband. They grow crops, like coco-yams, beans and cassava, while yam is a man’s crop. They sell the production in the market. Professionally and financially they are self-sufficient. Apart from these they look after their family, husband, children, etc. Parents with marriageable daughters would demand a good amount as a bride-price from the suitor and when they are married, they are subjected to their husband’s threat. Okonkwo, for instance, beats his wife. However, Uchendu’s lesson to Okonkwo gives the reader a new perception for the Igbo society. He says,

We all know that a man is the head of the family and his wives do his bidding. A child belongs to its father and his family and not to its mother and her family. A man belongs to his fatherland and not to his motherland. And yet we say Nneka – “Mother is Supreme”. Why is that? (Things 125).
He further says,

It is true that a child belongs to its father. But when a father beats his child, it seeks sympathy in its mother’s hut. A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness he finds refuge in his motherland . . . And that is why we say that mother is supreme. (Things 126)

Thus, through the character of Uchendu, Achebe actually gives a new perception to the Igbo society about their mindset for the woman. Achebe is criticized for the portrayal of women characters as most of them are subjected to the social norms and male dominated society. For instance in Stratton’s words, “Achebe’s women are, indeed, ‘down on one knee’, if not both, before their menfolk and they are regularly making an exit, no doubt ‘in their proper order’, from all the spaces in which power, economic or otherwise, is exercised” and they are “systematically excluded from the political, the economic, the judicial, and even the discoursal life of the community” (25). But we may not fully agree with Stratton. Ndulue and Ozoemena, for instance, are portrayed as an ideal couple in Igbo society who were considered two bodies with one mind. They lived for each other and died together. Gender differences could make egoistic neither of them. Then Nneka, for instance, sacrifices four pairs of twins to the wrong notion of the Igbo society. But during her fifth pregnancy she heartily seeks shelter under the umbrella of the Christianity. She is portrayed as an insurgent.

Beatrice Okoh, an “incredible girl” (Anthills 63), “a priestesses”, “a prophetess” (Anthills 109), is the finest character, born from the mighty pen of Achebe. Her baptismal name is Nwanyibuife, which means, “A female is also something” (Anthills 82). Representing the modern African woman she is a Senior
Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. Thus, she is quite different from the wives of Ezeulu, Okonkwo and even of Coetzee’s the barbarian girl and Lucy. Her friendship with Chris and Ikem is the best example of modernity with morality. She is the only person in the service, male or female, with first-class honours in English from Queen Mary College, University of London. This shows that she is a very intelligent and brilliant woman. Sam knows that she is in love with Chris however, he tries to seduce her. In the presence of all the guests in the party Sam orders,

Beatrice, come and sit here by me . . . African Chiefs are always polygamists . . . . Polygamy is for Africa what monotony is for Europe. (Anthills 74-75)

But Beatrice is not the girl to be seduced by any man. She has confined herself within the realm of certain moral norms. That automatically confines others’ realm. Sam’s power does not tempt her to uplift her professional life and to seek a place in politics. Unlike Lucy she does not compromise with the unfavourable circumstances and remains constant in her love for Chris even after his death. She is bold enough to accept death of Chris. She becomes strong pillar for Elewa and her baby to whom she gives the name Amaechina. Thus, Achebe’s women emerge from the little cells of the anthill; they stand on top of the social-political anthill, creating new roles that will not delimit women’s contribution and participation in social change (Kolawole).

Thus, reality and teaching both go hand-in-hand in the selected novels. Through these characters Coetzee and Achebe show the follies of the Igbo and South African societies and give a new perception to correct them.

➢ Themes in the selected novels:

• Misuse of Power and Exploitation—the Resurrection of Imperialism

Desire for power is unrestrictive in almost all living beings. Wherever there is a cluster a leading element is bound to take place. That actually gives birth to the idea
of superiority and inferiority and to the Darwinian theory of survival of the fittest. However, among all living beings, human being goes beyond all precincts. This reminds me Mirandola’s words quoted from the Genesis,

We have given you, Oh Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor any endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgement and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. I have placed you at the very center of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine. (Oration 7-8)

Thus, God has given all creatures besides human, a unique fixed nature. It is humanism that has made man comprehend his potential power and gift. It considers man as the crown of creation. The augment and collapse both are in his hand. If man wishes he can be an angelic and a saintly or cruel and ghastly figure on the earth. Unfortunately man has misused and misconceptualised the power. In order to become the Superman, man does not know when he fashions himself in the form of Satan who yearns for nothing else but power.
It is well known axiom that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. David wants power on Soraya. When she discontinues her Thursday meeting with him, he tries to find out the same pleasure from other sources but in vain. Once in the city he figures out Soraya with two children, who look like her sons, at that time a “shadow of envy passes over him for the husband he has never seen” (Disgrace 10). Petrus, “a pennypincher” (Disgrace 124), is a hand at Lucy’s farm. In David’s opinion he “has a vision of the future in which people like Lucy have no place” (Disgrace 118). Lucy’s rape by Petrus’ brother-in-law Pollux, gives him an opportunity to elevate his social status from Lucy’s dog-man to the farm manager and then her husband. He tells David that in South Africa a woman should not live single, “. . . it is dangerous, too dangerous. A woman must be marry” (Disgrace 202).

The Igbo believes that no matter how prosperous a man is, if he is unable to rule his women and his children he is not really a man. He is like the man in the song who has eleven wives and not enough soup for his foo-foo. Ezeulu doubts for the immensity of his power. He feels that his power is no more than the power of a child over a goat that is said to be his only till it is alive. But when it is slaughtered he will know soon enough who the real owner is. His masculinity is hurt when his wives take his words for granted. For instance, he says to Matefi,

But you will not listen. To you whatever I say in this house is no more effective than the fart a dog breaks to put out a fire. (Arrow 9)

Okonkwo shows his masculinity by beating his wives. He is punished for beating Ojiugo, his third wife, during the Week of Peace. Ironically it states that as per Igbo culture man can beat his wives on any other day except in the Week of Peace. The barbarian girl, Elsie, Edna and Lucy are the examples of the victim of the masculine power of Joll, Mandel, Nanga and Sam.
Ezeulu and Okonkwo both are afraid for their diminishing power with the intrusion of the British administration. According to Ahmed, Ezeulu . . . realizes the importance of perceiving the power that is bent upon subjugating them and ponders over the strategies primarily to maintain the delicate balance of relationship with the colonial power on the one hand and the relationship amongst his own people on the other. (73)

According to Ahmed, Ezeulu had internal and external threat for personal identity and for the safety of the entire clan, and the realities that the white men came from a distant land, were less in number, ignorant of the native language and lack firm grounding but had organized power and manipulated local support in such a way that they could successfully control the control affairs, prompted Ezeulu to design his own plans to confront his threats (80). Ezeulu feels that someone must know the white man’s knowledge in order to control them. So he sends Oduche as his eyes and ears to learn and master the white man’s knowledge. But with the passage of time he realizes that he has lost the control on his son and feels that he is a ruler who is ruled by his people. They do not give him the respect he deserves as the chief priest of Ulu. So, he deliberately delays to name the day for the New Yam Feast to punish his people. But starvation of the people turns them to the Christianity when Mr Goodcountry assures them that if they make their thank-offering to God they can harvest their crops without fear of Ulu. Thus, this brings an end to Ezeulu’s power.

