



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

COLONISING THE MIND IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *THINGS FALL APART*, *ARROW OF GOD*, AND *NO LONGER AT EASE*

Alican ERBAKAN

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2017

COLONISING THE MIND IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *THINGS FALL
APART, ARROW OF GOD, AND NO LONGER AT EASE*

Alican ERBAKAN

Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2017

KABUL VE ONAY

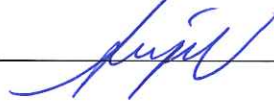
Alican ERBAKAN tarafından hazırlanan “Colonising the Mind in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, and *No Longer at Ease*” başlıklı bu çalışma, 20.01.2017 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak Kabul edilmiştir.



Prof. Dr. Burçin EROL (Başkan)



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Alev KARADUMAN (Danışman)



Prof. Dr. Serpil OPPERMANN



Doç. Dr. Lerzan GÜLTEKİN



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Şebnem KAYA

Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylarım.

Prof. Dr. Sibel BOZBEYOĞLU

Enstitü Müdürü

BİLDİRİM

Hazırladığım tezin tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu ve her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi taahhüt eder, tezimin kağıt ve elektronik kopyalarının Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü arşivlerinde aşağıda belirttiğim koşullarda saklanmasına izin verdiğimi onaylarım:

- ☐ Tezimin tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir.
- ☐ Tezim sadece Hacettepe Üniversitesi yerleşkelerinden erişime açılabilir.
- ☒ Tezimin 2 yıl süreyle erişime açılmasını istemiyorum. Bu sürecin sonunda uzatma için başvuruda bulunmadığım takdirde, tezimin tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir.

20.01.2017



Alican ERBAKAN

YAYIMLAMA VE FİKRİ MÜLKİYET HAKLARI BEYANI

Enstitü tarafından onaylanan lisansüstü tezimin/raporumun tamamını veya herhangi bir kısmını, basılı (kâğıt) ve elektronik formatta arşivleme ve aşağıda verilen koşullarla kullanıma açma iznini Hacettepe Üniversitesine verdiğimi bildiririm. Bu izinle Üniversiteye verilen kullanım hakları dışındaki tüm fikri mülkiyet haklarım bende kalacak, tezimin tamamının ya da bir bölümünün gelecekteki çalışmalarda (makale, kitap, lisans ve patent vb.) kullanım hakları bana ait olacaktır.

Tezin kendi orijinal çalışmam olduğunu, başkalarının haklarını ihlal etmediğimi ve tezimin tek yetkili sahibi olduğumu beyan ve taahhüt ederim. Tezimde yer alan telif hakkı bulunan ve sahiplerinden yazılı izin alınarak kullanılması zorunlu metinlerin yazılı izin alınarak kullandığımı ve istenildiğinde suretlerini Üniversiteye teslim etmeyi taahhüt ederim.

- ☐ Tezimin/Raporumun tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılabilir ve bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınabilir. (Bu seçenekle teziniz arama motorlarında indekslenebilecek, daha sonra tezinizin erişim statüsünün değiştirilmesini talep etmeniz ve kütüphane bu talebinizi yerine getirse bile, teziniz arama motorlarının önbelleklerinde kalmaya devam edebilecektir)
- ☒ Tezimin/Raporumun 07 Şubat 2019 tarihine kadar erişime açılmasını ve fotokopi alınmasını (İç Kapak, Özet, İçindekiler ve Kaynakça hariç) istemiyorum. (Bu sürenin sonunda uzatma için başvuruda bulunmadığım takdirde, tezimin/raporumun tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir, kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınabilir)
- ☐ Tezimin/Raporumun.....tarihine kadar erişime açılmasını istemiyorum ancak kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisinin alınmasını onaylıyorum.
- ☐ Serbest Seçenek/Yazarın Seçimi



07/02/2017

Alican ERBAKAN

ETİK BEYAN

Bu alıřmadaki bütn bilgi ve belgeleri akademik kurallar erevesinde elde ettiđimi, grsel, iřitsel ve yazılı tm bilgi ve sonuları bilimsel ahlak kurallarına uygun olarak sunduđumu, kullandıđım verilerde herhangi bir tahrifat yapmadıđımı, yararlandıđım kaynaklara bilimsel normlara uygun olarak atıfta bulunduđumu, tezimin kaynak gsterilen durumlar dıřında zgn olduđunu, Yrd. Do. Dr. Alev KARADUMAN danıřmanlıđında tarafımdan retildiđini ve Hacettepe niversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstits Tez Yazım Ynergesine gre yazıldıđını beyan ederim.

