

# **Angst and Anxieties: Historical and Psychological Parallels in Chinua Achebe's Trilogy**

A Thesis

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**



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## **UNDERTAKING FROM THE CANDIDATE**

This is to certify that I, Md. Elham Hossain, have completed the Ph.D. thesis work on the topic “**Angst and Anxieties: Historical and Psychological Parallels in Chinua Achebe’s Trilogy**” under the guidance of Dr. Kazal Krishna Banerjee, Professor of English of the University of Dhaka, for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This is an original piece of work and I have not submitted it earlier elsewhere.

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I, Md. Elham Hossain, certify that the work embodied in this Ph. D. thesis, is my own bona fide work, carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Kazal Krishna Banerjee at the Department of English of the University of Dhaka. The matter embodied in this Ph.D. thesis has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any other degree/diploma.

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## **ABSTRACT**

African Literatures in English begin with Chinua Achebe for his seminal handling of the historical and psychological realities of the Africans in his English writing. A genuine effort that Achebe has made for liberating Nigerian history and mind from all kinds of illusions and prejudices of the European colonizers has given him a permanent status among the world famous writers. He has discovered a new way of looking at the history and psychology of his people with an anthropological and ethnographic quest into the social, political, cultural, ideological, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial realities of Nigeria and, above all, Africa. Achebe's investigation demonstrates that all kinds of problems of the life of the Africans arose from the moment when they lost their initiative and identity to the colonizers. The co-existence of differing cultures and values was an inescapable reality in African societies. With the advent of the colonizers, this reality turned into angst and anxieties for the locals, because they became both unhappy for the colonial enslavement and interested in embracing the values of Western civilization in which they had been initiated. Angst and anxieties that emerge out of this ambivalent situation have become one of the major themes of African literatures. As a historically conscious writer, Achebe has used this theme in his trilogy with a view to portraying the realities of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. This work aims at probing into the angst and anxieties of the relationship between the natives and the colonizers from historical and psychological perspectives. It is a thematic assessment of mainly Achebe's trilogy in theoretical backdrop. But, for the fortification of arguments, I have focused on two more of his novels, essays, interviews, short stories and poems.

# **Angst and Anxieties: Historical and Psychological Parallels in Chinua Achebe's Trilogy**

## **1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Defining Angst and Anxieties and a Historical Overview of Pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-colonial Situations of Nigeria in Relation to Achebe's Trilogy**

Cultures are healthy when they are adaptable and organic. Lack of adaptability leads a community to angst and anxieties and the ultimate collapse of its traditional society. African cultures have got some inherent weaknesses that may be characterized by their inability to bend and adapt changes. But, internal disintegration and vehement sweep of the colonizing process inspire the locals to show an inclination to the Western culture. Their adherence to the local culture, and at the same time, their interest in the Western culture, education, epistemology, religion and ways of life pose a dilemma or ambivalence for them. This split-up disposition leads them to angst and anxieties. In an interview, Chinua Achebe has said, "If you refuse to accept changes, then tragic though it may be, you are swept aside" (Larson 61). And the tragic story of Nigeria's falling apart for showing

indifference to adaptability is mainly portrayed in Achebe's trilogy, and here Achebe also implies that angst and anxieties emerge out of the inability to accept changes.

Chinua Achebe writes from the historical and psychological perspectives. His profound involvement with psychological, historical, political, cultural, literary and colonial issues has ranked him among the leading literary thinkers of not only Nigeria but also the whole African continent. All of his five novels are vibrant with his consciousness of the time and mind of Nigeria, above all, Africa. *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are concerned with Igbo tradition from historical perspectives. *No Longer at Ease* portrays the pre-independence period of Nigeria "when the power was in the process of transition from the hands of the colonial to national bourgeois" (Dasgupta 20). *A Man of the People* presents corrosive corruption and all pervading political turmoil in post-colonial Nigeria. His *Anthills of the Savannah* depicts that power itself is a villain craving for which leads post-colonial Nigeria to corrosive political failure and disillusion. In his novels, Achebe exhibits that angst and anxieties emerged with the advent of colonialism which tried to disrupt and eliminate the indigeneity of the local culture. But, "Achebe seems to suggest that change is inevitable and wise men always reconcile themselves to an accommodating change" (Dasgupta 22). And thus, the problem of angst and anxieties can be overcome through reconciliation and accommodation.

Thus, as a historically conscious writer, Achebe has diagnosed and interpreted the maladies of angst and anxieties of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria, and at the same time, as a social and political reformer, suggested the way out of these consuming predicaments.

Thomas Jefferson, one of the nineteenth century American thinkers, renowned as a liberal voice of American independence, has said that the black man hardly possesses anything worthwhile. He does not think that the Africans have any tradition of painting, sculpture or architecture. In his eyes, “the black people were ignorant and had nothing significant to say or contribute except wild ululations and the pagan rites” (Dasgupta 1). Such a deliberate misrepresentation of Africa by the Eurocentric colonizers is challenged by the rise of colonial consciousness among the third-world writers who have used the colonizers’ language to link it to the harmony of African speech and other aspects of African objects and patterns of thoughts.

In response to the Eurocentric distortion of African identity, the natives feel an urge or anxiety to present themselves with all the realities of their culture, language and customs. Hence, a cluster of writers – Ayi Kwei Armah, Ngugi, Ama Ata Aidoo, Wole Soyinka, and Kofi Awoonor have discovered the hidden treasure of the narrative of African oral tradition for structure, theme and style. Chinua Achebe, a vanguard in African literary movement, has sought to defend African heritage by using English as his

linguistic medium and thus, African literature truly starts with him and it turns defensive of African heritage in his hand. Though Ngugi has termed the use of the colonizers' language by the African writers a "neo-colonial slavish and cringing spirit", Achebe does not hesitate to exploit the colonizers' language to fight back colonialism (Ngugi 26). Achebe has turned English language into African English by fusing it with local tales, proverbs and idioms of Igbo culture.

While Chinua Achebe was in a formative stage of his mind of a writer in the 1950s, Nigerian society along with the whole African society was passing through a rapid shifting from colonial to post-colonial conditions. The 1950s was a decade of significant changes. These changes were more mental than material. Undergoing a persecuting experience of a long colonial rule, the Africans realized that they had their own way of presenting themselves, and the social, political and cultural realities of their life were to be interpreted by themselves for their own sake and even for the world. Till 1958, the year of publication of *Things Fall Apart*, no African novelist could sustain his or her reputation as an exponent of the self-conscious tradition of African literature. But, Achebe's first novel *Things Fall Apart* has occupied an indispensable position for the readers to understand the colonial conditions of Africa. Subsequently, his second novel *No Longer at Ease* raised the question of national identity on the face of the practices of colonial enterprises. The quest for post-colonial

aesthetics that also embraced many African writers during the last days of colonialism in Africa inspired Achebe to produce his third novel *Arrow of God* in 1965. These three novels have got an intense and interconnected affinity in respect of their exploration of the roots of cultural, political and psychological realities of the colonial generation of Nigeria, and for this reason, they are widely known as the African trilogy.

Achebe has not ignored the opportunity to explore the post-colonial situations of Nigeria in his writing. His curious search for the post-colonial realities has given rise to the plots of his last two novels entitled *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Ignorant nourishment and blind imitation of the colonizers' patterns of life leads the post-colonial Nigerians to alienation, corruption and identity crisis. Frustration takes the people in its grip as the post-colonial republic upholds the legacy of the previous colonial masters. Unbridled corruption, corrosive elitism, local politician's impudence and negligence to the participation and consent of the masses in the government energized the causes of military coup in Nigeria only six years after its independence. Besides, internal heterogeneity of culture and beliefs in Igbo community, and the conflict between Northern and Southern regions contributed to creating political, social, economic and cultural instability in post-colonial Nigeria. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that internal uneasiness among the Igbos was caused by the juncture between Western education and local tradition.

The Igbo community showed significant interest in the Western way of life, and at the same time, they could not totally abandon their traditions. Unlike most other ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Igbo community was characterized by republicanism and egalitarianism and “[A]lthough the contemporary Igbos have assiduously taken up Western education, Christianity, and other emblems of modern civilization, traditional customs and beliefs have not been totally abandoned” (Moss 108). Achebe, as a man from Igbo community, can comprehend that the problems of the Nigerians are more psychological than political, and this assessment has inevitably found an expression in his last two novels. In these novels, Achebe offers to address the question of self-identity and develop an African hermeneutics for approaching the crises of “power, morality, domination and national consciousness” (Siddique 65).

Apparently, Achebe does not take a stand against the contribution of Europe in Africa in the fields of education, culture, way of thinking and the mode of life. The thing that he has opposed or criticized is the European attempt of ousting the local values and tradition through the colonial enterprises. It is true that culture, customs, traditional values and language are firmly rooted more in the psyche of the natives than in the material aspects of life, and Achebe “is preoccupied with the disaster brought upon the African psyche during the period of colonization and he defines quite clearly the kind of damage it can cause” (JanMohamed 152). Colonialist

praxis produced dilemma among the natives through ‘denigration’ and ‘historical catalepsy’. This dilemma also led the post-colonial government to failure which cannot be totally attributed to the political causes. Failure is greatly influenced by cultural, social and psychological factors, and as Fanon theorises, colonialism impacts a lot on psyche.

Accordingly, Achebe concentrates more on the psychological world than on the material world of the Nigerians. He has portrayed many aspects of the Igbo culture and beliefs that, in contrast with the European ways, appear to be superstitious. Portrayal of the parallelism between the European and the African values reveals that a compromise between these two may bring about advancement in the lives of the natives. But, Achebe has found that the Europeans are not ready to let it be so. They rather intend to oust the local values with their own and enjoy an absolute domination upon the natives. This intention of the colonizers creates uneasiness in the relationship between the European colonizers and the Nigerians. My dissertation intends an exploration of the historical and the psychological parallels with a view to revealing the factors responsible for angst and anxieties of relationship between the European colonizers and the colonized of Nigeria as depicted in the trilogy of Chinua Achebe. For further defense of my dissertation, I will make an intensive exploration of two other novels, essays, poems, short stories and interviews of Achebe.



Now, the terms -‘angst’ and ‘anxieties’, need to be clarified for the sake of further discussion. Sigmund Freud has used the term ‘angst’ which has been translated by Lytton Strachey, one of the founding members of the Bloomsbury Group, into ‘anxiety’ “...caused on the basis of political reasons” (Evans 26). Lacan mentions that “one has to preserve the distinction between these two terms” (Evans 26). He has distinguished these two terms in the light of their relationship to certitude and time. ‘Angst’ is associated with certitude which perplexes the deferment of knowledge that plunges the subject in time and ‘anxiety’ refers to psychological disorder, turmoil in the normalcy of life, resulting from unpredictable apprehension, suspension and unknowability where knowledge is always suffering from its deferral or postponement or interruption.

Again, the term ‘angst’, according to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, is a “feeling of anxiety, guilt or regret, esp about the condition of the world.” (40). ‘Angst’ covers broader perspectives than ‘anxiety’. Besides, in modern psychology, ‘angst’, a synonym for ‘fear’, emerges out of maladaptation, a fundamental reality, causing mental turmoil, generated by confrontation with the indeterminacy of things. It also refers to an intense feeling of apprehension, anxiety or inner dislocation of mental harmony and order as a result of a reaction to a traumatic situation. It is mostly a psychological state resulting in fear of losing one’s own self and

identity. It may be defined as a kind of feeling that promotes caution while approaching a potential threat. True, it is a common reaction to certain impending threat or danger. Subjective perception of danger is one of the major causes of anxiety. It grabs an individual while he is faced with the danger of becoming a non-being. Hence, “[A]nxiety is a diffuse, vague, highly unpleasant feeling of fear and apprehension” (Halonen 584).

‘Angst’ is often confused with ‘anxiety’ because of their close affinity and both the terms indicate unbearable anguish of mind. But, the basic difference lies in the final impact of these emotions. ‘Angst’ is associated with the hope of salvation from the situation which brings about anguish. When hope is discarded from the struggle of getting rid of unbearable anguish, it is known as ‘anxiety’. When the colonized nation struggles against the colonizers with a hope of salvation from colonial oppression, the anguish that works in its mind is ‘angst’. Again, when the colonized natives, positioning them vis-à-vis colonial oppression, suffer from an unbearable anguish in utter uncertainty and hopelessness, it is then termed as ‘anxiety’. In fact, ‘angst’ and ‘anxiety’ are very close to each other and I have employed these two terms together to emphasize the stronghold of colonialism upon the Nigerians, with a specific focus on their minds and times, and their consequential vacillation between hope and hopelessness. Besides, I have tried to show how awareness about the loss of identity causes angst and anxieties among the colonized or the natives. In course of

my exploration, I will plumb the depth of the unconscious of the Nigerian as well as African colonized so that their angst and anxieties that emerge out of the awareness about the confrontation of colonialism and nationalism, can be comprehended in respect of Chinua Achebe's trilogy. In the present dissertation, I would like to forge my findings of 'angst' and 'anxieties' with a specific emphasis on the psychology and the history vis-a-vis the impulse of political realities of Nigeria and above all, Africa.

It is quite familiar that anxiety may be perpetuated by the pessimistic outcome expectancy of the individual. Every individual identifies himself or herself with his or her own culture, language, religion, politics and ethnic strands. If it so happens that the circumstances compel the individual to think that he is losing these valuable determinants of his identity, then he may fall into a trance of angst and anxiety. Viewed from political perspective, after the Second World War, an intense struggle took shape against fascism, not only in Africa but also all over the world, and it threw Europe in material, political, philosophical, spiritual and intellectual anarchy. Aime Cesaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950) heralds a war against European colonialism and explores how the Black positioned themselves in the post-Second World War period. He feels the angst and anxieties of the time, and asserts:

...in 1945, black people from around the globe gathered in Manchester, England, for the Fifth Pan-African Congress to discuss

the freedom and future of Africa. Five years later, in 1955, representatives from the Non-Aligned Nations gathered in Bandung, Indonesia, to discuss the freedom and future of the third world. Mao's revolution in China was a year old, while the Mau in Kenya were just gearing up for an uprising against their colonial masters. The French encountered insurrections in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Cameroon, and Madagascar, and suffered a humiliating defeat by the Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu. Revolt was in the air. India, the Philippines, Guyana, Egypt, Guatemala, South Africa, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Harlem, you name it. Revolt! Malcolm X once described this extraordinary moment, this long decade from the end of the Second World War to the late 1950s, as a "tidal wave of color". (Kelley 8)

This 'tidal wave of colour' was stimulated by the development of the consciousness of the colonized about their identity. The Second World War made them feel that colonialism was deliberately distorting their identity. Hence, they responded to this colonial policy through rebellion.

During the first half of the twentieth century a culmination of realization that European civilization "has been shaped by two centuries of bourgeois rule" equipped the colonized with sharp consciousness (Cesaire 31). European colonization failed to justify its position as a civilizing mission because it gave rise to some problems, "...to which its existence has given

rise: that Europe is unable to justify itself either before the bar of “reason” or before the bar of “conscience”; and that increasingly takes refuge in a hypocrisy which is all the more odious because it is less likely to deceive” (Cesaire 31). Since the mind is a part of what the world is and what the time is, a social, political, economic, ethnic and religious consciousness among the colonized of different parts of the colonial world developed then against the colonial hegemony.

Even then, the colonizers proclaimed that unless they intervened, the colonized might have fallen into barbarism. Again, the bourgeoisie that took resort to colonialism instigated the colonizers to practice “cruelty, mendacity, baseness, and corruption” (Cesaire 48). Consequently, the colonized could rightly discern that “bourgeois swinishness is the rule” (Cesaire 49). In the same vein, the Nigerians felt that they had their own courteous civilizations. Thus, the confrontation between two different streams of thinking gave birth to angst and anxieties in their minds, and these impulses produced a profound impact on psychological, social, political, economic, ethnic, religious and cultural aspects of their life. Such an upsurge of awareness of self-identity and revolt against European colonial domination produced angst and anxieties among the Africans, and the tide of the time impacted Achebe remarkably, and consequently, his trilogy, reflecting his whole mind aptly makes his readers acquainted with

the psyche and feels the pulse of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria vis-a-vis Africa.

True, Achebe's trilogy is a plunge into the psyche and history of Nigeria and above all, Africa. It presents a counter-discourse to the image of Africa constructed by the European travelers, slave traders, merchants, missionaries and biased armchair geographers. The first novel of his trilogy *Things Fall Apart* "... is a historical novel, set in the British colony of Nigeria at about the turn from the nineteenth into the twentieth century" (Bloom 1). It is set in a fictional Igbo village Umuofia and depicts the corrosive dilemma of a man named Okonkwo who confronts the white man's mission of revising his social ethics as well as ethnicity. Throughout his life, he sways between the utter angst of becoming a coward and the anxieties of losing cultural originality. Achebe's second novel *No Longer at Ease* explores the probable factors responsible for the corruption of the colonial young generation trapped into the juncture of local and foreign cultures. Obi, a young man with Western education and in quest of a luxurious life of the West, falls into the pitfalls of Europeanization of African indigenous culture. Swept by the impact of European education and attitude, he endeavors to stand against ethnic nationalism, which basically conceives of social identity, and such an inevitable clash leads him to angst and anxieties. Achebe's third novel *The Arrow of God* goes back to the time and setting of the Igbo villages of *Things Fall Apart*, and again casts Ezeulu, a tribal chieftain, against the changing realities, inevitably related to

the advent of the white men in Nigeria. Ezeulu fights against not only the colonizers but also his own people. He is ultimately overcome by both these rivalries. It appears that the white men are the culprits but the native black people are no less responsible for breaking the arrow of God. This text is a self-analysis and deconstruction of the frail vanity of the indigenous culture in the era of rapid-changing and moderating cultural hybridity.

Not only is the advent of the white men but also the natives' falling into the temptation and subjugation of the European way of life is responsible for the weakening of self-determination and cultural stability. Achebe does not forget to show the misappropriation of the state of decolonization by the demagogues who, indulging in political euphoria, take resort to all possible means of corruption which inevitably precipitate the army to coup and abolish political rights of the people. *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* portray the post-colonial political failure of Nigeria. These two novels reflect Achebe's prophetic vision about the political instability and the emerging influence of the army in the government of Nigeria, and the truth is that even today Nigeria is in the state of abeyance. The causes of this abeyance are lying not only in the fabric of familial, political and religious life but also in the psyche of the Nigerians.

Achebe, as a historically conscious writer, is well-aware of the colonial entanglements in the psyche of the natives. So, Serafin observes that Achebe:

... believes that the African writer should be a teacher dedicated to explaining to his people how and why their world came to be the way it is today. To offset the psychological damage done during the colonial era, the writers of 1950s and 1960s had a duty to create a dignified image of the African past, so that Africans could learn to take pride in their own culture and traditions. (Serafin 9)

I, therefore, find that an intense exploration of the history of the advent of the Europeans in Africa is required to justify my observations about the din and bustle in Nigeria of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. The Europeans, especially the French and the English, came to the West African coast only for slave trade in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Before their arrival, in 1483 the Portuguese sailors visited the capital of Benin which was “probably the most highly organized coastal kingdom at this period” (Lloyd 51). Though they came for trade, their major aim was to proselytize the slaves, as they thought that it would justify their trade. Subsequently, they concentrated on trade. West African coast did not attract the Europeans till the discovery of America in 1492. With the discovery of America, there occurred the emergence of slave trade, and African coast offered a repository of slaves to the Europeans. Then they challenged the Portuguese monopoly of trade in the fifteenth century. A kind of anxiety compelled the Europeans to participate in the Atlantic commerce and “...in the second half of the sixteenth century, about 13000 slaves were being shipped



annually – a figure which grew to 27000 in the seventeenth century and to some 70000 in the eighteenth” (Lloyd 51). The French pivoted this triangular pattern of commerce. But, they emphasized on imposing their own culture and language upon the local people. Besides, industrial revolution in the Western Europe dealt a great impact on the pattern of trade and relationship between the European and the African. Thus, the seed of hybridization as well as cultural malformation was sowed in Africa during the colonial period. Even today, it is challenging the sense of identity, nationhood and historical consciousness of the natives through the continuous process of neo-colonization.

In competition with the French, the English started mercantile activity in the “form of national trading monopolies like the Royal African Company chartered by Charles-II in 1660 or the French West Indies Company created by Colbert in 1664” (July 199). Both the French and the English competed with the Dutch to get a hold on slave trade. Gradually, the Portuguese and the Dutch were compelled to retreat, and even France gradually became passive and through the eighteenth century, England multiplied its volume of trade which far outstripped its competitors. Slave trade became a very lucrative business for the British traders, though “paradoxically, it was in England during the late eighteenth century that the first steps were taken leading to the eventual abolition of the slave trade” (July 199). Anti-slavery movement, which was so prominent in England towards the end of

eighteenth century, “ultimately achieved not only the beginning of the slave trade but also the settlement of colonies for freed slaves” (Lloyd 54). Thus, colonization and the formation of the Black Diaspora went hand in hand.

Obviously, arrival of the Europeans affected the Nigerian communities in various ways. The most fatal impact was the disintegration of the community and political annihilation. The intruders traded with their usual vigor and tried to capture all aspects of life. Cultural differences that existed among the neighboring peoples worked in favor of the European intruders and against the formation of the spirit of nationality. For, true, “...nationality and national sovereignty were founded on an ethnic-linguistic criterion: people of the same race and who spoke the same language constituted (in theory) a nation and had the right to self-determination” (Dawahare 3-4). Apparently, Nigeria is a land of wide variety of tribal and ethnic groups with varied languages, religions, ideologies and beliefs. This variety is antagonistic to the development of a singular spirit of nationalism.

The perspective of ethnic nationalist attitude which flowered after the First World War had both positive and negative impact on the independence of European colonies in Africa. Ethnic nationalist perspective germinated self-determinism which led the natives to regain their cultural, traditional, linguistic and psychological origin, above all, sovereignty and political freedom. On the other hand, in post-colonial period, this ethnic nationality

led various ethnic groups to corrosive clash among themselves in their politically free territory. Consequently, Nigeria encountered a crisis of democracy. Even today Nigeria encounters the same crisis, emanated from the corrosive clash among various ethnic groups. Even the varied myths of origin kept the people poles apart from one another. In the words of Lloyd,

...one million Tiv of the Benue Valley believe themselves to be descended, over fifteen or so traced generations, from a man named Tiv, who founded the human race. The Yoruba describe themselves as the descendents of Oduduwa, the first man, whom the supreme god let down from heaven from chain. (27)

These internal biases and prejudices contributed to the things-fall-apart like conditions of Nigeria to a great extent.

Another impact of the advent of the Europeans in Africa was a complex amalgam of culture. European traders did not come to Africa with wives. Hence, many of them took African wives and consequently produced a mulatto population. Many of them tended to settle in the limited compass of local custom and started wearing local African tattoos and clothes. Again, the local Africans who could afford to receive European education started to imitate European life-style. This interaction produced a malformation of culture and custom, and such malformation, a kind of heterogeneity, generally works as a counter force of the development of nationalism and manipulates the historical sense that legitimizes the nationalist identity of a

people. But, when national identity is amalgamated with racial attitude, ethnic nationalism takes its form and challenges nationalism. In parallel, Christianity also got a fertile ground in Africa to flourish. In such a situation, the natives experienced a puzzling condition which gave birth to angst and anxieties among them because:

...some individuals gave every outward sign of a European way of life but could not always change habits of mind or morals with their dress. Others broke under the impact of a foreign education and were unable to maintain themselves in either their old or new world. (Lloyd 201).

Thus, they fell into the pit of ambivalence or confusion, and subsequently, due to maladjustment with the emerging situations, they suffered from angst and anxieties.

Ambivalence evolved out of the rapid political, economic and social changes that came in the mid-twentieth century. Actually, “[A] revolution of political freedom has transformed colonial status into national sovereignty for some two score states” (July 215). Nigeria was one of them. Economic development became the sole demand of post-colonial Nigeria. Social revolution gained momentum, challenging an older way of life, “questioning traditional values and customary relationship, and presenting Africa with many of the same advantages and the same problems which the process of modernization has already brought to other parts of the world”

(July 215). Nigeria which accommodates one fifth of the total population of Africa with varied creeds and mythologies experienced a fatal uneasiness that emerged out of the malformation of cultural, political, social, economic and psychological phenomena.

Imposition of Western education upon the Nigerians accelerated the amalgamation of cultures and minds. As a result, obviously both in modern and traditional sectors, Western-educated Nigerians took many remarkable posts. In former British colonies, well-educated natives who were formerly clerks and teachers filled traditional political offices. In this connection, P. C. Lloyd comments, "It would be erroneous to imagine these traditional offices as being filled by elderly illiterate men, impervious and perhaps hostile to Western ideas. The educated among them form a highly significant bridge between the indigenous societies and the modern state" (146). In course of time, from this educated bourgeoisie class there emerged resistance against the colonials.

The Western-educated section of people gradually turned into elites who developed a new pattern of social stratification "in which wealth and power are distributed in a manner of different, both from that of the indigenous societies and from that of the colonial period" (Lloyd 214). Difference in stratification and colonial system of government did not postulate the growth of nationalism and the concept of self rule by the West Africans. In this case, ethnic division and corrosive clash among various ethnic groups

led democracy to a vulnerable position of failure which, on the other hand, contributed to the valorization of the colonial rule and policy even after the liberty of the country. Consequently, even during the post-colonial period, the colonizers continued indirect rule through the so called representatives of the people, who served as puppets in their hands. Therefore, there emerged an inevitable uneasiness which threw the educated bourgeois class of people into the pit of dilemma and this dilemma produced both angst and anxieties among them.

By the standard of natural wealth and population, Nigeria is really a gifted country. It is widely known that Nigeria is the sixth largest crude oil exporting country of the world, and one in every five Africans is a Nigerian. In respect of its land's fertility, Nigeria has got all possibilities to become independent in agricultural product. But only the way through which Nigeria achieved freedom from the European colonization, which is obviously peaceful, offered a euphoria indulging in which the Nigerians put all their moral commitments on ice and banished their sense of duty to their motherland. They became more interested in urban life, and consequently, farming failed, leading to food deficiency. Glaring dollars, earned from nationalized oil industry, dazzled the eyes of the civilian leaders and led them to lethargy, forgery and corruption. Breach between the haves and the have-nots widened, inevitably leading to internal discontent and

disintegration. People's hopes tumbled; dreams were shattered and disappointment soared higher and higher.

Besides, post-independent Nigeria experienced a pathetic rural exodus which "...strained the already meager urban services to the breaking point and beyond. Nigeria became a prisoner of its own wealth, and Lagos was the capital that tourists avoided and numerous Western diplomats refused to be posted in" (Lamb 303-04). Due to economic exploitation, 75% wealth went to only one percent of the Nigerians. The gap was so visible that elegant suburbs reached the doorstep of impoverished slums. Scarcity became an everyday phenomenon. For example, one in every five children died even before the age of five because of inadequate medical care while, in contrast, the urban people were mimicking the American style-society. The picture of rural life was really horrible, featured by woeful hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy and hazards which caused frustration, anger and resentment among the average people.

Indeed, all these gloomy aspects and their impacts on the mind, political situations and historical realities of Nigeria have not escaped Achebe's subtle observation. His Christian origin or parentage has made him live at the crossroads of cultures and "[T]here is no doubt that growing up under the influence of Christian parents made him more hospitable to the idea of cultural fusion" (Buchanan 5). Unlike a plenty of writers, for attaining favour, Achebe did not attaché any significance directly to the social

disruptions associated with colonialism. He rather tried to bring about juxtaposition between the natives and the European colonizers because of his foresighted and liberal attitude and hospitable tolerance to invite the world-culture to his home. While exploring the reason behind such disposition of Achebe, Ian Buchanan has pointed out:

The only reason one can think of why Achebe would attempt to half cover up and half reveal the alienating effects of colonialism, especially the confusion and disorder external control caused in the day to day lives of colonized people, who were forced to live and work within settings thoroughly poisoned by rigid imported ideas of rank and status, is to convey his fascination with the idea of Igbo and European cultures co-existing on an equal footing, a concept of cross cultural interaction which he himself characterizes as a crossroads of cultures. (5-6)

Achebe's passion for Igbo culture and cultural patterns does not make him biased; he rather seems to teach his readers how to reconcile with changes. Though he has countered Western politics of misinterpreting Africa, he shows openness to Western knowledge and ideas and "[H]e teaches the necessity of compromise, a loyalty to traditional wisdom and values, if not to tribal politics and outmoded customs, along with a suspicion of Western materialism but openness to Western thought" (Rollyson 4).



Achebe has accommodated both Europe and Africa in a single mind. His liberal mind has made him capable of accommodating these binary oppositions because he has written from within the territory of his own cultural identity. At the same time, he leaves no stone unturned to show in his characters how an unaccommodative disposition leads the individual to his identity crisis. Obi Okonkwo, in *No Longer at Ease*, encapsulates such identity crisis in a juncture between two different cultures. Achebe has also depicted the prejudices and traditional beliefs of the Igbo people with compassion. For example, in the ninth chapter of *Things Fall Apart*, he has portrayed the peculiar way of medical treatment which was applied upon Ekwefi, one of Okonkwo's wives, who gave birth to ephemeral children who died in early infancy. Only Ezinma survived. The medicine man cut the dead child; dragged it to the evil forest for burial. He humiliated the dead child in every possible way so that it might not come back to the womb of its mother again. This may appear to be primitive to the Europeans, but it evolves from the tradition nourished by the Igbo people for ages. At the same time, the impact of modernization on the post-colonial generation has also been captured by Achebe in *No Longer at Ease*. In *Arrow of God* he has captured the essence of angst and anxiety in Ezeulu who is trapped between traditionalism and modernization. He sends his son Uduche to the missionary school for acquiring Western knowledge. But, when he is offered the post of a warrant chief, he refuses. This contradiction grows out of his inability to accept what he dreams of.

Again, Achebe's adherences to traditional values and unadulterated love for black aesthetics have enabled him to depict the faithful picture of African culture in his trilogy which is a seminal protest against the myths that the white men have created to dehumanize the Africans. These myths which have yielded "psychological, certainly economic comfort to Europe" have tended to suppress the Negro for four hundred years (Achebe 23). The myth-maker is fond of talking and talking, and never listening "because he imagines he has been talking to a dumb beast" (Achebe, "Impediments to the Dialogue between North and South" 24). In "Impediments to the Dialogue between North and South", Achebe articulates his belief that fruitful dialogue or interaction will take place only when the white men will give up their Conradian prejudices and attitude towards the Negroes. It would be possible only when the Negroes would be allowed to talk and listened to. Hence, Achebe seems to assert that accommodation is not one-sided but a two-sided attempt that can raise both the parties above angst and anxieties.

As it happens, Achebe's intrepid role as a writer has let the world know Africa through an African. He believes and maintains that "the African novel has to be about Africa" (Achebe, "Thoughts on African Novel," 66). To him, Africa is "not only geographical expression, it is also a metaphysical landscape – it is, in fact, a view of the world and of the whole cosmos perceived from a particular position" (Ibid 66). Throughout his

trilogy, he writes about Africa from within. His trilogy is a voice against the Europeans' racist portrayal of Africa as a "heart of darkness". Actually, he writes back to Conrad and Joyce Cary who have distorted and denigrated the Africans to the level of the beasts of burden. His trilogy confronts the distorted and false image of Africa produced by the European and American travelers and throws a formidable challenge to the European racist view that the partnership between Black and White is not like that "[B]etween the horse and its rider!" (Achebe, *Impediments* 23). While doing this formidable task of bringing Africa to the attention of the rest of the world, Achebe has dedicated his trilogy to the exploration of African indigeneity in which he has discovered angst and anxieties emerging out of the juxtaposition between within and without. No doubt, Achebe believes that his task is to reinterpret the African past from an African point of view and his proper knowledge about the intersection of different ideas has enriched his trilogy.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has experienced widespread crosscurrents or intersections of cultures. It is the century of collapsed border and hence, transmigration, transnationalism and transcultural phenomena have articulated diaspora and cultural hybridity which are becoming historicized as well as politicized because of the continuous intersections of ideas. Geopolitical entities, linked with diasporic hegemony and ideological thoughts have produced an intricate network of nationhood. Colonial venture, global trade and

discordant modernity have produced an intense uneasiness and questioned self-identity. Heterogeneous amalgamations of political theories and thoughts, political and historical intersections, traumatic experience of the colonial regime and the transformation of hideous elements of subjectivity have occupied the writers of this century. Again, for the trauma caused by the “...loss of man’s innate, animal nature due to its exile into the unconscious; repression produced culture and culture instigated repression” (Stace 173). Besides, Neocolonialism and the widespread crises of values have led the world to the inevitability of conflict, aggression and apprehension which are responsible for producing angst and anxieties. In such a crucial situation, especially after the Second World War, Achebe finds that colonial enterprise is no less a psychological process than a political venture. During the colonial period, atrocities in the name of religious nationality were practiced by the European colonizers in different parts of the world including Nigeria, and under the subterfuge of scientific positivism ethnocentrism was marred. Christianity was commoditized by the European colonizers and indigenous values, religions, ethnological beliefs were deliberately branded as malicious commodities and “[T]hey led to intoxication within group superiority and laid the ground work for oppression of the Other and for cruelty and genocide” (Akhtar 8-9).

Ethno-cultural awakening often leads the natives to angst and anxieties when they are challenged by the pervading colonial culture. Falling into the

juncture of binary oppositions, the natives experience a kind of uneasiness. It is obvious that isolation cannot define a man's identity and hence he must come out of his socio-political cocoon and the stimulus that determines his position, comes from the other people, living beyond their territory. Thus, an intersection between the centre and the margin produces the hybridity which leads people to anxieties. From colonial perspective, both the colonizers and the colonized depend on each other for recognition of their identity, and the reciprocation brings about crosscurrents of two parties. But, the domination of one party over the other obviously creates tension, not relation. Especially, when the natives, compelled by circumstances realize that the colonizers are attempting to erase out their identity, angst and anxieties occupy them. Achebe has explored various corners of relationship between the colonizers and the natives and the causes of angst and anxieties through the characters of his trilogy.

In Achebe's writings, tradition has become an animate entity and the loss of it causes alienation to his characters. Again, some of his characters turn into mimic men and their dream of living in passivity and they, as the progenies of the colonizers, work at their best for the marginalization of their fellow natives. The attempt at marginalization is also made by the colonizers. But, on the face of resistance that usually comes out of an intense adherence to the traditional values, consciousness of self-identity works among the natives. In this case, some people attempt at compromising with the colonial base and superstructure, and some others attempt to fight back

them. Consequently, crisis, more of psychological than of physical nature, begins. Achebe has made a brave approach to attempt an assessment of all these aspects of relationship between the colonizers and the colonized in his trilogy. In *No Longer at Ease*, Obi falls into a juncture between the tide of modernism and the ebb of cultural tradition, and loses himself in confusion, but Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* emotionally and vainly fights back Europe. Ezeulu initially tries to juxtapose Europe with Nigeria, though ultimately proves a failure for his perplexity. In this connection, Aime Cesaire, while analyzing M. Mannoni's views and observations on Madagascan soul, has said that "...colonization is based on psychology" (59). He goes further to say that there are some groups of people who, for unknown reasons, suffer from 'dependency complex'. They also feel a craving for dependency. Living under the domination of the colonizers for a long time, the colonized are forced to take up the 'Whiteman's burden' as a common fate and become forgetful about their own cultural values and identity, and eventually grow passive in the attempt at enslaving their consciousness. This passivity gives birth to a feeling of alienation from their own identity, and leads them to a dependency on the colonizers. The colonized interpellate the education and knowledge of the colonizers, and gradually tend to turn into mimic men. But mimicry's most remarkable outcome is that it produces resistance in the form of struggle against the alienation that gives birth to an intense craving for self-identity. Thus, angst and anxieties emerge out of the confluence of these two binary oppositions. Of course, the root of these conditions lies in the conscious discovery of an

in-between identity, fortified by the psychological and historical entities of the colonized because colonial situation gives birth to the emergence of a mass of illusions and misunderstandings which can be properly analyzed and defined mostly by psychology and historical realities. An acute sense of loss of authenticity, central location and position and awareness of cultural hybridity gives rise to angst and anxieties.

Thus, the relation between the colonizers and the colonized is mostly neurotic as well as traumatic. The outsiders are always in the apprehension that the natives are not as they are, and their contact may degenerate them. The natives are anxious of the intrusion of the outsiders also and believe that it would adulterate their culture. This problem is intensified as the outsiders lack the awareness of the world of 'Others', "a world in which Others have to be respected" (Mannoni 108). In the words of Mannoni, "This is the world from which the colonial has fled because he cannot accept men as they are. Rejection of that world is combined with an urge which is infantile in origin and whose social adaptation has failed to discipline" (108). This superiority complex of the colonizers makes the natives suspicious about their goal of ironical civilizing mission and leads them to anxiety.

Again, the potent desire for power, which is harbored in the unconscious of the outsiders or the colonizers, dominates over the natives and confronts their resentment which tends to break down dependence. Thus, the colonial situation assumes the form of a conflicting relationship which gives out

angst and anxieties in both the colonizers and the colonized. Another formidable factor is that “all human actions are prompted by egoism” that sows the seed of bitterness in the reciprocal juxtaposition between the natives and the outsiders (Mannoni 153). The privileged position with the administrative temper of the outsiders places them in superior but alienated location, surrounded by an inaccessible shell of prejudices. Inaccessibility produces an atmosphere of mystery and suspicion. The outsiders begin to suspect the natives to be non-cooperative and hostile. Suspicion on the parts of both the colonizers and the colonized retards both of them in the process of gaining knowledge about each other, because it confines them in “[S]ubjectivism which usually ends in skepticism” (Stace 361). Subjectivism emphasizes on subject only, not object, but knowledge is encapsulated by both subject and object. Hence, the subjective approach to each other deprives both the colonizers and the colonized of the knowledge of each other’s self. This limitation of knowledge places these two parties in binary opposition.

Hence, the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized is the relationship of trauma, distrust and uncertainty. Now, finally with regard to the historical realities, it is found that Nigeria is a country of ethnic diversity and the British rule was not a smooth one here. The fact is that “[O]nly the area around Lagos was a British colony; the other parts of the country were British protectorates” (Rothermund 146). Indirect rule



through pre-existing local power structures was introduced in the northern parts of the country by Lord Lugard, the High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, in 1899 and it continued till 1960. Though the emirs lost some of their sovereignty, they enjoyed a large degree of autonomy. The South was indomitable and it was inhabited by mostly two dominant peoples-Yoruba and Igbo. The Yoruba had several small kingdoms ruled by the kings who were highly honoured by them. On the other hand, the “Ibo had no chiefs but an elaborate structure of age grades and elders” (Rothermund 147). There was also a gulf of difference between the rural and urban situations. The peasants living in the rural areas did not trust the urban intellectuals who did never try to win their confidence. Even the local leaders in the rural areas did not care for the development of the conditions of the people. Internalization of Western patterns of life by the local leaders brought about a deep rupture between these two groups of people. Such a rift also contributes to the emergence of angst and anxieties in all the spheres of life of the Nigerians. Now, the following chapters will throw sufficient light on how Achebe has explored different facets of these angst and anxieties in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria and depicted them in his writings, mostly in his trilogy.

