CHAPTER - ONE

MASQUERADE DANCING

A study of the rhythms of humanism and metaphysics in Chinua Achebe's novels.
African Literature is represented as a form of creative exercise that is more concerned with the recovery of a lost link in the works of Chinua Achebe. His prime concern is to make contact with the organic unity that held together an Igbo existence. Hence he is selective about the contact to be made which is an urgent desire to recover the lost power of an Igbo oral tradition, and to expand the African vision beyond the contemporary consumer societies, which is alien to the African mindset. In this expansion is that space where the African contemporary individual is forced to pause and ponder the meaning of an African humanity. The focus of the narrative is on the recovery of the Word, as the natural power that had lost its ground in the presence of the Whiteman's written expression. Our study has found enough evidence to progress through Achebe's novels in this particular movement of recoil. From the Word, and its loss of substance in the African experience of dislocation, and in the new attempts made, in the recovery of this power, where the dynamic and vital expansion lies.

Achebe consciously keeps his attention focused on a particular region in his exposition of what it is to be human. Yet it is not a nostalgic extension of present memory to make contact with the past. The recollection or recovery of this erased memory is to spur into action the benumbed state of blind imitation. To halt this blind groping in the dark, to make some contact with a set of Western values that would perhaps allow entry into this wide world, he returns the African consciousness, to open the closed-eye to perceive the essence of all that is African in the new generation of Igbo's.

It is a positive approach to the future through the stimulation of a contemporary sense of what it is to be human. It is also the acquisition of a fresh culture established through the recovery of the unwritten phases of African, human history. From the smaller circle of a deep concern for the aimless application of an African mind to a culture that offered roles of slavery to all races that came in the trail of its conquests, he widens his concern for freedom of thought, once again through the strength gained by the recovery of
the word, in the reconstruction of the mythic form, which represents the metaphysical
mode. The myth itself emphasises on the diversity of human values, thus epitomising the
story of African men, the pre-colonial sense of achievement and glory. The myth is a
structure that holds within, both the power of the word and the substance of an African
metaphysics. It is visualised as the successful attempt made by the African artist in making
interaction possible within existing, cultivated groups. He spurs into action the ability to
versify in the present moment by offering a past alternative.

Achebe does not overtly mark areas of metaphysical inquiry or discussions, instead
uses effectively, the Word to make the present generation accept their constituents as
African, in its authentic form. Therefore it is a turning in of the vision which is crucial to
the recovery of the Word and in this turn about lies the metaphysical sphere, lying unexplored, yet, but visible in its abstract strength. So the emphasis is on putting together a
arrative that makes explicit these constituents lying beneath the hard realities of a twenti-
th-century Igbo society. He transcends the puzzle that overpowers Gabriel Okara's Okolo
who is unsuccessful in deciphering 'it'. The 'it' is roused to assume a certain dimension in
Achebe's works where it operates as the support, "the reliable guardian" to humanism.

Thus it is essential to Achebe's creation, to initially record the falling apart of a
system, which in the African context is where the memory discontinues to still the present
movement as a past and to bring forth a present time segment to serve as a mode through
which the continuity of memory is assured of a future. Post-colonial fiction performs the
activity of illuminating the obliterated section of the recoiling, by acting as the middle-
voice linking the present with the past. In the disintegration of the linear movement, the
inquiry reactivates the spatio-temporal processes within the African psyche, now made a
complex variety, by the addition of an evolving global consciousness within this human
community.

Initially the complex variety of spatio-temporal processes are a rethinking of pre-
colonial Africa or specifically the Igbo life, in terms of an animated picture or thinking in pictures, for the purpose of revoking a purely temporal occurrence called sensing. This internal purpose of sensing within the reimagined life links itself with the artists purpose of reactivating the authority of perceiving their essence, amongst the younger generation of contemporary Africans. A vital but delicately formed question about temporality as the adequate medium to contain this complex variety leads to the conviction that African fiction is that temporal event, an extraordinary occurrence, which has found form by being dissociated from materiality, depending purely on the materiality of memory.

The body of work chosen for scrutiny in this chapter fall in line with the argument that the temporality or the constructed past represented in the two major novels *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* irradiates to the larger surrounding area as a metaphysical inquiry of the African predicament. Firstly, the idea of going back into the past is for the purpose of making present speech possible amongst the Africans. In fact, *Things Fall Apart* is an autobiographic inquiry of the Igbo culture, in the sense that it is 'present speech referring to beginnings which, at the start, had no speech'. 'Speech' here is used to mean that process of communication that originates from the habit of mind to conceptualize. The activity of conceptualising belongs to the spatio-temporal process of evolution. In the pre-colonial Igbo time-space conceptualising is at its early stage of development, in its conception as a receptacle. Of ideas, thoughts, flowing into the receptacle of the community for its survival as an organism. The community existed as a compositae, where individuals merged to give substance and strength to this culture as a single unit. To introduce conceptualization as a habit of mind is an acknowledgment
of the individual units of the compositae, and the "Speech" act as a communication of concepts, itself is a metaphysical act.

As Achebe is concerned with creating a locus of temporal occurrences beyond present time, the body thus conceived had to actively gain substance and mobility, not only to register intended design but also to evolve further in the detailed exposition of the African predicament. So he grounds himself in the temporal permanence, ironically, of a locus held in memory. A recalling of past events to mind, progresses from the subjective to the final objectification of the impression, in the form of fiction. Intention, initially, flows from the subjective to the temporal reality of a completed art form whereas the final form itself is an illusion of concreteness. The first two works chosen get their objectivity from the inversion of time as a peculiar need for a specific organism. Within the subjective reality of, to take Umosia as the first sample, internalisation of the flow of thoughts are temporal by the singularity of the intention. The cyclic survival patterns of the external conditions channelise the inward flow as well. The linear course of individual thinking is the solidification of the faith in the organism, the Igbo community, as a sustaining order. As is evident from the second line of the novel, in its description of Okonkwo.

"His fame rested on solid personal achievements. (Pg.17, TFA)

Okonkwo becomes a man of solid achievements as he suppresses the 'Speech act', which is known as, one of the fundamental type of functions of metaphysics. His intentions are confined to the achievements that do not stimulate curiosity 'to know' his community. Instead, the knowing that he confines himself into is the gratification of the ego of the community, which, akin to the scientific temperament, awarded credit, as titles, to what it could see and judge as quality human performance within its param-
eters. Therefore Okonkwo compresses his ego or spirit within the Igbo time known by him, giving no thought to a region that lay beyond human control.

On the contrary, Unoka, the father, makes contact within him the subjective capacities built into the human system. He is ahead of his times in the sense, that he makes this particular contact which from the behaviour of the rest of the organism, of the Igbo community was not possible as they lay at the very beginning of the evolution of the physical universe. Here sensing begins in Unoka's transcending the immediate needs, of training ones vision in perceiving nature around, only for the purpose of survival. As it is evident from the lines quoted below.

Unoka loved the good fare and the good fellowship 
and he loved this season of the year, when the rain 
had stopped and the sun rose every morning with 
dazzling beauty. (Pg.18)

From sensing as a purely temporal event, as a manifestation of human experience, he further recedes into the larger universe which possessed neither materiality nor temporality known by the Community, by detaching sensing from an Igbo reality, to the region of sensing for the purpose of making contact with an alien subject, as experienced or known within the immediate reality.