Alican ERBAKAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express sincere gratitude to my supervisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Alev KARADUMAN for her unconditional support for me throughout the writing process of this thesis from the beginning to the end. Throughout the time we worked together on this thesis, she provided me with utmost encouragement and enlightened me with her expert opinions on the subject. This study is made possible with her professional attitude, guidance and priceless advice. I feel privileged to have worked with her on my thesis.

I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Burçin EROL, Prof. Dr. Serpil OPPERMANN, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lerzan GÜLTEKİN and Asst. Prof. Dr. Şebnem KAYA for their critical comments, advice and suggestions.

Finally, I am very thankful to my wife Melek ERBAKAN and my family for their unconditional moral support throughout this study. Their endless encouragement gave me strength even in the toughest moments of the process. I am very grateful to them for believing in me.

ÖZET

ERBAKAN, Alican. Chinua Achebe'nin *Parçalanma*, *Tanrının Oku* ve *Artık Huzur Yok* adlı Romanlarında Zihnin Sömürgeleştirilmesi. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2017.

Sömürgeleştirme süreci, sömürgeci ve sömürge altına alınan arasındaki güç ilişkisini oluşturmak amacıyla iki gruba da önceden belirlenmiş rolleri verir. Sömürgecinin sözde üstünlüğü bu müzakerenin başlıca özelliği olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Sömürgecinin türlü manipülasyonları dolayısıyla yerli halkların zihnine bir aşağılık kompleksi kazınmaktadır. Afrikalıyı aşağılayıcı özellikler taşıyan imajın oluşturulma sürecini okuyucularına aktarmak ve halkının kötü imajını kırmak amacıyla, Chinua Achebe sömürgeci yönetimin farklı safhalarına bir yolculuk yapmaktadır. Sömürgecilik öncesi döneme ait bir Igbo köyünü başlangıç noktası olarak Nijerya'nın tüm sömürge tarihini üç farklı kuşak üzerinden eserlerinde ele almaktadır. Her kuşağın, ana karakterlerin ve onların temsil ettikleri toplumların sömürgeci rejime boyun eğdikleri bir kırılma noktası vardır. Pes ettikleri gerçeğinden ziyade, onları pes etmeye zorlayan sebepleri vurgulayarak, Achebe Nijeryalı okuyucularını geçmişleriyle barışmaya davet etmektedir. Böylece Nijerya'nın bağımsızlığını kazanmasına az bir süre kala, halkının kırılmış özgüvenlerini onarmayı amaçlar. Yazara göre gerçek dekolonizasyon süreci yalnızca kirlenmiş imajları temizlendiğinde ve hikâyeleri dünyaya bir de kendi ağızlarından aktarıldığında başlayabilir. Bu doğrultuda, bu tezin ana amacı *Parçalanma* (1958), *Tanrının Oku* (1964) ve *Artık Huzur Yok* (1960) adlı romanları, Achebe'nin sömürgeci rejim altında yaşamış, itibarları sömürgecilik sürecinde zedelenmiş üç kuşak Nijeryalıya seslerini duyurma fırsatı vermesi bağlamında incelemektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Chinua Achebe, sömürgecilik sonrası Afrika romanı, zihnin sömürgeleştirilmesi, *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, *No Longer at Ease*

ABSTRACT

ERBAKAN, Alican. Colonising the Mind in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, and *No Longer at Ease*. Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2017.