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## **A Critical Assessment of Relationship between the Colonizers and the Colonized from Theoretical Perspective in the Light of Achebe's Trilogy**

Achebe's trilogy is widely believed to represent an early African nationalist tradition and repudiate imperialist and colonialist ideology. The concept of ideology that the trilogy presents intends to communicate "...the idea of complex rather than simple relationships between individuals and groups in the world of Achebe's "fictional" Igbo communities" (Nyame 5). If viewed from the perspective of Igbo traditional culture, Achebe's trilogy offers discourses that determine self-definition of the natives within the traditional culture. His trilogy runs in parallel with the minds and the history of the Nigerians. He absorbs political, cultural, social and psychological currents of not only Nigeria but also whole Africa. Reflecting on all these phenomena, his trilogy "...tackles many of the stereotypes to be found in British colonial literature and insists that pre-colonial Africa was not a land requiring the civilizing influence of missionaries and colonialists" (Newell 6). Even two other novels indicate his 'condemnation of post-colonial violence', corruption and militarization of Nigerian politics. Thus, the seminal aspect of Achebe's trilogy that arrests the readers' attention is that he has sharply juxtaposed fiction with history with a view to exploring both

the history and the minds of the natives and the colonizers, and in this regard, his trilogy is dedicated to re-creating the past and re-establishing its dignity “through symbolic means...” (JanMohamed 154). This chapter intends a critical assessment of the relationship between the African natives and the European colonizers in association with a theoretical speculation on Achebe’s trilogy.

According to Simon Gikandi, “...writing and historical development necessarily go hand in hand” (2). A subtle and faithful probe reveals that African literature presents the world “established as realities for knowledge” (Gikandi 3). African writers including Achebe competently explicate and define their culture and history; self and their writings voice their angst and anxieties over the colonizers’ deliberate politics of social marginalization. In an interview with Appiah, Achebe has said that colonization is the most important event in their history from all kinds of angles, and most of the problems they see in their politics derive from the moment when they have lost their initiative to other people, to colonizers. Actually, Achebe’s ability to combine the archeological role of novel with the social, political, historical and cultural identities of a nation has produced a desire for a mythical space in which a new society might be presented. Achebe’s dexterity of exploring the contemporary political realities is obviously felt in his trilogy. His trilogy does not depict an atmosphere of optimism or liberty of Nigeria from the colonizers as he has found the emergence of political forces most of which are communal and

regional, rather than nationalist. Achebe has also seen how the colonial economy experienced severe downturn, worsening urban poverty, severe unemployment problem and the decline of export revenues. His historical consciousness has created a parallel between his trilogy and the historical realities of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. Thus, a New Historicist study of Achebe's trilogy reveals an intense and new cognizance that formulates a new Nigeria out of the juncture of colonial and post-colonial Africa. Besides, "[T]he negative influence of the colonialist ideology and the need for restitution and vindication, then, constitute the sociological ground for Achebe's fiction" (JanMohamed 154). However, it requires a special consideration of the European colonial enterprises in Africa before examining the manifestations of social, political, cultural and ethnological imperatives in Achebe's trilogy.

Though the British colonizers feel proud of their role in civilizing the rest of the world, it is true that they have shaped countries, not nations. Actually, nationalism, an inevitable stimulus of a nation, lies in the developing awareness and ambivalence of a group of people, and it produces a system of cultural signification of knowledge. This inherent instability and ambivalence enables the colonizers to sow the seed of angst and anxieties in the minds of the natives. The British colonizers have captured many parts of the world; exercised dominance there and introduced their own cultural and religious hegemony but very carefully never created nations. The British rulers deliberately damaged the spirit of

unity and the sense of belonging to a particular national, cultural, religious, linguistic and historical identity. They were mostly afraid of the spirit of nationalism and in fact, considered it to be a pressure on their sole authority. And “[T]he continuation of British colonial rule depended on the ability of the colonial state to channel this pressure into a peaceful, pro-Western political orientation” (Thomas et al. 80). They set the natives apart from one another and instilled bitterness into them out of ethnic prejudices about superiority and consequently produced a false collage of identity. The root of their superiority complex lies in their conquering disposition and ‘Nero complex’

Though the Europeans came to Africa under the subterfuge of running trade, very soon they became conquerors, and denied equal footing to the natives. It is quite natural that “the conquerors felt superior to the conquered, and justified their actions on the grounds of their superiority” (Oliver 87). Thus, the feeling of superiority instigates the colonizers to impose their prejudices upon the natives. In doing the task of imposition, “colonialism denies human rights to people it has subjugated by violence, and whom it keeps in poverty and ignorance by force and therefore as Marx said, in a state of subhumanity” (Sartre 50). Thus, colonialism continues its inhuman practice of transforming human into sub-human.

Inevitably, being swept by prejudices, the colonizers come forward with colonial discourse to misrepresent the position of the natives through a



monolithic praxis. They intend the colonized to be like them, obviously maintaining a conspicuous difference. On the other hand, the colonized intend to be like the colonizers with difference. Thus, the colonial encounter which is never stable or fixed generates mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence because through mimicry, colonial authority is not reinforced; rather it splits up. The colonized adopt the colonizers' ways of thinking but never truly or fully become white. In this way colonial discourse fractures and disrupts. As a result, the "native represents himself / herself rather than be represented" (Nayar 170). Thus, mimicry challenges colonial discourse and its authority and it fails because the colonial masters want the natives to be as similar to them as possible and, on the other hand, wish to maintain difference between them and the natives. Consequently, it gives rise to ambivalence. Hence, whatever weapon or strategy the colonizers apply- it may be the Bible, bullet or business, it is bound to fail to yoke the colonized subjects because they are obviously the split, decentred, unstable and resistant one. Eventually, the negative impact of the colonial ideology turns out to be antithetical to the colonized and leads them to the consciousness of their identity; though in some cases, the natives cannot make the proper use of it.

As such, in chapter 21 of *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe shows how Mr. Brown approaches with a deliberate civilizing mission, initially through setting up school and hospital to spread colonial enterprise, as he realizes "that a

frontal attack on it would not succeed” (128). He gradually sets up churches as he knows that education and religion go hand in hand. His most remarkable advancement seems to place his success in Okonkwo’s son Nwoye’s conversion into a Christian. Nwoye assumes a Christian name, Isaac. Besides, the clan undergoes an extensive change during Okonkwo’s exile. But, Okonkwo does not change. His angst and anxieties lie dormant in his fear of becoming an *agbala*, lacking sufficient masculinity to stand against colonialism. Acute consciousness of his masculinity has made him a hero in physical strength and stamina, but in use of words, he is weak. When he gets furious, he stammers and trembles. His words are trailed off. His “physical aggression has become a substitute for verbal communications” (Gikandi 39). This verbal inability has caused his displacement from his community and the colonizers. He fails to reciprocate with the colonizers. He tends to use his knife where he could have reaped a better harvest if he had used words. Thus, his failure in reciprocation leads him to dehumanization and denigration.

Jean Paul Sartre, who has seen the predicament of the colonized through his own eyes, has termed colonial practice to be a reciprocal praxis which determines their destiny. The oppressors make constant attempt to dehumanize the oppressed. From the part of the oppressed, they see it as a destructive force. In Sartre’s words, “It is the oppressors themselves who, by their slightest gesture, resuscitate the humanity they wish to destroy:

and, as they deny it to others, they find it everywhere like an enemy force” (52). In course of time, their misery becomes their courage and an absolute disposition of rejection emerges against the bourgeois colonial society. Besides, they also exclude themselves from the domination of the oppressors in the name of national identity and the reciprocation saturated with tension, declares the “awful death throes of colonialism” (Sartre 53). Similarly, in *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo’s resistance to colonialism emanates from the gaps between the colonizers and the colonized. It is very powerfully depicted through the portrayal of Okonkwo’s predicament during his banishment in Mbanta. To be out of his power, position and place was intolerable and the realization of his displacement leads him to his predicament for,

[H]is life had been ruled by a great passion- to become one of the lords of the clan. That had been his life-spring. And he had all but achieved it. Then everything had been broken. He had been cast out of his clan like a fish onto a dry, sandy beach, panting. Clearly his personal god or *chi* was not made for great things. A man could not rise beyond the destiny of his *chi*. The saying of the elders was not true-that if a man said yea his *chi* also affirmed. He was a man whose *chi* said nay despite his own affirmation. (*Things Fall Apart* 92)

Thus, Okonkwo's passion for power, even more than his own god *chi*, helps readers make a psycho-analysis of his self, and there it is found that he is not to be dominated but to dominate. This domination is quite antagonistic to the practice of the colonizers. True, the colonizers deliberately intend to keep the colonized at the margin, and this process of marginalization is gradually responded by the colonized through resistance. Okonkwo's condition during his exile 'like a fish out of water' shows how intensely he intends to keep power of a god in his grip. But, his rigorous disposition in the power-game has turned into a bundle of contradictions. He is chased by a masculine vanity, and tolerance or compromise is next to weakness to him. He intends to maintain the absolute purity of his cultural tradition. But, he himself breaks it by beating his wife on a sacred day of the holy week and shooting Ezeudu's son during the funeral ceremony. So, his ignorance of his own characteristic weakness makes him violent. When the colonizers, with the same intention, confront him, he responds through the means of violence and killing that emanate out of his angst and anxieties about turning into a nowhere.

Further, anxiety for the loss of cultural identity creates anarchy in the social, political and mental life of the people. But, this anxiety does not work equally in the minds of all kinds of people. For example, both Okonkwo and Obierika in *Things Fall Apart* stick to their culture. Obi, in *No Longer at Ease*, assumes colonial culture. In *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu

possesses a desire to share the colonizers' knowledge. This variety of response to the colonizers' cultural tradition leads the natives to confusion. The ramifications of this confusion bring about a breach between the elites and the politicians of a country. It is usually found that "[T]he members of the political and educated personages fought side by side during the independence struggle. But, a divorce occurred in their ranks soon after. As a result of increasingly divergent aspiration for the nation and differing class interests, political persuasions, and perspectives among the constituent parts, "the educated people have now been pushed to the margins as the politicians and state functionaries gloat over their control of economic and other spoils of power" (Ogede 81). In this process of internal marginalization, general people and the educated section of people who are not directly involved in political enterprises, develop a sense of identity crisis. Besides, a kind of anxiety possesses them when they feel that they have been pushed out of the cultural dynamics by the aspirant ruling class people.

Theoretically interpreted, cultural identity determines one's entity. Awareness of it is accelerated when one lives in another's culture, interacting with other people. Cultural membership filters through one's experiences of identity which "exists within a changing social context" (Lusting 5-6). Cultural identity is not static, fixed or concrete; it is rather flexible, dynamic and relative. It is determined in respect of other cultural

traits, ethnic temperament, social prejudices and involvement with other people belonging to different prevailing stereotypes. Besides, different people in a singular culture obviously have different views and conceptions of their own cultural identity. Aged people are usually rigid in their adherence to their own cultural heritage. Young educated people don't mind interacting with other cultures. Some other people don't follow their own culture consciously, and they don't usually bother about their cultural membership. Then an inevitable segregation as well as internally corrosive conflict begins, and it gradually leads to an insoluble dispute which allures the outsiders to manipulate the natives' domestic culture and identity. Chinua Achebe has depicted this phenomenon in *No Longer at Ease*. Obi adheres to the Western culture and education, but his father and mother, though Christian, stick to old Igbo tradition. Thus, an inevitable conflict leads them to internal segregation.

This internal segregation is accelerated by a particular belief of the colonizers. The colonizers believed in 3B's, that is, "Bible, Business and Bullet" and thus introduced a relation of coercion and submission. Ironically, the British colonial adventure was too much connected with the evangelical mission. Christian missionary's arrival in any corner of the world served as a prologue to setting up British colony there. The missionaries at first declared their adventure as an enlightening or civilizing mission. But truly, this proclamation was just a mask to hide their deliberate

intention to enslave the natives so that they could suppress them by blackmailing the vulnerable aspects of their way of thinking, culture, episteme and discursive practices. Linguistic blackmailing began first through labeling the natives as barbarous, devoid of the light of civilization. It may also be termed as one of the initial attempts to pave the ground for legitimizing their unlawful and forceful intrusion into a land of 'Others' where they practically had no lawful and rightful business to do. Very soon, they took the colonized subject into the grip of colonial discourse. Similarly, the colonized subjects inevitably found themselves in the colonizers' regime of representation which is usually controlled by power. Consequently, the colonized felt retarded in developing a counter discourse. The colonizers approached gradually with a deliberate attempt to erase the identity of the colonized. Besides, the history of the natives was also misinterpreted down to the level of myth and superstitions. To tell the truth, from this situation, uneasiness, unrest, ambivalence, resistance and rebellion emerged in the form of a counter-discourse.

But, the implementation of this attempt is not easy for, the exercise of power essentially gives birth to resistance, and thus, sets both the parties in an encountering position. It, therefore, tempts the colonizers to use bullet, a common hardware of exercising colonial dominance upon the natives. They believe that by creating panic, submission of the natives can easily be ensured. Gradually, they set the state apparatuses upon the colonized to

suppress in the name of a civilizing mission. Resistance, then, offered by the oppressed, is branded as rebellion, and the colonizers legitimize their holocaust by labeling it as treason. For example, Okonkwo's consciousness of power and position has made him a counterbalance to the colonial hegemony. His over consciousness against becoming an *agbala* intensely works for formation of a strong identity and subjectivity. But, his brave resistance to the white men's domination is looked upon by the colonizers as a crime for which he will have to pay 'two hundred cowries' as compensation.

Thus, viewed from ethno-historical perspective, it is found that an inevitable clash emerges when confrontation between two opposite ideologies occurs. Militarist conquest introduces colonial regime physically, but the manipulation of ideology gives birth to resentment, anger and rebellion. It is true that "an ideology is a belief system, and all belief systems are the products of cultural conditioning" (Tyson 56). To any community it is the way of perceiving the world; it is also a new paradigm of social change. The sense of nationalism lies hidden in it and consequently produces an invincible urge among the people to establish self- identity as a powerful discourse, fortified by an intense "realization of individual and collective identity ... based on ethnicity, race, religion, class, gender or sexuality" (Tooze xvi). This urge for the development of national and nationality perspective becomes fortified in confrontational position of



the two different cultures. Intermixture of two different cultures inspires the natives to feel an urgent obligation to form an individual political, economic and cultural unit. Actually, it is one of the world-wide phenomena of the significant outcome of relationship. Practices of politics and capital accumulation stimulate the spirit of cultural absolutism which is marked by angst and anxieties, and inspires the natives to challenge the expansionist tendency of the outsiders.

Hence, search for and achievement of 'identity' is a powerful struggle related to economic, social and political well-being. Nationalism contributes to the increase of national wealth as it motivates citizens to be loyal to the political authority of a nation. Patriotism which is an inevitable product of nationalism inspires them to consume home-produced goods. This feeling also invigorates emotional attachments of the natives with their land, language and love for indigeneity in all spheres of their entity. But, diversity of ethnicity and artificiality of political entity challenge this feeling of nationalism. Thus, cultural consolidation and multiculturalism run side by side. Consequently, internal clash swells, and, in course of time, division among the natives becomes obvious. Then the outsiders come and venture to intervene in the internal affairs under the guise of benevolent mediators, but very soon they start taking a hand into the political, cultural, economic, religious and even moral beliefs, views and attitudes of the natives. Heterogeneous entity of the natives produces intersection of culture

and ideology. Thus, conflicting situation emerges, and it allures the colonizers to segregate the natives from one another, so that the former can easily impose their hegemony upon them and expand their spheres of influence. But, this enterprise inevitably brings them into conflict with the natives.

Now, the above discussion will help us understand how the British captured Nigeria; how the natives responded to this colonization; and how they ultimately gained independence from the yoke of colonialism. A minute exploration of the history and psyche of Nigeria, especially colonial and post-colonial, is needed to enrich the discussion. If we go back to the condition of 15<sup>th</sup> century Africa, it is found that the European invaders went to Africa with a view to maximizing their gain. An intense and further exploration shows that African peoples had their “own centres of culture and civilization long before the penetration of European slave traders and colonialists began. Africa also had commercial ties of its own with other continents” (Solodnikov 9). Egyptian civilization was much developed long before the Christian era began. The area between the rivers Senegal and Niger was a centre of culture. In about 300 and 400 AD, the state of Ghana was founded, and “[I]n the sixteenth century such states as Walo, Baal, Sine, Salum, Mali, Songhail, the Congo etc. came into being” (Solodovnikov 9). But, with European invasion in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, untold sufferings penetrated and caused disaster in Africa. In consequence of

European invasion, slave trade started and lasted till the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Portugal, which was one of the mightiest maritime powers at that time, began slave- trade first. Later on, England, Holland, France, Denmark and, last of all, the U.S.A. followed the track of Portugal. In exchange of European goods, the slave traders collected slaves and shipped them to the United States and many other parts of Latin America and Europe where they were used as field hands on cotton, tobacco and sugarcane plantations. Thus, the blood and sweat of millions of slaves and their cruel exploitation laid and fortified the foundation stone of capitalism in the U.S.A. and the West European countries.

It is historically undeniable that American and European civilizations owe immensely to slavery. In this connection, Solodovnikov writes:

The historical truth lies in the fact that slavery has contributed to the development and enrichment of many cities in West Europe and America: Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, London and Manchester in England, Nantes, la Rochela and Rouen in France, Amsterdam in Holland, Boston, Charleston, New Orleans, New York in the USA and many other cities owe their wealth to slavery. (11)

We cannot but recall that many modern West European and American firms “owe their existence to trading in African slaves” (Solodovnikov 12). In fact, slave-trade paved the way for colonization in Africa. In this connection, Solodovnikov has further asserted:

Slave trade paved the way for colonial conquest in Africa. In 1415 Portugal seized Cueta. In 1432 it fortified its positions on the Azore, in 1448 it got to the mouth of the river Senegal and in 1462 reached the Guinea coastline. The slave hunt encouraged other European powers and the USA to step into Africa. And that was the beginning of the shameful period of slave trade and colonization of the African continent in the history of European capitalism (12).

Though the European and the American colonizers till now publish that they brought civilization to the primitive peoples in Africa, it is undeniable that their civilizing mission was associated with cruelty, persecution and deliberate attempt of distorting the identity of the natives. The colonizers were mostly capitalists and they headed for Africa where cheap labour would provide them maximum profits. African slaves were a kind of allurements which contributed to the rapid growth of capital to the colonizers. Hence, they colonized Africa less for civilizing the natives than for maximizing their profit. Even the Muslims, after conquest, institutionalized slavery in Africa and "...they contributed greatly to the development of the institution of slavery by seizing women for their harems and men for military and menial service. By purchase as well as by conquest, the Muslims recruited African slaves and shipped them off to Arabia, Persia or some other Islamic land" (Franklin 28). Thus, during the

colonial period, Africa served as a repository of slaves to the colonial masters.

It is fairly obvious that the colonizers' attitude towards the Africans was never compassionate. Their interest was concentrated on wealth, raw materials for their growing industries and the slaves whose cheapest service made them rich in an incredibly short time, and thus, slavery turned into a manifestation of wealth, not of civilization. By the time slavery stopped, the capitalists turned African states into their colonies and continued exploiting the service of the people in the name of indentured labourers. Thus, "[S]lave trade carried on by European and American traders in Africa was substituted in time by imperialist colonialism" (Solodovnikov 14). Though, towards the beginning of colonialism, the colonizers' interest was solely concentrated on the accumulation of gold and slaves, in course of time, with the development of their domestic industries, their interest was directed to the accumulation of abundant raw materials. In this way, "[T]he history of colonialism is a history of a few imperialist states enriching themselves by shamelessly plundering many nations and states which were reduced to colonial dependence" (Solodovnikov 16).

Like Solodovnikov, Rabindranath Tagore, a politically and historically conscious poet, has not failed to explore the pathetic history of slave trade and the way it hampers the economic and cultural development of African

continent. In his famous poem 'Africa', Tagore has depicted how the slave traders impeded the development of African continent. In his words:

On they came with shackles of iron

These men hunters—

Their claws sharper than tiger's,

Their minds dark with pride-

Darker than your sunless forest!

The cruel greed of the civilized

Laid bare its shameless humanity; (Translated by

Arubinda Bose IX)

The imagery that Tagore has produced here exposes how cruelly and inhumanly the Africans were treated by the European colonizers.

If attention is focused on the colonial practice of the British colonizers in the Indian subcontinent which was the 'jewel in the crown', the same picture will be found. Rabindranath Tagore, in many pages of his *Chinna Patrabali*, has bitterly criticized the exploiting policy of the British colonizers in India. Tagore realized that colonial domination was really crucial for the identity and culture of the natives. Hence, he rejected Knighthood after the massacre of Jalianwallah Bagh. His "Letter Rejecting

Knighthood” expresses his disgust and impulsive disliking towards the colonial enterprises in the subcontinent.

The impact of colonial and imperialist domination on Nigeria was impoverishment, malnutrition, hunger, high rate of mortality and illiteracy. Both the colonial and imperialist exploitation is responsible for her economic, cultural, educational, health and literary backwardness. Actually, “[T]he imperialists cannot shrink the political and material responsibility for the damage they have inflicted on the nations of colonial and dependent states” (Solodovnikov 25). Gradually, the exploiters developed a discourse of dividing the world into poor and rich countries. But, this discourse is a kind of evasive concealment of the true role of imperialist exploitation and enslavement. In the name of globalization, capitalist countries which were once colonizers are now playing the role of the imperialists imposing their knowledge upon the developing or poor countries. The then colonizing countries are still trying to confuse the once colonized countries by tempting them to their language, culture, commercial products, technology and even the way of thinking so that they can’t dismantle the former’s true pursuit. The latter are branded as *Third World*, to signify the superiority of the West. Identity as natives is still manipulated and their feeling that they are indigenous to their land, is still creolized by cultural hybridization, delicately and deliberately imposed upon them by the then colonizers. As a result, post-colonialism is getting overlapped with neo-colonization, and

thus a tension emerges and it leads the formerly colonized people to a lasting and corrosive instability, confusion, angst and anxieties.

But when the colonized and impoverished people come to consciousness about their wretched position, they try to form resistance which works as a counter discourse. The encounter between these two opposite streams of force gives rise to tension. Political consciousness makes the natives or ‘indigenous inhabitants of colonized lands’ suspect the derogatory attitude and role of the colonizers. They even tend to challenge the narratives of the empire which identify the colonizers with masculinity and brand the natives with femininity. Political consciousness also makes the natives suspicious about the role of the colonizers. When the natives found that the colonizers kept them in ignorance and retarded the formulation of political parties and above all, sense of nationalism, they could not but look upon them to be exploiters. This suspicion was intensified when the “European bourgeois scholars have done their best to justify the colonial conquest” (Solodovnikov 28). Famous English writer Rudyard Kipling has suggested that the colonized should take up the ‘Whiteman’s burden’ for enlightenment. Many European leaders termed their project of colonial exploitation as a civilizing mission. They overlooked treachery, massacre, barbarity and meanness of the colonizers, and even a great portion of European literature is dedicated to depict the African colonized as savages.



Hence, the colonizers, even in post-colonial period, continue offering textual resistance against the emergence of nationhood among the natives.

In this connection, Achebe appears to have correctly got the politics of European literature by coming in contact with Joyce Carry's *Mr. Johnson* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. At the end of *Things Fall Apart* where the District Commissioner intends to write at best a 'whole chapter' on the suicide of Okonkwo, Achebe has not forgotten to show how the colonizers' texts manipulate local thoughts and culture. The derogatory name of the book *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger* reveals deliberate textual politics of the colonizers. The Commissioner's yearning for writing the story of the colonized natives can be termed "as a challenging ethnographic project in a moment of the colonial encounter in Africa" (Bloom 6). By witnessing Okonkwo's disgraceful suicide only, he dares to fabricate an imperialist narrative. The term '*Primitive*' that he intends to use in the title of the book parallels Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Joyce Carry's *Mister Johnson* which merely venture to paragraph African history with a deliberate intention of degrading the natives to the level of subhuman beings and shrinking their history into a negligible paragraph. From the part of the colonizers, it is an attempt of causing displacement of the natives.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* poses as a potent contest against this colonial mission of pacifying, that is, suppressing, mislocating and misinterpreting

the natives. Besides, his competence in writing back the derogatory imperialist narrative embodies the consciousness of the natives, and it contributes a lot to the emergence of resistance to colonial enterprises from the part of the Nigerians. Actually, by writing *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe tries to retell “Cary’s story ‘from the inside’, and in so doing creates a new kind of novel which implicitly questions the form and technique of Cary’s novel, as well as well as its content. For Achebe, “Cary was a representative colonialist novelist, foremost among those who portrayed the African as inherently primitive and irrational, and whose work reinforced the racist assumptions upon which the British empire had been built and maintained” (Coyl et al 1126). Living in the cultural crosscurrents, it is possible for Achebe to comprehend the deliberate purpose of Cary or Conrad for his intense historical consciousness which helps him produce a harmonious examination of contemporary Africa and “the historical forces that have shaped it” (Minle 4).

Consciousness of their indigeneity inspired the Africans to fight against colonial domination. They began their struggle against the colonials immediately after the advent of the invaders, but their struggle was intensified more when they realized the hypocrisy of the colonizing mission under the disguise of civilizing mission. Though they were backward in warfare they never stopped fighting against the invaders who were well-equipped with updated technologies and military superiority. Though their

handmade weapons, such as, spears and arrows were futile in the face of guns and artillery of the colonizers, they were continued their struggle against the colonial enterprises. But, it is to be mentioned that lack of social development and modern materials, lack of integration and too much adherence to the feudal system delayed coming of their freedom from the clutches of the colonizers.

Even, since independence in 1960, Nigeria has been passing through the rough times of military rule. It is highly vulnerable to corruption, unrest and insurgency. While throwing light on the prospect of Nigeria, Marina Ottaway refers to its general election of 1998 and says, “Nigeria’s return to civilian government in 1998 was a positive step, but not guarantee that the country will succeed in avoiding further decay and possibly violent conflict” (230). Though the civilian government is trying to push forward with the immense task of governing diverse communities of Nigeria, ethnic and religious tensions and corruption have taken Nigeria to a pressing grip. But a source of hope is that Nigeria’s civil society has started being built up after almost two decades of military rule. And Nigeria, “the sleeping giant”, is gradually waking up.

Now, keeping all these historical and anthropological backgrounds in mind we have to assess Achebe because he is one of the most historically conscious African writers of his time. He was the first who initiated Anglophone writing in Africa through his novel *Things Fall Apart* which

“has found its gruesome prolepsis fulfilled” (McLuckie 1). Then his other novels of the trilogy are *Arrow of God* and *No Longer at Ease*. In his trilogy, Achebe has corrected the imperialist myth of African primitivism and savagery by recreating the Igbo culture of the Eastern region of Nigeria, its daily routines, its rituals, its customs, and essentially its people dealing with one another in a highly civilized fashion within the periphery of a complex society. His trilogy delves deeper into the heart of Nigeria, and in broad sense, Africa, and finds out how the Europeans disseminate their influences among the natives with a view to eliminating their identity and how their attempt at bringing their culture into their vicinity for bringing about a paradigm shift in knowledge and attitudes of the natives. By exploring the history, politics and psyche of the Africans, Achebe’s trilogy aptly locates not only the factors responsible for angst and anxieties among the natives but also corrects the European attitude to the traditional Igbo culture.

Though Achebe admits his limitations as a writer of the novels of traditional Ibo life, he is faithful enough to do his duty as a novelist whose responsibility is to make the Africans know “that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and; above all, they had dignity” (Mahood 37-38). In all these three novels of his trilogy, local Igbo tradition is depicted with so much dynamism that it has assumed the role of a very potential and

lively agent. It is not an inanimate phenomenon, but an entity with its own power to survive and guide the natives. In these novels, Achebe displays his potential as a seminal writer by overturning the notion that “writing and literature are concepts that come to Africans only from outside” (Hawley 4).

Achebe leaves no stone unturned in criticizing the ambivalences of Igbo culture. In *Things Fall Apart* Okonkwo’s devotion to Igbo tradition is appreciable. His response to the advent of colonial tradition is also appreciable. But while forming resistance against foreign tradition, he has gone against his own traditional values in some critical situations. His obsession with masculine philosophy and fear of becoming an *agbala* like his father is appreciable to a certain extent. But, when the superfluity of this mentality instigates him to beat his wife on a holy day of the sacred week and kill his foster son Ikemefuna’ and again, when out of frenzy, he shoots Ezeudu’s son during the funeral ceremony, he violates his own tradition that he struggles to uphold. Hence, it is his own tradition that punishes him most. Accordingly, he is exiled in Mbanta for seven years not by the colonizers’ tradition, but by his own tradition. Okonkwo is ignorant about the fact that tradition is for man, and man is not for tradition. He might not kill his foster son Ikemefuna by his own hand. The boy calls him father, but to him, a masculine image does not go with the softness of fatherhood. Hence, he cuts his throat with his own hand though the oldest man of the

clan Ezeudu says to him, “That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death” (40). He further reminds Okonkwo of the tradition that “Umuofia has decided to kill him. The Oracle of the Hills and Caves has pronounced it. They will take him outside Umuofia as is the custom, and kill him there. But I want you to have nothing to do with it. He calls you father” (40). But Okonkwo believes that becoming soft is his limitation and the most fatal limitation of his character is that he is unable to accept his human limitations. He seems to believe that only individual force is enough to resist all challenges to his personal ambition.

Tradition supports Ikemefuna’s killing. But, humanly it is not acceptable that Okonkwo should kill the boy with his own hand. So, there are some subtle and important principles of Igbo tradition. But, Okonkwo, who “was afraid of being thought weak”, cuts the boy’s throat with his own hands (*Things Fall Apart* 43). His fear gradually ensnares him with *hubris* which has led him against his own tradition. Like Oedipus, Okonkwo forgets that a tradition is stronger than an individual. This very *hubris* brings about an irrecoverable breach between father and son - Okonkwo and Nowye. The latter’s conversion into a Christian may be interpreted as a consequence of Okonkwo’s *hubris* because the killing of Ikemefuna creates a trauma in Nowye’s psyche in the form of a ‘vague chill’. Achebe exposes the effect of the killing of Ikemefuna on Okonkwo in the following words:

A vague chill had descended on him and his head had seemed to swell, like a solitary walker at night who passes an evil spirit in the way. Then something had given way inside him. It descended on him again, this feeling, when his father walked in, that night after killing Ikemefuna. (43)

Nwoye's reaction to the killing of Ikemefuna throws a volley of challenge at Okonkwo's command upon his son, his family and, above all, his community. His search for harmony in things around him gets marred by his own *hubris*, and subsequently, things fall apart. Even, his suicide follows from his *hubris that* places him against his own tradition. Thus, Okonkwo harms his own tribal integrity that he had been trying to preserve.

The same is the case with Okonkwo's grandson Obi Okonkwo in *No Longer at Ease*. The most fatal aspect of Obi's Character is self-deception which places him out of his own traditional customs. Achebe "presents a careful selection of characters whose vanity, prejudice, or misplaced values allow them only a partial view of reality" (Rollyson 7). Living in Nigerian atmosphere, he tries to see his tradition in the borrowed light of European hegemony. His attempt at becoming Europeanized in attitude and practice casts him against his own tradition, and in this conflict, he fails to bring about a synthesis with his local Igbo tradition. He falls into the juncture of "the colonialist attitude to which he is responding and to which he owes..." (JanMohamed 158). He is a 'self-willed young man', and in England, he

read English while Umuofia Union wanted him to study law. This characteristic dualism leads him to failure. This dualism emanates from the colonialist denigration of the local culture. Mr Green's assumption, "The African is corrupt through and through" is an example of the colonialist denigration that adequately generates a sense of inferiority complex in Obi's mind (*No Longer at Ease* 2). Obi's indulgence in corruption is, to some extent, geared up by the cultural hybridity and the ambivalence in identity which is created by this hybridity. He is caught up in the capitalist vices and the long-nourished taboo of the traditional system, and this pressing condition and contradiction lead him to concussion.

Like Obi, Ezeulu, the protagonist of *Arrow of God*, also falls victim to dualism while he sends his son Uduche to the missionary school of the white man to share the cultural tradition of the colonizers. He says to his son Oduche, "If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something there you will bring home my share" (47). Here Ezeulu appears to be progressive regarding his attitude to learning. Like Achebe, he intends to mediate between two different cultural traditions. But, his staunch obsession with absolute authority contradicts this disposition. His inclination to acquiring the colonizers' knowledge rather exposes his opportunism, and makes him stand against his own tradition and clansmen who oppose his act of sending Oduche to the missionary school. Thus, a clash begins between Ezeulu and his tradition, that is, an individual and a



community and in this clash, an individual is defeated by the community. Achebe's protagonists, thus, while fighting against the colonizers' hegemony, out of the superfluity of subjective impulses, stand against their own tradition and rituals and fail to locate individual identity. They are galvanized by their ostensible gullibility, ignorance of 'innumerable streams of consciousness' that lead them to tension, not synthesis.

Achebe may be found to be a historically conscious writer whose writings make readers feel the pulse of Nigerian time and mind. His narrative, in all possible respects, is a document of Nigeria and to every historically conscious reader, he offers an impressive discourse, presenting and portraying his time and mind. In a literary conference Achebe admitted:

I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past - with all its imperfections - was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them. (Mahood 38)

It is true in the case of his trilogy which offers a powerful appraisal of Igbo society with a view to re-creating not only Nigerian but also African history of the past and the present, though his reproduction of a version of Igbo society fails to "constitute the essence of realism in his fiction (JanMohamed 161). It happens so because Achebe has portrayed his

protagonists as the representatives of Igbo culture and values and complicated the interaction between the self and the society.

Nonetheless, Achebe has done a great job of exploring the moment in which “European culture and military power began to take over the world of his own ancestors” (Appiah VIII). In his trilogy, Achebe has portrayed how such a juncture contributes to the emergence of national consciousness. His trilogy also powerfully embodies his intensive exploration of Nigerian time and mind and complicates the African experience of profit and loss – profit of cultural amalgamation and reciprocation of epistemological practices and the loss of indigeneity of Igbo values and customs. While estimating Achebe’s task of writing, Appiah writes:

Not only does Achebe draw a compelling picture of life in one part of Ibo land before the arrival of Christianity and colonialism; he manages to convey to all of us, Ibo, or not, the tragedy of the loss of that world and the possibilities created by the new situation. Achebe’s rigorous accounting includes columns both for profit and for loss. (VIII)

The interactions between loss and gain create a cultural malformation, and it has become one of the major subject matters of Achebe’s trilogy and two other novels. He criticizes the aggression of the colonizers and at the same time knows that identity is unstable, metamorphic and relative, “marked by

multiple points of similarities as well as differences” (Hall 233). Achebe’s attitude has been stained with an emphatic tinge of universality. His writing, thus, has become more than one kind of mimesis. His trilogy ensures the presence of the present, and at the same time it unites the past and the future with the present in a single string of Africanism. Achebe, especially in his trilogy, resolves the problem of the incompatibility of history and truth through a process of historicity of his ideas of African dialectics. His trilogy produces the truth which does not consist in his narrative; it is produced rather by the intricacy and location of ‘absolutely permanent ideal objectivities’.

If viewed from political perspective, it is found that Achebe writes in protest against Albert Schweitzer’s “immoral dictum in the heyday of colonialism: The African is indeed my brother, but my junior brother” (Achebe, “Morning Yet on Creation Day” 3). Achebe’s novels obviously appear to be a counter discourse thrown against the ‘big-brother’ arrogance of the Europeans. After the publication of his first novel *Things Fall Apart*, Honor Tracy, a literary journalist, in a corrosive review underestimated African novelists, especially Achebe and termed the past of African history to be ‘mindless times’. In her words, “How would novelist Achebe like to go back to mindless times of his grandfather instead of holding the modern job he has in broadcasting Lagos?”(Achebe 4). Tracy meant to say that Achebe would rather remain grateful to the European civilization for whose

grace he was doing the job of a broadcaster. This colonialist review also charged Achebe for depicting the advent of the Europeans as a threat to the local culture in *Things Fall Apart*. But, what Tracy did not understand was the angst and anxieties of the natives regarding their apprehension of the loss of cultural originality and heritage which, in Achebe's eyes, are not in the least mindless. He is not a myth maker; he is rather faithful to the historicity of ideal objects. He rather believes that "the European critics of African literature must cultivate the habit of humility appropriate to his limited experience of the African world and be purged of the superiority complex and arrogance which history so insidiously makes him heir to" (Achebe, "Colonialist Criticism" 7).

In doing this job, Achebe assumes the responsibility for "problems and our situation in the world and resist the temptation to blame other people" (Achebe 1). While exploring the mind and history of the Africans, he found that the intersection of European and African culture and history has produced profound angst and anxieties among the natives owing to the malformation of cultural and traditional realities of heterogeneities. But initially, before the advent of the colonizers, Africa was rich in culture and cultural heritage, and so he "believes it to be his duty to teach Europeans and Africans about the richness and validity of traditional African culture" (Magill 8). It is out of his commitment to African history that Achebe has produced his trilogy.

Achebe's trilogy is a response to the European attempt at malforming and misinterpreting Africa. Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* is a pure man from Igbo culture and his unadulterated adherence to his tradition and his uncompromising attitude to the colonial culture has enabled him truly to guess about the goal of the deliberate mission of Europeanization of Igbo culture. He struggles against the malformation of Igbo culture. But, while doing this, he solely relies on tenacity and violence. Okonkwo's primary mode is anger, and even at the slightest provocation, he beats his wives. Repentance is alien to him. He is rather ready to undergo punishment for beating his youngest wife during the "Week of Peace" than to repent. The only emotion that Okonkwo gives out is anger. To show affection is to be weak, and hence, he does never show any characteristic softness either to his family or to his clan, let alone colonizers. But such a rigour or tenacity closes down the faculty of thoughts which is very essential to reproduce a counter discourse. Besides, this disposition has alienated him from his community, too. His exile to Mbanta for seven years for shooting Ezeudu's son during the funeral ceremony, though by mistake, metaphorically depicts this alienated state of Okonkwo. Thus, Achebe has created a complicated dialectic between self and society by imposing fundamental values and structures of Igbo culture upon his protagonist.

But, one thing that arrests the minds of the readers of *Things Fall Apart* is that the internal fragmentation, rather than the advent of colonial

intervention, is responsible for Okonkwo's failure in his fight against the colonial enterprise. Like a typical African narrative, Achebe's trilogy is within its cultural context. In it, "...the readers see a vivid picture of the Igbo society at the end of the nineteenth century" (Bloom 40). The Igbo people's social custom, religion, rituals, political structures and even seasonal festivals have not escaped Achebe's intensive exploration. Okonkwo's confidence and concrete position in the face of corrosive effect of colonialism makes the readers think that Igbo is a clan with vigorous enthusiasm, self-sufficiency and rich cultural values. Okonkwo has discovered his clansmen caught between two 'conflicting cultures'. Igbo traditional way of life pulls the native to the struggle of maintaining cultural integrity, on the face of the overwhelming force of 'colonial imperialism'. On the contrary, the temptation of the European style of life to a future civilized world also actively works in the minds of the natives. Okonkwo cannot accept the temptation of European society, because to him, it will bring about loss of his identity. But his fellow Igbo men have accepted this attraction. Even his son, Nwoye has embraced the Christian faith. Consequently, Umuofian society has been fractured. Okonkwo's suicide and the District Commissioner's final desire of writing a book on this incident refer to the "total imposition of one cultural, social and political structure upon another" (Bloom). It can be interpreted as a process of stereotyping the natives by the European colonizers.