'He had often wandered around looking for a kite sailing leisurely against the blue sky. As soon as he found one he would sing with his whole being, welcoming it back from its long, long journey, and asking it if it had brought home any lengths of cloth.(Pg.18)

If the body and the brain are spatio-temporal organs which make communication possible between the spatio-temporal processes of the world and the actions and reactions
of the physical organism as a whole, Unoka allows this mediation to take place as a contrast to the linear movement of the Igbo thought processes that allowed little traffic between imaginative creations and physical existence. The release, which an imaginative reflection of reality affords as a sense of upliftment, away from its mundanity is a luxury the Igbo community could not afford.

...in his mind’s ear the blood-stirring and intricate rhythms of the Ekwe and the Udu, the Ogene, and he could hear his own flute weaving in and out of them, decorating them with a colourful and plaintive tune. (Pg.19)

From the lines quoted above a link establishes itself between attitudes of both Unoka and the son Okonkwo, in the sense, Unoka’s perception of the larger Universe deliberately distances itself away from the immediate by transcending limitations of time and space and making contact with different rhythms, by covering immense distances on the incomprehensible energies of the mind. Thus he diverts any immediate physical reality from his minds eye which in the process detaches him from his community. On the contrary, Achebe builds substance into the abstract reality of memory or the remembered community, by introducing Okoye as a representative of the society in keeping with his contention, that culture was not first heard by them from the whiteman. Okoye is the character in whom the excesses are well balanced to ensure the continuity of the tribe.

'Okoye was also a musician. He played on the ogene. But he was not a failure like Unoka. (Pg.19).

If Unoka had internalised spatial time to follow his fantasy, Okoye is presented as an
individual who had internalised the Umofian sense of time thus ensuring the temporal identity of the Igbo life segment carefully constructed by the author. Okonkwo on the other hand begins with the advantage, offered by the survival-conscious community, to practise his industrious exercise, unable to dissociate the temporal occurrence of his father as a failure.

'Fortunately, among these people, a man was judged according to his worth and not according to the worth of his father. Okonkwo was clearly cut out for great things. (Pg.20)

The narrative built on the strength of memory arrives at its contrasts by the many kinds of fantasies that percolate within it. The element of fantasy or the act of fantasizing bring together instinctive behaviour with mechanical functions of the external reality. Okonkwo's fantasy of reigning as the unfailing success story of Umofia is threatened constantly by challenges thrown in his path. Umofia itself assumes solidity or substance, besides the authors intention, by the determination of the one man Okonkwo to sustain the fantasy of success as a perennial feature of his life, which is sadly threatened by the white worlds presence on the fringe of the Igbo world. The Igbo world has a quasi-timeless foundation, like a corpse, which Okonkwo fills with his faith on physical strength. Strength is associated obviously, to a live, physical presence in Okonkwo's order of knowledge. The line of discussion works itself towards the argument that Okonkwo belongs to a world of fantasy and Unoka rests on the line that links temporality with zones of unexamined life, despite the fact, that Unoka, as an individual chooses to shut the opinion of the community out from his mind.

Briefly, fantasy in this context is recognised as the primary element of the unconscious and it proceeds towards the objects familiar and thus makes the unconscious
rkings of the mind credible. Both men ride on the strength of their fantasies. In the
of Unoka the fantasy does not necessarily influence his life, but creates room for
magnification of the fragmentarily intelligible order of the universe. Which is one
the reasons for the familiar rhythms of the Igbo playing to his tune on the
It is in his ability to distance himself away from objective Igbo life style that
fers him his personal identity. Unoka in fact introduces the habit of conceptualising
to the Igbo thought process through his fantasy, as an act of identification and as the
exercise of his intellect. His fantasy world is the epiphenomena which, with the advent
of white cultural influence, moves as the secondary symptom engulfing phenomena as
received by the consciousness of Okonkwo.

On the contrary Okonkwo's unconscious fantasy influences his lifestyle on a day to
day basis. His realisation of his first fantasy, to be the most successful man within the
community is a shortlived success because he fails to detach his fantasy from the objec-
tive expectations of the community. The question of a personal identity finding a larger
shape of longer influence does not arise in his case as he seeks identification within the
enclosure of the life force of Umofia. He draws very few inferences, or to be more
wise, imbibes the one and only inference from the experiences of the Igbo lifestyle,
that weakness is an intolerable offence committed against the larger interest of the
community. Thus his mental position is a static, circularity of fear that hems him in. He
paradox of both sense and senselessness. He senses the power of his strength as the
fuel to his community, he senses the fear of displaying weakness, and he is sense-
to the flexibility, the rebellion, and the rational and logical segments of the same
community. He chooses to be a particular subject of the clan, while Unoka chooses to
be the transcendental subject, and Obierika and the rest of the community prove that mortal man, not merely an Igbo, is both a particular and a transcendental subject in this universe.

The rigid fixations curtail communication even within the temporal reality of the Igbos to an extent where every thought or reaction stumbles to a halt concealed as a hostile weakness. The textual evidence to prove this point are enumerated below. The first is his reaction to his son Nwoye and the boy Ikemefuna.

You think you are still a child.

I began to own a farm at your age........

and

Inwardly, Okonkwo knew that the boys were still too young to understand the difficult art of preparing seed-yams. (Pg.39 TFA)

The second sample is presented in the details of the Week of Peace and Okonkwo's reaction to the surrounding peace and the violence which erupts as a reaction to the placidity. Okonkwo fails to fall into the rhythmic control of the aggression that is a natural trait of the tribe, environmentally condition to attack as a means of sustenance and survival.

Inwardly he was repentant. But he was not the man to go about telling his neighbours that he was in error. And so people said he had no respect for the gods of the clan.(Pg.37 TFA)

In the relationship with Ikemefuna.

....Okonkwo himself became very fond of the
boy-inwardly of course. Okonkwo never showed any emotion openly, unless it be the emotion of anger. (Pg.35 TFA)

Paradox is built into the statement that 'Okonkwo was not a man of thought but of action: (Pg.64 TFA). The latter half of the narrative, does portray him as a man of thought but thought that was singular and linear to survive only as a single cultural component; certainly not applicable in an encounter or in the presence of an alternative pattern of cultural thoughts. In other words, he is drawn into the vortex of the Igbo social fantasy systems, such that when the second strand of the narrative, the rest of the compositae is prepared to internalise the whiteman's sense of time, Okonkwo stays in what is now a false position in the transcending times. He does not occupy the false position merely in his attitude towards the larger threat of dislocation by an alien force, but within the framework of Igbo system of justice imparted in the case of Ikemefuna. The fear of failure sustains his false sense of reality in this case, obstructing his vision from the possibility of derealization of what he falsely took to be reality and a rerealization of what he took to be unreality, which would have enabled him to grasp the social fantasy system in which he existed. This false sense of reality could be effectively attached to the ogbanje which serves as a metaphor on various levels within the framework. In his personal experience he remains numbed by the disclosure, that:

.....the child was an ogbanje, one of those wicked children.

who, when they died, entered their mother's wombs to be born again. (Pg.71).

As a further explanation to the process of derealization and rerealization, to acclimatize
the current social fantasy system. Ekwefi's strategies to escape the vicious circle of ogbanje, stand juxtaposed to Okonkwo's state of numb inaction.

'Ezinma did not call her mother

No like all children. She called her by

her name Ekwefi, as her father and other

grown up people did. The relationship between

was not only that of mother and child. There

was something in it like the companionship of

equals which was strengthened by such little

conspiracies as eating eggs in the bedroom. (Pg.70)

he realigning of survival strategies witnessed within Okonkwo's family fantasy sys-

ystem by Ekwefi is also evident within the social fantasy system as we hear in the words

of Obeirika's brother,

'But what is good in one place is bad in

another place.' (Pg.67)

A similar realigning and deconstructing of Igbo old world order is the rebellion that

ises within Nwoye at the disposal of social misfits, the community cleansing system.