The process of colonisation attributes pre-determined roles for both the coloniser and the colonised, which aims at establishing a power relationship between the two. A supposed superiority of the coloniser over his subjects stands out as the main characteristic of the discourse. Through the manipulations of the coloniser, an inferiority complex is etched in the minds of the indigenous peoples. Chinua Achebe deconstructs the false image of his people by a journey to different phases of the colonial rule in Nigeria and shows his readers the process in which the degrading image of the African is created. Starting from the pre-colonial Igbo village, he covers the whole colonial history of Nigeria through three different generations. Each generation is marked by a point of subjugation in which the protagonist and the societies they represent succumb to their colonisers. By placing an emphasis on the reasons that pave the way to their surrender rather than the act of surrender itself, Achebe prompts his Nigerian audience to make peace with their past in order to be able to move forward with a restored self-confidence in the eve of their national independence. Only when their tarnished image is cleaned by making their side of the story be heard by the world, true decolonisation can be achieved. Accordingly, the major aim of this thesis is to analyse *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *Arrow of God* (1964), and *No Longer at Ease* (1960) as Achebe's giving voice to three generations of Nigerians, who lived under colonial rule, and returning their dignity, which has been stripped from them during the colonial discourse.

Keywords: Chinua Achebe, post-colonial African novel, colonising the mind, *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, *No Longer at Ease*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KABUL VE ONAY.....	i
BİLDİRİM.....	ii
YAYIMLAMA VE FİKRİ MÜLKİYET HAKLARI BEYANI.....	iii
ETİK BEYAN.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
ÖZET.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I: PRE-COLONIAL UMUOFIA AND THE FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH THE WHITE MAN IN <i>THINGS FALL APART</i>	19
CHAPTER II: POWER DYNAMICS DURING THE EARLY COLONIAL RULE IN <i>ARROW OF GOD</i>	42
CHAPTER III: IDEOLOGY AND CORRUPTION IN THE FORMATION OF THE NEW NIGERIAN IDENTITY IN <i>NO LONGER AT EASE</i>	67
CONCLUSION.....	89
WORKS CITED.....	96
APPENDIX 1: ORIGINALITY REPORTS.....	103
APPENDIX 2: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORMS FOR THESIS WORK.....	105

INTRODUCTION

Our humanity is contingent on the humanity of our fellows. No person or group can be human alone. We rise above the animal together, or not at all. If we learned that lesson even this late in the day, we would have taken a truly millennial step forward.

--Chinua Achebe

The beginning of postcolonial literature as a tradition can be placed in the mid-twentieth century, but the term “postcolonial” is still very much open to debate. Depending on the context in which the term is used, the definition and its timespan can change drastically. Especially the social and political contexts generate two significantly different definitions for postcolonialism since defined in the social context the term becomes more expansive. Ania Loomba claims that postcolonialism can refer to a change of regime in the ex-colonies in the political context through independence, however the economic and cultural effects of it still continue with the emergent “neo-colonialism” (7). Also the practice of colonialism spans hundreds of years throughout the world, so Loomba suggests that “it is more helpful to think of postcolonialism not just as coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly as the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism” (12). In accordance, postcolonial literature does not only include works created after colonialism, but also the ones that contest against the methods and practices employed by the coloniser under the colonial rule. Postcolonial literature is produced by the people of former colonies and deals with their problems, such as the anger and resentment towards the coloniser, the practise of colonialism or the challenges they face after decolonisation. Therefore, it enables the colonised to tell his/her side of the story for once after long years of colonisation and racial bias. It is widely read and studied due to its reactionary nature and the role of imperialism and colonialism in the history of the world. This type of literature begins to flourish with the decline of the European Empires including the British and the French in the early twentieth century and the

emergence of independent states of former colonies towards the mid-twentieth century. The wide practice, common themes and the amount of literary production in the area has led to the formation of a postcolonial tradition and made its way to the canon of English Literature. Examples of the tradition can be seen all over the world ranging from Africa, South America, the Caribbean to Asia. Due to the sheer number of the former colonies producing it, postcolonial literature shows great variety in itself. Thus, it poses a paradoxical tradition. While sharing certain elements, such as the reclamation of their own identity or construction a new one depending on the conditions of newly independent states, a certain level of resentment towards the former coloniser and the revival of local culture which has been assimilated or suppressed, it also produces works which show immense difference in style, theme, form, language and local colour. The time of colonisation and decolonisation, the system of colonial rule and the amount of violence and oppression the colonised nation has gone through also contribute greatly to such diversity.