It is quite apparent that Achebe's novels are mostly based on historical realities related to Nigeria and they are dedicated to liberating Nigerian history from the distortion of the European colonizers. His trilogy offers a very crucial insight and compendious understanding of the Nigerian mind. In this connection, Joseph, a postcolonial critic, asserts:

African Literature in European languages deals with two main themes: (1) the African literary response to European accounts about Africa and (2) the shift in the postcolonial era from responding to European Literature to addressing problems of the new African nations. (339)

True, Achebe's trilogy presents a vehement response to the European attempt at misinterpreting Nigeria, above all, Africa. His choice of a European language for writing may be interpreted as a struggle for obtaining a permanent space for him in world literature. Besides, it helps him to enjoy a broader reading circle and to convey the African worldview to the rest of the world. For this reason, Achebe has borrowed some phrases from English writers for his novels. For example, the title of his first novel *Things Fall Apart* has been borrowed from W. B. Yeats' apocalyptic poem 'The Second Coming', and the title of *No Longer at Ease* has come from T. S. Eliot's poem 'The Journey of the Magi'. By borrowing phrases from the European writers Achebe means to declare that he has a share in world literature. Moreover, African literature in English emerged basically

because of an extreme urge to achieve self identity, a brave and fruitful attempt to challenge the European distortion and deformation of Africa. The most remarkable thing that Achebe has done is that he has transformed English language into an African idiom by using imagery, allusions, figure of speech, proverb, sentence patterns of Igbo language in English language. He manipulates English in his novels to capture the flavor of the native Igbo expression. He does it through dialect, idiom and figurative language, and through proverbs that reflect traditional Igbo wisdom.

Achebe deploys Europhone writing as a strategy for contesting the sole authority of the former colonial masters. He is writing back to the colonizers who misinterpret Africa in their writing with the power of their language. He masters the colonizers' language to write back to them. The Europeans initially gathered knowledge about Africa through their travelling, voyages, study and prolonged stay there. They claimed their knowledge to be objective, and deliberately projected Africa as a 'dark continent' which, according to them, is devoid of culture and civilization. European colonizers went on with a propaganda that Africa was an abode of noble savages, "[P]rimitive wild beings, suffering from diseases, devoid of spiritual and moral qualities and in need of the civilizing benefits of European colonialism" (Joseph 339). Many European novelists misrepresented and misinterpreted Africa with all possible ugliness. For example, Conrad in his *Heart of Darkness* has depicted Congo as heart of



ignorance, illiteracy, hunger, savagery, primitivism and disease. He worked in the British Navy and travelled around the world and gifted himself with firsthand experience that was saturated by his biases, emerging out of the feeling of becoming a member of the ruling power. Many other European writers wrote about Africa only on the basis of their sojourn, travels, colonial newspapers and oral tales heard from those who used to visit Africa on business purpose. Hence, their superficial knowledge which was disoriented by cultural biases deformed Africa in all aspects.

European historians maintained big brother like arrogance and superiority complex in portraying Africa in their writing. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe does not forget to reveal this colonial disposition of the District Commissioner who does not think of degrading his position in the eyes of the natives by cutting the dead body of Okonkwo down from the tree. This colonial officer plans to write a book in which he would inform the world that “[I]n the many years in which he had toiled to bring civilization to different parts of Africa he had learnt a number of things” (*Things Fall Apart* 147). He also planned to use the title “*The Pacification of the primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*” (148). The keyword ‘primitive’ used in the title of the book bears his deliberate political intention of degrading the natives. The story of Okonkwo’s killing of the messenger does not seem to the District Commissioner his necessary chivalry or patriotism. Like the District Commissioner, European writers with the colonial bias quietly

evaded the fact that a different culture could not be synonymous with primitivism. African culture does not go with the Western culture, but the natives have their own cultural heritage, indigenous language, ethnic values and moral qualities. And this truth has been distorted in the colonizers' writings. In this connection, Achebe as a socially conscious writer has taken up the responsibility to portray Nigeria, above all Africa, with its own cultural indigeneity, heritage and duality. Duality in cultural values has both shaped and destroyed Okonkwo's life. Okonkwo belongs to a world which is run by two sets of values- the societal and the personal. Okonkwo finds no equilibrium, and this discovery is one of the causes of his tragedy. Thus, Achebe has disclosed not only the cultural riches but also the drawbacks of the natives and brought about an equilibrium in his portrayal of Africa as a true artist.

Achebe takes up a mission to refurbish history and show the West that the Africans have their own heritage, values and traditions engendered with the dynamics of their own politics and culture. He, as an artist, maintains the belief that his concern is to correct European attitude to Africa. His statements, regarding his role as a writer, have been published in "Morning Yet on Creation Day" (1995) where he has affirmed that he writes "in order to correct European writing on Africa" (Joseph 348). In an interview with Bill Moyers, he has said that in his college-days, while reading Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, he decided that he would have to write another story.

The portrayal of Africa with a distorted image of imperfection made him understand how the European discourse is deliberately attempting to dislocate Africanism in contrast with Europeanism. The racist attitude of the European writers shocked him, and led him to bitter resentment that inspired him to brand Conrad as 'a bloody racist'.

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* depicts the picture of the same enterprise of the colonizers who reached, in Conrad's words, the heart of darkness, that is, the Congo with a view to, obviously superficial, replacing 'barbarity' with the light of Christianity. Even in the title of *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad has exposed his paternalist attitude to the natives of Congo. According to him, the Congo is the heart of darkness, savagery, illiteracy, ignorance, primitivism and uncivilization, and all these evils are to be mended and reformed by the colonizers. As a part of the colonizing process, to win dominance over the economy of the country, the Europeans soon started running business. As money begets power, the colonizers took a hand into the economic activities of the country; set up banks and distributed loan among the natives on tough conditions. Gradually, economic 'Base' comes into their grip and 'Superstructure' follows it inevitably. Subsequently, European discourse projects Africa through concoction and fabrication and relegates it to the level of a sub-human entity.

If an intensive study of the evolution of the European discourse is made, it is found that in the medieval period European epistemology was "based

upon religion, appearance and social patterns. Science and technology were not often used as China, India and the middle East were more advanced than Europe in many technologies and forms of knowledge” (Sharp 30-31). In the eighteenth century, there occurred European enlightenment. Science and technology took the place of religion. Capitalism led the Europeans to a rapid development of their economy. Dynamic and vibrant flourishing of culture and cultural patterns, railways, navigation and the manufacture of commodities facilitated the Europeans with the knowledge that the non-Europeans were different in abilities, and they could be taught by the former. Enlightenment also enabled the Europeans to develop ideas about the separation of man from nature. Separation from nature brands humans as man and attachment with nature brands humans as ‘savages’. This separation provides man with the ability to reshape, reconstruct, mathematise and rein in nature from the saddle of a master. Academic development, specifically development of the discipline of geography in nineteenth century, enabled the Europeans to chart new lands, congenial to colonization and identify natural resources and native resistance and thereby to deploy troops in a new land. Superiority of geographical knowledge enabled the Portuguese, French and English to conquer and control many new lands of the world. By virtue of their knowledge in geography, navigation and science, they branded the people beyond their territories as ‘Others’

In reaction to the European mission of branding the rest of the world as 'Other', the colonized people ventured to form a resistance through a counter discourse towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. This resistance became stronger after the First World War and later after the Second World War. Gradually, there occurred an intellectual development in the colonized countries. Many thinkers and writers formulated resistance in their writings and wrote back against the colonial discourse. Achebe is one of those thinkers whose determined project is to produce a literature of resistance, and in this mission, he is truly and literally successful. Like his contemporaries and predecessors, he carries forward a project of challenging the "representational violence of colonial discourse and, indeed, in its commitment to the onerous task of consciousness rising in the Western Academy" (Gandhi 77). Distortion of history and confusing identity are obviously a violence which is conspicuously and deliberately done by the colonial discourse. This violence works through inflicting wounds upon the indigeneity and confining "the colonized to a luminal, barely human existence" (Gandhi 111). For his commitment to cultural nationalism, Achebe, through all his writings – novels, short stories and poems, attempts to reveal how the Europeans were robbing the natives of "their capacity to engage in any form of resistance whatsoever" (Buchanan 9). One very common tone flows through the writings of Achebe, and it is that "he insists on the clash of European and African cultures and a position on which a whole species

of the African novel has grown” (Buchanan 9). Thus, his writings shed light on his resistance to colonial rule and its aftermath and at the same time, he throws a challenge to the European conception that writing and literature have come to Africa from outside.

For example, some novelists of 1950s and 1960s attempted to create an exceptional point of view that critiques the cultural ambivalence and crisis of identity developed in contact with European civilization. *Camera Laye*, Cheikh Hamidou Kane and V.Y. Mudimbe have depicted how the advent of European culture endangers African cultural originality. Ngugi writes in his *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986) how the colonizers imposed English language upon the natives to produce mimic men. He discovers how the colonizers take the natives “further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other world” (12). Cheikh Hamidou has depicted how the intersection of cultures leads a community to displacement and mental unrest. In *Adventure Ambigue* (1961), Samba Diallo, like Uduche in Achebe’s *Arrow of God*, was sent to a European school so that he could introduce European technology to his own people, commits suicide owing to his inability to hold two cultures together.

Like Samba Diallo, Obi, in Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease*, is split up “between complicity in and resistance to the colonial project” (Thiem 13). He is caught between two extremes of culture as a result of colonialism. Though he was sent to England to study law, he took up English literature.

He studied the language of the colonizers, the language of power and authority. His interest in the language of the colonizers incarnates his suppressed desire to overcome his inferiority complex and, like a typical colonized, he believes that “[H]e becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle” (Fanon 18). Thus, the confrontation between the colonized’s dependency complex and the colonizer’s authority complex creates a fatal dilemma in him. Hence, his choice of European language may be seen as a typical attempt of the natives to acquire European education and then to challenge Europe’s big-brother like arrogance with the intellectual weapons of Europe itself. On the other hand, his fascination for English may also be interpreted as a sort of desperate attempt to become a mimic man, but ultimately, he loses himself between his education and promise; he takes bribe and is brought in trial. His eyes are filled with tears when his education and promise are reminded to him. The judge cannot understand why Obi has done this. In his words, “I cannot comprehend how a young man of your education and brilliant promises could have done this...” (*No Longer at Ease* 1).

The incapacity of the judge to comprehend the cause of Obi’s betraying his education and promises makes the readers curious to look into the factors responsible for Obi’s moral deviation. Of all the factors, the most important one is his blind attempt to become a mimic man with a view to sharing the power of the colonizers, and it has caused an ambivalent and staggering

disposition in him. Falling into the juncture of two different cultures, he suffers from the sense of displacement and consequently ventures to break the hopes and dreams of his countrymen. Thus, *No Longer at Ease* “turns to modern Lagos and temptations confronting a young Nigerian with a Western education when given responsibility in his own country” (Dudeley 333). Obi’s indulgence in corruption is more mental than phenomenal. He belongs to a society where corruption prevails in all spheres of life, and the government seems to be an alienated body to the people and so “people’s business was to get as much from it as they could without getting into trouble” (*No Longer at Ease* 16). He works in an atmosphere which proclaims the superiority of particularly the white man. His boss is a white man whose material and moral status casts Obi into a trauma which is created by his lack of self-determination. This lack of self determination has brought about anomalies in his cultural practices and rituals, family life and even sexual relationship. A corrosive disintegration mars the intrinsic merit of humanity and lust for money becomes the only “measure of a man’s social and moral worth” in Obi’s case (JanMohamed 174). Thus, in *No Longer at Ease*, Achebe has presented the Nigeria of 1950s leading to the political independence in 1960. Besides, Obi’s inclination to the language and knowledge of the Europeans marks the rise of a local bourgeois class of people during the years leading to Nigeria’s independence.



True, Achebe's trilogy encompasses and locates the factors responsible for Africa's colonial enslavement and its aftermath. One of the major factors that Achebe has diagnosed is the psychological weakness of the natives. The natives' weakness that the colonizers have manipulated lies in their psyche which is mostly troubled by political instability and tribal segregation. If attention is focused on the history of the invasion of some African countries by Europe, it can be easily discerned how tactfully and diplomatically the invaders have captivated the psyche of the natives in their grip. It is initially surprising to see how a small country like Belgium colonized Congo, a country 80 times larger than itself. Even Portugal, a small and economically backward country, possessed Angola and Mozambique. And "...individual adventurers such as Goldie and Rodhes were able to found, more or less on their own initiative, gigantic colonies such as Nigeria and Rodesia" (Wesseling 148). The incredibly fast speed of imperialism in Africa makes us look into Africa's historical and psychological instability that Achebe has sincerely incorporated into his trilogy. True, ethnic diversity works against the development of the singular spirit of nationalism, and this lack of political consciousness is the fatal hamartia which is manipulated by the colonizers and thus, imperial enterprises and transplantation of African culture get accelerated. Achebe has depicted the picture of this internal segregation in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. Okonkwo and Ezeulu cannot stop this internal

segregation, let alone colonial enterprise. They are helpless to ethnic diversity leading Nigeria to corrosive anomalies and anxieties.

Huge ethnic diversity alienates the Africans from one another and causes ambivalence which occupies Achebe's protagonists, too. It is obvious that assimilation of African and European culture has produced a sharp awareness in Achebe's protagonists that "[C]olonialism and its masters are a sham and that assimilation means humiliation, exploitation ..." (Joseph 343). Assimilation between Europe and Africa vivifies discrepancy which marks backwardness of Africa and "the real difficulty of governing Africa arises from the backwardness of Africa – backwardness in economy, education, health condition and civilization" (Macmillan 152). All the protagonists of Achebe's works sway between forwardness and backwardness, and this ambivalence leads them even to alienation. Domestic disintegration amplifies this corrosive ambivalence which leads Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* to the extent of committing suicide. Similarly, Ezeulu, in *Arrow of God* likens himself to an arrow in the bow of Ulu for the same cause. He also discovers that his clansmen, defying his ban on the harvest of yam, are taking the side of the God of the white men and the church is taking away the authority of Ulu, his god. But his ignorance that he does not know the white man's ways and the ironical tolerance that he showed toward the white men previously has already weakened his authority to a far extent. He also fails to estimate the colonial

realities by evading the truth that “traditional values appear to be childhood fancies in the face of contemporary realities” (Rollyson 8). Hence, there grows instability in his relationship with his own people, and ultimately, he turns to nowhere.

Such an unstable and contingent situation emerges out of the lack of the spirit of nationalism also. The spirit of nationalism is obviously a decolonizing force, and its fortification is a must for the fortification of independence and sovereignty. It is true, modern nationalism is related to internationalism. Now there is no chance left for any nation to remain alienated from the cosmopolitanism or globalization. Reactionary nationalism leads to chauvinism and even to insurgency and hence a harmonious formation, and possession of nationalism definitely ensures a nation’s individual identity. Reconciliation between nationalism and internationalism is not the loss of identity if it occurs ensuring the strict maintenance of individual identity. But, hybridity also occurs at the moment of displacement and emergency. As a result, indigeneity has to face threat of being displaced.

In this respect, a close analysis of the character of Obi reveals that his activities always challenge his indigeneity. His imprudent decision of not participating in his mother’s funeral does not make him a modern man educated in Europe; rather he becomes a heartless fellow belonging to neither of these two cultural identities. Truly, his bourgeois sentiment has

turned him into a sarcastic and divided entity. Thus, “*No Longer at Ease* is a profound novel when seen as an analysis of the predicament of the young elite in the newly formed Nigeria and as an argument on the wrong-headedness of stereotyping of the African as innately corrupt” (Okechukwu 78). Through *Obi*, Achebe has found that the advent of European culture in Nigeria has corrupted the values of its culture, though not destroyed it. In such a big predicament, *Obi*, who represents the colonial bourgeois class of people, experiences the angst and anxieties regarding his cultural location and identity in the Nigerian backdrop. This anxiety has emerged out of the age-old suppression inflicted upon the natives by the colonials. *Obi*’s white and outspoken boss Mr. Green also believes that “age-old suppression has left the blacks with a repressed greed transformed into corruption” (Dasgupta 53).

Achebe’s writings throb with the pulsation of angst and anxieties, coming out of the advent of the European colonizers under the guise of missionaries. He has left no stone unturned in exploring the predicament of the Igbo culture caused by its intersection with European culture. He believes that this intersection is responsible for creating angst and anxiety. It is portrayed through the uneasiness of Okonkwo during his exile in Mbanta when “he sees the people of Mbanta allowing the first Christian missionaries to establish a church, win adherents from among the outcasts of the village defy the powers of the tribal gods” (Ravenscroft 13). His

anxiety turns into a sigh when the villagers do not respond to his urge “to chase the abominable gang of Christian away with whips” (Ibid 14). His anxiety becomes deep when his eldest son Nwoye leaves him and joins the missionaries. Nwoye’s conversion into one of the missionaries was geared up by some factors of which the killing of Ikemefuna by Okonkwo was the most powerful one. Ikemefuna lived with Okonkwo’s family for three years; he looked upon him as his father and he became very intimate with all the members of Okonkwo’s family, especially with Nwoye.

But, when Ikemefuna was killed by Okonkwo to whom local tradition was more than paternal emotion, Nwoye was hurt and developed a kind of defiance towards the inhuman side of the indigenous tradition and culture. He sought shelter in Christianity which seems to him more tolerant than the local traditional custom. It stimulated the factors responsible for the falling apart of things. Besides, Nwoye’s conversion serves as an indictment of a protest against the inhuman aspect of Igbo culture. Culture must uphold humanity above ceremonies. If ceremonies take over man then the latter gives them up and it becomes true in the case of Nwoye who gives up his father’s religion and embraces the religion of the colonizers.

Besides, Achebe does not forget to show his allegiance and faithfulness to the past in portraying Nigeria from inside. As a true artist, he has evaded the temptation to be flattered only by the good sides of the Igbo culture; he has rather maintained a balance and harmony to present the bright as well

as the dark sides of its past. One thing that does not escape Achebe's notice is how the colonial rulers instigated suspicion into the Igbos to smoothen their mission of exercising the 'divide and rule' policy. In this connection, Ian Buchanan asserts, "By instigating mutual suspicion among Igbos, colonial rule segregated them into distinct camps, making each group of native people keep its distance from other even further"(7). Dissolution of social bounds accelerated by both external and internal uneasiness shattered the harmony of indigenous culture. Again, he thinks that domestic problems are mostly responsible for inviting the Europeans in. Corrosive intercultural conflict initially showed the colonizers the path to colonizing the natives.

The Igbos had numerous gods but there existed egalitarian relationship among these gods and human beings. Despite the presence of such a huge number of gods, the earth deity Ala was venerated throughout the Igbo land. Today archeological discoveries show that the Igbos had a rich cultural heritage. But the fatal drawback that created a space for Christianity, Western education and government was that the Igbos did not have any centralized government system. Different clans were used to be governed by their individual leaders. Consequently, inter-community clash was inevitable. Besides, they did neither have any written scriptures nor any organized religious institution. Hence, local gods, rituals and priests easily lost their authority when there occurred an encounter with the Western

religion, its written scriptures, education, and organized system of government.

In this connection, *Arrow of God* offers the picture of an encounter between the Igbos and the colonial authority and depicts how the internal weaknesses are manipulated by the outsiders. In this novel, the war between Umuaro and Okperi, which ultimately makes Ezeulu a man of no power and no action, invites the British District Officer T.K. Winterbottom to intervene into the internal affairs of the natives. Oduche's conversion into a Christian and killing of the sacred python are the consequences of the internal dissention. After thirty-two days of imprisonment Ezeulu realizes that the fight is not with the white men, but with his own people. His characteristic firmness to refuse the proposal of Winterbottom to become a local chief has been misrepresented and misinterpreted by the local people. None of his clansmen protests against his imprisonment. Hence, he decides to take revenge upon them by not calling the Feast of the New Yam. If he does not call the Feast they cannot harvest, and if they cannot harvest, they must starve to death. But, his rigorous resentment against his own people brings about more disintegration that benefits John Goodcountry, the catechist at St. Mark's Church whose propaganda against Ulu and in favour of the Christian God doubles his class in size and gives him the hope that he can build up another church with the fund, created by the harvest service. In Achebe's words:

Now Mr. Goodcountry saw in the present crisis over the New Yam Feast an opportunity for fruitful intervention. He had planned his church's harvest service for the second Sunday in November the proceeds from which would go into the fund for building a place of worship more worthy of God and of Umuaro. His plan was quite simple. The New Yam Feast was the attempt of the misguided heathen to show gratitude to God, the giver of all good things. This was God's hour to save them. They must be told that if they made their thank-offering to God they could harvest their crops without fear of Ulu. (*Arrow of God* 217)

Here the church represents the colonial institution which is essential for the practice of the colonial enterprise. Ezeulu's Ulu fails to confront Goodcountry's Christianity owing to the lack of his rhetoric which usually embraces the judicial, political, social and ceremonial aspects of the whole community. Ezeulu's inactivity or silence, after his release from his thirty-two day's imprisonment, may be interpreted as an absence of his rhetoric. He does not talk to his people, and fails to defend his resentment and cause of indifference in declaring the schedule for the Yam Festival. He has Ulu but not a written scripture. On the other hand, Goodcountry has God, Bible and the church which serves as a powerful institution. So, he can produce a rhetoric which serves as a foundation of his colonial mission. Consequently, with all these apparent apparatuses, he succeeds in challenging the sole



authority of Ezeulu whose inadequate understanding of Goodcountry's phenomenal support and ability hastens the fall of his authority.

Thus, the absence of rhetoric which is the foundation of human society inevitably creates disintegration among the natives, and internal clash and misunderstanding pave the way for the colonizers to impose their religion and enterprises upon the natives. Besides, internal and mutual hostility does not allow 'anti-colonial discursive resistance' to be formed. The spirit of mimicry that has been incarnated in the character of Oduche, the son of Ezeulu in *Arrow of God*, also weakens the spirit of indigeneity. Consequently, things fall apart. The same is the case with Obi in *No Longer at Ease*. His bourgeois temperament hinders him from standing against the colonial process of eliminating the identity of the natives because, for his allegiance to the colonizers' mode of life, he is positioned discursively, epistemologically, historically, socio-economically and linguistically. His subjugation to the Western tradition dissuades him from working as an autonomous agent of his own culture, and it leads him to the absence of reflexivity; and the apprehension of abandonment makes his effort of resistance against the colonizing process futile.

Achebe has carefully explored how the apprehension of abandonment leads the colonized to an outburst of hostility. The advent of the foreign culture introduces heterogeneity among the natives and a rooted fear of abandonment works within. Indeed, with the heterogeneous tribal people,

boisterous and argumentative tribal leaders and self-assertive mass, pre-colonial Nigeria was one of the most ungovernable countries of Africa. Yoruba and Ibo were the most impressive of all the tribes. Yoruba worshipped more than four hundred gods and lived mostly in the west while the pastoral Igbo lived in the east, who occasionally compensated for their scarcity of yam protein with human flesh. Long before the arrival of the colonizers, domestic warfare and inter-tribal clash told upon the local culture. The British colonizers only completed the process “by forcing the major tribes to melt into a single colonial boundary” (Lamb 307).

Though culturally backward in the eyes of the Europeans, the Ibo had a unique culture, compatible with the Western-style progress. They were ruled not by their aristocratic chiefs of the villages, but by the successful warriors, achievers, excellent orators and titled champions. All their titles and rewards were buried with them. Their rulers had to exhibit extraordinary feat for securing and holding leadership. They believed in individual achievements, not in inheritance. Their quest for learning was also distinctive and more than that of other tribes. Hence, whenever the missionaries came with schools and books, the natives welcomed them promptly. The British colonizers assumed this willingness of the Ibos as the backbone of Nigeria’s bureaucracy and commerce.

The bureaucratic mindset of the Igbos is very conspicuously reflected in *Arrow of God* where Ezeulu’s interest in the white men’s education and

sending of one of his sons to the missionary school portrays the inquisitive mind of the Igbos. Besides, Winterbottom's offer to Ezeulu of the post of the local chief reveals how the colonizers could succeed in discovering the bureaucratic mind of the natives and how this discovery led them to their success in introducing an indirect rule. Ezeulu cherishes a hidden desire to share the authority of the white men. This desire motivates him to give his verdict in favour of Winterbottom on the issue of the dispute between Umuaro and Okperi over a piece of land. To the utter disappointment of his people, he speaks out in the meeting that he heard from his father that the disputed land belonged to Okperi:

'I know', he told them, 'my father said this to me that when our village first came here to live the land belonged to Okperi. It was Okperi who gave us a piece of their deities-their Udo and their Ogwugwu. But they said to our ancestors- mark my words- the people of Okperi said to our fathers; we gave you our Udo and our Ogwugwu; but you must call the deity we give you not Udo but the son of Udo, and not Ogwugwu but the son of Ogwugwu. This is the story I have heard from my father. (*Arrow of God* 16)

This story of Ezeulu alienates him from his own people, but on the contrary, he wins the favour of Winterbottom who has already had an intention to make Ezeulu a tool of the colonizers' 'indirect rule'. Ezeulu sends one of his sons to the church only in response to the request of

Winterbottom. He does all these things against the disposition of his people. Ezeulu's characteristic weakness towards the colonizers' knowledge and authority may be interpreted as an outcome of the internal disintegration of the natives which quickens the success of the colonizing mission in Nigeria.

Achebe has depicted the same picture of the intrinsic diplomacy of the colonizers and the characteristic weakness of the Igbo culture in *Things Fall Apart*. The arrival of the missionary was not taken seriously at first by the natives. They allowed the missionary to build their settlement in the evil forest, and soothed themselves by the thought that their god would efface the outsiders. But nothing happened to them; rather activities of the colonizers spread like mushroom quickly and the number of converts became multiplied, and Okonkwo found his authority and other things falling apart. His own son Nwoye became a convert. Even his own earth goddess punishes him cruelly by banishing him out of his own village for killing 'a clansman' inadvertently. Obierika, Okonkwo's friend, thinks about things but cannot understand "[W]hy should a man suffer so grievously for an offence he had committed inadvertently? But although he thought for a long time he found no answer. He was merely led into greater complexities" (*Things Fall Apart* 88).

Despite these complexities, Achebe possesses an unadulterated compassion for his compatriots. In *Things Fall Apart*, he has bravely criticized the District Commissioner's biased attitude towards Okonkwo. He makes a

brave and faithful effort to criticize the way the District Commissioner interprets Okonkwo's suicide. Achebe, in fact, challenges the debate among the whites in 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and even 20<sup>th</sup> century "over whether blacks were equally as human as whites, or even whether blacks were human at all"(Spikes 48). The treatment that Okonkwo and other native protesters received for destroying a missionary church is a true reflection of how the whites looked upon the natives. The rooted prejudice of the colonizers that "there never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action and speculation", mostly persuaded the District Commissioner to degrade Okonkwo to the level of an untouchable (Ibid 49). One thing that is apparent from Okonkwo's suicide is how the gamut of colonial oppression has alienated him from his own countrymen. Outwardly colonialism may be perceived as a benevolent mission of expediting the absorption of the native cultures and juxtaposition of out and within, but it subtly produces policies of alienating the colonial subjects by declaring them as an entity devoid of civilization.

This politics of labelling the colonial subjects with distorted epithets is an outcome of the neurosis of the colonizers, because they always fear the rise of potent resistance on the part of the colonized. It is true that exercise of power creates resistance, and the intense fear of this resistance produces neurosis in the minds of the colonizers. Again, the natives are always in the fear of intrusion of the outsiders. This also creates neurosis in them.

Okonkwo is a neurotic as he sways between two sets of values "...the societal and the personal", but he never can find the equilibrium (Bloom 44). Thus, the relation between the colonizers and the colonized assumes the metaphor of relation between Prospero and Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Prospero is in fear of Caliban's vindictiveness that he intends to fulfill by raping Miranda, Prospero's daughter, and populating the whole island with his progenies. Again, Caliban is afraid of the infliction of torture and the spells of Prospero's books of magic. Thus, mutual fear produces an atmosphere of neurosis. Achebe portrays the same impulse of relationship between the outsiders and the natives in his trilogy.

Furthermore, the District Commissioner's branding of the Igbo people as primitive can be seen as an effort to politicize western attitude towards the African locals. After assessing the Igbo behavior towards the dead body of Okonkwo, the District Commissioner has decided that he would write a book entitled "*The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*" (148). It can be interpreted as the common Western attempt to produce a discourse for defining the Africans natives by distorting them to the level of a savage tribe. Thus, colonial discourse does not show any noble impulse to reclaim the humanity of the natives, and "to show that they were as capable of literacy as were whites" (Ibid 49). Colonial discourse intentionally tends to define the natives as subhumans. This attempt has been articulated by the suppressed angst and anxieties of the colonizers emerging from the

apprehension that the colonized may develop a counter-discourse, because they know that “colonized cultures were catalectic agents for metropolitan self-questioning” (Boehmer 139). And this is the fear of self questioning that makes the District Commissioner interested enough to write a book on Okonkwo’s tragedy without investigating much about the factors that lead him to his tragic end. Metaphorically, it is a strategy, deliberately assumed by the colonizers, to manipulate the epistemology and dialectics of the natives.

In this way, the relation between the colonizers and the colonized is found to be the relation of chasm and cavities, characterized by mutual apprehension, ignorance and intervention. These chasm and cleavages appear as a misguiding force to the natives, even after the departure of the colonizers. Absorption of the colonizers’ style of thinking and the government system without sufficient and proper knowledge leads the post-colonial natives to the perpetuation of violence and “replacement of one domination by another” (Kapoor 123). Achebe’s eyes cannot overlook this fatal drawback of post-colonial Nigeria. True, Achebe has very minutely explored the cause of fast spreading corruption in Nigeria. It is a historical fact that “[T]he African states which gained their independence during the 1950s and 1960s mostly by peaceful agreement with the former colonial powers, were born in an atmosphere of political euphoria” (Oliver 266). Actually, the post-independence Nigerian politicians got “[A] framework of

internal and external security, efficient and disinterested administration, sound finance, a basic economic infrastructure of roads, railways and harbours, and at least the beginnings of modern social services in education, health and community development” (Oliver 266). In 1957, there were only ten independent states in Africa; by 1963, there were thirty-four. This rapid growth in the number of independent states in Africa marks the rapid growth of a bourgeois class of people which successively runs the political enterprises in the independent states. After independence, Nigeria unfortunately got a bourgeois group of politician which, after getting the entire readymade framework for the country, got involved in corruption.

In post-independence Nigeria, the local political leaders paid attention more to their personal gains than to the public interest. Thus, corruption took a corrosive as well as epidemic form in post-colonial Nigeria. Even today, the fundamental issue in Nigeria, whether under the military or the civilians, is bad governance. The causes of post-colonial Nigeria’s backwardness have been vivified in the following words of John Campbell:

The federal government’s economic policies reflect the special interests of those who control it. Accordingly, economic policy is focused on providing short-term benefits to the heads of the patronage networks that dominate Nigerian governance to the detriment of long term economic development. (Campbell 17)



Consequently, Nigeria has fallen back in all the productive sectors of economy – agriculture, infrastructural development of communication network, energy production for both domestic and industrial consumptions and the investment policies in trade and commerce.

In fact, by African standard, Nigeria was more advanced than all other African colonies in respect of cultural diversity and natural wealth. It had self-respect and economic potential. It had all possible hopes and dreams of rapid advancement. But, owing to the failure of post-colonial leadership, “...the black Africa’s biggest hope soon became its greatest disappointment” (Lamb 301). In this connection, famous journalist David Lamb who worked as a bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times* and spent four years travelling the south of Sahara wrote:

In the first sixteen years of independence there were three coups d’état, the assassinations of two heads of state, and one civil war that claimed a million lives. The country’s oil revenues were squandered in the biggest spending binge any African country ever went on. The soldiers came to power and proved themselves more corrupt and less efficient than the civilians they had overthrown for their corruption and inefficiency. The cities filled up and broke down. The farmland emptied and stopped producing. The parliament dissolved, the economy deteriorated, the dreams disintegrated. (301)

Thus, the downward skid of Nigeria was mostly geared up by the moral degeneration of the bourgeois class and their ethical degeneration and absence of commitment to the nation. For example, Obi, in *No Longer at Ease*, degenerates himself to the level of a corrupt civil servant because of his loss of identity, being dwindled in the ambivalence caused by the confluence of the native and the European cultures. His attempt at valorizing heterogeneity in contact with Western epistemology and dialectics causes a displacement of his moral and cultural position and turns him into one person opposed to his own people. His allegiance is split up between his local culture and his Western education, and thus, he turns into a representative of the confused and confusing post-colonial bourgeois generation of Nigeria.

As such, it is apparent that Achebe's trilogy has formed a challenge against the Occidental or European attitude towards the African locals. He has very successfully explored indigeneity of the ethno-cultural realities of the Africans, and showed that they may not have the culture like that of the Europeans but they have their own culture, cultural identity, rich heritage and aesthetics. Hence, the relationship between the Europeans and the Nigerians is an antithetical relationship between two binary oppositions, rooted in colonial domination. This unequal cultural, socio-economic, psychological, ethnological and political relationship results in the development of the psychological complicities and marginalization. A

narcissistic desire overcomes the colonizers, and very soon they think that the natives are never equal. But Achebe's writings present a seminal attempt to constitute the natives as humane, capable of literacy, fundamentally individual and apparently embellished with cultural identity. Obviously, his trilogy forms a powerful counter-discourse against the European narcissistic colonialism which denies the natives of their history and scope of innovation. Achebe's greatness lies in his discovery of the universality of the fate and the proceeding of a colonial nation. His Nigeria has become a representative colonial country which undergoes all the angst and anxieties, emanating from an intersection of the colonial and anti-colonial dispositions. And the power of Achebe as a writer lies in his formidable attempt at developing a counter-discourse and writing back to the imperialists who, taking resort to textual politics, have deliberately misinterpreted those who were once colonized by them.

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### **Ambivalence in Achebe's Characters: A Thematic Survey of Historical and Psychological Parallels in the Trilogy and Two Other Novels**

Cultural dislocation which emerges out of ambivalence and concussion generated from the ambiguous relations of the natives with their indigenous culture and the colonizers, is the source of anxiety. Achebe's novels, widely renowned for realism, apparently offer possibilities of formulating a discourse on Africa and attempt to make a quest for postcolonial aesthetics. His novels are an attempt of a way out of the pattern and formulation of colonialism and evocation of a new identity, which is indigenously African. Achebe, like an archeologist, delves deeper into the psyche and history of the Nigerians. The narrative that he has produced in his novels has investigated a space for conjunction between history and psychology of the natives during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. His novels and other works, for example, essays, poems, short stories and interviews exhibit the circumstances which promote the emergence of African knowledge and problematic. The problematic which is articulated by the clash of local ideology and colonial formulation of thoughts is mostly responsible for the articulation of angst and anxieties.

While Achebe became acquainted with European culture in his own country, the colonizers had already ruled in Africa for almost three centuries. Hence, there had already been a rich and strong Western cultural tradition and literary canon, and Achebe found with surprise that “Africa is a European concept” (Wesseling 84). The spread of the colonial cultural tradition tended to dislocate the natives out of their indigenous social, cultural and literary centre. This confrontational and aggressive role of European culture led the natives to anxiety which emerged out of a corrosive ambivalence whether they would stick to their indigeneity or be overpowered by the buoyancy of Western canon. In such a juncture, like other African writers, Achebe felt an urge to produce a discourse that depicts Nigeria from within because he held a conviction that:

Africa is not a blank sheet on which impressions can be drawn. African society has its own store in its subconscious, the society forms its own conclusions-judgments of value and sensibility as to what it feels and does not as to where pain and pleasure do or do not lie. (Piesterse 72)

True, African writings begin with Achebe because the historical consciousness that has impacted his writing has portrayed Nigeria as well as Africa, its psyche, culture, ethnography and ideologies with all their beauties and realities. In fact, he writes for reorganizing and reproducing

the history and ideologies of his cultural identity. In this connection, Gikandi observes:

Indeed, the historical significance of Achebe's works lies in his ability to evolve narrative procedures through which the colonial language which was previously intended to designate and reproduce the colonial ideology, now evokes new forms of expression, proffers a new oppositional discourse, thereby countering the permanence of vision embedded in colonial discourse.(4)

Achebe comprehends the true purpose of writing and knows the true function of a writer. He has explored the anthropological realities of the native ideologies and the historical conditions. It is certain that Achebe has brought about a new order of knowledge which originates from the exercise of colonialism that functions to reconstruct resistance against the same colonial force. He seeks his readers to be embraced by the consciousness of that knowledge and the problematic of 'its ideological function'. In his essay, "The Role of a Writer in a New Nation", Achebe expresses his anxiety about the loss of dignity and self-respect of the people who were once colonized. It is apparent that "Achebe was writing in the era of decolonization when the world witnessed the collapse of colonial governments, birth of new nations, the rise of totalitarian dictatorship and violent revolutions" (Chattaraj 68). It is also apparent that the legacy of colonial power and the practice of indigeneity go hand in hand even in post-

colonial period, though not always in spectacular forms. A considerable number of people, absorbing the colonizers' knowledge, continue the legacy of the colonial epistemology even after the departure of the colonizers. They also inherit the colonizers' wonder and fear. Like the colonial masters, local culture appears to them exotic and exciting. At the same time, indigeneity that poses a resistance appears to them as a threat. But, it is undeniable that from this educated section of people a quarter emerges as a counter-force against the colonizers. They write as well as fight back the colonizers.

The rise of an educated class in Africa has thrown a challenge to the archaic fantasy of the colonizers' Kurtzian attitude to the natives. This 'superiorist binarity' makes the colonizers audacious enough to question the probity of the natives and see their culture to be inferior to Western culture. Achebe has clarified this colonial disposition through Mr Green's consciousness of his hierarchy in *No Longer at Ease*. In his words, "Faced with the educated Africans, more so educated in his own country, Green [in *No Longer at Ease*] is filled with fear, anxiety and suspicion since they negate his convictions of superiority leading to an identity crisis" (Chattaraj 72). Mr. Green, Obi's former European boss, cannot come out of his prejudice. He brands, in the context of Obi's indulgence in bribery, "The African is corrupt through and through" (2). As a typical colonizer, he builds up a distorted image of the natives. He goes on, "They are all corrupt... 'I am

all for equality and all that I for one would hate to live in South Africa. But equality won't alter fact" (8). And the judge trained in the West, Galloway, is suspicious about Obi's Western education. He cannot comprehend "how a young man of your education and brilliant promise could have done this..." (2). He thus glorifies the superiority and sanctity of European education which, according to him, has the capability of purging a native of his crudeness. So, he is confirmed that a man with the colonizers' education cannot indulge himself in corruption. Such an attitude of this judge places European epistemology upon the African as the 'Whiteman's burden'.

Both Mr Green and the judge of Obi's trial make a discourse of inequality regarding the Africans. Though ironically they talk of equality, their discourse will never allow the natives to be equal to them. Even at the outset of the novel, the look that the European judge throws upon Mr. Adeyemi, a lawyer who gives an excuse of the problem of automobile for his delay, reveals how suspicious and critical the colonizers are towards the natives. Actually, he has already projected a distorted image of the natives. But the problem with the natives is that very often they desire to become like the colonizers. Again, their adherence to their own culture leads them to the juncture of double consciousness. Double consciousness of the colonized accelerates ambivalence which prefigures alienation from the indigenous culture, language and even emotion. This very psychological

problem gradually leads Obi to absolute failure. Double consciousness alienates Obi from his mother, too. He can use any English word at ease in any situation, but he cannot apply Igbo words at ease in expressing emotional immediacy spontaneously. This limitation later alienates him from the doctrine and discipline of his native culture. In this connection, Chattaraj argues, ““Witnessing corruption in the micro-level in his journey to Umuofia when the driver of the lorry has to pay bribe to the policeman for passage, Obi’s response is typical of his English education: “What an Augean stable”” (41). Receiving Western education, Obi fails to construct his national identity and his persuasion of façade bourgeoisie as a civil servant, dancing in the party, flaunting a new car on overdraft finally lead him to the vicious trap of bribery. Obi himself turns into a farcical failure while he composes an impassioned poem valorizing his motherland but during his distress he reads Houseman. Such duplicity of personality has problematized Obi’s identity, and led him to the bog of confusion. Besides, his position in such a juncture challenges the stereotype of his identity. Obi’s in-between or intermediate position causes a site of transition which Bhabha has interpreted as we find ourselves in the moment of transit, “where space and time cross to produce complex figure of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, exclusion and inclusion” (*The Location of Culture* 1).