The boy overburdened by paradoxical identities within, is disturbed by the inability to

collude the inherent paradox; and ultimately Okonkwo becomes the centre for the

ncursions formed within the organism of the Umofian community. The insurrection

inally bursts free when the white influence overpowers even the Evil forest. The connec-

ction made between the social fantasy system with the Evil forest and Nwoye within

his family fantasy system with Okonkwo as its singular rigid component, reduces the

ation for the younger generation among the community which in turn as the self of a
new African order repudiates the imposed elements of identity, and in Nwoye's case both biological and social. It is a movement towards 'personhood', away from the status of passive matter, an inorganic individual operative only as a component of an organic unity.

The world of Okonkwo, in fact, is a lifeless world of uniformity and the author carefully excavates for the world audience, anthropological details to enliven a static order of existence where responsibility flowed towards the organizational matters of the Umofian community.

Each act of rebellion as demonstrated by Okonkwo is an eruption indicating the introduction of an hierarchical power based system, while Nwoye's rebellion is towards the belief of Descarte, that it is possible to 'translate methodically all that is unknown into the realm of indisputable common knowledge'. 1 And again to draw our attention to the Cartesian conception of the world, it is an explanation that comes close to the Umofian community as it lay beneath the ordered activity. Such a conception begins on the premise that it is,

....'an essentially chaotic, lifeless world, from which people have been excluded. It is a world which must be investigated for the laws regulating the motions of its elementary parts.

It is an already existing world in which the only changes are changes of rearrangement. Nothing in it passes into existence and out of it again; it is a world of being not becoming. 2

The elaborate rituals of coming together are perhaps instances of the community, 'being' but 'becoming', in the global sense is the seeming developmental changes that in the pre-colonial stage was operative in a different sense. It finds its presence as the mask dance and the rhythm of the drums played in the presentation of the pure form of Igbo culture. The rhythm that beats its way into the community, initially, performs the task of herding together the body and mind of the clan. Secondly it performs the protective function of encircling within its sounds the vulnerable human crowd against the threat from the darkness and its silence, against the inhabitants of this silent darkness. The third function, as is evident from the novel, initiates into the system of early man the first signs of religion by its resounding announcement of birth, marriage and death. The metaphysical movement is made possible by the rhythm, since metaphysics does not remove man from his nature or extenuate his presence there. Within this enclosed world of survival the rhythm of the drums establish trans-world identity of beating a path to the many other worlds percolating around; it announces the presence of that which is missed in a linear thought process; it explodes the linearity into clusters of comprehension which are linked to the centre of the Igbo ideology, one of collective continuity. The various instances of the rhythms that add substance to this point of view, are, to begin with, the instance of a wrestling match,

"Three men beat them with sticks working feverishly from one drum
to another. They were possessed by the spirit of the drums. (Pg.48)"

and

The drummers stopped for a brief rest before the real matches....

They became ordinary human beings again talking and laughing among themselves and with others who stood near them. (Pg.49)

The drumbeat here, in the Aristotelian sense proves that no conscious thinking or activity can exist without a substance and its rhythm offers this substance to the African willing or the activity of thinking.

'The drums were still beating, persistent and unchanging.

Their sound was no longer a separate thing from the living village. It was like the pulsation of its heart. It throbbed in the air, in the sunshine, and even in the trees and filled the village with excitement. (Pg.47)

Significantly, this drumbeat which co-ordinates aggression and rational thinking in the Igbo mindset is distanced from the activity of killing Ikemefuna, it operates as a premonition of Okonkwo falling out of step from the milling contrarily viewpoints regarding the boys fate, particularly after the closeness shared by Okonkwo and Ikennefuna, who called him 'father'.

The sun rose slowly to the centre of the sky, and the dry, sandy footway began to throw up the heat that lay buried in it. Some birds chirruped in the forests round. The men trod dry leaves on the sand. All else was silent. Then from the distance came the faint beating of the ekwe. It rose and faded with the wind-a peaceful dance from a distant clan. (Pg.57)
Besides rhythm as the linking factor between the physical and the spaces of knowledge that help in the formation of concepts to comprehend physicality, there are instances within the work which bring face to face the supremacy inherent in the temporal being, man, as an equal measure with the unperceived. Here the subject begins as the most real part of an entity and it is an exercise in reinforcing the Igbo’s sense of actuality of being in the enfolding darkness. It is also a manner of grasping knowledge, a transition of the subject made in the contact with the object of understanding. In other words the abstract in this context becomes the tangible, solid object and the subject looses its substance or solidity in its passage towards this particular source of knowledge. The instance quoted below from the novel is in agreement with the Aristotelian view, the gist of which is, man as a being, surpasses in reality the entire cosmos of physical substances, including the perennial mummified existence of our body. It is the description of the shrine of Agbala and Cheilo’s transformation from one identity to another.

'The way into the shrine was a round hole at the side of the hill, just a little bigger than the round opening in a henhouse. Worshippers who came to seek knowledge from the god crawled on their belly through the hole and found themselves in a dark endless space in the presence of Agbala. (Pg.27)

and

......at the very moment cheilo’s voice rose again in her possessed chanting, and Ekweñi recoiled, because there
was no humanity there. It was not the same Cheilo who
sat with her in the market and sometimes bought bean-cakes
for Ezinma, whom she called her daughter. It was a different
woman. The priestess of Agbala, the oracle of the hills and
caves. (Pg. 92)

The transition of both, physical being of man and the unseen powers around, easily
assume a unified image better symbolised as the mask, as the 'substance-subject' which
makes the Igbo community a terrain where,

'The land of the living was not removed from the
domain of the ancestors. There was coming and
going between them especially at festivals and
also when an old man died, because an oldman
was very close to the ancestors. A man's life
from birth to death was a series of transition
rites which brought him nearer and nearer to his
ancestors. (Pg. 104)

The 'I' or the individual within this community is a subject that is a result of inference.
Okonkwo is a product of such inference but soon veers away from this pattern and rests
alone as the 'I' which need not be inferred. In this connection he is an end in himself
and here end is used to mean both 'a demarcation and a opening beyond demarcation'.
His death signifies this view, as the Igbo culture, as known during the pre-colonial
times, is the kind of metaphysics which fell into a set pattern of thinking as 'time,
reason, truth and presence,' which had no essential creative potential for modern thought.

*Things Fall Apart* dissolves the issue that 'traditional metaphysical thinking in its self-
enactment, its middle voice, enacts also its end in the sense of self-delimitation.' On the outer circle of perception this self-delimitation is reflected in the whiteman's volume on his African experience, as an episode of little consequence to the global recentring, of cultural values. Besides the visible anthropological details building into fictional situations in the novel the various pauses or failure of contact within it fit well into our study which seeks to trace the transition of purely human concerns into questions regarding the presence of the inexperienced or the unknown. This novel without its synthetic, industrial pressures on humanity records the downfall of a certain group of people in the acquisition of a global culture.