When Okonkwo returns to Umuofia after his exile he realizes that he has lost his power over his people to lead them against the British administration. Eventually, he commits suicide to save his power before the foreign rule and foreign culture dominate him. Nanga and Sam represent the political power after independence. To win election Nanga gets Chief Koko to kill Max, his opponent. When he fails to bribe
Odili, his private army beats him in such a way that he has to be hospitalized before he can submit his nomination papers for the election. Thus, Nanga wins election with tricks without any opponent.

Sam inherits Ezeulu’s fear of losing power and Nanga’s hunger for power. Achebe writes about Sam, “…the most awful thing about power is not that it corrupts absolutely but that it makes people so utterly boring, so predictable and . . just plain uninteresting” (Anthills 52). He has the colonialist’s psyche to qualm on other to protect his power. He asks Mr Attorney-General about Chris’s allegiance who gives an example of the trouble Jesus had to face with his people who used to say: “Is this not the same fellow who was born in a goat shed because his father had no money to pay for a chalet?” (Achebe, Anthills 22). On the other hand old President Ngongo advices him: “Your greatest risk is your boyhood friends, those who grew up with you in your village. Keep them at arm’s length and you will live long” (22). These enhance Sam’s fear as he knows what he was and how he is now the “nation’s Man of Destiny” (Anthills 22). This results into the fissure between the three childhood friends. Eventually, he betrays and kills Chris and Ikem, to secure his power.

- **Reverberation of History and Preposterous Struggle to Overcome History of Suffering**

  Postcolonial works reverberate the history of exploitation under a new garb. Nigeria and South Africa both were colonized by the British and many other European countries. Many people sacrificed their lives to flung foreign rule out from their native in order to emancipate their motherland. As a writer, however, Achebe is equally neutral in his opinion for the colonial and neo-colonial collision on his Nigeria and Nigerians. He writes,
Yet the fact remains that Nigeria was created by the British – for their own ends. Let us give the devil his due: colonialism in Africa disrupted many things, but it did create big political units where there were small, scattered ones before. Nigeria had hundreds of autonomous communities, ranging in size from the vast Fulani Empire founded by Usman dan Fodio in the North to tiny village entities in the East. Today, it is one country. (English and African Writer 344)

Thus, Achebe puts forward the murky and lucid sides of the colonial and the postcolonial periods. It is like that saying that some people always throw stones in other’s path. It depends on what we make with them; a wall or a bridge or we throw the same in turn. We are the architect of our life. The colonial dominance was like that stone. The Nation was left with the citizens to fabricate Her in the form they may prefer. So only they are responsible for the present state of the independent nations.

But unfortunately after independence men in power have followed the footsteps of the colonizer and the history of exploitation is continued. Arrow of God and Things Fall Apart are set with the background of arrival of the British administration which directly assaulted at the native cultural heritage. They reveal the both, how the native were influenced and how they gave a fight against the foreign rule when they realized that one should bale the water before it rise above the ankle. Age of Iron and Disgrace are set with the apartheid and post-apartheid period respectively and reveal that life was and is hell in both the periods but with the overturned tables. This reminds me Durrant’s words:

Coetzee’s bodies [characters] attempt to mourn their own loss, to tell the story of their own eclipse. And in so doing, they open out onto a wider
history of loss, a history that is not their own and that indeed cannot be owned, a history that ungrounds them as individual subjects. (Durrant 439)

A Man of the People and Anthills of the Savannah introduce the reader with the dirty politics and various corrupted government sectors which were established at the time of formation of constitute of independent Nigeria. They tell us the story of how Nigeria is nibbled by the coup and counter-coup of the power hunger politician. Thus, the history of exploitation goes on in some or the other form. Michael K represents the life restricted by the government during the Civil War. Okonkwo, Mrs Curren, the Magistrate, Chris, Ikem etc. preposterously struggle to overcome from the history of suffering. They try their level best to wake the people and reform the government but in vain.

• **Quest for Identity after Colonial Abandonment and Alienation**

During colonial period nationalism took birth with the awareness of the native about why and how domination was possible for the uitlanders. But this awareness was in scattered form. It was lacking a coherent and an allied effort to revolt against the British administration. Those who took shelter under umbrella of the British administration had nothing to do with identity, but those who abandoned and alienated it undergo quest for identity. The characters of Achebe and Coetzee are found having quest for freedom, for identity. Their works can be seen “as part of the task of creating viable societies from the cultural chaos of the colonial period. Thus they are involved in the recreation of the identity of a society as they make choices and affirmations concerning what was and what should be” (Mutiso 13). Okonkwo alienates himself from the British administration and even from his own clan when he is not satisfied. He finds himself aloof from the mass. Ahmed writes, “Analysis of Okonkwo’s personality clearly shows that he is split into two diametrically opposite
traits within himself” (48). He becomes restless for his own identity. The interloping of the colonizer makes his identity as of being the odd man out in his own community where he was earlier considered as the man of title. He knows that now he has lost that honourable titles and the chance to lead his warlike clan against the new religion. Now the questions with he struggles are where he can fit himself and how he can make his living in this new country. It is new because indigenous culture, religion, administration and judicial system are highly affected by the Christian evangelist, British administration and judicial system. Ezeulu observes the white man very closely and feels that it is their knowledge that has made them so capable to dominate others. His people and at least one of his sons must learn their art which he considers a preparation for the future. But when he realizes that his own power is assaulted, he wants Oduche and his people to abandon the magic of the white man and when they do not agree to him, he alienates himself once again from his family and community. Michael K faces the same problem of identity during the Civil War. He prefers an isolated life in mountains. For his survival he cultivates pumpkins using his skill of gardening. Unfortunately he cannot continue with his isolated life as he is again taken back to the refugee camp. But as it is not the place where he wants to fit himself, he escapes and finally comes back to Cape Town. They all go through psychological perplexity. They collapse because they cannot assimilate between native and foreign ethnicity.

- **Indigenous Inhabitants—Victims Rather than Foes of the Dominant Hegemony**

The barbarians have nothing to do with the unnamed empire and with the power of Joll and Mandel. They do not even claim for their land. What they want is to live without anybody’s interference in lap of the Nature. Lucy does not want the
company of man in any form. She has preferred a separate life as a self-dependent single woman without male domination. She lives amicably with her neighbours in Salem. But David’s words move the reader when he says,

Petrus, my daughter wants to be . . . a good citizen and a good neighbour. She loves the Eastern Cape. She wants to make her life here, she wants to get along with everyone. But how can she do so when she is liable to be attacked at any moment by thugs who then escape scot-free? (Disgrace 138).