Thus, hybridization of culture and its corrosive impact on the natives have preoccupied the canvass of *No Longer at Ease*. A malformation is found in the sacrifice of kolanut to 'Jesu Kristi'. The ritual is from Igbo culture, but the manner of incorporating the final speech of deliverance is Christian. Obi's father Issac Okonkwo does not want to show adherence to Igbo ritual though Odugwu, the old kinsman, who is not a Christian, goes to the church at every harvest time. Again, Obi's mother tells her traditional folk tales to her children, though Issac Okonkwo does not show any interest in them because, to him, it is a kind of betrayal to his new religion. Obi, as a Christian does not know Igbo tales, and hence, he has to undergo humiliation at school. He wins acceptance only when he learns some Igbo folk tales from his mother stealthily and reiterates them to his classmates. The helplessness, that Obi experiences falling into the juncture of two different cultures, is one of the major experiences of the colonial generation, and Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* has addressed this problem very realistically.

Again, though Issac Okonkwo is a Christian, he cannot agree with Obi's decision of marrying Clara because, to him, she is an *Osu*. In his words, "*Osu* is like leprosy in the minds of your people. I beg of you, my son, not to bring the mark of shame and leprosy into your family. If you do, your children and your children's children into the third and fourth generations will curse your memory" (121). Thus, Obi's father behaves like an Igbo



traditionalist despite his becoming a Christian, and thus, he turns into an Igbo Christian, not a European Christian. The problem that Obi and Obi's father encounter also runs through the mind of Chinua Achebe. He has a firsthand experience of the anxieties derived from his in-between condition. His father was a lay worker in the Anglican Church in the early days of Christianity in Nigeria. Achebe experienced confusions and anxieties when he saw how the Igbo society was gradually transforming through the intersection of the local and European views, culture, beliefs, education and religion. Achebe found that this intersection was leading both the natives and the colonizers towards disintegration whose seed was not lying in the geography, but in the minds of both of them.

Even Joseph, Obi's friend, for example, is afraid of *Osu* though he is a Christian, educated in the West, and thus, a traumatic process of negotiation foregrounds the ambivalence of hybrid positions which permeate through the major characters of *No Longer at Ease*. In the words of Joseph, this ambivalence assumes a new dimension of juxtaposition between two different cultures when he expresses the helplessness in these words: "[I]n future, when we are all civilized, anybody may marry anybody. But that time has not come. We, of this generation, are only pioneers" (68). Ironically to its name, 'Umuofian Progressive Union' which has sponsored Obi's higher education in London, shows vehement defiance to his choice of an *Osu* for marrying. Even Obi's divided loyalty—"loyalty towards his

parents, family and culture, and loyalty to Clara, the prospective mother of his child” leads him to angst and anxieties in whose grip he is on the verge of losing his own self and individual identity (Mukherjee 95). Again, Clara, a nurse with Western education, is symptomatic of a woman who falls into the pit of ambivalence. Despite her consciousness of her being an out-caste, she develops an extra marital relation with Obi, and again her denial of her marriage with him becomes evident of the anxiety which has characterized her.

Obi’s colonial mindset, in Bhabha’s term, “colonial mimicry”, dissuades him from developing an individual identity. His adherences to the colonial discourse and his liking for the life-style of the colonizers have produced an enigma. This enigma is also produced by the conglomeration of different tribes in Nigeria “struggling for a share in the political control of the country” (Okechukwu 79). It splits up his identity and causes a mislocation which leads him to his final humiliation and indignity. Actually, his ideals suffer from distortion because he meets with colonial idealism and a temptation of the luxury of the colonizers’ life, and it has traumatized his handling of his economic, social, racial or family affairs. True, the development of a man’s relationship with his surrounding depends on how he can interact with and receive response from them. Its root lies in his childhood. If it is divided between his mother culture and the imposed

forms of culture, then he is faced with some defects in his relationship with his cultural identity. Adler has aptly diagnosed it in the following lines:

The obstacles a child meets with in the development of his soul usually result in the stunting or distortion of his social feeling. They may be divided into those which arise out of defects in his physical environment, such as originate in abnormal relationships in his economic, social, racial, or family circumstances; and further, into those which arise out of defect in his bodily organs. (41)

In fact, the major obstacle that distorts Obi's morality is the malformation of his culture which dissuades him in the forms of his father, mother, Umuofian community of the scholarship board and, above all, Clara. Consequently, an intense anxiety brings about unrest in his life.

By probing into Obi's psyche it is conspicuously found that his behavior is symptomatic of the Westernized elites in the post-colonial countries and this group of people gives a strong gesture that the departure of the colonizers does not ensure true independence of the natives. They keep the lights of former colonial control alive through colonial modernization by absorbing Western languages, industrial framework, educational structures, political ideas and economic organizations, and thus, "...the members of this elite, once in positions of authority after independence, were every bit as determined to continue the process of economic modernization as their forbearers" (Thomas et al 4).

Gradually the natives realize that decolonization is not a panacea; nor does it mark the end of ‘a historical process’. In this connection, Achebe’s *Obi* represents the Westernized elites who continue the colonial legacy even after the departure of the colonial masters. He works as a secretary to the scholarship board and exercises power as a Westernized administrator; takes bribe and is caught up for trial. Though he is split up between Western hegemony and the indigenous cultural identity, his alienation from his own culture and tradition proves the emergence of a new Westernized elite class who will continue the colonizers’ mission, even in post-colonial period. The counter force that he has posed against his tradition owing to his cosmopolitan thought will continue, and ultimately take up the local administration in post-colonial society. In this connection, he works as a bridge between the colonizers and the natives by taking up ideological slavery and it is also found in *Things Fall Apart*. In this novel, the court messenger who works as a translator possesses “extraordinary power over both colonizers and colonized” (Chrisman 159). True, colonialism offers a promise of global citizenship. But it is both false and fatal. It is false as it cannot bring out the colonized from the periphery of their own cultural ideologies. Again, it is fatal because it challenges the indigeneity of the natives and creates confusion among them.

In the same vein, *Arrow of God* demonstrates angst and anxiety in the face of colonial encounter. A close reading discovers that, “[A]mbivalence is

central to the discursive setting of *Arrow of God*, for the protagonist exists in an integral space in which one discourse is ending and another is still emerging” (Himmelman 8-9). Thus, western discursive power creates an ethno psychiatry which creates a ‘mad native’ “who reinforced this discursive ambivalence, and which exceeded the ambivalences held towards the Western madman” (Ibid 10). Therefore, there emerges a temporal distance between the natives and their ethno-psychiatrists, and thus evokes both fear and pity. In such a situation, the natives cannot estimate the objectives of the colonizers who impose their discursive power upon them. Ezeulu, the protagonist of *Arrow of God*, is lost in confusion for his failure in estimating the objectives of the colonizers. His ignorance of the impact of the colonial power leads him to a kind of madness out of which he creates a fatal rift with his own people.

In this way, colonial discourse endeavors itself to build up superstructures in binary terms, that is, the natives must be noble and savage, feared and pitied. The natives are thrown against the colonizers and marked as undeveloped while the colonizers are marked as developed. The natives become a distorted entity which needs to be civilized. Out of the binary oppositions, ambivalences emerge and inevitably create potential emergences in colonial discourse, and opens up spaces for supervision and even resistance. In such a very vulnerable situation, the colonizers tend to penetrate their own discourse into the psyche of the natives.

In response to this attempt of the colonizers, Achebe has produced *Arrow of God* and endeavored to “rewrite a Nigerian history that confronts the discursive truths, upheld by colonialism and in this way, *Arrow of God* serves as the author’s gesture towards decolonization” (Ibid 13). This novel demonstrates how a colonized man is created and, for example, it is exhibited through Ezeulu’s son Oduche who instead of becoming his father’s eye, turns into a mimic man, deserting his own culture and embracing the colonial hegemony. In fact, decolonization requires an identification of discursive truths and a restructuring of power relations which usually have been deposited in the psychological power of the colonized. Oduche’s conversion into a Christian and assumption of the colonizers’ life-style and way of thinking shows how colonial realities are ordained with power and the ways in which these realities are inserted into society through force and coincidences. It is found in the colonial period that by receiving Western education, there emerged a strand of opposition, fortified by anti-colonial nationalism, leaving behind conservatism, ruralism and tradition. But, the discrepancy found in Oduche is that owing to the contact with western education, he develops a strand of opposition against indigenous tradition, norms, culture and beliefs. Here, he has got an affinity with Obi Okonkwo, the protagonist of *No Longer at Ease* regarding their inclination to western knowledge, religion and patterns of life.

In *Arrow of God*, Achebe's use of force and happenstance reinforces ambivalences created by the colonial encounter. A gap of understanding between the Igbo and the Europeans produces confusion out of unknowability. The Igbo hear through prophecy while the Europeans hear from hearsay. This level of inequality has both united and divided the people through concoction and horror. Consequently, discursive truths fail to produce absoluteness. And angst and anxieties lie in this failure of the development of a radical strand of nationalism. The spirit of nationalism is always challenged by the intervention of inner segregation. Ezeulu criticizes the behaviour of the Igbo towards the colonizers. He believes that for the rampancy of colonial hegemony, not the outsiders, but the natives are to be blamed. He says to his friend Akuebue:

We have shown the white man the way to our house and given him a stool to sit on. If we now want to go away again we must either wait until he is tired of his visit or we must drive him away. Do you think you can drive him away by blaming Ezeulu? You may try, and the day I hear that you have succeeded I shall come and shake your hands I have my own way and I shall follow it. I can see things where other men are blind. That is why I am known and at the same time I am unknowable. (133)

This juxtaposition between knowability and unknowability of Ezeulu's character acts as a block on the way to the formation of the spirit of

oneness, and at the end, frustrates his attempt at knowing the secrets of the white power for the enchantment of his own. Besides, the pride that he takes in his absolute power as a priest stops him from clarifying to his clan. His firm belief that he is a proxy for his god Ulu and his clan hinders him from developing a sense of self-identity. Even his arrogance alienates him from his own clan and even from Winterbottom who offers him an opportunity to become a part of the indirect rule of the colonial rulers. All these failures promote the acceleration of colonial power in Umuaro through the justification of an Igbo proverb:

If the rat cannot flee fast enough

Let him make way for the tortoise! (231)

As all kinds of knowledge are contextualized, and the context is rooted in history, language and culture of a nation, colonialism works for the displacement of these elements. So, it is found that exercise of colonial power in Africa is an opportunistic interference as it, from the very outset, casts itself against the preexisting hierarchies of power. In *Arrow of God* it is found that colonial power gets entangled with the Igbo power with a deliberate view to uprooting it. Before the advent of the colonial power, traditional life in Umuofia was not compartmentalized. Every sphere of life was then conducted by the religious community. Ezeulu was the common fountain from which life of Igbo society seemed to flow. But, after the arrival of the colonizers, Winterbottom, who represents colonial power,



tends to compartmentalize life of the Igbo people. As a result, unrest begins to take shape, and it reaches its zenith with the collapse of authority of Ezeulu who cannot hold things together. Even the conversion of his son Oduche into a Christian and his attempt of suffocating the sacred python to death frustrate him utterly and give him an intense realization of the futility of his authority. Through Oduche, Ezeulu intends to develop a counter discourse of colonialism, but his indulgence in the colonizer's pattern of thinking becomes fatal for his own. Even in the end of the novel, Ezeulu wants to create a frail resistance against colonial hegemony by not declaring the New Yam Festival. He thinks that it will fortify his position among his people. But, it also fails owing to his failure in developing a strand of tribal unity among his clansmen against colonialism. Finally, the death of his son Obika's during the funeral of Amalu further weakens his authority over his people. Besides, he escalates angst and anxieties among his people by declining to declare the New Yam Festival but he remains quite ignorant of its repercussion. A delegation of ten persons came to meet Ezeulu with a view to appeasing his wrath and resentment. One of them tells him:

Perhaps you can guess why we have come. It is because of certain stories that have reached our ears; and we thought the best thing was to find out what is true and what is not from the only man who can tell us. The story we have heard is that there is a little disagreement

about the New Yam Festival. As I said we do not know if it is true or not, but we do not know that there is fear and anxiety in Umuaro which if allowed to spread might spoil something. We cannot wait for that to happen; an adult does not sit and watch while the she-goat suffers the pain of child birth tied to a post. (*Arrow of God* 208)

Ezeulu, even then, fails to grasp the causes of disintegration of his clan. Obika's death gives a conviction to the villagers that Ezeulu has been abandoned by Ulu. Then they do not wait for Ezeulu's declaration any further. Groups of people start going to the church, sacrificing yam in the name of the Christian God, and Mr. Winterbottom gets a congenial space in Umuaro for spreading colonial practices. True, Ezeulu cannot feel the apprehension and anxiety that the delegation of people feels. His shortsightedness and arrogance accelerate the spread of colonial hegemony in Umuaro. His drawback works as a metaphor of the historical reality that the immense power of colonialism has taken the deliberate chance of the internal segregation in favour of its spread in Nigeria.

While writing *Arrow of God*, Achebe was full of nationalist feelings. The novel was published in 1964, during the post-liberation period of Nigeria while historical consciousness was taking shape slowly among the natives. Post-colonial generations started formulating their views and attitudes in the format of the colonizers who had recently left. Judicial system, government and other state apparatuses borrowed zest from the colonizers'

discourse. Hybridization of culture has started turning into a permanent hegemony. In such a situation, longing for the purity of indigenous cultural identity is next to impossible. Through Ezeulu in *Arrow of God*, Achebe has felt the pulse of that time. He faces Winterbottom's intervention. He is able to draw the attention of the colonizers' administration. In response to Winterbottom's request, he sends his son to receive the education of the colonizers with a view to reinforcing his position and authority. But unfortunately, he is aware of his position of subjectivity, not objectivity. He intends to have an access to the ideology of the colonizers. Both his desire and attempt have made him a cosmopolitan. But he fails to realize that "[C]osmopolitics inhibits that creation [the creation of the conditions for new and properly global humanity] by making the inequality that structures contemporary globalization" (Chrisman 161). His curiosity about the knowledge of the colonizers has forfeited him, and he realizes it when Uduche has already assumed Christianity; Obika dies and his villagers abandon him. This realization comes too late, and by this time, his authority falls apart.

Again, on the part of the colonizers, the most fatal drawback appears to be their ignorance of the truths they enforce upon the natives. Continuity of the government, whether it is upwards or downwards is a must to establish colonial hegemony. But a rift in this continuity makes Winterbottom a weak representative of the colonial administration. For example, Winterbottom is

dead against creating paramount chiefs, but he offers Ezeulu the post of the warrant chief as a part of the indirect rule, and when Ezeulu refuses, Winterbottom is enraged. Ezeulu's refusal of the offer of Winterbottom, if viewed historically, has got its strong basis in the realities of the colonial period when, in course of the establishment of the indirect rule by the colonizers, the local chiefs and council elders ornamented only "presidential functions and were invested with no executive power" (Asad 131). On the part of the colonizers, this attempt of introducing indirect rule reveals the incapacity and inconsistency of the colonial hegemony. The reality that the colonial rulers faced during the colonial period was that the ruling of so vast a territory with a very small number of European officers was next to impossible for the colonizers. As a result, this inconsistency in the continuity of the colonial administration later contributed a lot to the vulnerability of colonial discourse in encompassing all subjects. It also gave rise to uneasiness among the natives, and thus, a bitterness of relationship mars the coexistence of the colonizers and the colonized.

Both Ezeulu and Winterbottom lack awareness of their own subjectivity. Failure on both the sides creates vulnerability of both the local and the colonial authority. In this connection, Himmelman asserts:

Both men have access to two different discursive spaces, but while Ezeulu chooses to investigate the "Whiteman's knowledge through his son and varying interactions with Winterbottom the captain only

pretends to access Ibo discourse. Captain Winterbottom enjoyed mystifying other Europeans with words from the Ibo language which he claimed to speak fluently. (18)

Thus, Winterbottom's failure in convincing Ezeulu to be a part of his indirect rule is the result of his lack of knowledge or proper understanding of local conditions and Igbo social organizations. That is a common practice of the top-level administrators of colonial Nigeria. Winterbottom fails to have any access to the knowledge "with which colonial discourse can be interrogated" (Ibid 18). Ezeulu also fails in his negotiation between two discursive subjectivities-Ibo and colonial. Thus, it has escalated ambivalence whose root lies in the multiple subjectivities of Ezeulu.

Further, when Ezeulu goes to visit Government Hill, he experiences duality of his subjectivity. As soon as he arrives he is imprisoned in a guard room, though it is swept and provided with a mat so that it may be taken for a guest room. This imprisonment brings about a change in the life of Ezeulu. His travel to the Government Hill also brings him close to a new discursive space, away from Umuaro. At the same time, he himself breaks the native discursive space by making a travel from his own hut to a far place which is prohibited for a priest of Ulu. In this way, standing on the crossroads Ezeulu confronts the conflicting truths. These truths give him the feeling of both pain and pleasure. Very soon, he feels the loss of status as a priest and the pleasure that he is momentarily relieved of the charge of a priest.

Moreover, while sojourning in the prison of Okperi, he sees the power of the written word in colonial discourse. For instance, upon his return to Umuaro, Ezeulu says:

When I was in Okperi I saw a young white man who was able to write his book with the left hand. From his actions I could see he had very little sense. But he had power; he could shout in my face; he could do what he liked. Why? Because he could write with his left hand. (189)

Here, he realizes the power of learning of reading and writing. His wonder demonstrates his comprehension that written words have the capability of storing knowledge, circulating powerful ideas and preserving traditions and histories.

Now, Ezeulu realizes the contrast between the locals and the colonials. He also comprehends that his knowledge is based on the oral tradition of Igbo culture and, on the other hand, colonial discourse is based on the written words. He discovers the weakness of oral tradition in the face of the power of a written language, because “language itself contains sedimented layers of emotionally resonant metaphors, knowledge, and association, which when paid attention to can be experienced as discoveries and revelations” (Clifford 198). This is the first time he learns, in his predicament, that all of intellectual mood and colonial realities are lying hidden in the language of the colonizers. In contrast with this power of language, his own oral

tradition appears to be weak. He also gathers that with no written text or language, his natives are ‘disseminated identities’, and thus, they are not able to raise a formidable resistance against the colonizers’ discourse. Consequently, hope and hopelessness lead him to frustration about his own people and their episteme.

Discovery of the futility of his discursive knowledge gives Ezeulu an impression that he is no more an arrow in the bow of god who does not have written scriptures that the Christian God possesses. Besides, his intense realization of the duplicity of the colonial discourse which superficially wants order, though in practice, works to create unrest, gives Ezeulu senses of angst and anxieties which ultimately make him reluctant towards his duty to his own people. Thus, Achebe’s narrative demonstrates “the incompleteness of available discourses, as well as their statics, hyper-structured order of things” (Himmelman 23). For instance, the ending of *Arrow of God* depicts that the natives are sending their children “with a yam or two to offer to the new religion and to bring back the promised immunity. Thereafter any yam harvested in his fields was harvested in the name of the son” (232). Thus, it is exemplified that the native discursive practices are challenged from within because of its lack of completeness. The ending may also be interpreted in connection with the ambivalence of the Negritude movement which tried to convince the world that “[O]nly the Negro will be able to explain the Negro to the rest of the mankind”

(Ahluwalia 21). The process of ultimate Christianization and creolization of the natives unmask the fatal hollowness of the local discursive practices.

An important paradox of Negritude is also apparent in this connection. For instance, Ezeulu, who is to maintain authenticity himself sends his son, Oduche, to learn lessons from the colonizers, and the people of his own community offer yam to the church of the new religion or Christianity. In this connection, Pal Ahluwala asserts, “An important paradox of Negritude was that the very people who were urging a return to authenticity and renewal were themselves thoroughly imbued with the values of the colonizer” (23). This dual role of the natives acts as a block on their way to the emancipation from the impact of colonialism. Achebe apparently seems to deliver a message that internal unity and political stability are needed for saving things from falling apart.

Again, this paradox has shaped the character of Ezeulu when he casts himself against his own community. He decides to take revenge upon his community by not initiating the festival of Pumpkin Leaves. But, strangely enough, he discovers that “no man how great, is greater than his people” (Irele 37). Ezeulu’s anxiety regarding the loss of his sole authority and self-dignity and status has blinded him to realize the truth that he is a scapegoat of history. In this respect, Abiola Irele says the following about Achebe, “His tragic heroes are isolated figures at the point of tragedy, rising no higher in the tragic scale than status of history’s scapegoat so that the



community may survive” (37). Truly they have become scapegoats of their own follies owing to their lack of a powerful discursive narrative that may stand against the colonial discourse.

Also, this paradox creates tension between tradition and transformation. For example, when Ezeulu decides to send his son to the mission school, “he is also, perhaps unconsciously, expressing his own doubts about the survival of Igbo culture in the face of the colonial challenge” (Gikandi 53). As a priest, he is the custodian of the past rituals and festivals of his tradition. But, the colonizers cast future before him, a glaring allurements to education, progress and gentlemanship and power, formatted by the Western colonial discourse. It is a vehement urge for cultural transformation on the face of which Ezeulu is overpowered by the ambivalence which staggers his priesthood and leads him to disunity and division. Ulu is created by six villages as their god to evoke their identity, but this god is now challenged by Ezeulu’s bitterness to his own people. Besides, colonialism offers a challenge against relationship between the priest and his people and evokes “a situation of duality and reversal” (Gikandi 54). Moreover, it reveals that his priesthood is not unadulterated regarding his secular bent of mind. His bitterness with Nwaka gives out his secular bent of mind, and it also divides his own self. Thus, the intrusion of these mundane and phenomenal ideas into his mind evokes anger and anxieties which ultimately alienate him from his own people.

Besides, his obsession for monolithic power leads him to a fatal failure. He maintains a belief that dispersed power is not power at all. Hence, he likes to monopolize his authority as a priest. He desires that all the people around him should think like him. Absolute authority and opinion are his objectives. According to one of his wives, his fault:

Was that he expected everyone – his wives, his kinsmen, his children, his friends and even his enemies-to think and act like himself. Anyone who dared to say no to him was an enemy. He forgot the saying of the elders that if a man sought for a companion who acted entirely like himself he would live in solitude. (92)

In his attitude, he is over-possessive, and this disposition blinds him about his limitations in analyzing things around him foresightedly. As a leader, he should have been guided by his head, not but his heart. But, the irony is that he is overpowered by his heart, a repository of emotion, not reason.

This over-possessive disposition stems from Ezeulu's priestly authority and egotism. At the same time, an intense realization knocks him that there is no escape from the epistemology of the colonizers. By sending Oduche, one of his sons, to the white man's school, he conforms to his ambivalent view of accommodating the colonizers' knowledge along with his local tradition. Thus, his persistent resistance against and unconscious subordination to the colonial discourse have led to the tension which shatters him and leads him

to his ultimate failure, and at the end of *Arrow of God*, he turns into a nowhere.

Similarly, failure has also instigated Okonkwo, the protagonist of *Things Fall Apart*, to take his own life. As an epitome of Igbo culture, Okonkwo achieves unadulterated acknowledgement from his people. But gradually he develops a consciousness that ultimately helps him discover that he is in the juncture of “the fragmentation of the Umuofia society and the destruction of its cultural values by the colonial powers” (Nnoromele 39). The firm belief for which Okonkwo cannot accept the invasion of the colonizers’ culture is that he believes that Igbo culture is “a complex, vigorous and self sufficient way of life” (Nnoromele 40). Hence, when he finds the infiltration of Western culture and religion into his own traditional customs he takes it to be a threat to his own identity. Anxiety, emerging from his constant fear of loss of identity, makes him go crazy. From the very beginning of his life, he is afraid of becoming an *agbala* or feminine. Even his suicide is a result of his constant struggle of suppressing the feminine image among his clansmen. In this connection, Traore has said, “Okonkwo’s suicide, the closing event of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, is in many ways a direct result of the hero’s attempt to displace or decenter the *Nneka* principle in his private and public life. *Nneka*, or ‘mother is supreme’, is an ideal clearly inscribed at centre of the symbolic universe of Okonkwo’s people” (50). To Okonkwo, anything weak is

associated with women, and to give up his own culture and take up Christianity is also a mark of womanly frailty to him. Hence, after hearing of his son Nowye's conversion into a Christian, Okonkwo utters how he, "a flaming fire could have begotten a son like Nowye, degenerate and effeminate" (143). To him, resistance against colonialism is masculine and fear and cowardice is obviously equivalent to effeminacy. This restiveness very often leads him to commit irrational activity, such as, killing the messenger from the District Commissioner irrationally in the midst of a public gathering. His suicide is also another outcome of his irrational estimation of the colonial realities.

Throughout nine villages he was an unparalleled wrestler. At the very outset of *Things Fall Apart*, his masculine disposition is portrayed in the following words:

Okonkwo was well-known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze was the great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old men agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of the town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights. (*Things Fall Apart* 3)

The irony is that Okonkwo who wrestles throughout his life to avoid becoming an '*agbala*' belongs to the tradition whose one of the major and uncontested idols is a female figure *Ani*, the earth goddess, who is also believed to be the constitutional deity of the Igbo. Okonkwo's devotion to the integrity of Igbo culture and his incessant attempt at avoiding the softness of the mother image gives birth to a kind of duality which leads him to angst and anxieties. This duality also hinders him from comprehending that the fatherly affection for Ikemefuna whom he has killed, is not a feminine quality; it is rather essential for harmonizing a family, a community and in broad sense, a state. Human society goes with human emotions, like fatherliness, kindness, charity and other soft abstracts in absence of which a man turns into a demon. Okonkwo fails to understand this truth of life because his life is dictated by his internal apprehension of becoming like his father, though outwardly he appears to be a stern and strong man.

Further, throughout his life, Okonkwo sticks to maintaining cultural integrity which provides him with fortitude to save his gods from being blasphemed, and customs from desecrated. Okonkwo is 'a man of action, a man of war' and very justifiably may desire "to become one of the lords of the clan" (Nnoromele 41). But, on the way to the fulfillment of his desire, Okonkwo encounters some challenges. First, he acutely feels the necessity of overcoming the "Public estimation of his father" (Ibid 42). Unoka, his

father, was a man with a flute, who found pleasure only in leisure, was an *'agbala'* in the eyes of the village. He borrowed money from almost everybody whom he knew but never repaid the loan. War and bloodshed made him shudder. When he died, he left a huge amount as debt that Okonkwo had to repay.

On the other hand, Okonkwo's manliness surpassed that of anybody in nine villages. He was a man of incredible prowess, and demonstrated his incredible skills by bringing home seven human heads during the interwar conflicts. He was a successful farmer and kept three wives, and it showed his solvency. Though he started his life with nothing, he became a thriving farmer only by virtue of his hard work. Throughout his life he tried to avoid becoming a coward. He did not know weakness even in the exercise of paternal emotion to Ikemefuna. Though, by this time Ikemefuna was absorbed into his family and started calling him 'father', he did not take resort to emotion. Ogbuefi Ezeudu forbade him to attend the sacrificial procession because it was a common belief in Ibo society that emotional attachment interfered in the sacrificial ceremony. But Okonkwo, only for his fear that his community might suspect his heroism, attended the procession into the forest, and when Ikemefuna shouted, "My father, they have killed me!" (43) Okonkwo rushed to him and "cut him down" (43). He did it lest people should suspect his manliness. Actually, in his world, "real men do not show effeminate emotion" (Nnoromele 46). So, only in fear of

being effeminate and only to overcome the neurosis coming from his acute fear of losing masculinity in exercising paternal emotions, Okonkwo kills Ikemefuna.

But, Okonkwo's violent reaction to the role of missionaries as an intruder into the cultural identities of the natives, if explored from historical perspective, deserves sufficient acknowledgement for its valid ground. It is not only his fear of being effeminate but also his absolute adherence to the historical consciousness which encouraged him to stand against the missionaries. He was overwhelmed by the fear of losing his ancestral glory when his son Nwoye became a convert and joined the missionaries. Encountering the colonial enterprise, "Okonkwo felt a cold shudder run through him at terrible prospect like the prospect of annihilation" (108). Okonkwo's fear of the prospect of annihilation borrows the ground of his historical consciousness because the dynamics of the 'evangelizing missions' was the preamble of colonizing mission throughout the world, then followed the colonial administration. In this regard, Olufemi Taiwo has said:

Strange as it may seem, in Britain's African colonies, the missionaries were the progressives, and the administrators - soldiers, residents, hired guns - were the reactionaries. The missionaries were not only ones who felt it their duty to bring the native to civilization, they were also the ones who were willing to put in place some of the

most important institutions for filtrating modernity into colonies.

(129)

For instance, in Umuofia the white men brought missionaries at first. They preached Christianity and converted the natives into Christians. But “...apart from the Church, the white men had also brought a government” (123). The body of the government is a foil to Okonkwo as it represents masculinity which works as a rival to his own masculinity.

Hence, from the very beginning he felt disturbed about the dispensation of the white man. Coming back to Umuofia after seven years of his exile in Mbanta, he wondered why the men and women of Umuofia “did not feel as strongly as he about the new dispensation” (126). Actually, Okonkwo’s anxiety about the advent of the white men is deeply rooted in his fear of losing the integration of self-identity which is mostly formed by his masculine image. But, if viewed from historical perspective, his fear appears to be futile on the face of intensive expansion of the proselytizing zeal of the local people. Discriminatory behavior, received from the local traditional customs, inspired the victims to welcome the missionizing enterprise of the colonizers. For instance, Nwoye’s conversion into a Christian is mostly geared up by the rigorousness and inhuman behavior of Okonkwo to Ikemefuna. Upholding of traditional belief supersedes the paternal feeling, and it appears to Nwoye to be a manifestation of brutality against which Christianity seems to him to be a softer and more

(135)



accommodative doctrine. Eventually, he assumes Christianity as a counter discourse to his native tradition. But the truth is that, Okonkwo, an epitome of impulse, lacks proper sagacity to understand his own drawback. This ignorance, in broad sense, on the part of the natives, very often facilitates the intruders to expand their missionary activities rapidly. Actually, Okonkwo's fear of the grabbing approach of the missionaries is not baseless, but it is based on his historical consciousness and realities, and his fatal limitation is that he fails to handle the colonial enterprises rationally.

It cannot be denied that the evangelical activity gradually turned South Africa into "one of the most intensively missionized regions in the world" (Gilmour 51). In fact, Christianity was preached by the missionaries with a deliberate intention of paving a highway, a route by which commerce, culture and above all, the government of the colonizers would have an access from outside. This route has ultimately connected Africa with the West with the inevitable shackles of colonialism. But this affinity does never coincide with the passage of heart or friendship; it is rather a bridge between the black and the white, formulated with domination and submission, not with relation. Even the Christian missionary, swept by the prejudice of the superior race, looks upon the Africans as the sons of darkness against whom they are set to fight. Reverend James Smith who succeeded Mr. Brown incarnates the true nature of the missionaries. Achebe asserts:

He saw things as black and white. And black was evil. He saw the world as a battlefield in which the Children of light were looked in mortal conflict with the sons of darkness. He spoke in his sermons about sheep and goats and about wheat and tares. He believed in slaying the prophets of Baal” (*Things Fall Apart* 130).

Thus, the church played political roles for the justification of the colonial enterprises in Africa. Besides, it contributes to the instigation of repugnance of the natives against the local ideologies and religions. Very often the church failed to distinguish the Christian principles and those of the colonialists, and it occurred owing to its consciousness of the superiority complex of European progress and civilization. This complex instigated the church or the Christian missionaries to brand the religion of the natives as superstition and barbarianism.

True, the church appears to be a threat to the natives because the Europeans came to Africa with the Bible and gradually they started using the church as an institution of colonization. Hence, the demolition of the church by the *egwugueu* has been geared up by the apprehension of losing indigenous culture and identity. For the destruction of the Church by *egwugwu*, the punishment that the leaders of Umuofia receive is quite humiliating not only to themselves but also to their culture which in true sense, is ‘a strategy of survival’. The way in which these leaders are treated by the District Commissioner’s men exposes the superiority of their

culture. They are hand cuffed and their heads are shaven. It is really humiliating for the traditional customs of the Umuofian leaders. They also have to pay two hundred cowries for each to be released. The humiliation that Okonkwo receives through his arrest knocks down his identity-question. Okonkwo's irresistible and endless struggle against the missionary is metaphorical for his struggle for preserving his identity, and when he finds it being challenged by the missionary, his 'revolutionary consciousness' inspires him to declare the following against the white man, "I despise him and those who listen to him. I shall fight alone if I choose." (*Things Fall Apart* 142). His indomitable fortitude seemingly stands against the colonizers' process of displacement and decentralization of his ethnic identity. Metaphorically, it is an endless attempt on the part of the natives against the process of 'self-Othering' by the colonizers.

But, in the case of Nowye, his conversion into a Christian may be interpreted as a spontaneous attempt of 'self-Othering'. It can also be explained with reference to Lacan's mirror phase:

The child's smile at the mirror, however, is leased not so much on the recognition of his own image as on the misrecognition of himself as the other. This misrecognition becomes a key moment in self-othering. Because of it, the fusion of self with other (or with the imaginary) is neither complete nor constant. It is not complete because, simultaneous with identification with the other, there is

alienation from the self. It is not constant because the favored unity of the imaginary is challenged by the child's entry into the symbolic that is, language acquisition and socialization. (Pennycook 296)

When a child first looks at his image on the mirror he smiles at it. In fact, he does not smile with the knowledge that he finds his own image but rather he imagines it to be a different person. In this way, even in the mirror phase, he goes through the process of 'self-Othering'. By comparison, when a native assumes the mode of life and culture of his colonizers, he alienates himself from his fellows, and produces his self-image with the color of otherness. Nowye's conversion is a kind of misrecognition of his own identity. Ambivalence emerges out of the fusion of self and other which takes him further from his native with deterioration of his epistemological position. Also, Okonkwo's fury towards the colonizers results from his fear of becoming transformed into an 'Other'. In fact, he fails to study his life closely, and his fatal limitation lies in his ignorance of the fact that life is fragmentary, not at all organized by kinship, religion, emotion and philosophy. His anxiety of becoming an 'Other' has hindered him from exploring this truth of life.

In the same vein, Okonkwo's impassioned hatred for the colonizers has taken its origin from his adherence to his indigenous culture or nationalism which he attempts to keep free from hybridization or intersection between native ideas and the foreign ones. So, he vigorously says, "We must root

out this evil. And if our brothers take the side of evil, we must root them out too. And we must do it now. We must bale this water *now* that it is only ankle-deep..." (*Things Fall Apart* 144). This rigorous and uncompromising attitude has made him kill the messenger and instigated him to commit suicide. His suicide receives stimulus from the discovery of his own alienation from his own people who "had broken into tumult instead of action after killing of the messenger" (*Things Fall Apart* 145). On the part of the natives, Okonkwo can be appreciated for his historical consciousness. But, the binary opposition of his historical consciousness also gives out his ignorance of the fact that "local histories are ingrained in global designs" (Mingaolo 86). It is evident at the end when the District Commissioner plans to write a book on the history of the Africans. Achebe has asserted, "He had already chosen the title of the book, after much thought: "*The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*" (130). This degenerating title demonstrates how the colonial politics deshapes and subalternizes the locals. So, all Okonkwo's attempts and plans are thwarted owing to his ignorance of the way of the world.

Further, destruction of the church by *egwugwu* may be historically interpreted as a violent form of resistance raised by the Igbo people in the form of secret societies which "mostly consisted of young men who were locally called Ekumeku "roughly translatable as "invisible", "devastating", "Whirl wind", and other terms that suggest stealth and overwhelming

power” (Moss 424). In *Things Fall Apart* the *egwuewu*'s action of destroying the local church was strongly handled by the local government of the colonizers. Besides, the church had already achieved an impression as an institution of dividing the village. Many natives have already accepted Christianity as their religion and began to consider their local custom as bad custom. So, now the fight is not against the church only but against Nigeria's own people also. Though Okonkwo fails to realize this truth initially, his friend Obierika truly realizes the internal segregation. He says, “If we fight the stranger we shall hit our brothers and perhaps shed the blood of a clansman” (144). Thus, the natives fall apart, and it is one of the probable causes of futility of any attempt on the part of the natives to fight against the outsiders.

Internal disintegration, coming from lack of adaptability, challenges the resistance posed by the natives. All these fatal flaws lead the Igbo leaders to hazards. For example, no attempt of Okonkwo against the colonial intruders becomes successful. Destruction of the Christian church by *egwuewu* has been answered by the District Commissioner very strictly. Okonkwo's killing of the messenger is also countered so strictly that he has to commit suicide when he realizes that no integrated resistance will come from his people. It can be termed as a metaphor that can relate the political ups and downs of Nigeria which is frequently intervened by the military power. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century repeated military

interventions squashed all forms of resistance on the part of the natives and it was easy for the British traders because of the disintegration among the natives. Thus, Okonkwo's "...achievements, failures and death illustrate the ethos and major historical questions of his time." (Ibid 424). In this way, Okonkwo becomes a historical figure who holds the true impulse of the colonial period in Nigeria. Through him, Achebe has portrayed the time when Nigeria started facing the inevitable invasion of colonial forces.

Actually, the impulse which Okonkwo demonstrates against the missionary's attempt of petrifying and degenerating the natives to the level of subhuman beings has borrowed its stimulus from Achebe's concern that the task of an artist is to alleviate the problems of historical 'petrification and catalepsy'. Achebe finds that the colonizers depict Africans as "wonderfully barbaric simpletons full of inexplicable superstitions. Their manner of speech is of children, their worship pathologically heathenish. They seem incapable of deep moral introspections" (Ibid 428). Even Hegel dismissed Africa as one place 'without history'. But in recent decades, historical and archeological discoveries have proved the European prejudice about Africa wrong. Achebe, through the character of Okonkwo, seems to exemplify that he [Okonkwo] has his own idols and religiosity and it is not "Wanton paganism" (Ibid 428). Okonkwo's abhorrence against Christianity can be interpreted as a resistance against the colonizers' attempt at Africanization of the European Christianity in Africa. In Africa, the process

of Westernization of African culture and the patterns of life was mostly geared up by the Christian missionaries in the twentieth century. The dramatic expansion of Christianity in Africa during this century exemplified a great shift of the core of Christianity from Europe to Africa. This process of Christianization of Africa did not go unchallenged. Local religions tried to put up a wall against it, though these failed in most cases owing to the lack of indigenous theology and theologians. This weakness also tempted the Western colonizers to brand the local religion as paganism. Okonkwo also failed in his fight against Christianity because he had resentment, but not any written scriptures.