The discussion began with the crucial function of recoiling as a movement of transition from one state of existence to another. The second novel is chosen for, its location in the African past which presents a particular type of conflict in which the protagonist rebels against the unconfirmed role of mediation assigned to him. In the process the element of masquerading, with a specific meaning in the African mindset, weighs down the power of the individual involved in the ritual. Continuing with rebellion and adamancy as the main traits of the emerging new trends of thought, Achebe focuses on the lack of space within the systematised form of role-playing, within the pre-historic or pre-colonial Igbo lifestyle. Ezeulu, the chief priest of the deity Ulu, is involved in attaining not merely communal confirmation of his presence but absolute confirmation of his power as the middle voice mediating between the god and the people. Besides Achebe's view of his character as one who deserves the salutations of his countrymen, one has to for the purpose of our study keep aside the role emphasised,

3 Scott, Charles. E. 1989 'The Middle Voice of metaphysics' the review of metaphysics, a philosophical quarterly,. June 1989/Vol. XLII, No.4 Issue No.168 Pg. 748
his high historic destiny as victim'. (Pg.317) Though one could consider this line as having some substance to offer, in which Achebe observes 'Ezeulu's end as 'consecrating by his agony thus raising to the stature of a ritual passage the defection of his people. (Pg.317). The ritual passage sought here is to convert the disconfirmatory clause built into his role. The role when detached from its unquestionable communal responsibility seems a diabolically contrived assignment, forcibly maneuvering Ezeulu to embrace an identity pivotal to his whole hierarchy of intentions and determining for him his whole system of meaning. His participation with the world is limited to a watchful distancing, where, in secrecy he restructures his 'real' view of others by redefining his 'real' self. The disconfirmatory drawback is presented early in the narrative.

'Whenever Ezeulu considered the immensity of his power over the year and the crops and, therefore, over the people he wondered if it was real. He was merely a watchman. His power was no more than the power of a child over a goat that was said to be his. As long as the goat was alive it could be his; he would find it food and take care of it. But the day it was slaughtered he would know soon enough who the real owner was. No! The Chief-Priest of Ulu was more than that, must be more than that.

(Pg.321)

For the reader the precariously positioned role of the Chief Priest is determined by the weakness inherent in the creation of his deity, which was the handiwork of 'a strong team of medicine-men' who installed this potent creation to protect and unite the six villages against the attack of the hired soldiers of Abarn. Ezeulu's rebellion begins at the beginning when Ulu was placed on his head, when he was transformed into a spirit. His initial confirmation with this identity was for the transformation itself, from man to spirit which seemingly defined for him, his self. But soon enough the mask, which in the African sense meant the sporting or supporting of a dual identity by offering oneself as a medium, to give presence to the spirits as acknowledged by the community, acquires the meaning, globally accepted as a deceitful concealment of oneself. In this context it is Ezeulu's 'real' self that is held prisoner. 'If one's self-identity is the story one tells one's self of who one is' (Pg.77), then Ezeulu is in no position, as the middle voice, to evolve that story that could counter and discount another story which is primitive in the present context. The other story is the credibility of Ulu in present time, when Ezeulu's consciousness conforms to the counter reality that,

'The whiteman is the masked spirit of today.' (Pg.497)

In the movement of recoiling Ezeulu has already relinquished the past movement, with which Ulu is ejected out of the present moment. In the switching of masks, in the present moment, Ezeulu sports Ulu as the mask who covers the formation of a complementary identity around which his present life revolves. The departure is from a tutored role to be who he is told he is. A series of responses selected from the text serve

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as examples to this stand.

'The priest wanted to have a hand in the choice of
his successor. It was what anyone who knew Ezeulu
would expect him to do. But was he not presuming too
much? 'The choice of a priest lay with the deity. Was
it likely that he would let the old priest force his
hand.' (Pg.413)

From an observation made about Ezeulu, the next sample projects his recentering, his
vision in his own words, as his initial reaction to Obika's whipping.

My friend, let us talk about other things.

There was a time when a happening such as
this would have given me a fever; but that time
has passed. Nothing is anything to me anymore.

AND

I have my own way and I shall follow it.

I can see things were other men are blind.

That is why I am known and the same time I am
unknowable. You are my friend and you know
whether I am a thief or a murderer or an honest
man. But you cannot know the thing which beats
the drum to which Ezeulu dances. I can see
tomorrow..... I have passed the stage of dancing
to receive presents.' (Pg.421)

Despite his constant reference to having 'passed the stage' he shifts his pivot by resting
'his hand for support' on the whiteman's knee as well as his own. The saying transforms its function in the presence of an alternative in Ezeulu's scheme.

'This is what our sages meant when they said that a man who has nowhere else to put his hand for support puts it on his own knee.'

The meaning behind his wish and purpose in sending Oduche to the whiteman's compound is the quest for substance in his unconscious task of setting a precedent for the future, a method by which an individual ascertains the meaning of humanity, thus transforming the perspective from which one views not merely one's past, but one's present and future.

I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eye there.

If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something there you will bring home my share,

because,

'The world is like a mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. (Pg.365)

This particular move made by Ezeulu, though it rouses interesting and yet hostile reactions amongst the clan members, is an establishment of a new angle to the philosophy inherent within Ezeulu the individual. Ezeulu's metaphysics depends on his existence, as an individual, who is aware of ideas in his own mind, depending purely on the strength of his mind. If a share of the whiteman's ideas is required for any purpose, it is to reduce the areas within his mind where ideas, in fact a large body of ideas, exist independent of his own mind for existence and character. Against the reactions which lie assorted as the following in the text, Ezeulu unconsciously transforms himself into
the sacrifice intended by Ulu for his dismissal as a finite spirit.

What that man Ezeulu will bring to Umuaro is pregnant and nursing a baby at the same time' (Pg.371)

..... no man however great can win judgement against a clan' (Pg.455)

and

Let me tell you one thing. A priest like Ezeulu leads a god to ruin himself.... or perhaps a god like Ulu leads a priest to ruin himself. (Pg.538).

Built into the first and third observations are the significant linking and delinking of matter and spirit within Ezeulu. He is found nursing the idea of revenge against a clan which had chosen a different path departing from the ritual foot-stamping that had assured him of their support in carrying Ulu.

.....As chief priest he had often walked alone in front of Umuaro. But without looking back he had always been able to hear their flute and song which shook the earth because it came from a multitude of voices and stamping of countless feet.... with every passing day Umuaro became more and more an alien silence- the kind of silence which burnt a man's insides, the blue quiet, razor-edge flame of burning palm-nut shells. (Pg.544)

The third sample explicates the paradox that lies within Ezeulu's complacency, pregnant with the duality where Ulu's final destruction of the priest is a dissembling of Ezeulu's confident belief in his exertion of power and in his awareness of his causal
agency. Ulu on the other hand perishes from being a 'spirit' in the eyes of his people to a mask, having a notion of spirit'. The final outcome or the breaking down of the complex meaning built into the title, into its simple parts is a series of inversions between the intention and the result. These inversions explain the nature of immortality that is inbuilt into the spirit. When Ulu ceases to exist as the finite spirit of Umuaro, he allows another form of the spirit from the Western hemisphere to expand his function as an unpredictable power from purely disciplining the African tribe in the management of elemental phases for survival, to a power that had the potential to regulate the finer sensibilities of the new emerging African. How well this transition works within the African psyche does not concern the author in the immediate context.

Ezeulu, is complacent in the thought that as the arrow in Ulu's bow, directed against his clan, he remains purely an instrument or matter in Ulu's design. So dynamism is to be instilled into his system; by himself he is unable to generate the potent power to fulfill his revenge, waiting as the arrow positioned for the purpose of destruction. Instead, Ulu chooses Obika, the son who brought disturbance into the chief priest's compound, as the arrow to dislodge the mask from Ezeulu's head, thus dislodging himself. As part of the colonial movement of conquest Ulu ceases to be an object of observation thus losing his credibility as an idea known to the Igbo's. Since Ezeulu blocks the perception of his clansmen by refusing to name the day of harvest Ulu robs his chief priest the ability to act, will, and perceive, thus making it possible for the larger body to continue; this is an affirmation of the natural world as essentially mind-dependent but the emphasis is on the particular mind it dependence on.