Lucy does not have any grudge for the black South Africans. However, she becomes a victim of the history of apartheid. Bheki and John revolt against the South African government for not its power but for misuse of the power and for their own right from which they have been deprived. Michael K does not demand for anything from the government. He has just fed up of the restless life of Cape Town due to the Civil War and he therefore desires for a peaceful life with no harm to other. All these characters, mentioned here, have nothing to do with the men in power. However, they become the victim and suffer for no reason.

- **Quest for the Good Government**

Quest for the good government is universal. The people of Nigeria and South Africa have also desired for a good government since independence. The political history of Nigeria and South Africa reveal a series of coup and counter-coup and the reversal of apartheid which has emitted agitation and discontent. Major Sam is elected because people were not satisfied with the administration of the civil government. Just after coming in power, he desires to become the Life President. But the people of Abazon do not vote him. They want a good government which can be active for their welfare. So he discriminates them from their basic right to access water of the river and orders to close their work of digging the bore-holes in their area to teach them a
lesson: “what it means to offend the sun” (Anthills 121). He is more concerned for his political power and status than his responsibility towards the people who have legitimized his authority. Chris and Ikem both fight for the rights of the common people and struggle to establish a good government when they realize their mistake of electing Sam as the Head. Mrs Curren also desires for the good government and that is why she tells Florence that she should complaint against the men in power if she is underestimated and discriminated from her basic rights with assurance of peace, security, equality and harmony.

- **Corruption—An X-ray of the Postcolonial Period**

  African writers are very keen to expose the corrupt and despicable African leaders and Achebe is one of these writers. His *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* deal with the theme of corruption, political lethargy, bribery, election rigging, poor leadership, inequities in various bodies of constitution and backwardness on the part of the Nigerian ruler in particular and the African politicians in general. Corruption in major national projects and in election is very common in the political history of the independent Nigeria. Nanga is interested in the road project not only because he would get his share from it, but besides it is going to be beneficial for his ten luxury buses of about six thousand pounds which he wants to run on that road for his new business of transportation and for the next coming election. Nanga wants to win election without any opponent so he suborns Maxwell and offers a good amount to Odili to quit dirty politics for him to play. Nanga and Sam encourage the British Amalgamation for the personal benefit. They misuse the national treasury and time comes for the *Nation* to face bankruptcy. This loss eventually goes to the shoulder of the citizen in the form of various taxes. Thus, these particular two novels
provide kaleidoscopic study of dirty politics and corruption of Africa after independence.

- **Security and Justice—Fantasy in the Postcolonial Period**

  Life was not safe and sound during colonial period but what about its security in the postcolonial period? Many eminent economists and thinkers, politicians and philosophers have given their standpoints on security. Their pragmatism teaches the world that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. Security and contentment come only through interdependence. National integrity is the upshot of this interdependence. It can be achieved only through constant change, through discarding old ideas that have outlived their usefulness and adapting others to current facts. Only those means of security are good, are certain, are lasting, that depend on own self and own vigour. This brings economic growth of Nation which cannot be built upon the nobleness of another person or another Nation. We have to struggle by our own and develop a mind-set that we can do anything and the other cannot ever take that away from us. Thus, man’s security comes from within. The real security of a Nation depends on knowledge, experience and ability of its populace.

  After independence the first things that people desire and expect from government is of peace, progress and security. Death of an old man and a baby, and exploitation of the little boy and the barbarian girl who is left blind for rest of her life in *Waiting for the Barbarians*; burglary and Lucy’s rape in *Disgrace*; Bheki and John’s death in *Age of Iron*; treatment to Anne and Michael K in *Life and Times of Michael K* and death of Ikem and Chris and humiliation of Adama in *Anthills of the Savannah* inflame the reader to think that life is apprehensive in postcolonial period. Lucy and David realize that bars, guns, and pistols offer a forged sense of security.
Neither dogs nor guns nor fences can protect them from the threat of violence, as they belong to the upper strata of South African society. In 19th century Kafka had foreseen the disordered bureaucracy in his celebrated work *The Trial*. Here he writes,

“That’s the figure of Justice,” said the painter, finally. “Now I see,” said K., “here’s the blindfold and here are the scales. But aren’t those wings on her heels, and isn’t she moving?” “Yes,” said the painter, “I had to paint it like that according to the contract. It’s actually the figure of justice and the goddess of victory all in one.” “That is not a good combination,” said K. . . “Justice needs to remain still, otherwise the scales will move about and it won’t be possible to make a just verdict.” (174)

Here, wings with scales symbolize the compromise of Goddess Justice with unjust verdict in the postcolonial period. The blindfold on the eyes of the idol of Justice and scales in her hand symbolize the impartial law which Kafka finds a myth–an illusion. The priest’s fable of *Before the Law* signifies that man passes the whole life with a hope that once he will be able to meet Law but seldom succeeds. He struggles for a year just to know for what he is arrested, but in vain. Eventually, he is killed “Like a dog!” (271). Law, order and Justice are illusions in the postcolonial period. We live in a free country; however, freedom and security are dubious. In sovereignty law is used against the innocent by men in power. For them, “. . . legal process is simply one instrument among many” (Waiting 92). The way to reach the Law is like a cobweb in which the ordinary men become the victim of the vulture like politicians and authorities, and lose their lives.

Lucy’s rape, as she feels, was a deliberate and pre-planned attempt. She has no hope from the bureaucracy. But David wants to seek justice from South African government. He says,
I am Lucy’s father. I want those men to be caught and brought before the law and punished. Am I wrong? Am I wrong to want Justice (Disgrace 119)?

David is surprised when he comes to know that the culprits were arrested and now they are out on bail. But it is shocking for him as the police did not feel it necessary to call him before they left them. This is how the bureaucracy works.

- **Internal Crisis—Lose of Origin of Nation**

  Internal crisis is always a powerful factor in making a *Nation* lose its origin like narration in the myth of time. History proves that internal crisis made it possible for the uitlanders domination on the foreign land. In *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu and Ezidemili are two rival priests of Ulu and Idemili, two rival deities and have power on two rival villages, Umuaro and Okperi respectively. People of Umuaro revolted against the people of Okperi for their claim over their ancestors land and lost the war due to Ezeulu’s support to Okperi. This not only intensifies the internal crisis between the two villages, but results into a rupture between the priest and his people. Nwaka, Ezeulu’s arch-rival, shakes hands with Ezidemili. He tells the people that their priest wants the white man to be his friend. But they should not forget their elders’ suggestion that as soon as we shake hands with a leper he will want an embrace. Thus, he poisons the ears of the people of Umuaro in a meeting challenging Ezeulu’s power. Eventually, Mr Winterbottom and Mr Goodcountry succeed in their aim to establish the British administration and spread Christianity. The internal crisis between black and white communities invites the British rule in South Africa. Thus, the old saying that when brothers fight to death a stranger inherits their father’s estate comes true.