True, when *Things Fall Apart* was published in 1958, all the countries of the African continent were agitating for independence. Many natives who received education in Western institutions were appalled at the discovery that the colonizers, under the subterfuge of enlightenment and Christian salvation, were destroying their traditional values, thought systems, economic production, and cultural indigeneity. This discovery caused angst and anxieties in the post World War II generation in Nigeria. Okonkwo is one of those who confront the advent of historical transmutation. He fights bravely, and by committing suicide accelerates resentment and hatred in the minds of the natives against the colonizers and gears up the struggle for political independence. Obierika's outburst of grievance at the death of his friend in the presence of the District Commissioner demonstrates the



emergence of a voice against the colonial polity, stimulated by the awareness of the epistemological verity. A prolonged in-between position obviously gives birth to angst and anxieties which persuade the natives to be bold and to confront the colonizers. Obierika represents one of them and thus, Okonwo's suicide is not an end; it is rather just the beginning - beginning of the rise of awareness of self-identity. Thus, *Things Fall Apart* deals with the past showing that

Africa had a culture with its own internal logics and set of contradictions and hence derive their authority from their capacity to imagine an African past decided or negated in the colonial text, the second set of novels have been popular because of their keen source of crisis of post coloniality, and in some cases, a prophetic sense of African history the attendant promise of decolonization and its failure of sense of decision. (Gikandi, *An Encyclopedia* 10)

Hence, the spirit of resistance against the colonial enterprises has germinated from the natives' realization of the realities of the indigenous culture of Africa. Besides, through the tragedy of Okonkwo, Achebe has disclosed both the facets of the Igbo society- its culture and its anarchy at the individual and communal levels.

The same picture of conflict between psychic representation and social reality has imbibed the plot of Achebe's another novel, *No Longer at Ease*. Here Achebe has showed how neo-colonial generation confronts the

juncture of colonial hegemony and native values and ideologies. Obi falls victim to the 'heart of Whiteness'. To him, whiteness stands for the West of civilization and so, he gladly succumbs to it. His persistent desire to be a white man has made him a black Kurtz, a hollow man, devoid of the cognizance of hegemonic consciousness. And the absence of the cognizance has alienated him from his own people. Learning English language and literature in London where he was sent to study law, he turns into a mimic man. Obi's adherence to English language and literature explains that "English is both the language that will apparently bestow civilization, knowledge and wealth on people and at the same time is the language in which they are racially defined" (Pennycook 4). Language is power as it operates in social interactions and makes a man behave in certain ways, adopt opinions and attitudes.

Obi's choice of English instead of law reveals that positioning in the mainstream world requires both the language and knowledge. But, while attempting to do so, Obi deviates from the historical consciousness. In this connection, it is better to look at the time of the publication of *No Longer at Ease* for estimating its historical association. This novel was published in 1960, the year of Nigeria's independence. It was the time when Nigerian nationalists were developing the discourse of national identity. It was a period of reinvention of Nigeria by the native nationalists. It was a period of "the struggle to forge a new Nigerian culture and national identity"

(Gikandi 79). Narratives in politics, history, economy, culture, tradition and language were developing then. A section of educated people was accumulating historical consciousness and securing the roots of Western education and religion in the African context.

Also, improvisation of all traditional thoughts was going on. But, along with the emergence of national consciousness, corruption, bribery, forgery and misuse of power became rampant. This contrast led the young generation educated in the West to a puzzling situation of angst and anxieties. Similarly, the crisis of decolonization shatters Obi's ideals. In this connection, Gikandi has said, "In *No Longer at Ease*, the subjects who had subscribed to the logic of colonial modernity are increasingly haunted by the choices they make, wondering where they stand in the new dispensation" (Gikandi, *An Encyclopedia of African Literature* 11). The space of transition in the history of Nigeria, when the country passed from colonialism to postcolonialism, has found a focus in this novel. This transition has provoked mental crisis of the post-independence generation through a vivid intersection between colonial hegemony and the local cultural indigeneity.

*No Longer at Ease* has thus felt the pulse of the post-independence generation because "it is clearly indispensable in the mapping out of the space of transition from colonialism to postcolonialism" (Gikandi 11). A New Historicist approach to this novel discovers the historicity of this text

and textuality of Nigeria's contemporary history, and thus, it has become a work of cultural poetics. If studied from structuralist and poststructuralist perspectives, it is out of fashion in the institutions of interpretation, but a New Historicist approach reveals how profoundly it has got entangled with its time, that is, colonial Nigeria on the verge of independence from the colonial rule. It is an account of the individuals and their communities who pass through the trauma of colonialism.

Thus, *No Longer at Ease* can be studied as a means of reconstructing cultural trauma, ambivalence and contradictions of colonial Nigeria. Colonial Nigeria is marked by the violent rise of colonialism and ambivalence due to prolonged colonial domination and absence of authentic leadership in the local society. In this chaotic society, a generation of mimic men, furnished with Western knowledge and language, love to hold the status of the colonizers though local economic set up does not suit their desire. Then prejudice of the colonizers which the natives imitate also tempts them to manipulate the state apparatuses for their conveniences. Hence, whatever in such circumstances emerges can be termed as contradictions which tell upon the harmony of the social life and generate corruption among the locals.

Evidently, in *No Longer at Ease*, a mere boy who is to unload luggage from the ship, is utterly corrupted. After his arrival at the port during customs formalities, a boy demands five pounds from Obi in return of his service.

When Obi asks him to write a receipt, he demands two pounds and soon leaves the place. In Achebe's words, "The boy did not write. He looked at Obi for a few seconds, and then said; I can be able to reduce it to two pounds for you" (*No Longer at Ease* 24). Even in the interview board a man questions Obi, "Why do you want a job in the civil service? So that you can take bribes?" (32) Obi hesitates to answer this question at first, and he then, looks upon it as an unnecessary question. The uneasiness that Obi demonstrates at the question depicts the typical "love and hatred entanglement of the colonial subject" which usually causes anxiety in the minds of the colonized. (Gikandi 30).

Obi's hesitation exemplifies the difficulties of the confrontation between the traditional and modern values. It also reveals his failure to rediscover Nigeria which evolves out of his utopian perception of Nigeria and reality. His failure to synthesize his desires with those of his country leads him to angst and anxieties. For example, when Obi returns home after four years of study in England, he cannot mentally accept his father's shabby and impoverished life in his retirement "on a salary of two pounds a month, a good slice of which went back to the same church by way of class fees and other contributions" (44). He cannot sleep for a long time after he has gone to bed because of the crowd of intrapersonal interactions regarding his responsibilities. But very soon his meditations diverse and are concentrated on his beloved Clara: "[H]e forgot his responsibilities and thought about

Clara, how heavenly it would be on such a night to feel her cool body against his- the shapely thighs and the succulent breasts” ( 49).

Contradictions that glide through Obi’s mind split him up between reality and utopian Nigeria that he projects in his imagination. His divided entity emerges out of historical anxiety which has taken his mind in its grip. His dislocation from the path of honesty borrows its potential from his “misconception of the relationship between individual and group fantasies” (Gikandi 95-96). He was sent to England for the study of law so that he could handle the Umuofians’ land cases. But, misconstruing their expectations, he took up English literature as the course of his studies. On his arrival, the Umuofians, dressed in European dress, waited to receive their guest in European attire but he was “in his shirtsleeves because of the heat” (*No Longer at Ease* 25). Later while addressing an acknowledgement speech “[H]e spoke ‘is’ and ‘was’ which appeared to be very unimpressive” (26).

Thus, a close exploration of the language used by him and his community reveals how profoundly Obi is alienated from the norms and beliefs of his community through contradictions and ambivalence. Such alienation is promoted by his inability to comprehend the depth of expectations of his community from him. The same inability also allures him to make an abortive venture to marry Clara, an *Osu* who stands between his Western education and Ibo culture.

As soon as he returns from England after four years he loses belief in his father's God. But at the same time he cherishes fondness for his mother's folk tales from Ibo culture. In the case of marrying Clara, "for him it was either Clara or nobody" (60). But, even ultimately he cannot dissociate himself from paternal ideology openly. He also demonstrates audacity in challenging the Umuofia Union: "don't you dare interfere my affairs again, he tells the president of the Umuofia Union" (75). But his momentary and occasional consciousness of his 'self' reveals his narcissistic disposition which "reflects his individuality to see himself as a subject who has an autonomous life outside his imaginary existence and the unrealized ideals that mark his desires" (Gikandi 98). His association with colonialism can neither help him achieve acculturation into a world of Western civilization, nor let him embrace his Igbo culture, and thus he falls into the pit of contradictions that emerged out of a sense of dispossession. This ambivalence has led him to a caricature of colonial ideology. At the same time, it prevents him from being conscious of his own culture. Obi's Western education and a subconscious bent of mind towards it lead him, like many other educated West Africans, to a dilemma which mars the harmony in life. In this connection, P. C. Lloyd has said, "...the educated West Africans discover a dilemma in the experience of their contact with the Western world" (276). Obi's dilemma becomes visible when he comes across his father's contradictory demand. He sends his son to England for modern education, and at the same time, he wants his son to be respectful to

the traditional Igbo culture even if it is branded as superstitious or barbaric by the Western epistemology.

Again, Obi's elitist attitude reminds us of the African graduates of the 1950s who, like typical mimic men, tended to alienate their individuality from the community. He has even formulated a "theory that the public service of Nigeria would remain corrupt until the old Africans at the top were replaced by young men from the universities..." (*No Longer at Ease* 31). He writes this paper to the Nigerian Students' Union in London. He even decides to marry an *Osu* ignoring the spirit of his community. Lloyd has said that European society is "an assembly of individuals" but it is based on the spirit of the group solidarity and community (280). African society is divided into ethnic groups and they cherish senses of ethnic hostilities. But, viewed from cultural perspective, it appears to be homogenous. In this connection, it can be asserted that, "... African society appears homogenous; ethnic differences are only minor; ethnic hostilities are the result of the divide and rule policies pursued by the colonial powers" (Lloyd 280). Similarly, it is worth mentioning that while Africa fought against the colonizers for liberty, it struggled as a singular force and a singular mass political party. African countries did not fight for their individual borders or political interest. Anti-colonial struggle was a continent-wide singular resistance against the colonial powers. This spirit of unity and singularity gradually converged Africa and led to freedom.



Hence, Obi's boldness in deciding to marry an *Osu* seems to be an ignorant denial of the Pan African ideology and symbiotic African society. In fact, his protest against his community spirit can be interpreted as a kind of conflict of his mind between the Western knowledge and the African knowledge. African knowledge is based on its rich cultural tradition and the denial of it is a taboo for a native. Prejudices, pantheistic conception of God, belief in the power of Evil forest, the sacred python and the supreme God Chukwu have produced conflict with the monotheistic Christianity of the Western world. On the other hand, comparatively liberal Western thought and knowledge which has got an embodiment in Obi has been placed in an entangling position with the local culture and religion by Achebe in *No Longer at Ease*. Juxtaposition between the binary oppositions of knowledge has caused angst and anxieties which have shattered Obi's dream. Whatever Western knowledge he may gather, Obi, as an individual, is unable to stand against a community and its hegemony. Thus, Obi's conflict with his father and mother metaphorically interprets a clash between Western knowledge and African knowledge, and he is helplessly pressed like his grandfather Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, who was a "failure to resist European colonization...and colonizer's ability to distort the history of the people it conquered" (Iqbal 98). Obi's failure mostly results in a curiosity and inclination to Western knowledge and patterns of life and a vain wrestling with the Westernization of the local culture.

True, Obi embodies the dilemma of the young and educated colonial generation. Thus, “[T]he whole novel is built up out of the profound gulf that exists between Obi’s Western education and its practical relevance to his individual place in the world” (Innes 15). He is a divided ‘self’ and his awareness appears to be a kind of “dissociation between intellectual and moral poles...” (Innes16). His love for an *Osu* girl is challenged by his submission to his father’s prohibition and mother’s refusal of his offer for consent. This double-edged issue splits up his mental framework, and turns his utopia upside down. Thus, *No Longer at Ease* faithfully depicts that its protagonist:

Obi is a man torn between two sets of values. The result is his spiritual disintegration. *No Longer at Ease* is in this sense a comment on the modern situation in Nigeria (and even in Africa): on the plight of the Westernized elite as well as on the human problems posed by the fast tempo of social change which causes a parallel instability in the spiritual framework...” (Innes 16)

Actually, Obi is caught between the traditional village world of his childhood and the modern Western world of his European education and disillusioned by his imagination that he has become a progressive individual after receiving Western education in the face of his native cultural values. But, he fails to diagnose the conflict in his psyche which is divided between Europeanism and Africanism. In this regard, it is found

that *No Longer at Ease* is mostly a psycho-socio-political novel dramatizing the predicament of a generation caught in the angst and anxieties of pre-independence Nigeria.

In the same vein, *A Man of the People* has got a close connection with the period of its composition, and “at the time Achebe was writing *A Man of the People*, Nigeria was literally falling apart” (Maier XIV). After the political independence in 1960, Nigeria fell into the crisis of self-leadership. Corruption took every vein of the nation in its grip. Contractors became the fortune-makers and ten percenters decided whether the country would have any infrastructural development or not. Deep control of the Imperial power upon the post-independence government and policy of the state led the country to an inevitable military coup. In 1960, some ambitious Igbo military officers attempted a coup claiming the lives of several influential leaders and activists of various political parties. Though the coup collapsed, Army took up power. Consequently, the country was led to further crisis, followed by a civil war claiming Biafra to be a free state. Different ethnic groups and regions which had autonomous government felt the dire need of constitutional guideline. But, the army failed to soothe the demand of the local ethnic groups. As a result, inter-tribal clash began and it is still going on in Nigeria. Theft, robbery of the state wealth, abnormally swollen bank balance of the local political leaders in the European banks, and deliberate dealings with the contractors made Nigeria a country with the “government

of the contractors, by the contractors, for the contractors” (Maier XIII). Angst and anxiety regarding the uncertain and insecure economic, political and social future brought about disillusion among the post-independence generation of people of Nigeria. In fact, *A Man of the People* has exposed the post-colonial Africa to the rest of the world and Achebe is obviously credited with feeling the pulse of the time and post-independence realities of Nigeria accurately.

After independence in 1960, Nigeria experienced a reversal of expectation. Achebe’s dream is also shattered when he finds that the white man is still in his chair in each sector, surrounded by some ‘black stooges’ who work for implementing his agenda only in exchange of commission. Achebe further finds how, for making political control and economic gain complete, the colonizers, even after independence, are trying “to control the cultural environment: education, religion, language, literature, songs, forms of dances, every form of expression, hoping in way to control a people’s values and ultimately their world outlook, their image and definition of self” (Wa Thiong’o 12). True, values give shape to the identity of a people and the colonizers, even in post-colonial period, continue their enterprises to corrupt the values of the natives. To his utter surprise, Achebe discovers that post-independence Nigeria becomes a home of political failure. The politicians, who are to take the nations ahead, turn into contractors after independence and start business with the former colonizers. Hence, he

apprehends the rise of a new force against their evils and it is inevitably a military coup that takes place only two days before the publication of *A Man of the People*. Truly, Achebe's apprehension and prediction are based on the perception that post-independence Nigeria's political machine has become so dysfunctional that a military coup is inevitable.

If an intensive study is made then it reveals that *A Man of the People* demonstrates conflict between Nanga and his former pupil Odili, a cynical young university graduate and school teacher. He narrates, as an omniscient narrator, the corruption of the country's government as the cause of his conflict with his former school teacher, now an influential minister, Mr. Nanga. Strangely enough, their conflict emanates from their personal level. Odili's girl-friend is seduced by Nanga and, hence, fury and vindication has swept him to stand on the way of Nanga, a minister of culture. Owing to unlimited corruption, moral degeneration and distortion of historical realities of the country, people have become reluctant at the activities of the local politicians. Hence, the countrymen cannot but welcome the military coup in the midst of their angst and anxieties. Failure of leadership inevitably leads Nigeria to repeated military coups in post-colonial Nigeria. Thus, the novel depicts that both the educated generation and the politicians, who claim to be the members of the society, lack the capability to form a homogenous group, and so, they lack the power to act as a single people or to see their country as a nation. This conflict between the elite

and the common masses creates anxiety in post-colonial Nigeria and tends to halt the modernizing process of the country. Achebe, a writer with sharp insights into the problems and dilemmas of the new political order in post-colonial Nigeria, has offered *A Man of the people* as an “[I]ndictment of African society after independence” (Gakandi 85).

*Anthills of the Savannah* also demonstrates “the way narrative recreates history and memory, and how this recreation gives meaning to moments of crisis and then transcends them to point out new vistas for future...” (Gikandi 126). This is the last novel which Achebe has published almost twenty years after the publication of his fourth novel, *A Man of the People*. By this time Nigeria’s politics has unfolded:

...through several military coups, a civil war, and endemic corruption- centres not so much on historical events and those who perform in the theatre of postcolonial politics, bent on the form which the story of the nation takes and the interpretative problems its polis presents for these seeking concrete meanings to some of the most turbulent events on the African scene. (Gikandi 125)

Achebe has assumed such a long hiatus to assimilate his experience of the political realities in Nigeria during the post-independence period. This novel is based on the firsthand experience that he gathered during his work as an ambassador of Biafra, an Igbo region, which fought for liberty in

1966. Consequently, an abortive civil war broke out, and thousands of people were killed during a span of thirty months.

In this novel Achebe has depicted the ‘pitfalls of national consciousness’, hypocrisy in ethos, political corruption and the identity crisis owing to the distortion of values in post-colonial situation. The most fatal drawback of post-colonial nationalist temperament is that it suffers from the sickness of mimicry. It also experiences the discursive constraints from the local elite class of people who intends to Europeanize themselves with all borrowed ornaments, such as, education, way of thinking, model of the government, culture and other spheres of the colonizers’ life. But in such a critical situation, a gradually emerging bourgeois section of people usually think themselves to be the agents of their local history. This desire works for their self-fashioning, and thus, a conflict between these two groups starts, and it lengthens the colonial unrest even in post-colonial period.

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe has depicted a corrosive political clash between Sam and Ikem, and it metaphorically marks that the “post-independence nations have been increasingly plagued by neo-colonial ills: economic disorders and social malaise, government corruption, state repression” (Boehmer 237). In this novel, Achebe has depicted the consequential crisis in post-colonial nation where the values of the colonizers remain influential in creating tension even after their formal departure. The incapacity of both Ikem and Chris to stand against Sam or

military power indicates the intellectual failure in post-colonial Nigeria. Throughout the novel Sam remains silent. He is addressed as 'His Excellency'. He does neither appear nor speak "except through reported speech" (Yousaf 93). He intends to use the press only as a tool in the person of Ikem. Sam has made a brotherhood with his two school mates Ikem and Chris, so that none of his near ones can betray or challenge his dictatorship. It characterizes the nepotistic model of government in post-independence Nigeria. Sam's venture of killing Ikem and Chris as they appear to be a threat to the absolute power of Sam indicates the probable chaos inside the civil government in post-independence Nigeria. Nepotism, fratricide, paranoia, suspicious and unequal competition for power among the political leaders invited frequent military coups in post-colonial Nigeria. Thus, *Anthills of the Savannah* presents Achebe's belief that when the ruling elites forget that the public remains conscious of the troubles with the country, there occurs a collapse or fall of the government.

In fact, *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* deal with the great irony that centres around the idea that the Nigerians are a single nation because even after its political independence, "Nigeria fails to homogenize into one entity" (Okechukwu 104). Achebe realizes well that because of tribal or sectional allegiances, Nigerian nationalism turns into 'regionalist version of anti-colonialism' which impedes the Nigerians to be united in a single economic and constitutional system. As a result, in both



of these novels it is found that the mass people do not bother much about their political leaders' manipulation of power or even the military dictatorship goes unattended by the countrymen.

If viewed from the historical, colonial and post-colonial perspectives, along with Achebe's trilogy two other novels of Achebe are loaded with a historicist approach to the social, political and psychic portrayal of the 'human subject'. In the colonial condition, the natives become estranged from indigeneity and fall into acute consciousness of dispossession and displacement. Dislocation of cultural identity during colonial regime leads the natives to uncertainty and hopelessness. Again, in the post-colonial period, consciousness of the relocation of cultural identity, economic base, superstructure and historical enlightenment cast the natives against the left-out colonial discourse of the departed colonizers. Thus, the encounter between these two binary forces gives rise to discontent, restlessness and finally, corruption. Achebe's faithful exploration of all these states of history and the minds of the Nigerians find expression in his trilogy.

Hence, the study of his trilogy is the study of the mind and culture of Nigeria from inside. Achebe has brought about a kind of interpenetration between cultural study and literary study in his novels. In this connection, David Lloyd asserts, "Cultural study represents the fulfillment rather than the displacement of literary study, a critical return to its fundamentals rather than its demise" (281). So, Achebe's attempt of juxtaposing literature with

culture has elevated African novels to the level in which they have offered Afrocentrism which aptly challenges Eurocentrism, and by handling social and political issues of contemporary Africa, he has made his literary writings completely relevant to the socio-cultural context of the time. Angst and anxieties, emerging from the conflicting position of these two antagonistic isms, that is, Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism, have occupied the canvass of Achebe's novels which accommodate all the possibilities for social changes in Nigeria.

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## 4

### **Achebe's Exploration of the Process of 'Othering' by the Colonizers: A Thematic Consideration of His Writings**

Achebe's writings, including five novels, go on to expound political issues of contemporary Nigeria. Besides novels, many of his essays, poems, short stories, interviews and critiques have made a very composite analysis of the social, political, cultural and ethnological situations of his country. His five novels are so close to contemporary Nigerian situations that they have got the status of national novels, "preoccupied with the issue of how to create a genuine national and moral order out of the anarchy of inward-looking ethnic orders and predatory legacy of colonialism" (Siddiq 42). In many of his essays and interviews, Achebe has clarified that African writing must address social, political and cultural problems. His five novels are called African chronicle which was never ventured before by any of his predecessors or even contemporaries. A good number of his essays, articles, poetry, short stories and child stories have revealed his prolific and multidimensional genius in highlighting Afrocentricity. His essays demonstrate how historically conscious he is regarding his meticulous analysis of the minds and attitudes of both the colonizers and the natives. He is truly the man who challenges the distorted portrayal of Africa by the casual visitors from Europe. He has criticized Conrad who "...saw and

condemned the evil of imperial exploitation but was strangely unaware of the racism on which it sharpened its iron tooth” (“An Image of Africa” 19).

Achebe has decried Conrad as a “bloody racist”, and showed from many angles how Conrad dehumanizes the Africans with the eyes of a casual visitor. A superficial study of *Heart of Darkness* reveals that it is a critique of imperialism. If deeply analyzed from critical perspective, it is found that Conrad deliberately does not allow the natives to speak. His white narrator, Marlow keeps speaking and projecting a distorted image of Africa. Conrad has associated Africa with darkness and dumbness. He does not seem to believe in the liberty of the natives. Marlow, the narrator, tells the story and the readers are to know Africa through his narrative and this narrator keeps speaking but never lets the natives speak. Achebe felt appalled by reading Joyce Cary’s *Mister Johnson* also which “seeks to portray the African in terms of a savage” (Reddy 25). Being provoked by both these European writers’ distortion of African image, Achebe resolves to rectify the savage image of the Africans as placed in European writings.

In his student life, Achebe could discover the double standards of the colonial writers regarding their handling of the question of individuality and identity of the natives. This discovery brought about a conscious realization of his responsibility towards his nation and history. He was also well aware of his ambivalence. But his historical consciousness has impelled him to discover the cause of his own ambivalence. In his essay “Named for



Victoria, Queen of England”, Achebe has minutely analyzed his position in the ‘crossroads of cultures’. His father’s conversion into an evangelist had a profound impact on his mind. On the one hand, he had to go to the church on Sunday, and on the other hand, he had a deep fascination for heathenism. But, he never forgot the task of safeguarding his national and cultural identity, even living in the juncture of two different cultures. In his words:

On one arm of the cross we sang hymns and read the Bible night and day. On the other my father’s brother and his family, blinded by heathenism, offered food to idols. ...If any one likes to believe that I was torn by spiritual agonies or stretched on the rack of my ambivalence, he certainly may suit himself. (“Hopes and Impediment” 35)

Achebe has infused this ambivalence into the characters of his trilogy. But, his account of the African realities is not subjective. It is thoroughly objective and realistic in respect of Achebe’s faithfulness to the history of Nigeria as well as Africa. His Okonkwo, Ezeulu and Obi can aptly echo the angst and anxieties of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. In “Hopes and Impediments” he has said how he felt an irresistible urge to become a writer. Actually, after the Second World War, he could see how mental revolution embraced the Africans. As a part of it, he “decided that the story we had to tell could not be told for us by anyone else no matter how gifted or well intoned” (Achebe 38). He felt this urge to save the image

of Africa from the distortion deliberately done by the Europeans. The anxiety that he felt living on the crossroads of cultures inspired him to project an objective and true image of Africa from inside.

This intense urge is more vigorously presented in his essay “The Novelist as Teacher” where Achebe affirms that, “...no thinking African can escape the pain of the wound in our soul” (44). The task of ‘re-education’ and ‘regeneration’ always espouses a writer to dive into the unconscious of a people and offer his discoveries with a framework of art to his readers. A writer must not play the role of a mimic man shouldering the white man’s burden and making an ‘ironic compromise’ for producing a marginalized vision of the people. To him, a palm tree is a fit subject of his writing. He must not be at the fringe but at the middle of his community and avoid producing a discourse of fantasizing Africa. He even intends to mend the identification of the natives. In this connection, Culler has referred to Freud, and said, “...identification is a psychological process in which the subject assimilates an aspect of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, according to the model that the other provides” (116). In this regard, Achebe’s mission is to project his countrymen with Africanism, not with borrowed imagery. Ancient Africans were not primitives. The Europeans such as, the British, the Portuguese and the French found that:

Africa was peopled not primarily by hundred gatherers, as was the case in the Americans and Australians, but by farmers.

Archeological evidence later showed that almost all the Africans had shifted from hunting-gathering to farming by the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. These farmers were comparatively advanced, using iron tools. They were well organized into kingdoms and communities, protected by formidable armies of spear-and bow-wielding warrior. (Harmon 61)

In this connection, Achebe takes up the responsibility on himself to teach the readers, at least, the Africans that "...their past-with all its imperfections-was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them" ("The Novelist as Teacher" 45). His mind is always busy in providing his readers with some messages and thus intends to correct his readers' perception of Africa. He intends to rest his faith upon the community of audience. In his words:

...we can see in the horizon the beginnings of a new relationship between artist and community which will not flourish like the mango-trick in the twinkling of an eye but will rather, in the hard and bitter manner of David Diop's young tree, grow patiently and obstinately to the ultimate victory of liberty and fruition. ("The Writer and His Community" 61).

As a prophetic writer, despite his consciousness of internal segregation, Achebe seems to maintain a belief that the Africans with all their heritage and ideological elements, culture, nature and conditions and even the dichotomous formation of identities will survive as an individual nation.

The stimulus for their survival lies in their age-old traditional customs and beliefs. Achebe takes up the task of bringing out this stimulus and revise the history of Nigeria as well as Africa.

True, a responsible writer usually acquaints his readers with the prevailing problems of his nation. He feels what a nation state badly needs. Rapid population growth, growing urbanization, weak agricultural output and the continuing food crisis, inequality of women, and all ravaging effects of the corrosive AIDS crisis contributed to the deteriorating and intensifying economic problems of not only Nigeria but also the whole continent of Africa. However, “[O]ftentimes, the abilities of people to articulate their demands are not matched by the capacities of governments to provide security and public services” (J. Umeh 1). Discrepancy between expectation and reality causes resentment, and it is evident in post-colonial Nigeria. In post-colonial Nigeria, corruption germinates, and frequent military coups become inevitable. But, one of the stark realities of post-colonial Nigeria is that the natives need democracy. Long suppression teaches the natives. Long suppression gives rise to militancy also which is a perverted form of an urge of self-expression. Elleke Boehmer, in this connection, asserts, “This demand of utterance, for self-representation and self-respect, was spoken with steadily increasing urgency, in some cases with militancy across three and more decades after 1945” (173). Even in the post-colonial Nigeria, it is very often found that the local rulers continue the legacy of the

colonizers and try to suppress the natives by ‘Othering’, stereotyping, and hybridizing. When the natives suspect this process of ‘Othering’ and stereotyping on the part of the rulers, they show resistance. Sometimes owing to historical realities, putting up resistance assumes the form of military coup and even militancy. Post-colonial Nigeria has gone through such bitter experiences of the consequences of ‘Othering’ and stereotyping.

In 1950, a pressing question embraced the blacks, “What does the black man want?” In the words of Frantz Fanon, ‘self-determining powers’ took the black in their sweep and fought against ‘paranoia, feeling of inferiority’ which was imposed upon them by the colonizers. This feeling naturally chased the Nigerians, too. Consequently, in 1952, Nigeria was allowed self-rule. But it was only eyewash to deceive the natives, and the nucleus of authority and administration was in the grip of the white men, surrounded by some clownish black sycophants. Even after independence in 1960, Nigeria remained a prey to the European merchants. Face remained as it was during the colonial period, but the mask changed. Hence, resentment got intensified among the natives. They realized that “[T]he colonial world is a world divided into compartments. It is probably unnecessary to recall the existence of native quarters, of schools for natives and schools for Europeans...” (Fanon 29). The feeling of compartmentalization inspired the natives in different countries of Africa, including Nigeria, to show their reaction towards domestic exploitation.

Fanon, a leading anti-colonial thinker, “called for entire structure of colonial society to be changed ‘from the bottom up’, violently. To decolonize thoroughly meant that the indigenous be forcibly substituted for the alien, in literature as in life” (Boehmer 175). He Juxtaposed political struggle against colonialism with social consciousness in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967). Development of indigenous cultural consciousness is the gateway to the mobilization of the enduring strengths and insights of their own communities. In this connection, the native writers can play a very potential role by using their pens against the guns of the colonizers for raising consciousness among the people. To illustrate, Chinua Achebe is not an exception. His writings are truly throbbing in feelings of nationalism, patriotism and historical consciousness. He has successfully harnessed the power of an ethnographer to look into his society’s response to the exigencies of its encounter with the European colonial enterprises. Achebe, in his various essays and interviews, ventures to set the records right about the Igbo people, their culture and their problems that have emerged out of the cultural crosscurrents. His writings stimulate the spirit of nationalism among his people by portraying the historical realities faithfully.

It is widely believed that literature could be a moving spirit in the nationalist struggle against colonial domination. Wole Soyinka, Aime Cesaire, Senghor, Damas and Chinua Achebe embraced this belief. Achebe, like Ngugi, believed that a pen could substantially do the work of a gun.

The blow that Achebe dealt at Conrad in his essay “An Image of Africa” is more powerful than a hand grenade. On the whole, Achebe’s writing is a mortar shell on the audacity of the European colonizers who distorted the identity of African culture and language reducing them to the level of barbarism.

An intensive exploration of Achebe’s essays, interviews, stories and poetry reveals his vigorous attempt for Africanizing the identity of the natives. Like many other post-colonial writers, Achebe “concentrated on developing a symbolic vocabulary that was recognizably indigenous or at least Other to European representation - and yet at the same time intelligible within a global grammar of post-war politics” (Boehmer 179). Like many of his contemporary Nigerian writers, for example, Elechi Amadi, Flora Nwapa, Nkem Nwakwo, Onuora Nzekwu, Achebe has told the stories of Igbo family and “compound life which not only championed traditional ways but figured communal and – by implication - national togetherness from within using symbols of recognizably local derivation” (Boehmer 179). He is well aware of diverse people of Nigeria, and hence, he intends that there must be a singular spirit regarding the spirit of nationalism the lack of which brings a fatal blow to the history and identity of the natives. In this respect, he does not hesitate to point out the flaws of traditional customs which retarded the formation of the spirit of nationalism among the natives. One of the fatal drawbacks that hinder the growth of national spirit is the

member of languages, rituals, gods and beliefs among the Igbos. Every distinct clan has its individual language and god. Very often they involve themselves in corrosive clash on the issues of gods and rituals. This internal diversity and faction quite frequently disintegrates the locals.

In his famous essay, “Language and the Destiny of Man”, Achebe advocates in favour of native language. To him, language lies at the root of the life-force of civilization. A fair command over people requires a fair command over their language. Potency of words contributes to the determinism of a leader. Achebe quotes Igwe and Green in his essay, “Language and the Destiny of Man”, and says, “a speaker who could use language effectively and had a good command of idioms and proverbs was respected by his fellows and was often a leader in his community” (130). Like George Eliot, Achebe believes “that language can be used not only for expressing thought but for counseling thought or even preventing thought” (“Language and the Destiny of Man” 133). Language is malignantly abused by the colonizers to abuse the cultural indigeneity of the natives. Debasement of language degenerates the nation which speaks that language because it incarnates the nation’s material and mental worlds. So, when the natives realize that the colonizers impose their language and culture upon them with a deliberate intention of evacuating them of their identity, there emerges a vehement and strong counter-discourse to combat with the colonizers’ epistemology. This combat is also geared up when the natives



feel the colonial angst and anxieties falling into ambivalence, created by the juncture of differences.

In many parts of the world, post-colonial writers proved determination to “have something of their own making, fired by their own imagination” (Boehmer 181). As colonization vehemently attempts to cause psychological dissonance and alienation of the natives, post-colonial writers make effective attempts to bring the natives out of ambivalence and try to settle their minds on the firm ground of cultural identity. Accordingly, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o criticizes the faulty English department of Nairobi University which has placed the study of English language and literature at the centre and native language and literature in the margin. He rather believes that native art, culture and literature should be in the centre and the language and literature of the colonizers should be at the margin. Also, in his essay, “Novelist As Teacher” Achebe advocates pertinently that the duty of a novelist is to teach his readers about struggles, impulses, cultural features, language and many other aspects of the hearts of the colonized. Thus, Achebe has declared to repudiate the borrowed European vision of the world that mars and even tends to eliminate the values of local culture and heritage.

In fact, his trilogy along with his essays and interviews has produced African chronicles and his “chronicles of Niger delta just before and at the time of colonial invasion also present a view-from-within of his people’s

past” (Boehmer 187). So, a close reading of Achebe’s writings exhibits how meticulously he encapsulates the salient aspects of Igbo identity, in particular, the apparently fatal propensity for single-minded resistance and endurance. In all his writings, Achebe advocates that identity of a community is concretized by a people’s consciousness of its history and tradition. Language, in this connection, is a very powerful phenomenon. Regarding the use of English language by the African writers, Achebe has said that English can carry the weight of African experience and creativity and in the country with several hundred languages of several hundred tribes English can serve as a national language. Also, the Africans can write back to the colonizers by using English. According to him, the use of English by an African writer does not mark his spiritual sterility. It rather helps him reach the whole world with his past, present and future.

Actually, Achebe presents himself as subject of his own past. In this connection, one thing which is mentionable is that Achebe has used the language of the colonizers to counter the colonizers’ distorted perception of Africa. His dexterity lies in the fact that he has used English language in Igbo diction and knitted it with a good number of local idioms, proverbs and words. It is apparent when the colonizers approached the natives to impose their hegemony upon them they looked for the texts of the natives and set up intimacy with local specialists, in particular, linguists, scribes, spiritual leaders, preachers and interpreters. Their only aim was to

legitimate their administration. In fact, texts contain the essence of ideology, politics, culture, economy, and hegemony of the community of a land. If it can be enveloped with the dominance and power, the psyche of the natives can easily be enslaved.

But, for example, it is usually found that exercise of power gives rise to resistance. Caliban, in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, was taught the language of Prospero, the colonizer and his benefit was that he could curse Prospero in his language. Like many postcolonial writers, Achebe has chosen the language of the colonizers but used his own idioms and symbols and his own Igbo syntax and produced a seminal discourse against the monumental histories of the colonizers. True, he writes back and intellectually fights back the colonizers. Texts of the colonizers masked the sufferings of the colonized. Reading of Achebe's texts is a revelation of the metaphor of the colonial situation. For example, the study of *No Longer at Ease* reveals "the failure of Okonkwo's English educated grandson to reconcile the seemingly contradictory forces that have determined his identity" (Thiem 5). Actually, Achebe offers a protest against the Europeans who have depicted the pre-colonial period as a black episode, devoid of any significant achievement. Besides, Achebe in all his writings has depicted how the Africans are struggling to keep their identity intact in the face of colonial aggression.

In this connection, it may be said that identity develops from self-realization. It is a universal human tendency to identify oneself. Identity develops through a process in which a man conforms to the indigenous community through the internalization of beliefs, values and norms of his culture. This internalization process goes on out of conscious knowledge of the individuals. Awareness of culture works at varied levels in varied individuals. But, cultural awareness works in different degrees of different people. This identity-consciousness inspires him to vomit out what he usually absorbs under the colonial impact. In this connection, Lustig and Jolene Koester writes:

Young children, for instance, typically lack an awareness of cultural differences and the characteristics that differentiate one culture from another. Teen-agers and adults may not want to categorize themselves as belonging to any particular culture. Some people may not have explored the meanings and consequences of their cultural membership but may simply have accepted preconceived ideas about it that were obtained from parents, their community. (4)

Such a liberal attitude to other cultural streams is appreciable as it paves the ground of interaction. Again, at the same time, it leads the individual to hybridity or intersection of cultures. Consequently, there emerges an acute crisis owing to the loss of cultural originality and leads a person to angst and anxieties. Achebe, like an anthropologist, has discovered it in *Obi* of

*No Longer at Ease* who takes resort to corruption after being a victim of ambivalence that emerged from a juncture between his native culture and the European culture. But, Achebe intends to unmask Joyce Cary and Hegel's misinterpretation of Africa. A typical colonizer believes that servitude lies in the nature of the Africans, and Joyce Carey in his *Mister Johnson* leaves no stone unturned to establish this biased perception of the European colonizers. Hegel has associated Africa with a dark mantle of night. But, Achebe's trilogy and other writings are at an endless battle to uncover African identity. He has criticized those travelers and traders who watch Africa only through windows or try to comprehend the spirit of Africa through myths and stories. He leaves no stone unturned in criticizing the so-called intellectuals who are reluctant to explore books and other sources of knowledge. In his essay, "What Do African Intellectuals Read?", Achebe has criticized the so-called African intellectuals who are indifferent to studies and books. He believes that the intellectuals should know the Africans first with a view to knowing the Europeans and Americans. In this essay, Achebe writes, "African intellectual will become more generally ignorant of Europeans and Americans even as these are today ignorant of Africans" (54). Here, Achebe invites the natives to develop a counter discourse against the European and American venture of misinterpreting Africa through a laborious process of gaining the knowledge of historical realities.

Blind and uncritical approach to European cultural viewpoint creates an oligarchic cultural trend which monopolizes the native resources. Sometimes, it is found that a section of artists of a society upholds and extols the foreign and imported viewpoint, and culture falls into two categories- aristocratic and common. Difference between these two categories puzzles the natives, and leads them to stagnation of culture. Achebe has criticized the African writers who consider Europe and the West as the whole world. In his famous essay "Africa and her Writers" Achebe has said, "In talking about the world here we really mean Europe and the West. But, we have all got into the habit of regarding that slice of the globe as the whole thing. That an African writer can so easily slip into this error is a tribute to its hold upon the contemporary imagination" (32). This criticism shows that Achebe is very conscious of the Africans' ignorance of the causes of cultural stagnation. The whole concentration on Europe and America deters the Africans from embracing a total world-view which is manipulated by the colonizers as a vulnerability of the natives.