Contemplation and inaction decides Ezeulu's fate for him. They are presented in a few instances of importance within the narrative. To begin with his mother's insanity and
the incidents of binding her in stocks transform, initially, in the metaphoric stillness which occupies Ezeulu's mind. In total isolation, as an enemy of his people, in a portentous nightmare he hears her voice as the voice of the python. The residing insanity within him is like the puff-adder perceived in him by those who knew him. The fangs meant for others sink into him releasing him from this hold of inaction.

The blind alarm and the life and death urgency fell away from it at the threshold of waking. But a vague fear remained because the voice of the python had ended as the voice of Ezeulu's mother when she was seized with madness (Pg.548)

and

John Nwodika explained that Ezeulu was like a puff-adder which never struck until it had first unlocked its seven deadly fangs one after the other. (Pg.502)

As evidence to the observation that Ulu makes way for the natural immortality of the christian spirit, from his role as the finite spirit, the deep current of feelings running within Ezeulu are expressed thus,

Beneath all anger in his mind lay a deeper compassion for Umuaro, the clan which, long, long, ago when lizards were in ones and two's, chose his ancestor to carry their deity and go before them challenging every obstacle and confronting every danger on their behalf. (Pg.545)

The underlying spirituality is yet another trait particular to Ezeulu who places, in order of inheritance as observed by Akuebe 'the one half of you is man and the other half
spirit'. (Pg.456) the man in him dominates all along such that the spirit emerges from beneath to overpower the presumptuous mind of his chief priest. His course through life carrying this duality within is best portrayed in Obika's last ritual run through the villages.

A fire began to race inside his chest and to push dry bitterness upon his mouth. But he tasted it from a distance or from a mouth within his mouth. He felt like two separate persons, one running above the other.' (Pg.551)

The novel refutes a western philosophical notion which is called an absolute criterion in the search for the difference between appearance and reality, and in the scheme of human thinking, ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself. In the African order of devotion ultimate reality is not the prime concern, where the interaction between spirits and human beings is a visible link that had no place for the expressions of disbelief or scepticism, as known to the white mindset. The transition is from an unquestioned state of co-existence where spirit and flesh mingled as distinct identities to form the whole body of Umuaro. As it is evident from the lines below:

The festival thus brought gods and men together in one crowd. It was the only assembly in Umuaro in which a man might look to his right and find his neighbour and look to his left and see a god standing there—perhaps Agwu whose mother also gave birth to madness or Ngene, owner of a stream. (Pg.528)

Conservatism that was strongest in Okonkwo when the cultural endowment was at its weakest, is now set ready to diffuse this harmonious co-existence between the spirits
and men. It is essentially an obliteration of a system of thinking and social acceptance of the new scheme of sacrifice, a transition from one cultural sphere to another. In the midst of a social acceptance within whose intentions Ezeulu remains an individual discounted in their regard, the Chief Priest stands still like the wicked-medicine-man Otakekpeli during the Akwu Nro feast. His posture is described thus,

He sat like a lame man with legs folded under him.

They said it was the fighting posture of a boar when the leopard was about. . . .(Pg.522)

'Arrow of God' fits into Neitzche's genealogy which explains the process of function within a enclosed or limited structure of values as an inevitable recoiling on itself. The paradox inherent within this limited scope of existing morality, the repressed powers supporting the prime values in hierarchies of moral attitudes, is that they have the effect of turning on themselves when the counter-vailing powers are set free to their own directions. The turning of oppressed powers on themselves, the resentment unleashed is the middle voiced movement of self-overcoming in Neitzchean genealogy. Further in his discourse on 'The Will to Power' he emphasises that the world is the will to power and the individual himself is this will to power, in other words, ;he is holding the world in his mirror'. In his perception, this world, he admits, is a "monster of energy without beginning, without end.... enclosed by "Nothingness" as by a boundary.... a sea of forces flowing and rushing together.6

The description of Neitzche's Dionysian world fits well with Ezeulu's desire for control, in which the enormous forces flow back and forth as a becoming that is beyond emotions of craving or fulfillment. It is a self-creating sphere but which lies beyond control as he is interminably fixed in the vortex of a community which carries itself in eternal movement of self-overcoming and self-destroying. The goal certainly is not to beyond good and evil but the circle itself is the goal which explains the presence of spirits amongst humans and the ancestors escorted ritually to a region familiarised through these ritual passages.

The introduction of Captain Winterbottom and his apostles moves the question of entity from a fixed timeless state to its meaning, as a succession of moments. The actuating eminence of the White man's camp, despite heightening the sense of mystery that surrounds the title of the novel, moves African Time from its static position to within the wider frame of a democratic international sense of Time. In relinquishing the hold of Ulu from Ezeulu's power, the larger mass makes its direct contact with the centre of a religion. The variety of elemental powers is reduced to the One, though within the temporal reality of the African story Christianity is the only alternative available, to the African artist it is crucial to narrow down these numerous centres of power to focus on the complete outbreak of Ezeulu's, political ambition within a race that 'ew no kings'. It is not the obliteration of the unknown within as known by this race is an attempt to refocus a humane vision on the powers of sheer self-centred manipulations now in control.

The expansion of vision initiated by Ezeulu in sending Oduche to the Christian command is to get his share and the parochialism of his self-interest is what finally Achebe ns at destroying in this particular novel before moving over to a direct contact with the political situation.

The emerging image of Christ, the Christian sacrifice into the narrative introduces
to the men of Umuaro a confusion. in the new sacrifice, as the hitherto practised form, is not the kind of ego loss without retention of desire for ego gain. The element of sacrifice continues without the desire to return to a source that is without identity or subject interest. Confusion enters when this sacrifice is offered a single form of suffering completely subjugating them in its singularity of purpose, as different from their familiarity with the image of the 'trans' of the space without presence.

The power of negation or sacrifice, now in the African mind is sowed to grow in the peculiar fashion of Western metaphysical thought, where it is transvalued into a different quality of forces. It involves a new set of conflicting directions involving a method but within it continues the 'middle-voice recoiling' function. The prime concern of the author after the sacrifice in the Arrow of God is to focus on the wobbling 'middle-voice recoiling' function as it introduces into the African system a steady devaluation of its identity thus producing a gaggle of incoherent power practitioners in their midst. Despite his placing No Longer at Ease between the two narratives, discussing the beginnings of recorded history in Africa, he descends to the present, as a logical move, described in the words of Graham Clarke, in his 'Aspects of Prehistory,' with regard to the use of anthropology for the purpose of defining man, as,

Human values, and by definition behaviour conditioned by these values, cannot be 'natural'......; they can only be artificial, the product not merely of human society but of the history of particular human societies.8

7. 7a. Scott, Charles. E. 1989 'The Middle Voice of Metaphysics,' the review of metaphysics a philosophical quarterly June 89/Vol.XI.II/No.4 Pg.743 to 764
8. Clarke, Garaham 1982 The Identity of Man Methuen and Co. Ltd. New York Pg.XV
The thought expressed above is a rejection of the continuing presence of a past that has now reshaped itself with an interplay of differences involving several meanings, and the active middle-voice which held physical reality and transcendent reality of the Igbo's together in the now passive voice, as a sickened center of the multiple difference surfacing within it. The move away from the active voice of inquiry, witnessed in the masked spirits conducting the business of law and order, is the passive voiced inaction that is presented in the next two works chosen No Longer at Ease and A Man of the People. As the following line from Jose Ortega Y Gasset's The Dehumanization of Art and other essays (Princeton, 1968), 191, expresses

History tells us of innumerable retrogressions......
but nothing tells us that there is no possibility of
much more basic retrogressions than any so far known
including the most basic of them all; the total disappearance of man as man and his silent, return to
the animal scale.' 9

The introduction of choice in respect of his future in the midst of the 'Cultured Primate' (Pg.150) is the induction of 'process metaphysics', a formulation by Whitehead. As, against the static state, what has been central to philosophical materialism, is replaced by 'the notion of fluent and structured energy', in 'process metaphysics'. The crux of conflict arises in the detachment of both static intention and the fluent and structured energy embodied in the socially accepted masquerade of traditional African society.

which was central, to their reality. The 'static fallacy', in the Aristotelian theory of primary substance, becomes the 'static reality' of the African society, meaning, the unchanging subject of change which is the characteristic of substance, according to this theory, and acquires a new sense in the particular context. Static reality, as it presents itself in the novel *No Longer at Ease*, begins as the structured relationship between the white boss and his African sub-ordinate, though the first few pages bring forth the present, before moving back into the past, to examine the cause for the present state. The line below initiates the static state, in the novel.