- **Religions Obstinacy – a Stumbling Block in the Framework of Nation**

  Religion is a cultural issue. Sometimes it is esteemed as a cultural heritage. It is a set of beliefs decided by the men of titles of certain community. People of
community are expected to adhere to them. Birth, death, marriage, seasonal festivals, various occasions, cultivation and harvesting of crops and many other ceremonies of Igbo life are fabricated with some or the other religion beliefs. To save themselves from the evil spirits and from the wrath of Ulu Igbo tribe offers sacrifices when there are occasions like marriage or if they commit any sin. For instance, Okonkwo have to sacrifice a she-goat and offer a hen, a length of cloth, a hundred cowries and a pot of palm-wine to the shrine of Ani as a punishment for beating his wife during the Week of Peace. They believe in black magic. Obika’s death is another example of the blind adherence to the wrong notion of the Igbo culture.

Achebe, a steadfast novelist, does not dither to criticize his fellowmen for their superstitions and blind beliefs. For instance, the tragic life of Osu, the outcast. In Igbo society Osu is the person dedicated to God. He lives in a special area of the village. He belongs to the forbidden caste. Many things are taboo to him. A razor, for instance, so he would have long, tangled and dirty hair. He cannot attend an assembly of the free-born, and they in turn, cannot shelter under his roof. He can neither marry nor be married by the free-born and his children would also live the same life, restricted from everything. After his death he would be buried by his kind in the “Evil Forest” (Things 148). In the evil forest the dead bodies of the persons who dies of the evil diseases, like leprosy and smallpox and of great medicine-men are buried. It is therefore alive with sinister forces and powers of darkness. Person with fatal disease would also be thrown away in the evil forest alive to be eaten by the animals and birds. The person who commits suicide would not get burial from his clan.

Similarly the child that dies in the earlier stage of its life is also buried in the evil forest. In Igbo culture such child is considered as “an ogbanje” (Achebe, Things 73), that means a child who after its death enters its mother’s womb to be born again.
The medicine-man would mutilate the dead child and takes it away to bury in the evil forest, holding it by the ankle and dragging it on the ground behind him. It is believed that after such treatment it would think twice before coming again, unless it is one of the stubborn ones who return, carrying the stamp of its mutilation – a missing finger or a dark line where the medicine-man’s razor had cut it. There would be no mourning for the dead child. The reader feels pity for the mother like, Ekwefi who “had borne ten children and nine of them had died in infancy…” (Things 72-73) swallowed the disgrace of her dead children.

Another example is that of the wrong notion of the Igbo regarding the birth of twins and Nneka, the wife of Amadi becomes the casualty of such superstition. She is pregnant for the fifth time. In her previous four pregnancies she gave birth to twins and in Igbo culture twins are considered as the devil’s deed and therefore they were thrown away. Thus, she suffers the loss of eight children who were thrown away before her eyes and she could do nothing. No one else but the mother is affected and humiliated. Igbo religion is very numb towards women who are sometimes treated as a token, a virgin, for instance, in the case of murder of Ezeugo. This encourages the missionary’s activity of conversion of the natives. Achebe writes that Nwoye is not “captivated (139)” by the Holy Trinity, but the cries of the twins in the bush of the evil forest, especially the murder of Ikemefuna, blind beliefs of his fellowmen etc. make him restless and provoke him to rethink about the enigma of life. Though he does not understand the Holy Trinity however the words of the hymn give relief to his restless soul. For him they are like “the drops of the frozen rain melting on the dry plate of the panting earth” (Things 139). And that is why he accepts the new religion. Eventually, this results into the loss of cultural identity. In nutshell what Achebe
believes is that blind adherence to the religion should be checked or else it becomes a hindrance in the path of evolution of man as well as Nation.

- **Insensitivity—an Acidic Factor of Human Identity**

  Humanity is the fundamental element that makes man a man. Man sans emotions, like love, care, concern, compassion, altruism, tolerance, fraternity, etc. is like a monster. In 21st century there is erosion of such humanly attributes. Men can be insensitive to any extent for personal benefit and forged pride. They are very obdurate to killing, looting and exploiting other, for instance, Ikemefuna’s murder. Okonkwo is given his custody. By his amicable nature he successfully secures a place in the heart of all the family members of Okonkwo. He considers Okonkwo his father. But after three years he is told that he is being taken to his village by Okonkwo and a few men of Umuofia. He thinks that he does not need to afraid as Okonkwo, his father, is walking after him. He recalls his mother and three year old sister who would be now of six. He thinks that his mother would weep a lot on seeing him back and thank Okonkwo for taking care of her son. But on the way one of the men raises his matchet. When he finds Okonkwo running towards him, he cries, “My father, they have killed me!” (Things 57). But Okonkwo draws his matchet and cuts him down, as he is afraid of being thought weak by his clan. Slaughtering of animals is very common in the Igbo society and they do it with great ease. Coetzee criticizes the act of killing animals as an inhuman activity in his works. David’s job at Salem of cutting dogs and pouring their flash into plastic bags is of heartbreaking for a sensitive reader. But it shows how man has become insensitive towards other living beings. Description of the way Bheki and his friends are murdered is also very touching. Lucy’s tragedy is an example of reverberation of insensitive history.
• **Role of Parents and Children in the Framework of the Nation**

It is said that today’s child is the leader of tomorrow. This lays responsibility on shoulders of the parents and teachers, as well. But this responsibility is overlooked in 21\textsuperscript{st} century. Florence is proud for the way Bheki misbehaves with Vercueil, resists the school and roams in the streets with his friends. She does not mind if he raises his hands against his elders. This is very appalling to Mrs Curren. As a teacher she believes that the more the parents give in the more outrageously the children will behave. It is a serious matter if this new generation afraid of nothing as in that way they may become careless to their own lives and end by being careless of everyone else’s. It speaks volumes of Coetzee when he writes, “How easy it is to love a child, how hard to love what a child turns into!” (Age 57). Parents may wash their hands of their children if they give up authority over them. Mrs Curren says,

And when they grow up one day . . . do you think the cruelty will leave them? What kind of parents will they become who were taught that the time of parents is over? Can parents be recreated once the idea of parents has been destroyed within us? They kick and beat a man because he drinks. They set people on fire and laugh while they burn to death. How will they treat their own children? What love will they be capable of? Their hearts are turning to stone before our eyes, and what do you say? You say, ‘This is not my child, this is the white man’s child, this is the monster made by the white man.’ Is that all you can say? Are you going to blame them on the whites and turn your back? (Age 49-50).