This thesis aims to analyse the African Trilogy of Chinua Achebe (1930-2013), who is one of the forerunners of postcolonial literature. Showing the process from the first encounter with the white man to the complete colonial order where the mindset of the colonised and their view of the coloniser changes with their gradual subordination and all the economic and religious manipulations, the need for decolonising the mind of his people is shown from a postcolonial perspective. The independent Igbo clans before colonisation are depicted with complex systems of religion, economy, diplomacy and traditions which held their societies and cultures together. The fact that their customs do not fit the norms of the supposedly superior culture of their colonisers does not mean that they are completely uncivilised. Achebe's African Trilogy will provide a chronological order through generations where the colonial rule has expanded as well as its impact on the lives and the minds of the natives. Also, the ways in which the people of Nigeria are colonised are depicted to show to the reader that a mass learned subordination has been planted in the natives' mind. As the first step towards the solution is determining the source of the problem, this works towards the psychological decolonisation.

African postcolonial literature is a substantial part of postcolonial studies. Colonial discourse in Africa is tainted with a history of slavery, racism and dehumanisation of

indigenous peoples by the imperial forces of Europe. Due to its vast amount of raw resources such as oil, gold, and diamonds, the European colonial forces engage in a race to divide the continent among themselves. The rivalries among the rising imperial and industrial forces of Europe turned the African continent into a vast battleground for Imperial Europe. With every European Empire joining in the race for control over Africa and her resources rapid and violent colonial movements start which later on is titled as “the Scramble for Africa”. The colonisation of almost all of the continent happened so fast that historians have a hard time determining the reasons that escalated the process. As G. N. Uzoigwe states in *General History of Africa Vol VII: Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, “what is most remarkable about our period is the co-ordinated manner, speed and comparative ease –from the European point of view- with which the occupation and subjugation of so vast a continent was accomplished. Nothing like it had happened before” (19). Most of the lands of the African continent was divided between the British, the French, the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the Belgian colonisers. Economic intentions of these invasions were covered by supposedly humanitarian causes like teaching Christianity, education, improvements on the life standards of the natives and establishing “superior” social, political and economic systems of Europe. Uzoigwe states that social Darwinism, Evangelical Christianity, the Imperial rivalries, and the internal quarrels of African peoples elevated the speed of the Scramble and constituted the mentality behind the European invasion (21-28). The assumed superiority resulted from the European belief that “the inferior mental and physical abilities imputed to non-Europeans would render them incapable of the large-scale cultural accomplishments and heroic deeds that only modern Europe could achieve” (Osterhammel 108). As the race to maintain control over Africa continued, eurocentrism, imperialism, and extreme racism, which are masked by a supposed humanism, crept through all the colonies. It is not far-fetched to claim that the African peoples are among the ones who have experienced the brutality of colonialism the most throughout the world as free men have been condemned to slavery both locally and overseas by the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Such a brutal history of colonisation resulted in a flourishing of postcolonial literature afterwards. Jürgen Osterhammel argues that

inevitably, . . . there came the historic moment in which a hitherto weak and dependent group of educated inhabitants of a colonial society broke the spell and took up the fight for cultural hegemony. From then on, reinforced, revived or

invented native traditions were cultivated in opposition to colonialist thought. Moreover, the philosophical, juridical, aesthetic ideas of Europe were turned against colonialism, with devastating effect. (112)

Both fictional and critical works start to emerge in former colonies in mid-20th century written in local languages and languages like English, French and Portuguese which belong to the coloniser. Numerous literary figures are introduced to the readers worldwide, some of the most notable ones of whom are Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1938-present), Wole Soyinka (1934-present), Lewis Nkosi (1936-2010), and Ben Okri (1956-present).