Very often, slavish adherence to European and the Western culture and literature acts as a block to the flourishing of local culture and literature. Only positive awareness of the self can pave the concrete ground for the natives. But, according to Achebe, an African writer cannot declare that he belongs to Africa and he interprets the soul of the whole universe. Achebe

has also successfully diagnosed the problem of anxiety in the African writers. In his essay, “Africa and Her Writers”, he writes:

I know the source of our problem, of course, anxiety. Africa has had such a fate in the world that the very adjective African can still call up hideous fears of rejection. Better then to cut all links with this homeland, this liability, and become in one giant leap the universal man. Indeed, I understand the *anxiety*. But running away from myself seems to me a very inadequate way of dealing with an anxiety. And if writers should opt for such escapism, who is to meet the challenge? (36) (emphasis mine)

Achebe finds the source of this anxiety of the African writers in their incapacity of becoming African in true sense. Their selves divided between the native and the European cultures has led them to ambivalence. If viewed from Hegelian perspective, formation of an author’s position is not an alienated incident. Hegelian organicism promotes the concept that no aspect of life can be evaluated in isolation. An author’s divided self is the reality and every reality is equivalent to rationality. In the words of Hegel, “The real is the rational and the rational is the real” (Lavine 208). Again, Marxist conception of historical materialism considers human consciousness as a reality. Keeping it in mind if an account of colonialism in Nigeria is prepared, then it is found that Nigeria’s local ruling system, internal clash, looseness in mental unity, lack of development in patriotism

and nationhood served as 'bud' and 'blossom' which finally gave birth to the fruit of colonialism. Thus, the dialectic of colonialism in Nigeria, like all other parts of the world, was an organic growth and unity of all mental, cultural, geographical, economic, anthropological and religious aspects of the totality of the local thoughts and institutions. Also, colonialism, in time, served as a 'bud' and a 'blossom' which begot the fruit of self-consciousness, and it finally paved the way for the Nigerians for self-government and nationhood.

But, angst and anxieties emerge while the rulers look upon themselves to be masters of the ruled. Such a disposition with the colonial rulers results in "...contradictions and limitations which are the seeds of its own destruction" (Lavine 221). The colonial masters tend to reduce the natives to a thing and make them work for their material benefit. Hence, automatically they grow dependent on the service of the natives. While working for the colonial masters, the natives gradually develop their skill in their performance and it works in favour of them. One thing which may be considered as the fatal limitation of the colonial rulers is that they depend on the natives for recognition as masters or rulers. Rulers are not rulers unless and until the ruled gives them acknowledgement. But, "[H]ow long will the slave continue to acknowledge the 'Other' as his master?" (222). The master-slave chapter in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* exhibits that the slaves or the subordinates gradually develop a sense of possession



over what they produce, and in time they are no more ready to continue their acknowledgement to their masters as masters. Whatever a colonized individual performs is the means of his existence. Hence, he tends to become independent through his work. On the other hand, the colonial master remains dependent at least for acknowledgement. So, when the colonized people decline to exert recognition to the colonial masters and when they become conscious of their own nature and independence, angst and anxiety take their form in the shape of a resisting force. In this connection, a close reading of *Things Fall Apart* demonstrates that Okonkwo's mind coincides with the same disposition of declining acknowledgement to the colonial rulers. His anger and resentment against the missionary took their shape from his sense of independent self. The titles that he has achieved by dint of his feats inspire him to conceive that he deserves an independent identity. This temperament is quite antithetical to the demand of the acknowledgement of the colonial masters.

Hence, a clash began between Okonkwo and the colonial missionary. Okonkwo's relation with the missionaries, from Hegelian point of view, can be metaphorically termed as 'Self-Other' relationship which "...involved mutual dependency and agency on both sides; it also involved a struggle to the death" (Newell 36). As this relationship is formed by a staunch demand for mutual recognition, it ends in power struggle, because both the sides, in time, do not continue giving mutual recognition, and thus "the relationship

between self and 'Other' was one of mutual recognition, mutual dependence and, ultimately, annihilation" (Newell 136). The tendency of annihilation develops when the desire for mastery works and truly "[M]astery is indeed the good which human beings desire..." (Lavine 225). This tendency makes the colonizers produce a colonial discourse which casts a corrosive impact upon the cultural identity of the natives. In creating a malformation of African culture, colonial discourse always worked as a potential force, even in its absence, in post-colonial period. In this connection, Newell has referred to Stuart Hall, and according to Hall, "the 'absence' imposed by the colonial discourse continues to shadow African self-representations, binding the postcolonial self into a difficult relationship of 'Self' and 'Other' of speaking in the face of being spoken for" (Newell 86). Hall asserts the antithesis between Europe and Africa by saying that Europe always keeps speaking while Africa is always kept unspoken. This antithesis lies at the root of an antagonism between the colonizers and the colonized.

Furthermore, Hall maintains the belief that Africa is represented not by the Africans, but by "the ongoing presence of Europe as a powerful producer of identities, ideas and images" (Newell 86). But, this vanity of the colonizers has been challenged by Achebe through his publication of *Things Fall Apart*. Achebe feels that denial of African presences in European discourse

was the keynote of colonialist ideology. This realization helps him to see how the colonial narrative constructs the 'native' as 'Other', and how it tends to erase the presence of Africa from European dialectic. In response to European narrative's deliberate attempt of "the construction of the 'native' as Other and in the erasure of his own African presence, Achebe wrote *Things Fall Apart*" (Newell 87). European colonial strategy of erasing the identity of Africa gives birth to angst and anxieties which fuel Achebe's staunch feeling of nationality, and it impels him to bring about a synthesis between Africanism and colonial discourse.

Achebe realizes that the strategy of hybridization cannot be necessarily progressive or successful for a long time. Creating a stratification among the natives, the colonizers tend to exercise their hegemony but "[D]ivide and rule is an old colonial tactic deployed against anti-imperialist and nationalist struggle" (Kapoor 144). Besides, in course of time, the subaltern simultaneously stuns and transgresses the hegemony. For example, Achebe's *Arrow of God* has faithfully depicted how European colonialism brings about a cultural transformation through 'divide and rule' policy. An anthropological exploration of Achebe's *Arrow of God* discovers "the Igbo cultural dynamics with its varied rituals and orthodoxies" (Sinha 18). Like two other novels of his trilogy, *Arrow of God* is set against the European discourse, produced by the colonial texts like *Heart of Darkness* and *Mister Johnson*. Eurocentric epistemological view has politically misinterpreted

and mislocated the Africans and placed them in the margin or periphery. But, Achebe takes up a project to place Africa at the centre. Eurocentrism tends to produce African hybridity. Years of betrayal by the Western intellectuals contaminated the indigeneity of African culture. Eurocentric world-view always intended to discourage self-determination and led the natives to 'Otherness'. Colonialism and Eurocentrism go hand in hand. Both of them deliberately attempt to make a distinction between self and 'Other'. The colonizers try to place themselves at the centre and lead the colonized to the margin. Thus, they are placed in binary oppositions.

Actually, "self is characterized as all that is positive; a sense of actuality, significance and wholeness. 'Other', as its opposite, is negative, signifying nothingness, emptiness and lack, and therefore, outside the centre of identity and authority" (Winquist 357). Again, transformation is contrary to resistance. Indigeneity of cultural identity formulates resistance and fights back the spread of colonial enterprise. The natives derive a coercive resistance from "indigenous demands for self-determination" (Ashcroft 19). In this way, a cultural hybridity is produced and the more competent ideology, which in most cases belongs to the colonizers, ultimately wins the natives and they gradually turn into 'Others'. The process of 'Othering' starts with the colonizers' attempt of representing 'Self' through the humiliating tactics of the Empire. At the end of *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu's final predicament depicts how he is marginalized by Goodcountry. A

deliberate process of 'Othering', practiced by Winterbottom, a representative of the colonizers, leads him to the periphery of society and ultimately, he becomes alienated from his own clansmen.

Chinua Achebe, a prominent voice of Africa, writes to make the world know Africanness, and with further zeal, he "mobilizes Igbo history and culture to articulate the upheavals and dislocations of colonial and post-colonial existence" (Mathuray 46). When the colonial discourse leads to dislocate and misinterpret the local ideologies and dialectics, a counter resisting force becomes functional against it to demonstrate its competence and performance. But, it inevitably embraces defeat as it is already infected by internal clash. It weakens the resistance against the rise of a new discourse. In fact, political consensus and the spontaneous involvement of all the people act as a competent force against the colonial discourse. But, if the leader of the people becomes blind to his egotism, vanity and an extreme consciousness of his position, and forgets "that no man however great was greater than his people", then alienation overcomes him (231). When the leader fails to feel the pulse of the people, and when he does not speak in the language of the people, he is deserted by them. Then the people rush to an alternative and more powerful force which can aptly give them asylum up to their demand. Accordingly, Achebe, in *Arrow of God*, throws light on how the intense internal clash alienates the priest Ezeulu and how the natives gradually receive the process of turning into "Others" after the

advent of the external force and the failure of the internal leadership. In fact, failure of leadership accelerates 'Otherness'. Even "in the *Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe avers (1983; 1) that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (Okolo 80).

The process of 'Otherness' is invigorated by the internal corruption also. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe suggests that political crisis lies in the attitude of the people to the political climate in the country, and the "complacent attitude of the people to the coup, their mindless rejoicing at every change of government, makes coups attractive to plotters" (Okolo 80). Political progress is broken when the natives behave like 'Others' in their own country. True, natives turned into 'Others' when they tend to destabilize and connive at the repressive activities of the government. Ugly march for power among the local leaders frustrates the locals regarding their rights and expectations, and then they turn away their faces from the government. In such a situation of the political reluctance of the people, a second alternative force, which in most cases is the army, tends to snatch the power to rule through coups. Thus, *Anthills of the Savannah* appears to be an antidote to the ugly march of power, and it succinctly portrays how the power-game alienates the people from the power apparatuses in the neo-colonial situation.

In postcolonial theories, 'Other' is synonymous with 'subaltern', and the term refers to a group or a section of people kept outside the hegemonic

power-structure of a political, geographical, cultural and ideological location. 'Others' cannot represent a particular society politically and culturally. They are made so by the outsiders with a deliberate view to misrepresenting and mislocating their hegemony and history. And thus, they create an artificial vacuum which is filled up by the colonizers. In this course of action, the natives are forced to move towards the margin and the colonial masters occupy the centre. At times, conflict begins between margin and centre. Centre tends to subvert the margin and the margin struggles to regain its position in political hegemony. In this unique battle between centre and margin, Eurocentric thoughts and ideas produce a discursive dialectic in favour of the colonizers, and works restlessly to subvert and misinterpret the natives as 'Other'. Internal clash and differences, on the part of the natives, retard their victory. Again, colonial discourse is rooted in the denial of the identity of the 'Other'. Colonial hegemony tends to characterize the natives' complicity with colonialism. Cultural linguistic and political policies are manipulated with a view to forming a cultural diversion which creates ambivalence among the natives. Local ideologies and cultural traits are misinterpreted as erroneous, close to savagery and synonymous with darkness. The natives or colonial subjects are turned into 'Other' in contrast with the self-declared superiority of the outsiders. Religion of the natives is branded as prejudice, and thus, the religion of the missionaries turns into the gateway to power and pelf of the colonizers.

The process of 'Othering' is associated with the process of hybridizing. As hybridity interrogates national integration and cultural indigeneity, the colonizers take resort to the strategy of creating malformation and displacement of the collective consciousness of the colonized. In this connection, *Arrow of God* manifests the project of the colonizers to turn the natives into the 'Other'. This text depicts the 'crossroads of culture', and Achebe always advocates in favour of a compromise and the "*Arrow of God* is a critical story of such a compromise and understanding between the colonizers and the colonized and in weaving this story of transference of dominant aspects, Achebe shows the undercurrents of tensions and conflicts within the clan" (Sinha 20). Ezeulu, the priest of Ulu, at first does everything congenial to this compromise. He sends his son Uduche to the Christian missionaries so that he can receive Western education of the colonizers and consequently, become a part of the colonial power. He also maintains a friendly relationship with Winterbottom. He advises his son Uduche, "It was I who sent you to join those people because of my friendship to the white man, Wintabota. He asked me to send one of my children to learn the ways of his people and I agreed to send you. I did not send you so that you might leave your duty in my household" (13). Thus, Ezeulu's disposition demonstrates his aggressive individualistic trait which works against the interests of his own community.



But, Ezeulu, like Achebe, intends to appreciate the interaction of two different cultures, that is, the crossroads of cultures because it paves the way for knowledge of both the parties. True, amalgamation of different cultures causes hybridity which muddles the definition of culture of a particular nation. In a post-colonial world, cultural narratives rely upon cultural hybridity and one culture is defined in relation to another culture. But, it is also true that hybridity does not mean the loss of cultural originality because it is related to a nation's identity. Besides, an acute sense of the loss of cultural identity gives birth to anxiety in a nation. In this connection, in his essay "Named for Victoria, Queen of England", Achebe has exhorted the natives to be alert about the demolition of originality through close contact with the 'multiheaded spirits' of this interaction. But, he has also called this interaction lucky if the native succeeds in maintaining self-identity and can "return to his people with the boon of prophetic vision" ("Hopes and Impediments" 34). Here Achebe presents himself as an accommodative individual who is in favour of a mediation between two different cultures.

Achebe does not speak against colonial enterprise in Africa directly. He rather appreciates the role of colonialism in uniting the divergent natives by giving "a language with which they could talk together" ("Morning Yet on Creation Day" 57). Unlike the exponents of the Negritude Movement, he vehemently approves of the appropriation of the language of the colonizers.

Achebe demonstrates that it can help the natives to reassert and reconstruct their cultural worth. The mastery lies in Achebe's expert handling of English language in expressing Igbo proverbs and idioms. In fact, he has brought out the richness and treasure of Igbo culture in the language of the Europeans and presented them to the world. It is really a coercive enterprise of bringing about a juxtaposition between two different streams of epistemology. It may be interpreted as a prophetic vision of a globalized and cosmopolitan writer who honestly attempts to enrich himself with a liberal attitude while maintaining his own individual cultural identity. He did not refuse western education because "... colonial schools provided a modicum of Africans with sufficient modern education for them to serve as clerks, foremen and junior administrators, and many of them were late to play significant roles in the process of decolonization" (Yadav et al 385-86). Achebe could realize very well that for the formation of a counter-discourse, the natives must receive the education of the colonizers. Resistance or counter-discourse is produced through mimicry because the process of imitating and absorbing the knowledge of the colonizers gradually gives shape to the self-determination in the minds of the natives. In course of time, a counter-discourse fights back the colonial discourse. For example, previously Africa was branded as an oral continent, but now it is writing back even in the language of the colonizers. A handful of African writers, including Achebe, have produced a huge quantity of writing that can be aptly cast against the European discourse.

In response to the colonizers' values, ideologies, education and dialectic, Africans developed their own competence. Owing to the impact of mimicry, African writers became able to recuperate their oral traditions and establish their own dignity and richness. Hence, Achebe's accommodative attitude towards the colonizers' epistemology interprets his far and foresighted vision of a philosophic African. Achebe has demonstrated the contrast between orality and literacy in *Arrow of God* in the scene where Ugoye is telling a story to her two children sitting in close to a cooking place while Uduche is not listening to her; he is rather learning the vocabulary of the Europeans; doing school exercise. This contrast suggests an attempt of the natives to elevate themselves along with the authenticity of their own cultural dialectic to the level in which a counter-discourse can be formed against the European dialectic. Thus, Achebe portrays a process of coexistence of two different ideologies, and means to suggest that the hybridization of these two can enable the natives to develop their own identity on a concrete ground.

This attempt at juxtaposition, for instance, is found in the activity of the protagonist of *Arrow of God*. Ezeulu's decision here of sending his son Uduche to the Missionary school is appreciated by the white men. Even while going against the demand of his own clan, he gives a verdict in favour of the people of Okperi about the possession of a disputed piece of land. For this reason, he receives bitter criticism from his own people. But,

all the steps taken by him draw appreciation from the English colonizers. Captain Winterbottom is quite satisfied with Ezeulu. He intends to select him as a passive ruler on behalf of the British administration. Winterbottom's satisfaction with Ezeulu lies in his service for Okperi "Which welcomed missionaries and government while Umuaro, on the other hand, has remained backward" (38). Besides, Ezeulu's foresighted vision has drawn the attention of the colonial administrators. His brave attempt, despite his clan's vehement opposition, of sending his son to the missionary school, indicates how foresighted and accommodative he is. His farsighted observation has made him different from the other members of his clan. He finds an advent of change with the advent of colonialism and he intends to adopt the appropriation of change in the form of government and administration. Ezeulu's affinity with the colonizers is visible when, after a corrosive clash between Umuaro and Okperi, to please Winterbottom he gives the disputed land, which was the bone of contention, to the latter, and previously Ezeulu wanted to give it to Okperi.

Such an accommodative attitude of Ezeulu ironically causes a rift between himself and his clan. Further, the rift between Ezeulu and his clan is widened for his inertia and silence regarding his son Uduche's dishonor to the Royal python. The holy python is considered to be a blessing to the clan while, according to Goodcountry, it is nothing but a snake, disguised evil, which misguided Eve. Thus, Uduche learns from the church that a snake is

to be beaten to death. Accordingly, Uduche caught the python and confined it into a box so that it “would die for lack of air, and he would be responsible for its death without being guilty of killing it, which seemed to him a very happy compromise” (51). But, it escaped death. Such an act was a staunch humiliation to the customs and norms of the clan and the clansmen wanted Ezeulu to punish Uduche. His rival Ezidemili also wanted to know what Ezeulu did for this abomination. But, Ezeulu’s silence infuriated his clansmen. Ezeulu’s indifference to the complaints of his people, in a sense, may be termed as his liberal attitude to cultural hybridization. Such a liberal attitude is a kind of passivity which contributes to the creolization of culture, and emphasizes on the mixing of identities and creating hybridity of culture.

In this connection, it is worth mentioning that with the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, renaissance embraced the whole world. Discovery of the sea-route opened the horizon to undiscovered parts of the world. Consequently, no culture could maintain its indigeneity or originality because of the intrusion and intersection of different cultures, languages, music and dialectics. It was an inevitable impact of renaissance out of which colonialism emerged. Ezeulu’s liberal attitude towards the creolization paves the way for mutual enrichment of indigenous cultures, languages and music. But, his liberal attempt at embracing the process of creolization is questioned by his failure in bringing about unity among six

villages. Besides, his ultimate inability to sustain his community represents him as a masked figure, mysterious to his community and to himself. This duality has produced angst and anxieties both in him and in his community.

Achebe has produced some characters with similarly liberal disposition towards the white government. In *Arrow of God*, Unachukwu possesses the same disposition as Ezeulu. He is the first convert of Umuaro and is appointed a pastor's warden. Though he receives the missionary's religion, he always maintains a belief that a new religion should not trample on the former one. He warns Goodcountry against "putting Biblical inputs into the minds of the budding learners and tempting them to kill a python" (Sinha 26). Goodcountry instigates narrow nationalism and religious prejudice. As a hypocritical colonial representative, he believes in the effacement of the indigenous culture and domination of colonial culture and religion. He says:

"If we are Christians, we must be ready to die for the faith, he said, "You be ready to kill the python as the people of the rivers killed the iguana. You address the python as Father. It is nothing but a snake, the snake that deceived our first mother, Eve. If you are afraid to kill it, do not count yourself a Christian" (48).

Goodcountry's purpose behind such instigation is to create bitterness, clash and rift among the natives, and it would accelerate the preaching of a new religion. It is also a part of the 'divide and rule' policy of the colonizers. Hybridity of culture and religion fortifies the ruling policy of the colonizers

significantly. Hybridization inevitably evokes anomaly which disintegrates the natives and its benefit goes to the colonizers mostly.

In fact, hybridization of culture involves the interpenetration of two different identities keeping their individual distinction intact. It does not mean the effacement of one by another or the substitution of one by another. It is mutually additive and benevolent for both the parties. But, if it is substitutive it is subversive, especially for the colonized. In this connection, Ezeulu, in *Arrow of God*, thoroughly wants innovation, enrichment and addition of this culture. He also believes that adaptation and appropriation should be selective. He sends his son Uduche to the missionary school only to confirm his participation in the colonial administration, keeping his own authority intact. His curious mind makes him send his son to the white man's school. He wants to share the knowledge of the colonizers but he does not want to lose his own identity which is determined by his authority. While convincing Uduche about his decision of sending him to the missionary school, he says:

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. The world is like a Mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying *had we known* tomorrow. (47)

His reference to the 'mask dancing' interprets his apparent desire to fortify his authority with new knowledge and he believes that knowledge brings power. So, it is his desire to share the power of the colonizers. But, he never accepts anything that may weaken his own authority. Hence, when he is offered a position by Winterbottom he instantly declines and says to Clarke who conveys the offer, "Tell the white man that Ezeulu will not be anybody's chief, except Ulu" (176). Though Clarke is astonished at the restiveness Ezeulu and calls him 'mad' in Ezeulu sticks to his own decision and makes "a fool of the British Administration in public" (176).

Nonetheless, Ezeulu feels a suppressed temptation for the power of the white man. When he remains sitting in his *obi* or house, he hears the church-bell sound "GOME, GOME, GOME." Even his own festival of Pumpkin Leaves cannot sustain his attention. His mind rushes to the new religion of the white man. Confusion clouds over him:

He was not sure what to make of it. At first he had thought that since the white man had come with great power and conquest it was necessary that some people should learn the ways of his deity. That was why he had agreed to send his son, Oduche, to learn the new ritual. He also wanted him to learn the white man's wisdom; for Ezeulu knew from what he saw of Wintabota and the stories he heard about his people that the white man was very wise. (43)



But, ultimately he realizes that the white man's religion is like a leper whose contact may easily infect him. So, he immediately thinks of taking out his son away from the missionaries. But, again the oracles cross his mind. The oracles "prophesied that the white man had come to take over the land and rule? (44). So, he thought that it would be wise to send his one of the sons to them so that he might receive their lessons and share their knowledge. His suppressed ambition for becoming a part of the colonial administration apparently dissuades him to take action against Oduche for attempting to kill the Royal Python. In this way, tension which is often typical with the natives overpowers him and leads him to a critical juncture.

But, Ezeulu comes to consciousness when he truly understands the "divide and rule" policy of the colonizers. This policy aims at breaking down the existing power structure so that the smaller groups of power cannot link up with one another and fail to generate a resistance against the advent of the external forces. It also undermines the selves of the natives and sows the seed of confusion and clash among them. In *Arrow of God*, the first attempt of Winterbottom of giving back the land to Okperi can be regarded as a part of his success in the "divide and rule" policy of the colonial rulers. Such a decision of Winterbottom internalizes the hostility between two villages, Umuaro and Okperi. Winterbottom wants to implement this "divide and rule" policy by making Ezeulu one of the parts of the colonial administration. Ezeulu's wisdom lies in his proper and timely discretion of

refusing the offer of Winterbottom. He rather assumes imprisonment than accepts the proposal of becoming a part of colonial administration. Exercise of power usually gives birth to resistance and Ezeulu projects resistance to the colonial power in the form of his restiveness. His refusal of the offer of the white man demonstrates his rigorous as well as emotional loyalty to his indigenous cultural identity.

Further, in *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu's comparison of the earth with the mask dancing may be interpreted as his desire for secular knowledge. He intends to transcend the limit of individuality with secularism. By using the metaphor 'mask', he intends to hide the duality of his desire to maintain the binary of it to enjoy the supreme power in his own clan and to become a part of the colonial administration. Thus, a tension arises out of this duality, and consequently, Ezeulu becomes alienated from his clan. At the end, out of the sense of humiliation that he develops while remaining in the custody and the realization that none of his clansmen will come forward for his rescue, he decides to take revenge upon them. Hence, he declines to declare the Yam Festival. But, by this time, the villagers lose their confidence in him. Last of all, his son Obika's death confirms the people's belief that his god Ulu has left him. On the other hand, the rise of the new religion, Christianity, paves the easy way for the ambivalent locals out of the rigour of the haughty and restive priest. Thus:

The Christian harvest which took place a few days after Obika's death saw more people than even Goodcountry could have dreamed. In his extremity many a man sent his son with a yam or two to offer to the new religion and to bring back the promised immunity. Thereafter any yam harvested in the fields was harvested in the name of the son."(231)

In this way, the process of cultural transformation begins due to the failure of Ezeulu's leadership. His restive egoism makes him unable to understand the change which originates in his people's mind. The vacuity that he makes by his incompetence of estimating his people from the practical perspective is manipulated by the colonial authority. And this anomaly tempts the locals to be metamorphosed into the Western mode of life.

In this connection, the post-colonial critic Homi Bhabha's *Location of Culture* explains the psychology of the locals who assume the borrowed patterns of life for becoming mimic men, and he asserts, "the discourse of mimicry is constructed around *ambivalence*, its excess, its difference" (Bhabha 86). The locals falling into the grip of ambivalence, develops a disposition of repudiation of or 'disavowal' to the indigenous cultural identity. Consequently, a vacuity emerges and mimicry occupies that vacuum. This vacuity also escalates the proliferation of alienation which inevitably leads the locals or natives to the authoritative discourse of colonialism. The 'strategic failure' of local authority leads the natives to the

crossroads or intersection of culture. Thus, the natives take resort to the dialectic of the colonizers and turn into 'Others' through voluntary effacement of self-identity which leads to the failure of creating one self-image and self-esteem.

In the process of 'Othering', introduction of 'Indirect Rule' by the first Governor of the then Nigeria, Sir Frederick Lugard (1914-19) played a very significant role. With the expansion of colonial territory, the British rulers were faced with financial crisis because it was not possible to administer vast territories with inadequate money. Hence, "London's colonial policy at that period refused to spend much on administration" (Asad 127). Moreover, there was not sufficient manpower to be fit for running the administration in Nigeria. Lugard was well aware of these limitations, and because of the British imperial enterprises, introduced 'Indirect Rule'. According to this policy, the British administrators selected local chiefs who "should govern their people not as independent but as dependent rulers. In the terms subsequently used, their status was to be that of Wakils or Governors, exercising only such jurisdiction as might be conferred on them by law" (Asad 128). Lugard's 'Indirect Rule' was nothing but an exercise of autocratic rule of implementing his own administrative policy. If it is approached from a cultural point of view, it worked as an attempt of transforming the natives into 'Others' in a passive way. Lugard wanted to invigorate local institutions through which he intended radical changes in

the Nigerian society. For this reason, he emphasized on ensuring the participation of the local leaders in the colonial administration so that the locals might not demonstrate any visible resistance to the colonial rulers. His attempt was a mission of transforming the locals into mimic men who would be equipped with borrowed European knowledge.

But, absolute transformation into ‘Others’ or mimic men is difficult if the colonizers approach the natives with insufficient knowledge of their anthropology. In *Arrow of God*, Captain Winterbottom’s attempt of making Ezeulu a part of the colonial authority “expresses his alienation in it rather than the mastery and control which is manifested by his exercise of power” (Gikandi 61). Fifteen years ago, when he came to Africa, he felt depressed by the climate and food of Nigeria, but now he might have thought that he could understand Nigeria well. It is illusive because even today he can’t comprehend the soul of Africa. Owing to his inadequate knowledge of Africa, “[H]e would wonder what unspeakable rites went on in the forest at night, or was it the heart-beat of the African darkness?” (30-31). Darkness, a metaphor of ignorance of Winterbottom about Africa, demonstrates a fatal weakness of European discourse. This weakness lies in the white man’s ignorance of the strength of cultural identity of the natives. Africa is synonymous with unknowability which draws a curtain over the knowledge of anthropology of the Europeans about Africa. Like a typical colonial ruler, Winterbottom mistakenly underestimates the cultural values of the

natives. Embraced by superiority complex, he wrestles to put up his own culture against that of the natives. He succeeds, to a large extent, to convert some natives, but Ezeulu who holds and represents local cultural values remains unreachable because of his indigenous framework of adherence to “an African centered world view” which is fortified with the influence of Ulu (Hayes xxxvi).

Towards the end of *Arrow of God*, after Obika’s death, the clansmen began to think that Ulu had deserted his priest, and they also looked upon Ezeulu as “headstrong and ambitious priest” and believed “that no man however great was greater than his people: that no one ever won judgment against his clan” (232). Instead, Ezeulu did not change his mind. In course of time, many people have sent their sons to the new religion. Ezeulu remains as a concrete pillar, untouched and unchanged in the face of the colonial encounter. His firm determination to stick to Ulu and again his hidden desire to learn the knowledge of the colonizers exposes his desire for cultural transformation, and it has made him an ambiguous individual. He has become a universalized symbol of the colonized that fall victim to angst and anxieties by encountering the intersection of two opposite streams of cultural ideology. This intersection also creates tension or “nonspecific feeling endemic to human condition, particularly when it is unanchored by the certainties of religious faith...egoistic infinity of possibility, which does not tempt like a definite choice, but alarms and fascinates with its sweet

anxiety” (Goldwag 325). A kind of “existential anxiety” creates ambivalence in his mind, and it leads him to the inertia of decision-making. Besides, Ezeulu’s rigidity may be interpreted as a stagnancy of his thoughts. On the other hand, Christianity shows accommodative disposition. Thus, out of these conflicting ideologies, there emerges an antagonism which is one of the coercive factors contributing to the cultural transformation associated with angst and anxieties.

Like an anthropologist, Achebe demonstrates that the Africans have their own history and it must be written by them, not by the outsiders through concoctions and fabrications. It must not be thrust down into their throat. In many of his essays and lectures, he has demonstrated that the natives must represent themselves in their own way. He argues in favour of the indigeneity and the internal integrity of diverse cultures. He has criticized the European fabrication of the African history in many of his lectures and essays. But, he does not forget to show his gratitude for the contribution of the Europeans in the fields of technology, education, medical science, political narrative and many other spheres of everyday life. He has appreciated that the Igbo have a handful of major languages and approximately five hundred minor languages. Even the Igbo should have a lingua franca for the comprehensibility of interaction. He has taken English language as a means of writing but kept the syntax of Igbo language intact. Local idioms and proverbs have created an impression that his writing

faithfully portrays Africa from inside. It is his realization that for political, social and artistic necessity, English is an unavoidable necessity.

In this way, Achebe has made a bridge between two different cultural identities. Writing in English is not a spiritual subjugation as Ngugi, the Kenyan novelist, has observed in *Decolonizing the Mind*; it is rather a compromise for the sake of creolizing a vast and expanded horizon of comprehensible interaction and development. It is true that African literature is defined not by its language but by its subject-matter. Achebe has chosen his characters from inside Africa and placed them in confrontation with the globally developing and hybridizing cultural identities. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo cannot compromise with the foreign culture, as he belongs to the generation towards the beginning of the advent of colonialism. In *No Longer at Ease*, Obi, Okonkwo's grandchild, belonging to a far advanced generation, receives European education but falling into the juncture of tradition and progression, he is overpowered by 'existential anxiety' or angst. In the last novel of the trilogy *Arrow of God*, Achebe has produced a far more advanced generation which has a long history of colonial experience.

True, tradition brings people together, and again its internal clash can drive them apart. In *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu's attempt of sharing the knowledge of the Europeans is frequently challenged by the internal clash of his own community and tradition. The anxiety that he feels has estranged him from



his own people. At the same time he has seen that people are going to the church leaving their god and religion. But he remains silent. His silence is a kind of helplessness and surrender to the European culture. It implies a compromise between Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism. Again, a study of *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease* side by side reveals that there lies a compromise between the historicism of *Things Fall Apart* and the contemporaneity of *No Longer at Ease*. On the basis of the political and economic situations of post-independence Nigeria, *Arrow of God* presents the duality and ambivalence of the colonial Nigerians.

As such, Ezeulu, in contrast with Okonkwo, possesses a liberal attitude towards the colonial culture. Okonkwo's myopic attitude to cultural indigeneity turns him into an immutable resistance against the innovation of cultural tradition. His unresilient and constipated view of indigeneity destroys him. On the other hand, Ezeulu's inclination to colonial culture has placed him on the level of internationalism and diversity. Okonkwo thinks that colonialism destroys indigeneity. But, he does not seem to realize that without intersection of cultural situations there will prevail stagnancy. Cultural hybridization is a very common phenomenon in colonial and post-colonial societies. Rigidity, regarding the uniqueness of cultural identity, retards "the resilience and adaptability of colonial societies" (Ashcroft 2). Reality is that "...colonized cultures have often been so resilient and transformative that they have changed the character of imperial culture

itself” (Ashcroft 2). In the globalizing world, every culture belonging to the colonizers and the colonized has to face an entry of other voices, histories and experiences, and consequently, there is a dynamic transition and modification of culture. Ezeulu, in *Arrow of God*, is farther advanced than Okonkwo, the protagonist of *Things Fall Apart*, regarding his congenial ideas about the intersection of two different cultures. Ezeulu’s myopic view of culture and curious adherence to Western knowledge lead him to angst and anxieties.

Again, Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* is a document of the colonial angst and anxieties. Obi, the protagonist, falling into the juncture between European and local dialectics, turns into a split-up identity. His fascination for English literature and fondness for A. E. Houseman’s ‘Easter Hymn’ contribute to his disposition of alienation from his own folklore. The imagery of sleeping Christ in Houseman’s poem indicates Obi’s passivity. Obi’s fondness for Eliot also depicts his Prufrockian disposition. His indulgence in inactivity has made him an Eliotian hollow man, a man of shallow or superficial faith, both in religion and tradition. He cannot expose himself with a ‘bang’ but with a ‘whimper’. His passivity is marked in many situations, for example, his expression of disdain for Clara’s taste for films interprets his Prufrockian fastidiousness, indecision, ambivalence and inability to act promptly with challenge.

The title of the novel *No Longer at Ease* borrowed from Eliot's poem, "The Journey of the Magi" implies anxieties that pervade the mind of the protagonist. The anomie and plight of the mind of Obi metaphorically indicate the anxiety of the educated generation of colonial Africa- divided between 'Self' and 'Other'. At the end of the novel, Obi concludes that his love, ideals and dreams are illusion. In contrast with Eliot's magus, Obi feels alienated, though magus feels glad at last at the thought of another death. Obi's full name, Obiajulu, meaning "the mind at last at rest", becomes justified at last while losing Clara, his mother and his clan Obi's mind is now at rest (5). His passivity, in contrast with his grandfather Okonkwo's promptness of action, leads him to rest and inertia. Thus, the ending of the novel is completely contrasted with the tension implied by its title. Moreover, Obi turns into a traumatized man at the end of the novel, "etherized by the formalin of book..." (170). In Igbo language *Obi* means 'home'. Obi Okonkwo's digression from his local cultural values and his abortive attempt at understanding 'Nigerian national consciousness' may be metaphorically interpreted as an infiltration of colonial culture and a manipulation of domestication of 'Nigerian realities'.

While staying in England, Obi wrote about idealism in English. He also wrote a callow poem about Nigeria. But, in the end, his practice, while in public service, proves him to be a quite contrast to his superficial idealism. In the last chapter of *No Longer at Ease*, his attempt at hiding the bribe with

newspaper demonstrates his spiritual paralysis by challenging his ideals of honesty. Besides, his detachment from Igbo language shows "...a separation from the emotional basis of his own feelings and personality" (Rogers 177). Obi thinks that English does not have the emotional power that Igbo has. Even then he is reluctant to use Igbo because "[H]e could say any English word, no matter how dirty, but some Ibo words simply would not proceed from his mouth" (45). To him, the fads of Western culture "seemed to reflect Western power" (Huntington 58). So, his acceptance of English language in place of Igbo indicates his conscious view of the universal civilization which requires an emergence of a universal language. And the universal language is English. It is the only reliable means of communicating intellectually, and "the use of English in the way, however, is intercultural communication; it presupposes the existence of separate cultures" (Huntington 61). Obi's fatal weakness lies in his ignorance that "[I]t is a tool for communication, not a source of identity and community" (Huntington 61). This incapacity to understand the reality leads Obi to his ultimate failure.

A universal language must not be identified with a particular ethnic group, religion or ideology. It is a de-ethicized language which deserves the criteria of a universal language. After receiving Western education, Obi's inclination to become a different man equipped with Western language and education is responsible for losing a close contact with his parents. His

adaptation of European values alienates him from his own society. In his first meeting with Umuofia Union, he fails to demonstrate his scholarship that he has received in England. His final alienation is marked by his failure to attend the funeral of his mother.

But, Obi's attempt at absorbing the white man's values appears to be an irony because the white man will never receive him sincerely. Mr. Green, Obi's European boss, does not show any interest in saving Obi from the law suit. To him, surprise is all. This indifference of the white men towards the natives interprets their suppressed fear which keeps them aloof from the natives. They are afraid because they think that they have what they have not earned, was earned by others. Fear of losing what they have, has kept them aloof. Besides, they are afraid that their power may be snatched away by the 'Others'.

Thus, the predicament of Okonkwo, Obi and Ezeulu indicates that the relationship between the European colonizers and the natives is one of inequality, trauma and neurosis, discrimination, malice and superstition. Superstition grows out of the colonizers' self-convinced superiority and self-declared belief that they are ordained to rule. In this way, a trauma prevails in this relationship which always keeps the colonizers and the colonized poles apart from each other. Consequently, the natives tend to develop a consciousness of intercultural identity which "is enacted across psychological, relational and situational contexts" (Kim 61). Hence, in

respect of colonial situation, a thorough exploration of Achebe's major characters of trilogy, for example, Okonkwo, Obi and Ezeulu reveals that they are challenged by their own dreams, knowledge and self-recognition and brought down to nothing, traumatized in the Juncture of "the desires of the self and the demands of the community" (Gikandi 100). Adherences to their idealistic values, which are mostly influenced by their lack of proper knowledge of Western education, alienates them from their traditional Nigerian society. This lack of proper knowledge leads Okonkwo to suicide, Obi to corruption and Ezeulu to a complete estrangement from his own people.

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## 5

### **Angst and Anxieties: A Survey of the Neo-Colonial Political and Psychological Conditions of the Nigerians in the Trilogy and Two Other Novels by Achebe**

Achebe attempts at rewriting history, and “has attempted to demonstrate that his border world is a valid place from which to view the world and to share the view with the world” (Cain 69). He belongs to a hybrid culture and always stands at the crossroads of cultural malformation. He is a construct of colonial power, a missionary education, a Christian family and a grandfather who welcomed the earliest missionaries of Ogidi. Living in such a locus of cultural multiplicity, Achebe has to renegotiate his relation with Igbo tradition, its religion, local gods and goddesses and beliefs. He succeeds in building a bridge between himself and the above mentioned factors as he is determined to demonstrate that the traditions of the natives are not savage and their multiplicity is not invalid. In spite of belonging to a spectrum culture and having serious cultural differences, he is capable of producing an Africanist discourse through the characters and situations of his novels in a faithful African setting.

Living in in-between circumstances, Achebe can realize that the relation between the two binary oppositions is never compatible. Relationship between the colonizers and the colonized, from psycho-analytical

perspective, is of paranoia, intense desire and fear. True, colonialism works as a process of 'Othering' of the colonized and "[T]he relations between the colonizing state and indigenous inhabitants are seen as characterized by paranoia: intense desire at the same time as intense fear" (Mills 110). Though the colonized country becomes a victim of exploitations, it becomes a source of fear and anxiety to the colonizers, too. The colonizers produce fantasy about the psyche and behavior of the natives, and colonialism then works as a psychopathological factor which causes disorder both in the colonial individual and the colonial state. This process of causing disorder goes through portraying the 'Other' as a 'lacking Self' and thus, neurosis takes place in the psyche of both the colonizers and the colonized. In this connection, neurosis refers to the development of behavioral patterns that avoid rather than cope with problems. But, both approach and avoidance encounter each other and result in angst and anxieties. In such a juncture between angst and anxieties, the colonizers assume different strategies and subterfuges to suppress the natives and tactfully try to maintain a safe distance between them.