The time really comes when Florence loses her son forever. David, by violating the relationship between the teacher and the disciple, not only brings
disgrace to sanctimonious profession, but also raises many questions to the field he belongs. Mr Isaacs says,

We put our children in the hands of you people because we think we can trust you. If we can’t trust the university, who can we trust? We never thought we were sending our daughter into a nest of vipers. No, Professor Lurie, you may be high and mighty and have all kinds of degrees, but if I was you I’d be very ashamed of myself . . . (Disgrace 38).

Melanie is equally responsible for her exploitation. Unlike Beatrice her education fails to guide her right path and to oppose her sexual harassment. Bheki, John, David, Melanie represent failure of education while Lucy, Beatrice and Mrs Curren are the example of triumph over illiteracy.

- **Rumour—the Destructive Factor**

Mind plays miraculous role. It gives birth to creative ideas when it is active and becomes destructor when it is over active. *Train to Pakistan*, a novel by Khushwant Singh, depicts how tranquillity of the Nation is destructed by rumour of the proposed division of India. The novel begins with the words,

The Summer before, communal riots precipitated by reports of the proposed division of the country into a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan, had broken out in Calcutta, and within a few months the death roll had mounted to several thousand…From Calcutta, the riots spread north and east and west to Noakhali in East-Bengal, where Muslims massacred Hindus, to Bihar where Hindus massacred Muslims . . . Hundreds of Thousands of Hindus and Sikhs who had lived for centuries on the Northwest Frontier abandoned their homes and fields . . . By the summer of 1947, when the creation of the new state of Pakistan was formally announced ten million people-Muslims and
Hindus and Sikhs were in flight. By the time the monsoon broke, almost a million of them were dead, and all of northern India was in arms, in terror or in hiding. (Khushwant 1-2)

History provides many such illustrations of holocausts that have taken place due to rumour and how they have destructed the national integrity by adding air and fuel to the internal crises such as social, religious, cultural, economical and political. *Waiting for the Barbarians* also deals with such ignorance of the people. The story begins to reach the people from the capital of the unrest among the barbarians. Traders travelling safe routes have been attacked and plundered. Stock thefts are increased in scale and audacity. A party of census officials are disappeared and found buried in shallow graves. Shots have been fired at a provincial governor during a tour of inspection. The barbarian tribes are arming and so on and so forth. These rumours spread like wildfire. People make stories more exciting by their destructive imaginative creativity and opine that the Empire should take precautionary measures. Coetzee observes that,

…once in every generation, without fail, there is an episode of hysteria about the barbarians. There is no woman living along the frontier who has not dreamed of a dark barbarian hand coming from under the bed to grip her ankle, no man who has not frightened himself with visions of the barbarians carousing in his home, breaking the plates, setting fire to the curtains, raping his daughters. These dreams are the consequence of too much ease. Show me a barbarian army and I will believe. (Waiting 9)

Due to this hysteria about interfere of the barbarians to so called civilized life, officers of the general staff are sent on tours of the frontier. Traders are given military escorts. The officials of the Third Bureau of the Civil Guard are seen for the first time
on the frontier. Coetzee with heavy heart writes, “Where it will end I do not know” (Waiting 8). Thus, he articulates very well his apprehension and concern for Nation and for his fellow men in undemanding language.

- **Home—the Heaven on the Earth**

  *Home* denotes a house made of bricks and cements where one lives, but connotes privacy, intimacy and cosiness. Ezeulu and Okonkwo live in their own *obi*. Their wives live with their children in the hut they are allotted after marriage. It is not the matter of privacy of the Igbo women but separateness. They are alone in their pain and suffering. This indicates that the Igbo society lacks the unity, intimacy and cosiness. They lack the concept of home that unites all the family members together.

  The beginning of *Age of Iron* surpasses the ‘black peril’ and ‘white peril’ and even sexual harassment of women on racial and colour ground. It reaches to the paramount of worldly knowledge of Coetzee regarding the importance of home in human being’s life. Mrs Curren is wretched due to her empty home rather than her cancer. She is emotionally attached with her home but the way the police kill John in her home, she feels that it is not her home anymore. Her daughter leaves South Africa as there she does not feel that hominess in her homeland. How tragic that Lucy is raped in her own home. How far home gives security is really questionable. Michael K, a young man prefers to live in mountains rather than in his own home in Cape Town. Thus, Africa in general and Nigeria and South Africa in particular lack the concept of *home*— the earthly heaven and many factors are responsible for that.

- **Civilization of the Natives**

  Africa was underestimated as the area of darkness and Africans as savages. The colonizers were under an illusion that the responsibility to civilize these Africans
was on their shoulders. The memorandum of Winterbottom about “indirect rule” is thought provoking. It says that the white men,

. . . endeavour to purge the native system of its abuses to build a higher civilization upon the soundly rooted native stock that had its foundation in the hearts and minds and thoughts of the people and therefore on which we can more easily build, moulding it and establishing it into lines consonant with modern ideas and higher standards (Arrow 57).

This shows how these natives were subjected to reformation. Native culture, religion, traditions were attacked by the foreign culture. The intrusion of English as a subject in the native education was a hidden attack on the native languages. Thus this act of civilization was more in the form of foreignization.

- **Symbols, Various Literary Techniques and Other Miscellaneous Topics**

  - **Duck Family**

    Description of the duck family given in *Disgrace* is the fantastic example of Coetzee’s literary genius. When David goes back to Cape Town he misses and recalls the Duck family he had seen in Salem during his stay with Lucy.

    Mother Duck tacking about on the surface of the dam, her chest puffed out with pride, while Eenie, Meenie, Minie and Mo paddle busily behind, confident that as long as she is there they are safe from all harm. (Disgrace 178)

    The intimacy of the duck family mentioned above gives the connotative meaning of *home*. Lucy does not have such security. Unfortunately unlike Mother Duck, as parents, David and Evelina fail to give Lucy such ecstasy of home, of family life and as a consequence she chooses a separate life from her parents. Mother’s lap becomes a great source of peace, security and consolation for the children. It heals the
psychological wound when there is agitation from within and when there is anarchy from without. And that is why even at the age of eighty Mrs Curren recalls her dead mother to seek her consolation when she is all alone. She whispers, “Come to me! Mother look down to me!” (Age 55). But Lucy gets such consolation neither from her mother nor from her father though they both are alive. The acquaintance between a parent and a child is more based on reciprocity of emotion. It is true that parents play a fundamental role in the framework of Nation by giving a healthy foundation to their children who are eventually the future of the Nation. Lucy, Bheki, John, Michael K, etc. are such illustrations of unfortunate children who are deprived from such fundamental things in the very initial stage of their life. That is why every now and then Mrs Curren warns Florence for the way she nurtures Bheki.