Whenever Mr. Justice William Galloway,
Judge of the High Court of Lagos and Southern Cameroons, looked at a victim he fixed him with his gaze as a collector fixes his insect with formaldehyde(Pg.173)

The second type of static reality is Obi Okonkwo's relationship with his mother. Here the element of sacrifice which bound, one way, the dependent to the body of sacrifice arouses rebellion in the young Obi's heart. The sacrifice in its binding restraints prevents his marriage with Clara that forces him into a series of miscalculated moves. The relationship initially, becomes meaningful through his sense of guilt and the sacrifice forced out of his mother by his first misplaced memory.

...As a child he took this relationship very much for granted.

But when he was about ten something happened which gave it concrete form in his young mind. He had a rusty razor-blade with which he sharpened a pencil or cut up a grasshopper. One day he forgot this implement in his pocket and it cut his mother's
hand very badly when she was washing his clothes on a stone in
the stream. She returned with clothes unwashed and her hand
dripping with blood. For some reason or other, whenever Obi
thought affectionately of his mother his mind went back to the
shedding of her blood. It bound him very firmly to her. (Pg.255)

Soon, the young Obi, back from his sponsored studies abroad, has his perspectives
changed with a new angle offering itself to his perception. The death of his mother
releases him from a static position of affection bound by the shedding of her blood.
The alternate reaction is,

When the period of guilt was over Obi felt like metal that
was passed through fire. Or, as he himself put it in one of
his spasmodic entries in his diary. 'I wonder why I am
feeling like a brand-new snake just emerged from its slough.'
The picture of his poor mother returning from the stream, her
washing undone and her palm bleeding where his rusty blade
had cut into it, vanished. Or rather it took on a secondary place.
He now remembered her as the woman who got things done. (Pg.309)
The static part of him becomes a concrete reality as it is found in this observation,

'There was always a part of him, the thinking part
which seemed to stand outside it all watching the
passionate embrace with cynical disdain. (Pg.231)
The movement from one static reality to another, made by Obi is an expansion of
about the 'essential subjectivity of the mental' and 'mental concepts as subjective points
of view and their modifications. More so, the assumption works itself to the claim that experiences as such do not have an objective character and by this, 'a subjective point of view does not permit a greater objectivity'. In the case of Obi Okonkwo it is proved true that his subjective point of view or experience in unable to translate itself into an objective character. As is evident from this instance within the text

He dashed across a major road and was missed by
a huge red bus by a hair's breadth. He backed,
went forward, turned right and left like a panicky
fly trapped behind the windscreen. (Pg. 295)

Since metaphysics, like Psycho-analysis, art and science illuminates through paradox, the familiar in the hidden, Obi's story is a deep search by the author for the new in the old. The whole work is an expanded paradox. The following instance selected from the text highlights this particular point. The futility of settling into the old world views, of a society that jointly sponsored the transaction of Obi Okonkwo, to bring home their share of new knowledge, is the dilemma that continues; fixes, as it were with formalin, the protagonist, inheriting Ezeulu's lust for the new world's strategies such that his state is as the one presented in this segment.

After about an hour of this mad and aimless exercise Obi pulled up the side of the road. He felt in his right pocket then in his left for a handkerchief. Finding none he rubbed his eyes with the back of his hand. Then he placed his arms on the steering wheel and put his head on them. His face and arms gradually became wet
where they came in contact and dripped with sweat.
It was the worst time of the day and the worst time
of the year - the last couple of months before the
rains broke. The air was dead heavy and hot. It
lay on the earth like a mantle of lead. Inside
Obi's car it was worse. He had not wound down the
glass at the back and the heat was trapped inside.
He did not notice it, but even if he had noticed it
he would not have done anything about it.' (Pg.295)
The scene is a metaphoric representation of the inaction that paralyses Obi when there
is opposition to his marriage to an Osu, Clara. In this instance, the new order is stifled
by the old order, convincingly; the two rest within each other thus neutralising overall
action and the progress of either, in Obi.

His mind was troubled not only by what had happened
but also by the discovery that there was nothing in
him with which to challenge it honestly. (Pg.284)
Therefore the centre is the dead centre of African ideology. Just as the unalterable past,
the present remains unchangeable with no indication of a future. Obi, by being as-
signed to a certain commitment by the Umofian society is a victim of intentions attrib-
uted to him by others. He is isolated as a separate being with the community holding
the privilege of choosing to respond to some of his attributions and to be impervious to
others, and is better expressed in the contrast Obi finds between the two places Ikoyi
and Lagos, which,

.....reminded him of twin kernels separated by a
thin wall in a palm-nut shell. Sometimes one
kernel was shiny-black and alive, the other

powdery white and dead (Pg.187)

and

For all its luxurious bungalows and flats and

its extensive greenery Ikoyi was like a

graveyard. (Pg.187)

His responses conditioned purely by personal preference as is evident from this line.

His mind was impatient to roam in a more

pleasant landscape. (Pg.210)

When tested with what is now evolving as the ecological approach, explains it as the breakdown of the dynamic relations of 'mutuality and reciprocity' between individuals and their environments, where they continue to be observers and not activators, of being able to provide for themselves, by their own action, conditions appropriate to support their action's continuation. They are not 'makers' of the lives but merely 'Finders' of support for the small segment of a global lifestyle, as in the case of Obi Okonkwo, the only palm-fruit' (Pg.178). The idea that temporal processes cannot be made up from parts themselves devoid of temporality is expressed well in A Man of the People which is a continuation of Obi Okonkwo's psychological type, achieving its difference with a certain determination that finally sets the 'static reality' position to transform into the Aristotelian 'Static fallacy'.

Obi's reactions as expressed here,

'Ice no longer felt guilty. Ice too had died.

Beyond death, there are no ideals, no humbug,

only reality. The impatient idealist says, 'Give
me a place to stand and I shall move the earth.'

But such a place does not exist. We all have to
stand on the earth itself and go with her at her
pace. (Pg.310)

Temporal processes in the African sense, depicted through Obi's dilemma, is not con-
tinuous or indivisible, and therefore the phases of before and after continue to be a
patchwork of disjointed parts, unable to cohere as aspects of a dynamic unity. Action
in the midst of it, is expressed best in the description of Obi, exerting to rouse anger
within him,

It came from the periphery and not the centre,
like the jerk in the leg of a dead frog when a
current is applied to it. But he could not
accept the present state of his mind as final,
so he reached desperately for something that
would trigger off the inevitable reaction.(Pg.285)

The protagonist from a world of merely functional entities, possessing a static quarter,
mobilizes the agencies within, structurising activities in the character of Odili in Δ
Man of the People.