This neurotic fear has found an exposure in Achebe's characters, both in the natives and in the colonizers. For example, in *Things Fall Apart* Okonkwo's paroxysm to the colonizers is an exposure of such fear and Winterbottom, in *Arrow of God*, sends Ezeulu to the prison for nothing but for this fear and fantasy. Achebe has portrayed the problems of colonialism

in *Things Fall Apart* without romanticizing them. In doing so, he has not accepted the colonialist versions of history. He has explored the past and found that Nigeria's pre-European past with all its imperfections was not an episode of barbarism. He discovers that the pre-colonial society had many things that were leading towards anarchy. Corrosive inter-tribal conflict was a fatal cause that accelerated the collapse of the local society through exploitation, misrepresentation and misinterpretation. Thus, the encounter between the local and the colonial realities causes tension that provides Achebe's trilogy and other writings with a major subject-matter. No doubt, Achebe is a politically conscious writer, and so, his writings offer a symbolic meditation on the conditions of the Igbo and they tend to unmask the cultural artifacts and bring out the genuineness of his people.

This political consciousness has made Achebe a serious writer, and hence, his novels offer various aspects of colonial experience to the readers. He has unmasked colonial mission with great care. Colonialism got spread widely during the nineteenth century under the subterfuge of universal civilization. In this connection, Huntington asserts:

In the nineteenth century the idea of "the Whiteman's burden" helped justify the extension of Western political and economic domination over non-Western societies. At the end of the twentieth century the concept of universal civilization helps justify Western cultural dominance of other societies and need for those societies to

ape Western practices and institutions. Universalism is the ideology of the West for confrontations with the non-Western cultures. (66)

The concept of universal civilization was a political slogan, and it was deliberately chanted by the Western colonizers for imposing the West upon the rest of the world. The irony is that what the West called universal was called Western by the rest of the world. In this way, the Western policy of hybridization inspired the rest of the world to question themselves about their identity. As identity is a relational and contextual phenomenon, it is determined in contrast and parallelism with other cultures and ideologies. First World War brought utter insecurity and economic discrimination to human civilization, and consequently gave rise to a vital consciousness about the location of identity among many communities, especially among the colonized. During the inter-war period, the colonized experienced an acute trauma resulting in discriminated distribution of wealth. Then the Second World War provoked the sense of alienation which inevitably led the colonized to be aware of their self-identity and individual self which contributed to the formulation of nationhood, and it started motivating and mobilizing the colonized. It was clear to common sentiment “that colonialism was a system which functioned well in the interests of the metropolises” (Rodney 223). The colonizing Europeans declared their enterprises as regenerative and stimulating power which would create accessibility “of what had once been disowned and strange” (Boehmer

133). But, this proclamation is nothing but a deliberate endeavor to mask their own commercial intention of maximizing their capital by exploiting the colonies.

As mentioned before, colonialism was a single-handed enterprise whose purpose was to fortify the colonizers' capitalist interest. It had no other hand. It was a single-handed enterprise of exploitation, deceit and persecution. Rodney had termed it from African perspective as "a one-armed bandit" (223). Rodney does not take resort to any exaggeration while he uses statistics to claim that in 1930 expenditure for social services in the British colonial lands was a very negligible amount and "[I]n Nigeria and Nyasaland, it was less than 1/9 dollar per head. None of the other colonizing powers were doing any better and some much worse" (Rodney 224). Setting up of rail line and many other infrastructures took place in Nigeria during the colonial period, but all were done for the convenience of the rulers and the capitalists of the colonial force. Almost all the members of the colonizing mission who came to Africa belonged to impoverished class of people. They could not manage to acquire luxury for themselves in their native land. Hence, when they came to Africa, they concentrated on luxuries and comfort. They also negotiated with the local leaders and managed to lead a life of luxuries and comfort. Consequently, the natives fell victim to exploitation and deceit. Due to the instigation of the colonizers, class discrimination became active and the general people

developed an acute awareness of dislocation and dispossession. Inter-tribal gaps widened and bitterness grew up and this crisis hindered the formation of cultural nationalism and homogenization of the varieties of cultural realities in Nigeria.

Even after independence in 1960, the Nigerians were not independent economically, socially and politically. They were literally independent, but due to the feeling of political suffocation, they longed for second independence, not from the colonial rulers, but from the corrupted local leaders. Every local leader was desirous of having a share of national cake. Even the villagers supported the local leaders so that they could go to the capital and bring the share of the cake for them. Individual qualification of a person was not estimated; rather his connection with the influential section of people was estimated highly. It did not matter what an individual knew, but it mattered whom he knew.

Local tribal leaders used to run local administration, local traditional court, collect tributary fees and “to exercise considerable authority over the distribution of land constituted a central part of the colonial administrative system, held in high esteem by White officials, while enjoying at the same time the traditional support of the local population” (Meredith 6). Colonial policy at first tended to domesticate their issues-issues of creolizing the local culture through deliberate compromise. Their attempt of creolizing was deliberate as it was marked by duplicity and dishonesty. They intended



to impose only, not to absorb because their over consciousness of power and status marred the concept of reciprocal affinities. Local chieftains welcomed this deliberate policy in absence of their knowledge of the hidden desire of the colonizers. But, this absorption had got a positive side, too. For example, the influence of the missionary schools on the natives of Nigeria and above all, the whole African continent was great. Many converts used to send their children to the missionary schools, and later “African elite of the time – clerks, teachers, interpreters and policemen-were all products of missionary schools” (Meredith 9). Chinua Achebe is also one of them whose parents were converted Christians and who accepted Christianity towards the inception of colonialism. He is one of the first graduates from the University of Ibadan which was situated in 1947 during the colonial regime in the fashion of colonial education system. Many veteran artists were produced out of the colonial enterprises. But, pathetically after its independence in 1960, Nigeria which is called the ‘sleeping giant of Africa’ for its large population and economy, fell victim to civil disobedience because the new nation was rather the outcome of what the European colonizers imagined an independent Nigeria to be.

The growth of educated middle class or bourgeoisie was a potential challenge to the growth of corruption and political turmoil. Very soon, owing to the failure of domestic leadership, discontent grew and subsequently led the country to military coups. It is true that intellectuals

were usually suspicious about the roles of the politicians, and hence, the political evil cannot escape their sight. They are the witnesses while the politicians are in the role of the men of action. As a result, hostile relations develop between the artists or intellectuals and the politicians during the post-colonial period. In Nigeria, local politicians played the roles of puppets in the hands of the European policy-makers. As the intellectuals looked at them critically, they felt uneasy. Achebe has depicted this uneasiness in the disposition of Chief Nanga about whom Odili, the narrator of *The Man of the People*, has said, "I remember the day he was telling his ministerial colleague over the telephone in my presence that he distrusted our young university people and he would rather work with a European" (*A Man of the People* 66). Thus, a conflict manifests here between the politicians and the intellectuals. Politicians are afraid of the development of the consciousness of the intellectuals, and hence:

Oscillating between the impact of the colonial legacy and the emergence of new society based on an exploitative class system, the new nation is shown to be no real departure from British colonial rule as only the ruling elite seems to have changed names while situation remains the same for the masses. (Bartels 174)

Actually, post-independence Nigeria was a locus of hopelessness and disillusionment, and it is portrayed from a historical context in Achebe's *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*.

Conflict between the ruling class and the middle-class educated people is intensified by the subtle and keen realization of the educated youths that the people, who are to lead the country towards prosperity and peace, are rather busy with their own interests. But, development is a multithreaded process which includes an individual's skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. On the level of national development, it refers to the growth of G.D.P. A nation develops when its individuals jointly increase their capacity in dealing with the environment. Similarly, reciprocation exists between the individual and the environment. If the environment is detached from the individual, then development will be retarded. And, if the politicians alienate themselves from the mass people, development of the nation will be retarded. Consequently, resentment grows among the people. Besides, the educated middle class with a sharper sensibility can detect the duplicity of the rulers, and in such a situation, there emerges resistance which is an articulation "of pre-colonial traditions of protest" (Parry 42). For example, a vehement protest is found in the character of Odili in *A Man of the People*, and he expresses his helplessness at his inability to stand against the corruption of his ex-teacher who is now a minister "... [B]ecause the man was a minister bloated by the flatulence of ill-gotten wealth, living in a big mansion built with public money, riding in a Cadillac and watched over by a one-eyed, hired thug" (68). Odili's helplessness comes out of his mind which is formulated by his ego and fantasies, and the fatal drawback that generates

his helplessness is that he has romanticized his objective instead of practically philosophizing it.

The scenario of the life-style of the minister that has been portrayed in *A Man of the People* exposes the corrupted politicians of post-colonial Nigeria to the readers. Again, Odili's romantic ideals refer to the rise of a bourgeois class whose objective is nothing but to attain the privileges for the comfort and luxury of life. Eventually, the country turns into a political failure owing to the absence of a true and pragmatic feeling of patriotism on the part of both the politicians and the bourgeois educated class of people. In such a vacuity in the country, army may venture to topple down the government, and military coup usually takes place. Nigeria has experienced military coups several times. Even today its government is in an unstable condition owing to the anarchy of the insurgent group Boko Haram. Today's Nigeria's most corrosive problem is the rivalry between its nationalism and local tribalism. Internal clash has shattered the country's peace and stability. There are several hundreds of tribes in Nigeria. Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba, Ijaw, Kanuri, Annang, Tiv, Ibibio and many other tribes are remarkable. 70% of the total population has come from Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Each tribe is led by its own culture and local leaders. Consequently, it is a land of diversity of culture, language and attitude. This diversity works as a foil to the feeling of togetherness or nationhood. Very often it creates a crisis for singular identity. Individual identity, in contrast

with national identity, creates prejudice and resentment among various tribes. Because of the lack of good governance, exercise of despotism, corruption, misrule and the failure of the government, Nigeria has been disintegrated in post-independence period. Above all, due to the failure of leadership of the central government, people are compelled to fall back on the tribal tradition.

Besides, political failure, after the independence in 1960, caused instability among the people. Massive corruption in electoral systems escalated frustration and resentment among the people. Out of resentment, they lost interest in local politicians, and their dreams were shattered. Taking the chance of such a vulnerable condition of the country, the Army captured power through a military coup in 1966 under the leadership of Igbo majors Emanuel Ifeajuna and Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu. The army killed the prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balwa and the Premier Ahmadu Bello. But, in the same year, a counter coup occurred, and it supported the previous army officers for the coup. These incidents inevitably amplified the ethnic tension and violence among the locals. In connection with this, in May 1967 the Eastern region declared independence as a state named the Republic of Biafra under the leadership of Lt. Colonel Emeka Ojukwu. As a result, a civil war broke out. Chinua Achebe worked as an ambassador in favour of Biafra as a free state and fell victim to the wrath of the Nigerian military government. In fear of life, he left the country. This civil war

continued for thirty months, and it is estimated that between 1 and 3 million people lost their lives in it. Many of them were killed; many died of starvation and diseases. Britain and Soviet Union backed Nigerian government while France supported the Biafrans. But, ultimately the Biafrans were defeated.

In 1970, Nigeria became a member of OPEC, and started earning a lot of revenues. But, the politicians did very little for the development of the lot of the people. As Nigeria earned a huge amount of revenue from oil resource, the rulers did not pay much attention to the other sectors. Nigeria became a country of contrasts. Lagos enjoyed the luxury of the Western world but in the middle of the same city there was a huge slum in which many people lived in an utmost unhygienic condition, malnutrition, illiteracy, abject poverty and diseases. Agriculture was not sufficiently patronized. Numerous Nigerians gave up their rural life, and in quest of comfort and luxury, they came to the cities and towns. As a result, a picture of acute discrimination regarding proper distribution of wealth and ability manifested, and it also created anxiety among the people regarding the disappointment of their dreams. Achebe, remaining committed to the history of Nigeria, has drawn scenes of the ravages of dream of the post-colonial Nigerians in his novels. His novels preserve “the essential features of Igbo history and, by extension, African history, at the point of contact with colonizing Europe” (Cain 71). For Achebe’s historical consciousness,

his characters represent the natives of Nigeria of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. Obi's dream is shattered on the face of the challenges posed by the juncture of local culture and European culture. In *A Man of the People*, Odili meets the disappointment of his dream of becoming a reformer and politician when he comes across the evil practices of Nanga. The culmination of disappointment, tension and anxiety finds its way out in *Anthills of the Savannah* through the assassination of Ikem, toppling down and death of Sam and the eventual murder of Chris.

Again in 1979, Nigeria went back to democracy for a brief period of time when Olusegun Obasanjo transferred power to the civilian regime of Shehu Shagari. But, very soon his government fell into a pit of corruption and nepotism. In 1984, military coup took place again under the leadership of Muhammadu Buhari and the people welcomed him as a positive development in the field of politics of the country but his regime was doomed by another military coup in 1985. Ibrahim Babangida, the new head and president, promised to do everything for the return of democracy by 1992. But, Babangida's regime nationalized corruption in every section as a fashion. Consequently, in 1993, another military coup took place under the leadership of Sani Abacha. Abacha took resort to violence to suppress the agitating civilians. In 1998, Abacha was found dead and his bank balance was discovered inflated with amazing amount of dollars. In 1999, Nigeria regained democracy through an electoral process. Abasanjo who

was a retired army officer became the president of the country. Today's Nigeria is a federal republic built up on the model of the USA, and the president is entrusted with all executive power.

But, the greatest irony is that Nigeria is a workshop of democracy which is formulated by colonialism. Repeated military coups in Nigeria make the world think how the people are frustrated with the local leaders who only engage themselves in plundering people's wealth like the agents of the colonizers. It is true that "...political independence is an ideological severance from all vestiges of colonialism" (Eze 11). Colonialism never showed any interest in the question of subjectivity, identity and humanity of the natives; rather this discourse had fantasized the Africans as sub-human beings, primitive or savage. Besides, it also made every attempt to dehistoricize the Nigerians and all the Africans. Moreover, it commoditized the history of Nigeria as well as Africa for the Western world. Though surprising, in post-colonial Nigeria, the local political leaders failed to reintroduce or reconstruct the indigenous identity of the natives. They rather continued the old discourse introduced by the Western world or the colonial world. Local dialectics, discourse, history, language and hermeneutic tools were manipulated by slavish submission to Western discourse. Thus, in response to all these attempts of displacement, the post-colonial military of Nigeria committed coups repeatedly.



Though today a democratic government is ruling Nigeria, still tribal clash, terrorism, rampant corruption and insurgency make the world think that the history of indigenous Nigeria is to be reinvented, “redefined, or retrieved to challenge this coloniality, to decolonize the African mind, a process that will involve an inversion of the subjective” (Eze 12). Peace and stability are quite unimaginable today. Insurgency and corruption are a common feature of present day’s Nigeria. Nationhood is frequently being challenged by tribalism. True, local people’s attachment to the tribal hegemony acts as a block to the development of national consciousness. Besides, post-colonial Nigerian government’s inherited structure benefits from the left-over colonial architecture. Colonial education system, designed to produce some low-level administrators, “...imposed the values and ways of thinking of the colonizers upon the natives and so, it is not surprising that such individuals would carry over colonial values into the period after independence was regained” (Rodney 287). Thus, neocolonization goes on in the name of modernization in the post-colonial period.

This degradation is delicately portrayed in the character of Obi in *No Longer at Ease*. He carries on the colonial legacy and is set against his tribal code of conduct. Consequently, he turns into a failure. In *A Man of the People*, Nanga, a former school teacher, after having received colonial education, ventures to continue exploitation in the colonial framework. Besides, the unhallowed political situation, portrayed in *The Anthills of the*

*Savannah*, is the repercussion of the unsustainable development coming from colonial policies. In this connection, Eze has said, “Colonial policies did not attempt sustainable development and so, independence became an empty promise, an illusion” (61). In fact, owing to enormous unknowability consisting of different terrains, different tribes with different customs, beliefs and different sets of requirements for survival, Nigeria, even today, is struggling to form a collective consciousness.

The vulnerability of Nigerian independence lies in the continuing legacy of colonialism, even after its independence. The assassination of Ikem, Sam and Chris in *The Anthills of the Savannah* may be interpreted as an exposure of tension owing to the encounter between indigeneity and coloniality in post-independence Nigeria. Even today, owing to the rampancy of terrorism, violence, corruption and insurgency, Nigeria’s spirit of democracy and national consciousness are next to an illusion. Again since the independence, the Nigerians have been tribalized by different groups of people; they are not evolving towards a nationhood. It is deliberately done to benefit the colonial architecture. Though the colonizers officially left Nigeria on 1 October, 1960, they are still running the mega business with the Nigerian government. They are the biggest investors even today. At present, the US investment in the energy sector in Nigeria is the biggest one. During the colonial period, Royal Niger Company dominated over the commercial activities in Nigeria. It did never allow France or

Germany to run business there. Even in post-colonial period, in the name of modernization of the local administration, the colonial power confirmed their position. In post-colonial Nigeria, industrialized economy opened up new opportunities for self-empowerment. But, these opportunities went to a few people who ‘inherited political power from the former colonial administration...’ (Little 139). Besides, the traditional rulers who owned vast land and inherited hereditary titles from the colonial regime got access to important enterprises of the state. So, the people who possessed wealth and position during colonial regime, and who were equipped with university education emerged as new elite groups in post-colonial period, and the vast majority of people were deprived of opportunities in public sector and administration. As a result, resentment grew among the deprived majority, and hence, despite repeated military coups, the average people did not demonstrate any remarkable kind of protest against military dictatorship. Out of rooted resentment, they seemed to think that military regime was better than new elitism because the post-colonial Nigerian members of administration were “usually more ‘Western’ in outlook and more at home in the niceties of European bourgeois behavior than other Africans” (Little 139). This disposition of mimicry acts as a block on the path of the formation of a nationalistic and democratic atmosphere in post-colonial Nigeria.

The experience of European colonialism opened a wider world to the Nigerians, but in post-colonial period, Nigeria failed to govern itself as the local rulers were still under the trance of colonial hegemony. Thus, even after attaining freedom in 1960, Nigeria still goes through the vicissitudes of political turmoil. If viewed from psychological perspective, this trance produced by colonial hegemony causes psychosis regarding any kind of change or action that the natives should take for a confident self-government. Post-colonial condition works as a persecuting force for them, and it leads them to paranoia. As a paranoid is actually suspicious of his friends and relatives, and fears that they may poison or assault or kill him, the colonized or a group of natives who were previously colonized and habituated in the mode of thinking of the colonizers become afraid of any kind of innovation or mechanism of projection of a new form of government. It happens owing to the severe disturbance caused to them by colonial repression which causes trauma in the psyche of the natives.

This trauma affects the spirit of Nigerian nationhood, and in this regard, Nigeria still falls back on the movement of Negritude which intended to discover a common heritage through the simultaneity of sufferings of the black, not only in Africa but also in many parts of the world where thousands of Africans were used as slaves by the cruel slave merchants. Negritude movement intended to define 'blackness' in association with a positive image, throwing a counter-discourse against "...the negative sense

of blackness that was at independence, and still is, obtainable in English language, such as “black market”, “black magic”” (Eze 111). In this way, Negritude vehemently proposed to salvage the sense of honour and self-identity with proper worth and status. Many African leaders including Senghor argued that the Negritude movement intended to change the world-view that the Negro did not mean degeneration or backwardness but “black people had a world-view different from the Europeans” (Eze 111). In this way, Negritude became a substantial discourse against the European mission of ‘Othering’ and it significantly fought back the trauma caused by the colonial hegemony of Europeanization.

Colonialism, in this connection, is considered to be a form of pathological disorder at the state level, and it works actively in ‘Othering’ the natives by creating paranoia in their psyche. The influences of the behavior, language, culture and above all, the mode of life of the colonizers on the natives are always pervasive. Besides, when the natives lead their life side by side with the colonizers, it produces a strong effect of interaction on the former. As a result, absorption of foreign mode of life on the part of the natives gets accelerated. It is found very obviously in Achebe’s trilogy. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo’s son Nowye’s conversion into a Christian, in *Arrow of God* Ezeulu’s son Uduche’s promptness in receiving the education of the missionary and in *No Longer at Ease* Obi’s inclination to the colonial patterns of life are mostly preempted by the angst and anxieties regarding

their identity consciousness that leads them to duality and ambivalence. This duality disillusioned the colonial and post-colonial generation in Nigeria.

In post-independence Nigeria, Negritude faced the colonialist hoax, even after the physical departure of the colonizers. One thing that must be kept in mind is that the most acute need that the colonizers feel is to alienate the colonized from their economic, cultural and linguistic history. Besides, colonization tends to uproot the colonized from their own community and snatch away their selves. Under such circumstances, the colonized start feeling that “[H]e is in no way a subject of history any more. Of course, he carries its burden, often more cruelly than others, but always as an object” (Memmi 92). As the natives’ attachment to their historical reality develops an anti-colonial and nationalist narrative, the colonizers make a deliberate attempt to bring about a breach between the natives and their local history. In this respect, the colonizers’ texts play a very vital role. In the last scene of the *Things Fall Apart*, the District Commissioner’s desire of writing a book interprets how the colonialist texts deliberately endeavor to estrange the natives from their history and nationhood through misinterpretation and mislocation. Besides, in the process of misrepresenting the natives, they create some politicians or chieftains among the locals who continue the colonizing mission even in post-independence period.

Thus, even after independence, the group of politicians who had accepted the colonizers' epistemology and disposition continued taking the press and other electronic media in their grip and create an impression that the elections are fixed up to their intention, and the commoners had nothing to do in war and peace in the country. The commoners, faced the hoax of the neo-colonizers, who are originally natives are sometimes stunned by their demagoguery, and in the extremity of their angst, anxiety, anger and resentment break their paper chains and upset the politicians' little calculations" (Memmi 92). But, skepticism often retards them, and in such a situation another wing of power, military force in most cases, stages coup. This is the picture depicted by Achebe in his *A Man of the People* where utter corruption of the local political leaders, in post-independence Nigeria, represented by Nanga, instigates a military coup. This fourth novel of Achebe is about the failure of leadership in post-colonial Nigeria. The rivalry that prevails between Odili and his ex-school teacher, now a minister, Mr. Nanga, depicts how the natives feel suffocated under the leadership of the local leaders who are obsessed with the mission of implementing the colonizers' agenda. But, the local people's suffocation escalates when they find their leaders in the trap of the duality of their personality.

Furthermore, an intensive study of *A Man of the People* reveals the dual nature of its protagonist, Odili, and angst and anxieties of the post-colonial

generation emerge out of his dual role. Odili is strong, and at the same time, weak. He is strong as he speaks against Nanga, a corrupt politician. He is weak because he is fighting against Nanga who has snatched away his beloved Edna from him. In fact:

Odili, the young graduate school master who challenges a corrupt cabinet minister at the polls, would have us believe in his crusading role, but his unconvincing vaguely leftist political stance is only a hastily donned disguise to cover his real motive- personal revenge against Chief the Hon. M. A. Nanga, who has outwitted him in an amatory intrigue. (Ravenscroft 33)

Thus, Odili's fight is on two fronts – one presents him as an antagonistic force to the rise of corruption and hypocrisy of the politicians in his country, and the other presents him as a rival in the amour game with Nanga for beautiful Edna. Thus, he is a divided self. Besides, his estrangement is from the "...communal sense of moral values, which in his view has no continuing validity" (Ravenscroft 35). He also misinterprets his father's way of life, a man who is still in tenuous touch with the past traditional customs. At the same time, he persistently sticks to self-consciousness regarding his own moral ground. In his words:

A common saying in the country after Independence was that it didn't matter what you knew but who you knew. And, believe me, it was no idle talk. For a person like me who simply could not stoop to



lick any Big Man's boots it created a big problem. In fact one reason why I took this teaching job in a bush, private school instead of a smart civil service job in the city with car, free housing etc., was to give myself a certain amount of anatomy. (15)

This excerpt shows that a potential dualism lies in his character. He criticizes 'eat-and-let-eat' politicians and again at the same time, he involves himself in the foul game of election against Nanga, not for the greater interest of his country, but for soothing his vindictive desire of revenge: "...I was suddenly confronted by a fact I had been dodging for some time- I knew then that I wanted Edna now (if not all along) for her own sake first and foremost and only very remotely as part of a general scheme of revenge"(99). Thus, the post-independence young generation that Achebe has portrayed is characterized by a divided self. Similarly, Obi, in *No Longer at Ease*, is of the same duality between his love for Clara and commitment to the Umuofian Progressive Union. In *Arrow of God*, Uduche who is to be his father's ears and eyes, attempts to kill the royal python and thus shows defiance to his tradition. Nowye, in *Things Fall Apart*, becomes a convert after falling into a juncture between tradition and humanity. Sam, Ikem and Chris in *Anthills of the Savannah* are also failures owing to their self-seeking pursuit. *Anthills of the Savannah* depicts the same picture of political failure coming from undemocratic, autocratic, corrupted and irresponsible leadership which concentrates only on individual progress, not

on national interest. After a thorough perusal of Achebe's last two novels, it is found that Nigeria is beset with conflict among the politicians, bourgeois class of people and the local communities. Therefore, the neo-colonial elites or intellectuals that Achebe has portrayed in his novels are driven by self-seeking pursuits. They are ready to demean national interest for their selfish opportunism.

If Odili's character is viewed from psychological perspective, it is found that an individual's personality and consciousness develop through experiences encountered by him or her. Experiences are of "two classes: the *common experience*, shared by most individuals growing up in a given culture or cultural subgroup, and the *unique experience*, not predictable from roles that the culture assigns us" (Hilgard at el 364). In the case of Odili, the common experiences through which he runs give him a negative impression about the corrupt politicians of post-colonial Nigeria. The unique experience comes to him in the form of loss of Edna, his beloved, who is to be the second wife of Nanga. Confrontation between these two dispositions leads him to angst and anxieties that emerge out of divided experiences. Actually, angst is associated with a 'fear-producing stimulus' [apprehension of losing Edna to Nanga] and anxiety involves a state of "tension and discomfort, the individual is motivated to avoid or reduce it and in the case of political evil of the country" (Hilgard at el 441). Falling into the juncture of two antagonistic situations, Odili fell in disillusion.

Post-colonial politics frustrates him greatly. When he met Nanga for the first time in his visit to Grammar School, he looked upon him as a genuinely honest politician. The excitement that Nanga showed during his introduction to Odili seemed to be really genuine. When Odili reminded him that the latter taught him in ‘Standard three’, Nanga shouted in delight and it seemed that “[I]f he had just found his long-lost son he could not have been more excited” (8). Nanga also complained why Odili had not informed him after having finished his university education. Odili stammered that he had not because he thought he was busy as he was a Minister. Now Nanga rebukes him, “Busy? Nonsense. Don’t you know that minister means servant? Busy or no busy he must see his master” (*A Man of the People* 8).

Such an ironical frankness of Nanga impresses Odili, and this utterance creates an impression on him that he is the man of the people. Odili also feels like a hero in contact with Nanga. Thus, an illusion regarding post-colonial politics takes possession of him. But, Nanga’s hypocritical role in the game of politics, utter corruption and ambiguous practices that Odili observes at a close quarter living in his household frustrate him. He then takes part in active politics and his rebellious spirit against political evil gives an impression that he may be a man of the people. But, very soon it becomes clear to the readers that he is doing politics for taking revenge upon Nanga who has snatched away his girl friend Edna, and hence, it

becomes apparent that he is also not a man of the people. Thus, both of them, for self-seeking pursuits, fail to maintain contact with the common people, and inevitably military coup frustrates both of them, and they two fail to become the men of the people.

Failure of both the parties- local politicians and the elite group - is enhanced by mutual suspicion and subjective antagonism. Elimination of any one of these two is not practically possible as well as expected; rather conciliation between these two on the ground of good of the people may give birth to a sustainable political tradition that may lead the post-independence nation to stability and prosperity. But, in *A Man of the People* these two parties stand face to face in an antagonistic relationship. They are presented as binary oppositions. The *Daily Chronicle*, which is an official organ of the POP, calls the well-educated generation 'the Miscreant Gang'. Even other newspapers of the country which are mostly patronized by political parties say, "...even in Britain where the Miscreant Gang got its 'so-called education' a man need not be an economist to be chancellor of the Exchequer or a doctor to be Minister of Health. What mattered was loyalty to the party" (4). Again, the young person with Western education like Odili, though sticking to strict principles initially, gives vent to personal emotions instead of national interest. Consequently, unrest goes on, and getting a fertile ground there occurs military coups. It is a common picture in many post-colonial countries including Nigeria. Hence, *A Man of*

*the People* has become a mythopoesis of Achebe's pragmatic study of post-colonial Nigerian political situation.

A similarly close look at the pitfalls of the political whereabouts of Nigeria has enabled Achebe to produce his last seminal novel *Anthills of the Savannah*. It was written twenty-seven years after the liberation of Nigeria. It portrays Achebe's traumatic experience of his observation of the predicament that befell the country in the mid-1960s. For the failure of the civil government, repeated military coups turned Nigeria into a pool of blood instead of forming a concrete ground of fraternity, equality and solidarity. The country which holds every possibility of becoming the wealthiest country in Africa with its immense reserve of oil in the mines fell into the pit of repeated military coups. Utter corruption and unbridled ambition of the political dictators led the people of the country to disillusionment. The network of political activities was so invincible that even the military leaders with good intentions ended up as unsuccessful, disappointing and ruthless dictators. At present "the country of Nigeria finds itself at the mercy of unpredictable world oil demands and other outside pressure that profoundly affect daily life among Nigerians" (Harmon 26). Thus, a division between the common mass and the politicians prevails in the realities of the present day Nigeria and this dichotomy contributes to the emergence of angst and anxieties among the people and leads them to an uncertain future.

But, only corruption is not enough to invite the armed forces to power. Atomization of ethnic groups, diversification of mentality, geographical differences and the collapse of harmony in socio-political life set people apart. Discriminatory attitude of the political leaders tends to alienate the people from their rulers. Such a mental rift brings about regional segregation, too. A huge portion of population, thus, hesitates in taking active part in any attempt of groups of people who stand against military coups. As the people do not remain with the rulers, civil government fails. There is another cause of the failure of civil government. A huge number of have-nots, who are not given considerable attention by the government, gradually start thinking that they are not considered to be the citizens of the country by their leaders. Out of senses of deprivation, they develop this kind of feeling and resentment. They grow indifferent to the activities of the government. As a result, the civil government falls into the locus of disorder, and military government stands against it as the vast majority does not demonstrate any sort of resistance to it. Vulnerability of the civil government instigates the military to take up the driving seat of the country. Besides, suspicion among the members of the cabinet may weaken the highest command. In this connection, *Anthills of the Savannah* demonstrates how corruption in the state mechanism can easily weaken even the highest command and sow seeds of corrosive mutual suspicion. For example, Sam treats Ikem as a threat to state-security though he does not have any concrete ground of such kind of suspicion. This corrosive

vulnerability on the parts of both the rulers and the ruled has envenomed the social, political, economic and even ideological harmony of present-day Nigeria.

Furthermore, in *Anthills of the Savannah*, the world of Ikem appears to be characterized by his political consciousness. His conversation with taxi drivers exhibits his political consciousness. He discovers the 'diseased tolerance' in the public which accelerates oppression and tyranny in the country by the ruling class people. His driving of an old car amazes the drivers in the street. He drives the old car with a good intention of becoming frugal and leading a simple life. But:

Ikem could understand well enough the roots of the paradox in which a man's personal choice to live simply without such trimmings as chauffeurs could stamp him not as a modest and exemplary citizen but as a mean minded miser denying a livelihood to one unemployed driver out of hundreds and thousands roaming the streets - a paradox so perverse in its implications as to justify the call for the total dismantling of the grotesque world in which it grows and flourishes. (*Anthills of the Savannah* 138)

Ikem's accurate feeling of the pulse of the people undoubtedly goes with that of Achebe. Achebe aptly comprehends how the general people have developed ideas about the corruption and extravagance of the rulers of the country. But, the amazing thing is that they do not raise any voice of protest

against persecution and corruption of the rulers. Average people have a perception that their leaders would drive 'the Mercedes Benz'. They would fly 'private jet' or cruise 'luxury yacht'. But when they find Ikem driving a 'battered old Datsun' instead of a flashy car they are amazed.

It is very often found that the public have information that their rulers are manipulating power and wealth but even then they do not oppose or raise any remarkable resistance. Actually, it requires some more interpretation for assessing the factors responsible for the passivity of the people. To rein in the voice of the average people, the ruling-class people exercise power upon them by manipulating some state apparatuses, for example, police force, army, judiciary, board of revenue and other executive bodies. Very often, manipulation of these apparatuses by the rulers creates panic among people. Besides, education which works as a software behind the development of political consciousness among the people is also deliberately kept unreachable to them by making it a precious commodity, available only to the people of the privileged classes. Thus, owing to lack of sufficient knowledge and consciousness, immediate and spontaneous and systematic resistance does not come from the average people. Resistance always comes from the educated middle-class people. When the middle-class people can involve the average people in their protest by convincing them that they are being deceived by the ruling-class people, it is only then that a mass upheaval takes place and leads the country towards revolution.



But, when the public upheaval fails, military coup becomes an inevitable alternative to democracy for the country, though it is not expected in the modern context of the world. It is quite obvious in post-colonial Nigeria which experienced repeated military coups due to the failure of the civil government and lack of public awareness. So, Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* is not a mere fantasy tale; it is rather a prophetic and historically expected eventuality for Nigeria.

In fact, Achebe writes *Anthills of the Savannah* with an ascetic purpose of rebuilding post-colonial Nigeria. He remains faithful to the history of his country and attempts to reclaim Nigeria's past and "...in *Anthills of the Savannah* Achebe appears to be identifying a usable base of tradition upon which to rebuild Kangan [presumably Nigerian] society" (Podis 105). True, Achebe plays the role of an agent of change, keeping his feet firmly rooted in the indigeneity of tradition. For the change of the socio-economic and political situation, he does not support military coup. Unbridled corruption of the local leaders and the failure of dialogic relationship lead the nation to military coups. Being a native is quite different from being a citizen. When the people realize their locus of dispossession of citizenship which must have been acknowledged by the rulers of the country, they do not bother about or do not oppose military coups.

Apparently, Nigeria experienced several military coups without facing significant opposition from her people owing to the failure of the civil

government in making the natives feel that they are the citizens of the country. It is true that a state is so often 'a machine of repression' which enables the rulers to impose their hegemony upon the natives, and accordingly prevent them from developing determinism. For example, in *Anthills of the Savannah*, Sam's attitude to his people is oppressive but the most fatal flaw of his character is that he is a tyrant, not in a feudal society but in the age of nation-states where national consciousness gives birth to national identity. But "[A]lthough Achebe argues in the novel that a national identity must be imagined, he himself does not imagine a Nigerian identity" (Kortenaar 70). In the last chapter of *Anthills of the Savannah*, conversation between Beatrice and Emmanuel reveals the ideology of Chris who has lost his life on his way to self-exile in a battle with a police man who tries to rape a girl, named Adamma. In the words of Beatrice, "Chris was sending us a message to beware. This world belongs to the people of the world not to any little caucus, no matter how talented..." (232). This revelation gives out that Achebe's view of identity embraces the perspective of the whole world. It is not confined to the geography of Nigeria and when the individual stands up face to face with the universe with the question of identity, there occurs tension, and this tension or anxiety will go on as long as acute self-consciousness will overcome the rulers of the people.

But, it is true that *Anthills of the Savannah* is a contradictory novel, full of Achebe's political views and proposals for the solutions to the socio-economic-political problems. This contradiction arises when Achebe views that the political leaders are the owners of country and again he says that the common masses are the owners of the country. In this connection, it may be said that "...there is an inherent contradiction between Achebe's belief that only a strong leadership can deliver Nigeria and his statement that the masses are owners of the country" (Erritouni 52). But, the fact is that he does not resolve these contradictions with convincing solutions. A thorough study of *Anthills of the Savannah* reveals that Achebe succeeds in locating the contradictions in the political issues of the fictional land Kangan, metaphorically interpreted, Nigeria, but he fails to present a concrete proposal for the resolution of these binary oppositions. For example, the novel ends with an apprehension of the possibility of a military coup amidst a huge diversity of ethnic groups of people. But, Achebe has not given a clear message whether it is feasible or not. It may be an internal tribal problem which retards the formation of democratic consciousness, but it is not apparently mentioned in this novel.

Tribal rivalry obviously appears to be a chronic problem with Nigeria. Corrosive conflict among the ethnic groups leads the country to an unending and irresolvable instability. Even after more than twenty years of independence, Nigeria fails to come into a compromise among all its ethnic

groups who are not capable of settling their own discords. Nigeria is a resourceful country in its oil and petroleum reserve and, in that, it surpasses all African countries. It can obviously provide all its citizens with all modern amenities of life. But, still thousands of children die of starvation, malnutrition and lack of proper medical treatment. In fact, the problem lies in the patterns and management of economics, politics and above all, the government policy. Achebe truly realizes this problem too in his *The Trouble with Nigeria* and expresses it in the following words:

There is no position in the Laws of Nigeria or the constitution which says that a man who comes first to public counter should be served before the man who comes later. But our sense of natural justice and our intelligence tells us that it should be so because (a) it is only fair and (b) experience has shown that any other way is liable to create disorder and delay (27-28).

But, failure in developing systems which are benevolent for the reformation and reconstruction of the nation is mostly lying in the insufficient and inefficient role of the intellectuals who are mostly middle-class professionals and who very often fail to produce concrete discourse against the hereditary causes and consequences of colonialism. Their failure also makes the civil government fragile. For these shortcomings, Nigeria embraces political instability in post-independence period. In this way,

*Anthills of the Savannah* is produced as a document of the history of Nigeria depicting the failure of the system of civil government in Nigeria.

Achebe has diagnosed that one of the major causes of the failure of the civil government is the conflicting relationship between the political leaders and the local intellectuals. Politicians do never look upon the intellectuals as a benevolent agent of the country. True, the function of the intellectuals is to criticize the political leaders constructively and help them understand the follies and frailties that hinder national development. Intellectuals are the custodians of a country's liberty, dreams and challenges, and their duty is to keep the politicians aware of these issues. So, the relationship between these two parties should be that of co-operation, reciprocation, guidance and assistance. But, the reality is that very often the politicians grow hostile and intolerant to the intellectuals and try to do everything to lull them. When the intellectuals wake up from their beauty sleep, they find that the politicians have already manipulated their absence to consolidate their post and position. Competent politicians know the metaphysical abstractions of the intellectuals, and hence, they leave no stone unturned to take the chance of it. But, when the intellectuals remain alert, a corrosive conflict begins and consequently, the politicians grow antagonistic to the intellectuals. For example, in *A Man of the People*, chief Nanga turns antagonistic to Odili only because of the latter's consciousness about the corruption of the former.

Sometimes passivity of the intellectuals instigates the politicians to exercise their evil practices. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Beatrice criticizes and blames Ikem, a progressive intellectual for not having a conspicuous role for woman in his political thinking. When the degree of an intellectual turns into a mere instrument in his venture of ascending the ladder of power, he also becomes corrupted. A *Man of the People* depicts Chief Nanga who was once a school teacher and who eventually turns into a political leader. Hence, the battle between these two parties produces ambiguity and uncertainty. They are a complete failure in *Anthills of the Savannah* where Ikem and Chris, who are journalists, meet tragedy. They criticize the ruler Sam, but keep themselves aloof from political involvement. Such a dual role leads the country to political failure.