- **Dream Motif and Symbol of Snowman and Fire**

  *Waiting for the Barbarians* deals with a series of dreams. They manifest not only the psychological aspects of the Magistrate but all the dreams are inter connected in some or the other ways and they also have some hidden meanings. In Durrant’s words,

  For Coetzee, most notably in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, dreams are the site of a transmission of pain, of an identification with the suffering of the other. They represent a mode of communication and solidarity that is not available to the characters in their waking lives. . . (444).

  In the very first dream the Magistrate finds some children playing at the square. They build a snowcastle. They have planted a little red flag on its top. They bring handful after handful of snow to plaster the walls of their castle. The rampart around the castle is half built. They all, except a girl, leave the place on seeing the Magistrate coming towards them. She is busy at making the door of the castle. The
Magistrate tries to see her face, but in vain. This entire process is highly symbolic which reveals how the colonialists gradually succeeded to establish their colonies in Africa. Here we find Coetzee’s literary creativity. The words like ‘snowcastle’ stands for forts that the colonialists built in Africa, ‘flag’ symbolizes their rule, ‘handful after handful’ and ‘rampart,’ stand for their gradual efforts to establish their power. This snowcastle also stands for the illusion of human beings. Like snow it gradually melts away and man has a face to face encounter with the brutal reality. The concealed face of the girl symbolizes the secret the Nature holds in her lap to astound the human beings and to raise their excitement. And what the Magistrate finds when he comes out from his dream world, is a wounded little boy on whose body the team of the interrogators has used knife like a key, turned it first left and then to the right. Thus, dream and reality are two such elements that juxtapose each other. This dream of snowcastle juxtaposes reality of the end of the novel. The Magistrate is returning to the town. It is the first snowfall of the year. A few children are at the square making a snowman, not a snowcastle. They first make a big round body. Then they roll a ball of snow for the head. Someone fetches out things for the mouth, nose and eyes. One of them crowns the snowman with his cap. The Magistrate observes all these things from a distance and notes that the snowman is missing one thing, i.e. “arms” (Waiting 170). However, he does not tell them that they have forgotten to make arms as he does not want to interfere. Here,

I. Collaborate exertion of the children making the snowman symbolizes the function of building a Nation and creativity and intellectual minds are needed for this splendid work.
II. Snowman without arms symbolizes South Africans, especially black South Africans, who were the victims of the imperialist and now even after independence they are at the mercy of some or the other.

III. The Magistrate embodies Coetzee who just observes his contemporary age, raises the curtain, holds “a lantern” as “the source of light” (Waiting 10) to show the real picture of the age and leaves many things for the readers to decide and do.

South Africans are yet not exposed to unfeigned emancipation. They need arms, the helping hands of some or the other. They blame to the government, to the political parties, to the society and culture for their wretched condition, but would never raise their voice against the maladministration. They simply wait for any foreign or miraculous help.

In another dream the Magistrate again finds a girl. When he goes close to her, he finds that it is not the sandcastle, but a clay oven she has made. She offers him a loaf of bread. He wants to admire her, but becomes dumb and the dream ends before he could hug her. Various functions of the girl of this series of dreams symbolize a proposal of a decent amalgamation of a man and a woman tied with the knot of marriage and they collectively nurture their next generation so that the fabrication of the Nation can be given a health foundation. That may bring uniformity in the society. This would be the solution to the problem of the erosion of moral and ethical values, so that Africans may not suffer from the syndrome from which the degrading European civilization is suffering. This is how they can achieve a meaningful life. This dream is set against the last dream of the series in which the Magistrate is standing in the pit dug for the well. Instead of water he gets a corpse of a parrot from the earth. Thus, these two dreams reveal two contrasting elements respectively, i.e.
life and death, and pleasure and pain. The novel begins with the reference of summer and ends with the reference of the beginning of the winter. This symbolizes the change of the itinerary of life.

K remains silent most of the time. In his silence also what he prefers is freedom, isolation and separateness from the government and social norms. Once he loses himself in a dream. In his dream he runs “as fast as the wind along an open road with the cart floating behind him on the tyres that barely skimed the ground” (Coetzee, Life 66). His running in dream symbolizes the certainty of him being fetched out by those from whom he escapes. The floating cart stands for the social vehicle resolute to take K forcefully back to the social precinct from his isolated life. Thus, *Life and Times of Michael K* traverses the realm of colonialism of the psyche and the havoc of Civil War. K’s struggle is for the free will on one hand and for his identity and existence on the other hand. Coetzee writes that the story of K’s “life had never been an interesting one; there had usually been someone to tell him what to do next; now there was no one, and the best thing seemed to be to wait” (Life 67). But it is difficult to say what can be the best thing for him when he is “becoming a different kind of man, . . . smaller and harder and drier every day” (Life 67). In that state of solitude also the life giving source to which we call the charm lacks in K’s life. K’s dream is a nightmare and it has relevance with the hustle and bustle of the 21st century.

Achebe has also used dream motif in his novel *Arrow of God*. During his stay in Okperi Ezeulu dreams of a big assembly of Umuaro elders in which instead of himself his grandfather rises up and speaks to them. But the people oppose him and refuse to listen him. They believe that they should not rely on him to tell them the season of the year. They can do that by their own. They believe that Ulu has now no
power and he cannot save them from the white man. They all agree that they should drive him away. When they seize him he is changed to Ezeulu himself. They push him from one group to another. Some spit on his face and call him the priest of a dead god. This dream symbolizes the would-be change in the well established social norms when their values are doubted, challenged and when they fail to satisfy the expectation of their agents. It also symbolizes human psyche in general and Ezeulu’s threat in particular, of losing power. Another signification of this dream is that it teaches a lesson to Ezeulu that his fight is not with the white man, not even with the people of Okperi but with his own people of Umuaro.

In the last dream Ezeulu is surprised and threatened on hearing the sound of the voices of the mourners passing behind his compound as there is no path behind his compound. He wishes to, but cannot, challenge them. The voices, the drums and the flutes grow louder. The mourners sing the song for the burial of the dead. Ezeulu raises his voice to summon his family to join him in challenging the trespassers but no one is there in his compound. He does not find Matefi in her hut, but ashes of a long-dead fire. He rushes to Ugoye’s hut and calls her and her children but her hut is already falling in and a few blades of green grass have sprouted on the thatch. He runs towards Obika’s hut but is stopped by a new voice coming behind the compound. The singers’ sudden, demented laughter fill his compound and the dream ends. When he comes in his conscious state he finds that the enigma of the life is waiting for him in his compound to welcome the dead body of Obika.