The movement begins from the periphery to the centre, as in the case of Obi, as evident
from this observation,

As I stood in one corner the vast tumult waiting
for the arrival of the Minister, I felt intense
bitterness welling up in my mouth. (Pg.2)
and

I wished for a miracle, for a voice of thunder, to
hush this ridiculous festival and tell the poor
contemptible people one or two truths (Pg.2)

The 'vast tumult' is a dissipative structure, which in the wake of such energy expenditure moves towards increasing disorder and Odili is the microscopic element propounding ways, in his mind, to activate a set of statements that could perhaps stem the flow of verbalising as against his preverbal silence. As all spatial relations should stretch through a stretch of time, the present relation of the African individual is a fixed state caught between the forgotten dimension of a past and the repression of present time as is evident from the two observations quoted below.

It was at this point that I first noticed a new,
dangerous and sinister note in the universal
cry. (Pg.4)

and

Everything around me became suddenly unreal;
the voices receded to a vague border zone (Pg.9)

Repression assumes the form of Chief Nanga, who is the present construct of a socially accountable ideal self, an image of a genuine personal being, holding forth as a challenge, to the rest of the community, As Odili observes,

'Memorable events were always flying about his
stately figure and dropping at his feet, as
those winged termites driven out of the earth
by late rain, dance furiously around street lamps.
and then drop. panting to the ground. (Pg.46)

Discomfiture within the circumstances of Chief Nanga's power bracket, is caused by Odili's misleading conception of himself as fixed to the fringe, from where he pickets the duality that has crept into the present state of African affairs. Hence his bewilderment.

'I find it difficult in retrospect to understand my inaction at that moment. (Pg.70)

and

I was just flapping about like a bird when suddenly I saw the opening. (Pg.76)

Referring to his relationship with Elsie and his quick detachment from her as the cause for his loss of self-respect, draws him back from a social void, yet at the same instance he gains the autonomy that is required for the moment to be the author of his own actions and conscious of his potential to account for his actions. In this context Odili becomes free of a fixed and predetermined 'self', as it was in the case of Okonkwo and Obi Okonkwo. Instead he shares with Ezeulu the quality of a 'Context-free', potentially infinite self, though Ezeulu proceeds from the assigned role, of an impersonal 'slot-filler self' to the 'context free' state.

Herein, a context dependent aspect of past reference and the conflicting interpretation makes ground for Odili to self-ascribe his state and his status in relation to his past. The incident involves the wooden figure of a god in a public square in Bori and the Englishman's interpretation of an old woman's gesture before this figure.

'I was pleased the other day,' he said, as I drove past to see one very old woman in uncontrollable
rage shaking her fists at the sculpture

this old woman, quite an illiterate pagan who most probably worshipped this very god herself; unlike our friend trained in European art schools; this old lady is in a position to know.

Odili's response, is the progression of memory from the unconscious that constitutes his current state and here his explanation of the shaking of a fist before a deity is an aspect which reports to himself a discontinued link, while establishing a cultural link with the Englishman.

'Did you say she was shaking her fist?' I asked.

'In that case you got her meaning all wrong.

Shaking the fist in our society is a sign of great honour and respect; it means that you attribute power to person or object.' which of course is quite true. And if I may digress a little, I have since this incident, come up against another critic who committed a crime in my view, because he transferred to an alien culture the same meanings and interpretation that his own people attach to certain gestures and facial expression. This critic a Frenchman writing in a glossy magazine on African art said of a famous religious mask from his country; 'Note the half-closed eyes, sharply drawn and tense eyebrow, the ecstatic and passionate mouth......
It was simply scandalous. All that the mask said, all
that it felt for mankind was a certain superb, divine
detachment and disdain (Pg.49 and 50).

The devices or ploys used by an outsider in bringing off his meaning into the current
reality with the intention of projecting rational accountability into an object that is on
the other side of his culture-training and Odili's response, turns this competency into
incompetency as a necessary move to defeat this 'attribution theory' which in its anxie-
ty to make and maintain actual processes of a particular corpus, renders it lifeless by
discontinuing a certain meaning that had been attributed to it by a body of existence,
which now in its end has found its definite structure.

It is a report of what constructions and re-constructions were required of a
certain generation of African youth to make those intersubjective changes, of agree-
ments, loyalties, tellings and reportings to meet the exigencies of daily life. The det-
tachment offered by such a stand translates his purpose for him through the tale of
Josiah and the blind beggar.

Josiah has taken away enough for the owner to
notice....In the mouth of our people there
was no greater condemnation. It was not just a
simple question of a man's cup being full. A man's cup might be full and none the wiser. But
here the owner knew, and the owner, I discovered,
is the will of the whole people. (Pg.86)

The 'whole people' and Odili had hitherto shared a precariously established personal
unity, a kind of ontological insecurity, a feeling which is a integral part of his finite
being. The constant fluctuation between being and non-being is stabilized, for Odili, through the tale, and moves away from his identity as non-being, having led a life which seemed to head towards a futile, ultimate meaninglessness. At the same instance Odili, in the public eye, is reduced to a non-being by Chief Nanga exposing him as a biological being of no-consequence.

The novel exposes Odili as an individual who lacked that base to secure his personal unity, a sense of himself as the agent of his own actions, but as a defenseless particle, resulting in personal disintegration. He represents the African society existing as a thing, with the political manipulators being the author of its perceptions. The lines quoted below express the futility of this finite being.

'We had been caught with only one foot on the ground, so to speak (Pg.100)

....under our very eyes, many in the audience laughed. But it was the laughter of resignation to misfortune. (Pg.123)

and

What I felt was sadness - a sadness deep and cool like a well, into which my hopes had fallen.....(Pg.130)

and

It is a sad truth of our nature that man becomes too easily brutalised by circumstance. (Pg.133)

Odili conceives his being for himself in the relationship with Edna.

She had been a dust particle in the high atmosphere around which the water vapour of my thinking formed its globule of rain.
Odili is roused from the large segment of the society as non-being, and encounters it, shedding the newly acquired synthetic unity of self under a new system of politics and education, which had resulted in partial loss of relatedness with the other, the forgotten time segment. From this new angle he envisages his task as such.

What I had to accomplish became more than another squabble for political office; it rose suddenly to the heights of symbolic action, shining monumental gesture untainted by hopes of success or reward.'(Pg.130)

The lean, weak contact of Odili's self with the other, in this context, the past within him, with the society keeps alive for the novelist, his next creation The Anthills of Savannah. As the title suggests the survival instincts of this particular landscape has been in keeping this contact, this relatedness a reality; Besides this, the entire novel elaborates upon the reduction of African system into an end-state, of a chaotic-non entity, in the midst of it a group of individuals replace the single, complex personality, to salvage the few remnants of hope and to make possible creative activity as a feature of the wasted land. As its prophesied in the words of Odili,

Suffering should be creative, should give birth to something good and lovely. (Pg.104 AMOTP)

The anthills symbolise the process of world-making: its a world first created and sustained by relentless activity. As a dynamic centre of preservation it also symbolises resilience, kinsmanship, regeneration, and a close contact with Mother Earth or Ani, the power assigned to sustain the centre of Igbo creativity. The base which supports the formulation of hypotheses, to think of an alternative establishment to the discontinuation of a self-established kingdom of military ends, of the world-making process has its beginnings in the earlier novels. The common characteristics shared by
either camps is the exaggerated regard for human power, the supreme confidence in their capability to turn the possible worlds into human designs where they are free to create a world which currently satisfies their values.

The strands found in the earlier novels are represented as minor, second-strand narrative components. The emergence of the new group of individuals is akin to this description in Things Fall Apart.

....At such times the ancestor of the clan who had been committed to Mother Earth at their death emerged again as eqwuwu tiny through anthills.