Obviously, in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* the intellectuals remain silent about the military coups. It may be interpreted as a sort of tolerance to a supposedly less mischievous form of government. In post-colonial Nigeria, politics has been characterized by intrigues and all-consuming ambition. It is also characterized by an endless race over who will be what and what will be gained by whom. Intellectual snobbery affects post-colonial politics in Nigeria and drives many intellectuals out of the country. Even Achebe personally fell victim to the wrath of Nigerian politicians, and had to leave his country. In post-colonial Nigeria, politics seems to become a dirty game of unpolished members of the society and it was not for those

who ought to be there. The intellectuals exemplify the highest ideals and aspirations of a nation. Hence, if their participation in politics can be ensured, a nation must progress in knowledge and wealth. But, when their places are occupied by the clownish and ambitious politicians who do not care for the values and ideals of a nation, the country is doomed to fall into the pitfall of disappointment. Chris, in *Anthills of the Savannah*, realizes that politics is a power-game, and it is “a game that began innocently enough and then went suddenly strange and poisonous” (1). He comprehends that an intellectual plays the role of an agent of historical memory and at the same time, he accepts his defeat when he finds that he does not match this power-game. The idealism that motivated the local intellectuals in the earlier stage of the decolonizing process was generally frustrated by the discovery of this evil power-game of the politicians. Thus, the fate of Ikem and Chris exemplify the predicament of the intellectuals in post-colonial Nigeria which is “gifted by providence but betrayed by those in charge of its destiny” (Gikandi 138). Hence, the novel suggests that if the intellectuals are not given any space by the politicians, the country will face a future of despair and disillusionment.

One thing that does not escape the eyes of the readers is that in Achebe's novels intellectuals do not listen to the subaltern, and they build up an ivory tower out of which they never come in contact with the flesh and blood. They incarnate themselves as elite, and confine themselves to 'hegemonic

discourses' which "are deaf to the subaltern, even when it does speak or resist" (Kapoor 53-54). True, the European colonizers never attempted directly to snatch away the power of the local Nigerian leaders. The colonizers knew very well that by receiving their knowledge, the local people would gradually represent them. They rather let them rule in their own way, because with the introduction of European education the Europeans found that the natives were very prone to receiving European style of life and practicing them in their daily life. In this way, "the native people gradually became Europeanized..." (Harmon 88). Apparently, European education aimed at producing a class of intellectuals who would think in the style and pattern of the colonizers, and that would accelerate the passive role of European domination.

But, in the southern Nigeria, educated citizens, receiving European education from universities started developing a sense of nationalism. After the First and the Second World Wars, a pan-African spirit developed among the educated Africans. Students studying in European and African universities formed student councils and developed a belief that not outsiders, but Africans should govern Africa. They further realized that European rulers were damaging their people and cultural traditions. From this pan-African realization, Negritude movement, developed by Aime Cesaire, Leopold Sedar Senghor and Leon Damas started and "[B]y 1930 Nigeria was nurturing a widespread and irrepressible sense of nationalism"



(Harmon 91). But, the most corrosive problem of Nigeria is its internal differences. Ethnically diverse groups clashed against one another. This is one of the major problems that lead Nigeria to the bog of the failure of civil government and democracy and instigate repeated military coups. Achebe has rightly addressed the political, social, cultural and ethnological crises of his time.

As a politically conscious writer, Achebe has not evaded the task of diagnosing the evils of politics in his trilogy and in his last two novels *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*. In *A Man of the People* Achebe has criticized the post-independence politicians with colonial mindsets. But, the young generation politicians, who are caught up in the rat race of climbing to the zenith of pelf and power, cannot escape Achebe's critical eyes. Odili, in *A Man of the People*, initially appears to be an idealistic politician but very soon, he is also caught up by the disposition of the national bourgeoisie class. Chris, Sam and Ikem in *Anthills of the Savannah* appear to be alienated from the subaltern by marginalizing them. They belong to the post-independence bourgeois class of people who, instead of doing the job of nation-building, indulge in power-games and promote a society "... infested with neo-colonial vices, from post-independence corruption to the process of fascist dehumanization stifling the freedom of speech of people's democracy" (Dasgupta 90). Thus, the aloofness of the elite and educated groups of the neo-colonized generation

serves as one of the major causes that create angst and anxieties among the post-independence people of Nigeria. Obi, a Nigerian, educated in Western traditions, in *No Longer at Ease* fails to bring about a synthesis between his knowledge and Igbo traditional society. He is caught up in the capitalist vices and the long nourished taboos of the traditional system. He is a product of cultural hybridization, beset with corruption, representing the split-up mind of the colonial generation. Okonkwo, in *Things Fall Apart*, puts more emphasis on his egotism than on the Igbo traditional values. Thus, the dichotomy between what people are and what they should be has created angst and anxieties in post-colonial Nigerian society and hence, the reading of Achebe's novels is like the reading of the historical problematic of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria troubled by the penetration of colonial practices into indigeneity. Achebe examines the historical evolution of African society from inside and portrays cultural, political and psychological circumstances of the gradual formation of Africa as an individual entity.

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## 6

# Conclusion

### **Achebe: A Visionary Indicating the Way Out of Angst and Anxieties**

Achebe's modernity lies in his view of realism regarding the symbiotic relationship between man and society. While depicting this relation, he has successfully kept himself aloof from sentimentality, bias, prejudices and resentment. He is acclaimed, as mentioned in *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, for unsentimental depictions of the social and psychological disorientation together with the imposition of Western customs and values upon traditional African society (61). His novels faithfully and convincingly depict the tragic consequences of the European colonialism for the African societies. This particular quality has made him a unique and powerful writer. Achebe, as a writer with a liberal mind, tries to mediate between African aesthetics and European discourse. He stands at the crossroads of Igbo and European traditions, and from that space, attempts to develop an Africanist discourse. His writings, especially his novels, form narratives that explore the pitfalls of local systems and policies before and after political independence. Readers may misunderstand him for criticizing Igbo traditional values, but if they understand the full significance of his

broad and liberal attitude to accommodating both local and European discourses for the well-being of Nigeria, they would surely revere him as a historically conscious writer.

Achebe's novels appear to be an attempt at producing or appropriating "a European genre to negotiate an African problematic: vindicating Nigeria and Igbo culture is a part of this larger strategy" (Kortenaar 59). For four or five centuries, European discourse, philosophy and dialectics dominated not only Africa but also most of the rest of the world. Eurocentric intellectual concepts tended to misrepresent the rest of the world. Africa and Asia were given various derogatory labels after the imposition of European hierarchy. But, in reaction to intellectual oppression, a group of African intellectuals developed their own ways of thinking and viewing life which cast a challenge to Eurocentric or Caucoscentric discourses. One of them was Achebe who attempted to liberate the history and politics of Nigeria from the European framework. True, "history shapes how one thinks about politics, and how one does politics, affects how one thinks about history" (Cooper 231). The purpose and motives of European colonialism were to take the history and politics of Nigeria, above all, Africa, in its grip to misinterpret the natives' identity. Nigerians struggled for decades not only for sovereignty but also for regaining or rescuing both their history and politics from the grip of the Europeans.

True, self-identity of a nation lies in its cultural identity which “involves multiple issues of history, environment, values, social stratification, knowledge, power, and wealth which are also the domain of development” (Falola 50). So, Achebe’s trilogy has become a record of Nigerian, above all, the whole African documents. His trilogy and other novels expose his aesthetic sensibility to the power of Igbo tradition and language. As a politically conscious writer, Achebe has prepared his novels as an enduring discourse that has captured the essence of people’s lives. He again suggests that Africa intends to survive, progress and modernize without losing its distinctive cultural identity. Africa adheres to its cultural identity and at the same time initiates to accommodate the competitive global setting of culture. This ambivalent stance has become a source of angst and anxieties in the mind of Africa. Achebe’s trilogy aptly feels the pulse of Nigeria and, above all, Africa with all its angst and anxieties.

Viewed from a Marxist perspective, writers are the progenies of their times, no matter whether they are conscious of it or not. Historical consciousness produces an urge in the minds of writers to write about their past. So, it is said, “that writing and historical development necessarily go hand in hand” (Gikandi 2). Achebe is a product of historical realities formulated by colonial discourse. As a historically conscious writer, Achebe realized that even in post-colonial Nigeria, political stability and people’s wellbeing could not be ensured because the Africans to whom the colonizers had



handed over power were “designed principally to provide the modicum of education considered necessary to produce Africans suitable to assist the colonizers” (Okolo 127). Achebe’s Sam, Chris and Ikeme in *Anthills of the Savannah*, Obi in *No Longer at Ease*, Odili in *A Man of the People* and Uduche in *Arrow of God* “emerged as leaders are made up for the most part of petit-bourgeois nationalists, more concerned with replacing Europeans in the leading positions of power and privilege than with effecting a radical transformation of the state and the society around it” (Okolo 127). Actually, after 1960, politics in Nigeria did not go with its own political culture; it rather showed more sensitivity to the politics of Western academia than to the local social and political realities. And decolonization does not mean depoliticization, and as the postcolonial politicians could not break through the margin of Western political epistemology they turned into petit-bourgeois nationalists and consequently post-independence Nigeria was led to anomalies.

After the Second World War, European colonialism experienced a massive blow which came in the form of anti-colonial disposition, and at this, the intellectual practice among natives “tended to analyze the determinants of thinking and behavior in a more complex way than is possible when using terms like ideology” (Mills 26). True, the Second World War helped in bringing the natives closer to political enterprises and agenda. Consequently, they started to think seriously about colonial hegemony and

assumed that they were the victims of the system of thought of the colonizers. This assumption brought the question of ethnic identity to the forefront of consciousness. As a result, questions of belonging, location, rights, citizenship, empowerment, welfare and affiliation filled the minds of the natives. Besides, intellectual practice enabled the colonized to know how literature and art reflects power-relations. Due to the influence of Marxist ideas, the colonized or the natives began thinking of power relations that intersected and coincided in cultural and literary texts. Marxism made people suspicious about colonial hegemony. It also made people realize that “culture is a system where particular ideas about truth, beauty and aesthetics are developed in relation to particular classes” (Nayar 123). All these intersecting thoughts led the post-Second World War generation to angst and anxieties that generated an intense urge in them to write back to the colonizers. Achebe writes with such angst and anxieties; these have inspired him to produce a new and native way of thinking against colonial domination. Eurocentric hegemony, even after the departure of the colonizers, does not allow the structural transformation of the state. Even local leaders, who work as the progenies of the colonizers, continue their legacy. They are unwilling to decentralize power, and in his novels, Achebe exhibits how the monopoly of state-power abuses the values and identity of the natives.

But in most cases common people do not put up violence against this monopoly of power. Though the corrupt leaders go on exploiting the general masses of the country, Achebe has found that common people do not show any interest in revolution and “through Ikem in *Anthills of the Savannah*, he suggests that the arrangement for violent revolution overlooks man’s disposition to surprise” (Okolo 130). It is usually found that the capitalists remain in the driving seat of government in the post-colonial countries. They use all the state apparatuses to amass wealth while the poor always try to keep body and soul together and remain indifferent to resistance against the hypocritical rulers whose words and practices contradict each other. This is the case in Nigeria which sufficiently represents a typical colonial country. In this connection, Okolo asserts:

The poor standard of living of most of the people in African countries is such that they should have been pushed to the brink of revolutionary violence, yet nothing of the sort has happened. Instead, the masses usually devise new ways of reconciling themselves to their disappointment. (130)

True, as the poor are deprived of all the basic rights, they prove resentment, but due to lack of proper and systematic literacy, which is not easy for them to achieve owing to insolvency, they cannot create an effective resistance. Besides, the capitalists and a section of African bourgeois intellectuals, patronized by them, continue in attempting at erasing the memories of

historical times from the minds of the locals, and eventually become successful in their attempt to a great extent, as there emerges no rebellion against them from the part of the common mass.

As the common people always wrestle with deprivation to keep body and soul together, they feel no stimulus to think of a resistance against the rulers. For example, Ikem in *Anthills of the Savannah* realizes that no stimulus on the part of the government can change the spirit of the general masses. Even Okonkwo's alienation from his clansmen after killing the court-messenger in *Things Fall Apart* exhibits the same socio-political stratifications. In *No Longer at Ease*, despite his lofty ideals, Obi fails to change Nigeria with the help of his ideals and is unable to stick to his desire to become westernized in habit and practice perhaps owing to his falling into the pitfalls created by the gap between his hope and hopelessness. Odili's disappointment also comes out of his consciousness of failure in involving the masses in his struggle against the corrupted minister Nanga in *A Man of the People*.

In all his novels including the trilogy, Achebe shows that the political, social, economic and individual anxieties of Nigeria cannot be resolved without the spirit of nationhood and radicalism. The problems of African dependency and underdevelopment cannot be solved without a strong leadership. Incompetent leadership and the utopian ideals of the elites educated in the West can only perpetuate angst and anxiety. Political

leaders like Sam of *Anthills of the Savannah* cannot lead Nigeria to prosperity without developing the qualities of a visionary leader. Obi, a man who mimics the Western patterns of life cannot reform Nigeria with borrowed ideals. Impulsive Okonkwo of *Things Fall Apart* cannot produce a discourse against the District Commissioner's attitude to the natives. In *Arrow of God* Ezeulu's rigour of shutting down all the windows of his mind prevents him from assessing the disposition of his people. What Okonkwo and Ezeulu try to do is a kind of violent revolution which cannot be the means of effective evolution of a society. It rather hinders the chances for better management of the country by accelerating uncertainty in an atmosphere of unequal epistemological competence. Hence, to overcome the existing angst and anxieties "what is needed are committed leaders who can bring about a positive change in general social attitude, formulate good and workable public policies, set priorities and abide by them" (Okolo 134).

In fact, failure of the leaders to formulate a reliable policy for the good governance of the country contributes to the intensification of angst and anxieties among the people. It also makes the people suspect that there is a dichotomy in the roles of their politicians, and this kind of feeling gives birth to anxieties among them. This dichotomy is found in Okonkwo's personality, too. There is dichotomy between his loyalty to his tradition and breaking of the sanctity of his tradition by beating his wife on a sacred day of the week, shooting the son of Ezeudu in his funeral ceremony by mistake

or killing Ikemefuna, the boy who called him father, with his own hands. Actually, his “‘manliness complex’ appears to dry up the milk of human kindness in him as evidenced in his merciless killing of Ikemefuna against the advice of Ezeudu, a village elder (Reddy 34).

Furthermore, intensive investigation of the dichotomy in Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* reveals that his adulthood is marked in his consciousness by his location in colonial society and a struggle to the construction of self-identity. But, consciousness generates angst and anxieties when it is challenged by submission on the part of the natives to the colonizers. In the market-place scene, when Umuofians gather to decide further course of action and their attitude towards the colonizers, Okika, a great orator, delivers a fiery speech and declares:

We who are here this morning have remained true to our fathers, but our brothers have deserted us and joined a stranger to soil their fatherland. If we fight the stranger we shall hit our brothers and perhaps shed the blood of the clansman. But we must do it...So we must do what our fathers would never have done” (144).

But strangely enough in the same scene when Okonkwo in the extremity of rage, kills the court messenger, nobody stands beside him; rather he "heard voices asking: 'Why did he do it?'" (145). Once Okonkwo was celebrated as a hero for bringing five human heads from the battle field. But now, for cutting off only one head he is vehemently questioned. Okonkwo fails to

realize that during his exile his village underwent a great change because he “was not a man of thought but of [thoughtless] action (*Things Fall Apart* 48).

This dichotomy between Okonkwo’s assumption and reality reveals the internal ethnic disintegration which frustrates the spirit of nationhood. The reverse course of action of his own clansmen leads Okonkwo to anxiety which ultimately instigates him to bring about a humiliating and tragic end of his life. Similarly, this dichotomy reveals the post-independence Nigerian society which gradually gets intersected with the West and not only *Things Fall Apart* but also two other novels of the trilogy receive a tremendous injection of energy from historical circumstances, reflecting a true picture of their contemporary period with the desire of contributing to the construction of reliable post-colonial cultural identities for new African nations.

In connection with the same trend of history, *No Longer at Ease* has been constructed in close association with the “rise of the bourgeoisie as the new European class, supplanting the medieval aristocracy” (Irele 142). During the post-colonial period, due to the inclination to Western culture, Nigeria experienced a decadence of indigeneity of its cultural identity. Then hybridization replaces local tradition. This issue of decadence has made Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* mostly a historical novel. Achebe knows that decadence of values affects not only material phenomena but also the

psychic condition of people. Therefore, he has depicted a schizophrenic neo-colonial generation through the character of Obi Okonkwo in *No Longer at Ease*, who is puzzled by falling into “the conflict between personal needs and social obligations” (JanMohamed 175). His ideals formulated by Western attitude frustrate him and prove him helpless on the face of the tremendous power of indigeneity.

Viewed from a psycho-analytical perspective, Obi Okonkwo also appears to be schizophrenic, and split up between ‘Self’ and ‘Other’. His mind is severely disorganized. Falling into the pitfalls of ambivalence, caused by the hybridization between his native tradition and his inclination to the European way of life, he experiences psychosis which “is marked by an impaired ability to interpret and test reality” (Crider et al 534). Obi encounters the predicament of two conflicting situations. His conflict with his parents and the Umuofian Progressive Union metaphorically incarnates a corrosive conflict between European epistemology and African dialectics. Again, Clara, his beloved, an *Osu*<sup>1</sup>, represents the culture and ideals of the Western Christian world. True, “[C]onflict generally arises at choice point...Conflict will give rise to behavioral problems when it is not resolved in meaningful behavior” (Ali 387). Obi shows incompatibility in resolving his conflict by accepting either of these two forces. In the conflicting situation, an individual usually tries to resolve by aligning with

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<sup>1</sup> *Osu* are the people who were domestic slave in the past and dedicated to the gods. So they are regarded as slaves, outcasts, strangers and untouchables in Igbo culture.



either of the two. But Obi tries to accommodate both Western patterns of belief and thinking which is incarnated through his abortive attempt at marrying an *Osu* and compromising with his tradition, represented by his parents. But the fatal mistake that Obi commits lies in his ignorance that his parents are Christians with Igbo traditional values and Christianity lost all attraction for “its policy of racial segregation” (Husain). During the colonial enterprise, Christianity assumed the role of hegemony in Africa and hence, a compromise between Christianity and Igbo indigeneity was not possible.

True, utopian or idealist disposition that usually evades the practical necessity of balance or equilibrium between appearance and reality obstructs a man from realizing the realities of history closely. Obi, in *No Longer at Ease*, as an idealist and a man of bookish knowledge, could not realize reality. He apprehends the binary oppositions superficially, not practically. His apprehension of elimination in such a juncture leads him to angst and anxieties. In this connection, one thing that is to be clarified here is that angst, which is synonymous with fear, is termed as ‘objective anxiety’ by Freud and is “a realistic response to perceived danger in the environment” (Hilgard 440). On the other hand, neurotic anxiety, as Freud has classified it, stems from the unconscious conflict of the individual. Angst is generated by the anguish which has still hope of salvation from the phenomena responsible for anguish or worries also. But, anxiety is generated from a feeling of uncertainty which does not have any hope of

salvation. So, the use of these two different terms together refers to the individual's in-between situation of hope and hopelessness. In *No Longer at Ease*, Obi like Achebe's two other major characters - Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* and Ezeulu in *Arrow of God* – is trapped in the in-between situation of hope and hopelessness.

Obi's conflict with the Umuofian Progressive Union and his parents gives rise to feelings of angst of elimination in him. And his falling into a juncture of two opposite streams of ideologies leads him to anxiety. These dual states of psychology are found in Okonkwo and Ezeulu also. True, angst and anxiety generate tension, and hence, the individual tries to evade the realities and reduce them. In the process of reducing them, the individual may take a drastic action, like, assaulting the agent that serves as a stimulus or killing himself or committing suicide or growing vindictive towards the stimulus. For example, Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* commits suicide; Ezeulu in *Arrow of God* turns vindictive and hence does not declare time for the Yam festival while Obi in *No Longer at Ease* evades the stimuli, that is, he avoids the Umuofian Progressive Union and also does not attend his mother's funeral.

Social decadence gives rise to angst and anxieties in Achebe's characters. For example, in *Arrow of God*, decadence of local authority and values gives rise to anxiety and Ezeulu's anxiety emerges from his discovery of the advent and interference of the colonial power as a counter force in his

locality. Colonial enterprises, typically run by Winterbottom, serve as a stimulus which motivates Ezeulu to cast himself against it as a counter force. In fact, the time of Ezeulu is the time of tension and African crosscurrents. Rampant capitalism, imperial powers, Christian missionaries and higher education in Western patterns met together. Capitalism came to Africa together with the Christian missionaries. Imperial powers also got amalgamated with the activities of the missionaries. Education in European format was imposed upon the Africans to bring them under the umbrella of a singular pattern of thinking with a view to producing mimic men. All these stimuli produced heterogeneity of identity and obfuscated the natives and caused tension among them. Standing on the crucial ground of history, Achebe has explored the cultural legacy of colonialism in *Arrow of God* through its protagonist Ezeulu who alienates himself in his complex search for power. He is doomed to nothing as he cherishes contradictory desires of dominating his people and at the same time alienating himself from them. His rigorous temperament has dehumanized him through alienation.

The colonial process of dehumanizing the natives accelerates angst and anxieties among them. Achebe, as a historically conscious writer, has not missed the opportunity to depict the colonizers' deliberate politics of dehumanizing the natives. His *Things Fall Apart* seeks to provide his readers with "a realistic depiction of their past, free of the distortions and stereotypes imposed upon that past in European accounts" (Irele 146). This

novel depicts the breakdown of traditional harmony under the impact of colonialism that escalates transition in Igbo society. *No Longer at Ease* portrays the anxieties of the generation of 1950s moving towards liberty from British hegemony. *Arrow of God* depicts Nigeria where colonialism has already established its euphoria and many Igbo people are embracing European culture and thus reflects upon the picture of transition or shifting of historical realities. *A Man of the People* groups the history of post-colonial Nigeria with a bitter tone of satire on political corruption and the consequential military dictatorship. His *Anthills of the Savannah* depicts how dreams turn into nightmare and how the process of the restoration of nationalism turns into disillusionment owing to the failure of leadership in post-colonial Nigeria. Thus, Achebe's novels are "a powerful indictment of the violence and corruption that have informed the post-colonial histories of so many African nations" (Irele 146). His novels are about a close affinity of man to his society whose corruption and dehumanizing control by the colonizers leads man to angst and anxieties.

If Achebe's novels are viewed from historical and psychological perspectives, then it is found that Achebe has depicted how the processes of dehumanization and depersonalization generate uneasiness among the natives. For example, in *Arrow of God* Ezeulu's imprisonment in Okperi metaphorically exhibits the colonial process of dehumanization and depersonalization through creating panic and apprehension among the

natives. The dignified image that Ezeulu embodies is fatally marred. No native, afraid of the same fate, come forward to his rescue. In the face of the colonial practice of dehumanizing the natives, Ezeulu realizes the vulnerability of his position in the colonizing situations and the passivity of the natives. Consequently, his sense of loss of identity causes worries which encourages him to restore his lost position and dignity in the eyes of the people of his community. If Ezeulu's condition is viewed from historical perspective, “[I]t is this dignity that many African people all but lost during the colonial period...” (Stratton 24). Loss of dignity or loss of self-respect is the worst thing for anybody and the apprehension of this loss creates uneasiness. Out of anxiety, Ezeulu grows desperate and keeps himself aloof from the declaration of the time for the Yam Festival. He wants that his people should know his importance and dignity. But he is a mere individual fighting helplessly against two extremely huge forces - one is the colonial discourse and the other, the passivity of his own people. The result is his inevitable defeat and the consequential spread of colonial enterprises. In this way, the failure of internal order makes room for the colonial practices. In the words of Achebe:

If the rat cannot flee fast enough

Let him make way for the tortoise! (*Arrow of God* 231)

This excerpt that Achebe has quoted from Igbo folklore, aptly interprets how the local priest Ezeulu's ambivalence and consequential failure to give

proper leadership to his people makes way for the germination and gradual flourishing of colonialism in his part of Nigeria. Besides, “the internalization of the imperialist idea of native inferiority is probably the worst form of psychic damage...” (JanMohamed 152). It also contributes to the failure of forging a resistance against the success of colonial enterprise.

It is worth mentioning that ambivalence emerges out of the colonial politics of racism through dehumanizing. For example, Joyce Cary and Conrad’s books appear to be a lurid attempt at dehumanizing the Africans. In this connection, Stratton asserts:

In *Things Fall Apart*, the Carys and Conrads of colonial Africa are represented by the District Commissioner whose own version of the story of imperial conquest is to be told in a book entitled ‘*The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Nigeria*’ (187), a book in which Africans are to be represented as primitive savages, and the destruction of a sophisticated culture rendered as ‘pacification’. (24)

Achebe’s loyalty to history manifests in many of his interviews, essays and his five novels and he held that the “African novel must undertake the special task of demonstrating that Africa even has a pre-colonial history” (Irele 156). Achebe is well-aware of the textual politics of misinterpreting the conditions of the natives. So, in *Things Fall Apart* he shows how the District Commissioner deliberately decides to write a book highlighting the

conditions of the natives and Okonkwo's suicide with deliberate negligence and distortion.

An intense investigation shows that the colonizers' policies of romanticizing and feminizing the natives accelerate anxiety among the locals. For example, the District Commissioner in *Things Fall Apart* plans to write '*The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of Lower Nigeria*' and it reveals the colonial politics of feminizing and romanticizing Africa because he intends to write it without having proper knowledge of the political, social and ethnological causes that instigate Okonkwo to commit suicide. Okonkwo's suicide is a trivial subject-matter making an 'interesting reading'. A 'reasonable paragraph' will be enough to narrate the story of Okonkwo's suicide. By committing suicide Okonkwo profanes his custom and becomes untouchable to his clansmen as "[I]t is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offence against the Earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen. His body is evil, and only strangers may touch it" (*Things Fall Apart* 147). A thorough exploration of the situations that lead Okonkwo to commit suicide reveals that the cause of his tragedy lies in his anxiety and consciousness of his failure to make his clansmen feel what he himself feels. In fact, consciousness develops through the gradual formation of the sense of identity which is constructed by acquisition of language and social practices. Okonkwo's consciousness has deceived his unconscious state of his mind that defers him to

understand his own repressed desire which, in the language of Freud, is *thanatos* or death wish. Death wish emerges out of the ultimate desire for relief from tensions “because all the tensions in human psyche disappeared in the final state of non-being” (Webster 94). Okonkwo’s realization of emptiness of his attempt at involving his people in his action against the colonizers and the consequence of his failure in holding things together generate anxiety or tensions whose culmination leads him to *thanatos*.

Okonkwo’s *thanatos* lies in the ambivalence which takes its origin from his acute apprehension of the failure of his command upon his community. He discovers himself in the time of the cultural ambiguity, too. It is fairly obvious, when Achebe started writing *Things Fall Apart* in 1950s, it was a period of anxiety and crises because the formation of the Nigerian attitude and thinking was then going on. Collapse of colonial authority and the rise of historical consciousness of the locals posited themselves against each other. The traumatic and conflicting situations between Nigeria and Europe left a scar on the minds of the post-colonial generation. Consequently, Nigeria continued to experience a trauma in the post-colonial period because even then the natives experienced the neo-colonial politics of misinterpreting and reducing their story of the struggle against European colonial practices into a single paragraph in the colonizers’ text. In this novel, the District Commissioner thought, “The story of this man [Okonkwo] who had killed a messenger and hanged himself would make



interesting reading. One could almost write a whole chapter on him. Perhaps not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph, at any rate” (147-48). The knowledge of the colonizers’ humiliating politics of reducing their story of the struggle against colonial enterprises into a single paragraph helps the Nigerians as well as the Africans develop their national consciousness. Okonkwo’s friend Obierika perceives the deliberate politics of the colonizers and he vehemently says, “That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself: and now he will be buried like a dog” (147). He cannot make a physical resistance but his knowledge of the European practices that have led Okonkwo to his humiliating end indicates the rise of Nigerian consciousness.

True, culmination of tension makes the individuals find a way out and this search for liberty from this mental condition leads them to formation of consciousness. Achebe demonstrates this process of development of consciousness metaphorically through Obierika in *Things Fall Apart*. Obierika stands for rationalism while Okonkwo stands for emotion. Okonkwo fails to realize why things around him are falling apart. But, Obierika can truly comprehend it. He criticizes Okonkwo for his rashness in various situations. He rebukes him for killing Ikemefuna with his own hands because the boy has called him father. He also criticizes Okonkwo when he beats his wife during the Week of Peace because it profanes the Igbo custom. Thus, through the character of Obierika, Achebe tends to

show the rise of Nigerian consciousness. In fact, Obierika locates the problem of colonization very rationally, and for this reason, it is possible for him to enlist the causes that lead Okonkwo to his predicament.

Metaphorically, Obierika represents the conscious natives of Nigeria who have gone through experiencing the repeated failure of democracy and the consequential military coups in the country. Failure of democracy and repeated military dictatorship has given the post-colonial Nigerians a feeling of uncertainty about their dreams of nationalism, fraternity and importance of the spirit of African heritage. Nervousness or weakness of the internal government tempts the colonizers to exercise power over the natives. But it is true that exercise of power is not just a repressive thing. It can be a positive force, too. Exercise of power upon the natives by the colonizers generates knowledge and resistance, and gradually the latter develop consciousness of their own identity. Therefore, the colonial process of reducing the natives into subhuman beings is gradually and subsequently challenged by the natives' development of political and cultural consciousness. Indigeneity of culture, encapsulated not in authority but in ambiguity, emerges owing to the failure of collective consciousness that lies in the ethnic diversity of the country.

In this connection, in *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo's self-conscious desire is that he will be able to drive away the colonizers. But towards the end of his consistent strife, he discovers that he is deceived by his self-conceit and

he realizes it when “[T]hey [his fellow men] had broken into tumult instead of action” after he has killed the court messenger (145). This failure frustrates him in developing a collective consciousness. Absence of collective consciousnesses is a fatal hamartia among different ethnic groups in Nigeria, and it is very aptly manipulated by the colonizers. Okonkwo is more a man of physical strength than a man of intelligence, and “he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the cat” (3). His disliking for his father’s feminine personality makes the readers think of the “problems of genealogy and cultural identity which have haunted Igbo culture...” (Gikandi 29). Okonkwo represents a cultural identity based on the exhibition of physical strength, and not on the capability of producing a potent counter-discourse. Such intellectual inertia disables him in formulating a collective consciousness, and this inertia gives birth to angst and anxieties not only in Okonkwo but also in other natives living in the same circumstances.

All novels by Achebe have depicted post-colonial angst and anxieties very powerfully. Failure to integrate ‘self’ with ‘community’ stems from angst and anxieties in *A Man of the People*. It depicts political hypocrisy after the transfer of power into the hands of the local bourgeois class of people. Its protagonist Odili’s incapacity to find out a national idiom for the identity of a national community is the cause of his anxiety. Chief Nanga’s eloquence gains applause, but he assumes vocabulary of the white man for

presentation of his community-identity. Odili's failure in producing a local idiom alienates him from his community. Moreover, his resentment and anger for Nanga are mostly subjective because they have emerged from Nanga's snatching away his beloved Edna from him. He cannot convince his community about the justifiability of his fight against the corrupted minister mostly because he has individualized the problem of the nation. The following words explain how the so-called men of the people show indifference to their nation only for the sake of their personal interest: "The owner of the village, and the village had a mind; it could say 'no' to sacrilege. But in the affairs of the nation there was no owner; the law of the village became powerless" (*A Man of the People* 137). Achebe has diagnosed here the natives' lack of integrity in the question of national interest and this great pitfall keenly instigates corruption and caprice of the political leaders in post-colonial Nigeria.

Disintegration among the natives acts as a block on the way to the formation of a national idiom to characterize the natives as a nation. Odili's ultimate realization is that it is not possible for him to unite all these segregated communities who cannot sacrifice their interest for the greater interest of the people. They are rather motivated by the policy of "eat-and-let-eat" (137). In the midst of this great anomaly of segregation, Odili is also alienated by his individual purpose. Hence, Odili's attempt of forming a new political party falls flat. Initially many people come to join the new

party. Odili's purpose is to replace Nanga with his own party. But the common people's perception is that the politicians are utterly corrupted and they take bribe to become rich. Hence, they will also get the share of it if they participate in his [Odili's] political party. Odili tries to show the people that the ruling government is utterly corrupted, and he is going to replace it with a new one through a campaign of his political party. But, to his utter surprise, no one believes him. They cannot come out of the cocoon of their usual perception. Their knowledge and determination are formulated by the capitalistic and socio-economic enterprises which are fettered by the moneyed political leaders whom Chief Nanga represents. Therefore:

The elders and the councilors of Urua and the whole people, he [Crier] said, had decided that in the present political fight raging in the land they should make it known that they knew one man and one man alone- Chief Nanga. Every man and every woman in Urua and every child and every adult would throw his or her paper for him on the day of election- as they had done in the past. (*A Man of the People* 124)

Consequently, Odili's campaign against Nanga fails. He discovers himself in an alienated and helpless condition in the midst of his fight against corruption. He, like other Achebean protagonists, makes a mistake by keeping his own self away from the self of his community. He cannot connect himself with his society and this alienation dissuades him from

developing national consciousness, realization of which leads him to angst and anxieties that mar the harmony of his struggle for political objective. But, despite all these limitations, he tries to become a mouthpiece “of a growing individualism in a post-independence society. This shift from collective will of the people to the individual response to a situation suggests the degree of change that has set in the Igbo tribal society and Nigeria at national levels” (Dasgupta 65).

Similarly, Achebe’s last novel *Anthills of the Savannah* metaphorically depicts the anomalous condition of post-colonial Nigeria. Ikem, Chris, Sam and Beatrice are four friends. They are petit bourgeois with European education. They were close to each other twenty-five years back but now they are segregated from one another for their individual goals of power. Achebe parallels their relationship with the things falling apart like the condition of post-independence Nigeria. Sam alienates himself from his community by his haughty and proud disposition. His intense determination to retaliate against his friend Ikem proves him to be vindictive. Chris ventures to penetrate into the mask of power. He looks upon Sam as a clown in power. Ikem, like Obi, is an idealist, and likes to imagine himself in an idealist space that will pave way for him to the redemption of the nation. Standing on such a ground, “[H]e saw himself as an explorer who has just cleared a cluster of obstacles in an arduous expedition...” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 140). Living in a utopia, Ikem presents himself as a

dreamer and intends to bring down the world to his self-will. From this romantic idealism Ikem takes Sam as a jester. Sam also looks upon them as a threat to his authority. Eventually, the government fails owing to the clash of these leaders' individual interests. At the end, Sam meets his tragedy in an inevitable military coup. Such internal disintegration and political unawareness of the common people gear up the fall of democracy in the country. Thus, Achebe exhibits that internal disintegration and lack of competent leadership are a few of the major causes of anxieties that cause Nigeria's failure as a state in the post-colonial period.

If one looks closely at Achebe's trilogy from historical perspective, it is found that Achebe has envisaged a Nigeria which will be able to step outside Africa into the world, equal to the European or Western world in respect of its own language, narrative and discourse. His trilogy produces a spectrum of meanings as their contexts are always subject to change. As history and social processes change from time to time, appraisals of literary texts change. If his trilogy is explored from colonial and post-colonial perspectives, it is found that it envisages the angst and anxieties of the colonial and the post-colonial periods of Nigeria as it is sincerely dedicated to the exploration of the psychic world of the Nigerians. It offers a subtle diagnosis of the pitfalls of Nigeria's history of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods, and produces a seminal appraisal of Igbo society. It appears to be a paradigm shift from literary to psychological and historical

studies. Achebe's trilogy is throbbing with "uncertainty and anxiety about relationship to European identity which it has set out to negate ..." (Gikandi 9). An intensive study reveals that as a writer, Achebe remains true to the history and minds of the people of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. He has not romanticized or mystified Igbo culture as well as African aesthetics; he rather tries to synthesize African aesthetics with the patterns of the epistemology of the European colonizers sincerely with a view to ensuring individual entity. But when the colonizers' aesthetics attempts at playing the role of hegemony and tends to eliminate the indigenous cultural identity, there emerge anxieties. Achebe, in such circumstances, has seen how things fall apart and how the cultural crosscurrents manipulate the indigeneity of Igbo culture through propagating rampant corruption, exploitation and internal disintegration. In such a predicament Achebe declares a crusade against the European politics of denigrating the local culture and thus pays a tribute to his indigeneity. He has, like a teacher, suggested that political reformation is to be given priority for the solution of the problems of Nigeria.

For the elevation of Nigeria from the slough of angst and anxieties, true political leaders, not soldiers, are needed. The collapse of Kangan in *Anthills of the Savannah* results from Sam's role as a soldier, not as a political leader. Sam says to his fellows, "You all seem to forget that I am still a soldier, not a politician" (4). Even Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*



considers himself as a soldier set against the missionary. In *No Longer at Ease*, Obi behaves like a soldier fighting against the hybridity of his cultural identity. In *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu looks upon himself as an arrow [soldier] of his god Ulu. Odili in *A Man of the People* possesses the disposition of a soldier more than that of a man of the people. Consequently, all of them fail.

As such, Achebe's trilogy is mostly an intensive study of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigerian history, culture, psychology, politics and identity-crisis, and the intertextuality of all these aspects has made his trilogy and two other novels a study of cultural crosscurrents, politics, language, psychology, history, ethnology and above all, African dialectics. Achebe has revised the history of Africa and invented a discourse in parallel with the African aesthetics, and thus produced a vehement attempt at decolonizing, nationalizing and modernizing Nigerian as well as African literary canon. By addressing the indigeneity of the Nigerian history and culture, Achebe has invited his readers to see how the Nigerian consciousness assumes its patterns and forms through an intersection of the local aesthetics with the European patterns of knowledge. Thus, he contributes immensely to the concretization of the place of Nigerian and above all, African literature. Assuming the role of a reformer, he suggests that the priority of the initiative of competent leaders who truly know the

art of governance and who can achieve development and hence promote the general public welfare can rid Nigeria of angst and anxieties.

In fine, for Achebe, literature is “the most utilized medium for the colonized writer to battle against the falsehood spread by colonizers through the misuse of literature” (Dasgupta 19). There is no exaggeration in saying that African literature is politically committed, and the novels, poetry and dramas are wholly conditioned by the colonial situations. For this, these genres have become a voice of resistance, a voice that is raised out of angst and anxieties about the identity crisis of the Africans. But Achebe, a writer with an accommodative disposition, depicts through the people of his novels that uncompromising rigorousness for indigeneity does not mean progress; rather adapting oneself with changes can help one or even a community rise above angst and anxieties. Angst and anxieties lead a man, a community and a nation to a backward direction. But change does not mean annihilation of the local values and customs; neither does it mean colonial subjugation. It rather means innovation, mutualization and modernization. Achebe advocates in favour of the innovation and intersection of ideas, cultures and knowledge and this very quality of a community rids it of angst and anxieties and “promotes a whole and complete force” of the people (Achebe 141).

True, angst and anxieties are prevailing over not only Nigerian society but whole Africa also even today. Although Africa has been able to heal “the

wounds sustained over four hundred years of slavery, Europe was busy devising other methods of subjugation: colonialism” (Davies 16). Today colonialism has left Africa after doing everything for the destruction of kinship, cultural pattern, local traditions, socio-economic organizations and even committing genocide. But neo-colonialism, corrupt leadership, defective international trade, intertribal clash, rise of insurgency, the burden of debt and new rise of imperialism are still instigating angst and anxieties among the Africans. So, Achebe’s writings aptly serve as a field of study to which generations of scholars will continue devoting their labour and time.

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