As a writer whose works are widely read and studied academically all around the world, Chinua Achebe has a central role in the body of postcolonial literature both as a writer and a critic. Thus, he is a prominent figure in African postcolonial literature as well. Being an African intellectual, author, critic and poet, he challenges a whole body of colonial literature which depicts pre-colonial Africa as a place of savagery and complete chaos in order to create a binary opposition between the European and the African validating the superiority of the former. So, in his works Achebe confronts the ideology behind the "inferiority complex" and deconstructs it by creating an alternative history where he employs functional systems and traditions of indigenous communities. According to Simon Gikandi in his *Reading Chinua Achebe*, Achebe keeps an objective point of view in the narrations of his fictional Umuofia as he lays it out to his reader with its imperfections. Still, he proposes "an alternative world beyond the realities imprisoned in colonial and postcolonial relations of power" (3). Being able to go beyond such "realities," he can freely reimagine his people before the stereotypes of the colonial ideology are set in their minds, which in turn shows his readers the imaginary chains put on their minds. Rose Ure Mezu also comments on this in her *Chinua Achebe: The Man and His Works* saying that "the fictional Umuofia provides the cosmological prism through which Achebe tells his own story as counterfoil to the prevalent image of peoples of African origin and as an indigenous African, he was better qualified to tell his and Africa's story" (12-13) as opposed to the colonial literature that devalued them. He is not the first Nigerian writer to promote traditional values of his people, however he is the first one to do it in English and in novel form, which can be considered a European form (Gikandi 6-7). This has brought him world-wide recognition and also the ability to reach other English speaking African countries giving way to even more

similar reactions from them. Thus, he has become a leading figure in African postcolonial literature as his “literary thoughts have given to all Africans, descendants of enslaved Africans, and all marginalised peoples, the weapon of freedom to defend the historico-cultural values of their homeland” (Mezu 14). To do so, he needs his readers to look at themselves by setting aside any stereotypes that are tailored by the colonisers for them. This is his main focus and the core of his writing as he reveals to Mezu in one of his interviews, he wants “to make people think. Just as a good story keeps revealing itself in different ways, in different connotations. The meaning is not finished. To make you see yourself in a different light” (38).

Chinua Achebe takes on the re-establishment of cultural identity, which has been damaged and distorted by the colonial ideology, through the creation of a mythical space where he re-imagines the pre-colonial and colonial Umuofia in his novels. In his Umuofia, the misrepresentations of his people are challenged which should be a key aim of writers as Achebe emphasizes that “the writer cannot expect to be excused from re-education and regeneration that must be done” (*Morning Yet on Creation Day* 45). So, in the novels that are to be analysed in this thesis, Achebe sets out to disintegrate the conventional, degrading and devaluing representation of African people and in his case Nigerian people. Because, he sets out to “re-educate,” his people, reclaiming cultural history is a major step. It is a noble cause especially for the indigenous intelligentsia to take up. Accordingly, while military and political decolonisation constitute the physical part of the struggle, the mental decolonisation will be possible at the hands of writers like him. Decolonising the mind is important for the African writer as Africa was one of the most misrepresented colonial territories throughout history at all levels including racial bias, difference in skin colour, and even physical differences. Mezu comments on Achebe’s intention saying that he “seeks to correct misconceptions, challenge the misrepresentations of the political history and culture of African peoples, and rearrange other established notions on who the African is” (17). Similarly, Achebe reveals his own intentions stating that he wants to

help my society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement... for no thinking African can escape the wound on his soul... 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 for which the first European acting on God's behalf discovered us (MYOCD¹ 45)

The “complexes” that Achebe speaks of here are the outcomes of the imposition of the colonialist ideology over the years starting from the early encounters with the white man, through generations, and in every stage of colonial rule. They are barriers buried deep in the indigenous man's minds, which need to be broken down. Thus, Fanon and Achebe have common interests in reclaiming the national history and culture from the pre-colonial times. Fanon argues that “the claim on a national culture in the past does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture” (*Wretched of the Earth* 210). In the three novels that are analysed in this thesis, Achebe covers three different stages of colonial rule in three different generations, while demonstrating how the colonisation of the mind is carried out both on communal and personal levels. Due to the fact that the protagonist of *No Longer at Ease* is the grandson of the protagonist of *Things Fall Apart*, the former can be considered a sequel to the latter. In these circumstances *Arrow of God* appears to be a separate work from the other two novels. Moreover, the publication dates of these three novels support that as AOG is the last one to be published. However, the colonial establishments in the novels suggest that events in AOG take place in a time between the other two. Although such a conclusion can be reached by creating a timeline of the novels, the result is not just a speculation as it is confirmed by Achebe himself. In an interview that was published in *Afrique* in 1962, he reveals that he is working on a new novel which deals with the village life of the generation between the ones in his previous two novels, he says,