Here ‘fire’ stands for both, that can light the path to the destination and if it is in the form of covetousness it may burn not only the things that come into its contact but also to the person himself from within. ‘Ashes of long-dead fire’ symbolize the devastation caused by negative emotions like wrath, envy and vengeance. Ugoye’s
‘falling hut’ symbolizes the collapse of ancient old and deeply rooted gigantic Igbo culture, and of the power of Ulu and Ezeulu. ‘Sprouted blades of green grass’ symbolize the Christianity grounding in Igbo culture. ‘Empty compound’ and ‘huts’ symbolize the period of adversity of the person’s life when even his own shadow deserts him.

- **Spectacles of Colonel Joll**

  . . . two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire... .

  The discs are dark, they look opaque from the outside, but he can see through them. (Waiting 1)

  Colonel Joll picks his way uncertainly among the furniture but does not remove the dark glasses. With such description of Joll’s spectacles Coetzee begins *Waiting for the Barbarians*. It is questionable in first glance that how a meticulous author, a Nobel Laureate, can begin the novel with such note, but while reading between the lines one can realize the ingenious mastery of Coetzee. Goddess Justice is attributed with a blindfold, a balance and a sword. She is expected to give an unbiased judgement by measuring the strengths of an issue on the scales suspended from her left hand. Her sword has the power of Reason and Justice which She uses either for or against any party brought to the court for verdict. But such Goddess Justice is nowhere in South Africa. Joll’s spectacles symbolize the messy bureaucracy of South Africa, where Goddess Justice is unsighted and therefore the innocent is tormented and the offender is comforted. The dark glasses symbolize hypocrisy, ignorance and maladministration of the judicial system. Joll’s uncertain steps due to the dark glasses symbolize uncertainty of judgement and authority’s blindness to the fact which corrupt the system and perturb the established peace, harmony, law and order of the
That is why Lucy and Bheki do not want to seek justice for themselves as it is an illusion in South Africa.

- **Symbol of Car**

  The battery of Mrs Curren’s car stops working, therefore Vercueil suggests her to purchase a new battery, but she denies. She believes that though her car is old and belongs to the world that barely exists, however, it works. She likes to hold all that belong to that world and still work. She is happy thinking that she also belongs to that world, not to the world what her car has become. In her world if the self-starter does not work, one can try the crank handle; if the crank handle does not work one can get the help of someone to push it and then also if it does not start one can use bicycle or walk or stay at home. However, she says, “I am comfortable there, it is a world I understand. I don’t see why I should change” (Age 71). This symbolizes the old ideas, ethics, morals and principles of the life, which contrast to the contemporary age of the author; however, the fact is that they are needed to bring about revolutionary change in the chaotic Nation disintegrating from the summit of moral height.

- **Locusts**

  Coetzee and Achebe have kaleidoscopic eyes. They have minutely observed things around them to deal with in their postcolonial novels. The reference of ‘locusts’ in Things Fall Apart is very symbolic in that sense. After so many years locusts come to Umuofia and as per their belief, now they will come every year for seven years before they disappear for another generation. First a small swarm comes as harbingers to survey the land and then comes a big swarm moving “like a boundless sheet of black cloud drifting towards Umuofia” and a cheerful voice, “Locusts are descending” (Things 52) is heard in the air. People leave their work and run into the open fields to see them. They wish they descend in Umuofia and it happens so. Locusts settle on
every tree, on every blade of grass and on the roofs. They cover the bare ground. They eat all the wild grass in the fields. They settle in the bushes for the night and when their wings become wet with dew, people turn out and fill their bags and pots with locusts to enjoy this rare food for many days. Other references on which we need to focus are the way the people kill a white man and hang his iron horse (i.e. bicycle) on the tree and what the oracle has said about the white men. The Oracle said:

. . . other white men were on their way. They were locusts, it said, and that first man was their harbinger sent to explore the terrain. And so they killed him. (Things 130)

In Fagrutheen’s opinion through the symbol of locusts Achebe shows the clash between the two cultures, “For instance, in Christianity, locusts are a symbol of destruction and ruin, but the Umuofians rejoice at their coming because they are a source of food” (Downfall 29). Here, the locusts stand for the colonialists. Like locusts, first a few colonialists came and established colonies in Africa. Africans were ignorant about the fact that how their ethnicity was targeted. They heartily welcome the new culture and new religion. Then many colonialists came and established their hegemony. They explored and exploited Africa and Africans for their benefits. The way people of Umuofia kill a white man and hang his iron horse symbolizes their anger, their open revolt against the British rule when they realized their own ignorance.

- **Anonymous Base**

Most significant part of Coetzee’s novels is its anonymous base. In *Waiting for the Barbarians* we have been told about an unnamed Empire. The Magistrate, the barbarian girl, the community and the town which he has set with his ingenious mind’s eye are anonymous. Even the Magistrate’s relationship with the barbarian girl
is also anonymous and ambiguous. He cares, worries for her and worships her. He is a
doctor, a caretaker and a father for her, at the same time he consummates his
relationship with her. However, we can imagine that this anonymous Empire is
nobody else but the British Empire, the Magistrate is the mouthpiece of the author, the
barbarians are the black South Africans who are discriminated from their
constitutional rights and the town stands for the Bantustan, land allotted to the black
South Africans during apartheid. The anonymous relationship of the Magistrate with
the barbarian girl marks his ownership over her even after her custody is given to her
community. In Age of Iron the readers have been not told about the actual name of
Mrs Curren. Her unnamed daughter represents the youth of South Africa opposing
apartheid policy. Vercueil’s name is also questionable. Thus, by this anonymous base
of the novels Coetzee has left much for the reader’s imagination in order to interpret
the text in the maximum possible ways.

**The Beginning and the End**

The beginning and the end of the selected novels are very perceptive. Things
Fall Apart begins with reference of name, fame and power of Okonkwo. All the three
parts of the novel tell the reader a gradual progress of Okonkwo which reaches to the
summit from where he meets a grand collapse. Arrow of God deals with the
psychological insecurity of Ezeulu for losing his power which by the end of the novel
comes true when people take shelter under the umbrella of new religion. A Man of the
People and Anthills of the Savannah begin with execution of political party by another
political party, which is in turn, by the end of the novel, dethroned by the third
political party. Thus, they reveal the story of coup and counter-coup of the political
history of Nigeria which has ravaged the Nation more than what the colonizers did to
her. Waiting for the Barbarians begins with Joll’s deteriorating steps due to his dark
spectacles and the Magistrate’s dream of the snowcastle and ends with an optimistic note for a peaceful and harmonious life and with the formation of Nation, which would need creative and intellectual mind, by giving the symbol of snowman. Disgrace begins with the reference of David’s ungoverned impulses and ends with how the tables are turned where David’s own daughter, Lucy becomes the victim of her ancestors’ deeds and how she has assimilated herself with new changes of her life. Age of Iron begins with the vacuum and solitude, struggles to establish harmony and in the end it meets with peace in the lap of death. Life and Times of Michael K begins with the escape of K from the chaotic life of Cape Town and ends with his return to the same place taking a big round proving that we are human beings; we cannot live an isolated life; we ought to find out a meaningful life out of nothing.