(Pg.151)

In A Man of the People, the giant step of action taken by Eunice in shooting chief Koko in the chest, combined with Ekwefi's courage in Things Fall Apart in braving the dark, and following the priestess of Agbala, and the tale narrated by Uchendu in the same work, is the emotional state that occupies this particular novel.

Mother Kite once sent her daughter to bring food.

She went and brought back a duckling. "You have done very well", said Mother Kite to her daughter, "but tell me what did the mother of this duckling say when you swooped and carried away its child away?". "It said nothing" replied the young Kite.

"It just walked away." "You must return the duckling;" said Mother Kite. "There is something ominous behind her silence." And so Daughter Kite returned the duckling and took a chick instead. "What did the
mother of the chick do?" asked the old Kite. It cried raved, and cursed me, said the young Kite.

"Then we can eat the chick," said her mother. There is nothing to fear from someone who shouts. (Pg.117 TFA)

These symbolic forms and instances give the inner form to the consciousness of the characters in relating them to the known, as different from the inherited knowledge of it.

It is evident from a character study of Ikem Osodi, that Odili has found a place and purpose to act in his own right, this time. Achebe's strategy brings together those elements that had been repressed within his protagonists, created thus far by him, presenting each form of Igbo culture, to be understood on its own terms, as having an inner logic of its own. Thus a reinforcing of the new generation with these distinct human powers is behind the creation of the trio born out of resentment. They are built together as three basic functions of consciousness.

We are all connected. You cannot tell the story of any of us without implicating the others. Ikem may resent me but he probably resents Sam even more and Sam resents both of us most vehemently. We are too close together, I think. (Pg.66)

and

We tend sometimes to forget that our story is the only one of twenty million stories- one tiny synoptic account (Pg.66 & 67)
They assume for themselves the significative function where they freely construct for themselves symbol systems through which the known is ordered and they pervade this order as the dominant element. Ikem constructs for himself a representational objective world through the power of his language. With the exception of Sam, who in the eyes of Chris is, as he observes, is.

...But strangely enough there was a kind of spiritual purity about Sam in those days despite his great weakness for girls. Maybe not purity but he seemed perfect and so unreal, in a way.' (Pg.66)

Ikem and Chris move towards that juncture of life as it forms or flows into one of the many directions of the mind or spirit. 'The Hymn to the Sun' is a poem, which makes him the owner of the objective reality, through literary imagination. A few segments of the poem represent themselves, as,

Great carrier of Sacrifice to the Almighty.

Single eye of God! Why have you brought this on us? ..

Wide eyed, insomniac, you got out at cock-crow spitting malediction at a beaten, recumbent world....

So the songbirds left no void, no empty hour when they fled because the hour itself had died before them. Morning no longer existed.....

The trees had become hydra-headed bronze statues
so ancient that only blunt residual features
remained in their faces, like anthills surviving to
tell the new grass of the savannah about last years
brush fires. . . .
After the last noisy meal the vultures pushed in
their wicked, bashed-in heads and departed for
another country. (Pg.37)

Requestioning a definite past becomes essential to, not the new conception of values;
but for the re-conception of their ancient project of self-knowledge.

No one could say why the Great Carrier of Sacrifice
to the Almighty was doing this except that it had
happened long, long ago in legend. . . .

Besides it being a requestioning, it is also the reorganising of the first power of lan-
guage, to construct an adequate metaphor; as it is in the conception of Giambattista
Vico, 'every metaphor is a fable in brief'. 10 It is a departure from a routine, a vicious
circle, as in the eyes of Ikem, I wonder why everything in this country turns so readily
to routines of ritual contest.'(Pg.45)

Ikem and Chris are more preoccupied with the modification of language, to use it more
selectively in the restructuring procedure. In contrast Beatrice and Elewa, particularly
Beatrice, is acutely sensitive to this fact.

'That we are surrounded by deep mysteries is
known to all but the incurably ignorant.' (Pg.102)

10 Verne, Donald Philip 1993 'Metaphysical Narration, Science, and Symbolic form.'
the review of metaphysics a philosophical quarterly Vol. XI.VII, No.1 Issue
No.185 Sept.93 Pg.118
Character of Beatrice is structured to look beyond herself and look into and beyond nature around. The disadvantage posed by the new mixing together of races opens up knowledge presupposed by nature as distinct from it.

She was born as we have seen into a world apart;
was baptized and sent to school which made much about the English and the Jews and the Hindu and practically everybody else but hardly put in a word for her forbearers and divinities with whom they had evolved. So she came to barely knowing who she was. (Pg.105)

And in the case of Beatrice the African essence, now distanced by the many other racial essences, develops or grows as the one which is perfect without specific identity and through her discursive reasoning it acts. Hence, Beatrice from her elevated perception of the immediate holds the strand of memory to continue, by supporting Ilewa to nurture the frail hope of an African future. Better perceived by Ikem as such.

Perhaps Ikem alone came close to sensing the village priestess who will prophecy when her divinity rides her abandoning if need be her soup-pot on the fire, but returning to the domesticity of her kitchen or the bargaining market-stool behind her little display of peppers, and dry fish and green vegetables.

Ingrained in this observation is the role played by Cheilo
who was the perfect balance between the physical and the metaphysical being which was natural to the African system of thinking. Ikem and Chris stand in contrast to Beatrice in that their body of belief is strictly in adherence to the power heated African present, whereas Beatrice's picture of the world includes large features of a discontinued past, a dismembered present and a doubtful future. The centre to the two young men was Sam and his dark regime and to Beatrice this centre-subject shifts to Elewa's baby and this recentering alters a general pattern of conclusions as it is in the case of Chris's death.

The image of Chris as just another stranger who chanced upon death on the Great North Road or Ikem as an early victim of a waxing police state was no longer satisfactory. Were they not in fact trailed travellers whose journey from start to finish had been carefully programmed in advance by an alienated history? (Pg.220)

Central to Chinua Achebe's fictional concern has been the callous disregard of rulers, in general, towards the common African. The static structure or image supporting the Central idea has been -

...the failure of our rulers to re-establish vital links with the poor dispossessed of this country, with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation's being (Pg.140 and 141)

The rulers, vary from the coloniser to the Chief Priest, the political jester Chief Nanga, and the military megalomaniac Sam.
The country under the scrutiny of this third-person outsider is someone else's 'object', on whose surveillance they had no control. This external observer position builds itself around this corpus, the common humanity, constraining a shift from the continuing pattern. The past in this case, in its unknowable, removed, distance becomes that metaphysical meaning of knowing the unknown in the present circumstances, as is evident from the continuous movement, of back and forth in Achebe's novels. It is strengthened by the power of the oral tradition which now has to alter its pattern from functioning as the 'conduit metaphor'. In Michael Reddy's explanation, talking or the spoken form transfers already well-formed objects of thought from one location to another and he, positively believes that despite the fact that language has an 'all-pervasive metaphorical', character, which in the current historical circumstances the 'conduit metaphor' is found lacking. The alternative which he offers is the 'toolmakers paradigm' where communication has 'an active formative function' working to specify further, something already partially specified.

The 'conduit metaphor' appropriate in a more socially settled time segment, in which assigned place and function was a social reality: and the switch made from this metaphor to the paradigm is one from which a spatially-rooted metaphor is reassigned to 'an essentially temporal or 'form-producing process'. In other words it is a conversion of the existing social inequality as an impetus towards liberty, to maintain an 'ongoing dynamic historical quality.' It is not a means to create a perfectly homogenous society, which is the egalitarianism offered by a military regime, in its true function is a

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TABLE 1.01: Mean and range values of pH, CO₃ and HCO₃ in mg/l