- **Significance of the Titles of the Selected Novels**

  The title of the novel Things Fall Apart is taken from W. B. Yeats’ poem The Second Coming. A few lines from the poem mentioned below reveal the central idea of the novel.

  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;
  The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
  The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
  The best lack all conviction, while the worst
  Are full of passionate intensity.

  In human life everything is inter connected in a chain to form an order in such a way that if one thing loses its loop, its hold, rest of the things would automatically
lose the order and the life would become out of control, this is what “widening gyre” symbolize. Falconer takes toil to train falcon so that the things become easy for him. But when “falcon cannot hear the falconer”, in other words when the link between them is disrupted “things fall apart”— everything would be dispersed and the center would lose gravitational power that holds on all the things together in an order and at their own place. This gives birth to anarchy and unfortunately only the innocent becomes the victim while the worst is blessed with amenity. With the intrusion of the British, in the novel, the native first lose their land, then unity of their community is molested, and finally their power, culture and tradition go out of order. Thus, one by one all that is native lose existence in that tide of anarchy and unfortunately innocents, like Okonkwo, who have lost the link with their clan, become the victim of that *widening gyre*. Every cycle is proved to be a compelling sacrifice for the natives. Thus, the title of the novel is very momentous.

In the novel *Arrow of God*, Ogbuefi Amalu becomes the victim of Ezeulu’s deliberate delay for naming the day for the New Yam Feast. His son cannot give the burial feast to the people. People are threatened as this delay may destroy their crop, result into drought and death of their family members. Ogbuefi’s death encourages them to oppose their Chief Priest and to accept the new religion which is ready to provide them security from the wrath of Ulu. The novel ends with Obika’s death which is, in people’s opinion, a punishment of God to Ezeulu. The title *Arrow of God* is very significant in that sense.

*Savanna or Savannah* is a common name used for the tropical grassland with hills and forests. The savannas of Africa are considered as the biggest one. They are wet and dry which are very favourable for ants to build their anthills. Ants build anthills fairly quickly, using the materials available in that location and live in group
in those colonies. The main function of each colony is to increase the number of ants and to give rise to new colonies with the rich diversity of behaviours in their various tasks. The title of the novel *Anthills of the Savannah* is very significant as it is a postcolonial novel. The title reveals the resemblance between the task of the ants and the colonizers in establishing the colonies. Like ants, they too, used very handy sources, like the native land, native natural resources and the native strength to build their colonies the numbers of which went on increasing with leaps-and-bounds. The only difference between the task of ants and the colonizers is that the former do no harm to other while the latter exploited the native to such an extent that their life had become hell in their own countries. After independence the colonies are substituted with the political parties which have concern neither with the *Nation* nor with the native’s progress.

In *A Man of the People* Mr Nanga considers himself as a humble servant, as a man of the people, but while studying the novel we find that it is a satire at those selfish, vulture like politicians who make many promises to the people during the campaign before election and forget everything as soon as election results into their favour.

The title of the novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians* is taken from a poem with the same name written by a Greek-Egyptian poet, Constantine P. Cavafy. It can be interpreted in many different ways. It resounds to Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* and Camus’ *The Myth of Sisyphus* which portray life as a meaningless journey from nothingness to nothingness because man lacks reason to find out meaning in the life. The former depicts the meaningless waiting for the person, Godot, whose existence is questionable and the latter depicts the person’s meaningless effort to roll a heavy rock up a hill in which his eternal failure is certain. Similarly Joll, his
soldiers, Mandel and the people of the town are waiting for the barbarians, whose existence is questionable. They go for a tireless endeavour to catch them and achieve ludicrous truth. But according to the author the real search is required from within. In true sense the person who is inhuman, brutal and exploitive is a barbarian. Joll and Mandel who are very brutal and the so-called civilized people of the town who are inhuman to the barbarians are the real barbarians. Moreover, to whom they call barbarians are actually tribespeople, nomads living a simple life in mountains and on the river bank. Their efforts to catch these tribespeople are meaningless. The barbarians also stand for a community of South Africa which is marginalized and deprived from their political and economical rights and enslaved to endure the exploitation by the ruling party. By scrutinizing the novel, we find that Coetzee himself is waiting for the barbarians (for the marginalized) to secure their dignified standing in South African society. He advocates for the synchronization and peace among all Africans which would lead the Nation to the path of progress.

David’s downfall from the height of humanly values and the disgrace he meets symbolize the acidic fact of 21st century, where man has become insensitive and indifference to the suffering of others; where relations are taken for granted and there is erosion of moral values on large scale. Solitude and barrenness dwell in the profundity of their empty hearts that vibrate like machine with no life at all. The title Disgrace, in that sense, is very significant.

The title pages of the novels, Disgrace and Age of Iron carry the pictures of dogs that symbolize the degradation of the human beings, living like dog. The former depicts Petrus as a dog man while the latter depicts Vercueil as no more than a dog. In Mrs Curren’s words, “he is cruel, mad, and a mad dog” (Age 122). She considers herself a dog:
This letter has become a maze, and I a dog in the maze, scurrying up and down the branches and tunnels, scratching and whining at the same old places, tiring, tired. Why do I not call for help, call to God? Because God cannot help me. God is looking for me but he cannot reach me. God is another dog in another maze. (Age 137-38)

The words mentioned above satirize the wretched state of mankind of 21st century. Unlike dog, human beings are fickle. This disgrace is due to the erosion of human attributes and lacking of spirituality. Moreover, both the novels are set with the background of apartheid. *Age of Iron* reveals how people have become callous, iron hearted, to the sufferings of others. Like iron, they also gradually wither away when they get rust in the form of erosion of humanly attributes. Coetzee calls *Age of Iron* to the period to which such people belong. Thus, the title is very significant as it divulges a particular period to the reader.

Thus, Achebe and Coetzee have given life like characters, much capable to reverberate the colonial and neo-colonial life of Africa and Africans in order to seek the empathy of the readers even from overseas. Their sufferings are not the sufferings of Africans only but of all who were colonized. Due to the universal appeal of the characters, themes and symbols of the selected novels, the readers from overseas who were also colonized once upon a time and now independent, feel that they are reading their own lives, the condition of their own nations. They do not need to go Africa and to see how the life is going on over there as these writers have hammered on such tender however scorching issues that are common to all victims of the colonialism.

In the next chapter, ‘Ideological andPhilosophic Parallels and Dissimilarities in the Selected Works of Achebe and Coetzee’, the selected authors and their philosophy will be compared with the reference of their textual elements.
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