In the first, I tell of the village traditions and the hopes and fears of all the inhabitants at the time when the first contacts with Europeans are taking place. In the second book, which is in fact the third of the trilogy, the story is about my generation. In the missing book, the story will be about my father's generation, those who were Christianized. (Lindfors 8)

Achebe calls his two novels and the one that he is working on at the time a trilogy. As a result, due to their timeline and thematic constructions, these three novels do constitute a trilogy. Thus, they are often referred to as the African Trilogy today. In these works, the stereotypes of the colonial discourse are deconstructed. As a result, Achebe achieves

¹ As several works by Chinua Achebe will be referenced throughout this thesis, the titles of the works will be stated only once and abbreviated for the rest of the thesis. The same rule will be applied to the two works by Frantz Fanon.

the essential aim of creating an alternative fictional history which Fanon puts forward as using “the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope” (WOE 232).

While analysing the fictional Igbo setting, there is an important fact that must be taken into consideration. Although Achebe tries to reverse the negative stereotypes created by the colonial ideology, he does not form an idyllic Umuofia. He believes that the traditions and systems have their shortcomings and some practises can be regarded outrageous from a modern point of view. So, it is not his intention to create an unrealistic and completely utopic place. The reader might sympathise with them, but his protagonists are not at all flawless. Gikandi believes that trying to over-sympathise with the protagonists and viewing the pre-colonial Umuofia as an idyllic place compared to the colonial one are pitfalls of reading Achebe’s work as these result in a failure to address the main questions and conflicts surrounding the works (1-2). One must always take into consideration that the pre-colonial Umuofia had its traditions that are bound to undergo some sort of change towards the better. So, the reader is prompted to think that even with its problematic systems the pre-colonial Umuofia is not a place of complete chaos and savagery which it has been imagined to be. Also the reader is led to question if the community is bound to undergo drastic changes, are the colonial changes for the better? The obvious answer is negative. As a result, Achebe aims to inform his reader about the past with all its problems in order to educate him and work for a better future. This thesis will not judge the morality of Umuofia’s traditions but analyse them in the light of their complexity and cultural integrity.

The Kenyan author Ngugi wa Thiong’o is also interested in the psychological freedom of the African from the mental chains of the coloniser from a neo-colonial perspective. He invites all Africans and their artists to abolish the use of the language of the coloniser in order to promote and restore their original languages both in daily and artistic usage. However, the postcolonial writers who choose to write in the language of the coloniser are his main target. He states, “if in these essays I criticise the Afro-European (or Euroafrican) choice of our linguistic praxis, it is not to take away from the talent and the genius of those who have written in English, French or Portuguese” (xii). The coloniser’s language is perceived as a way in which the intellectual commodity of the colonised, which are the works of art, are stolen by the coloniser just like their

commercial commodities were during colonialism. Moreover, language is treated as the embodiment of culture, which contributes to the formation of self-image during childhood. Ngugi asserts;

Our whole conception of ourselves as a people, individually and collectively, is based on those pictures and images which may or may not correctly correspond to the actual reality of the struggles with nature and nurture which produced them in the first place. But our capacity to confront the world creatively is dependent on how those images correspond or not to that reality, how they distort or clarify the reality of our struggles. (15)

If language is the main component of a self-fashioning process of a child, doing that through the language of the coloniser is, in essence, looking at oneself through the values and norms that come with that specific language, which are essentially foreign. Through formal education, the colonised is alienated from his immediate surroundings as the daily native language is switched to the coloniser's language of the education, which is considered to be "the language of conceptualisation, of thinking, of formal education; of mental development" (Thiong'o 28). On the other hand, the native language is associated with ignorance and backwardness. The subject is confined in a bilingual state in which he speaks his own language at home, and speaks the coloniser's language at school. It affects the psychology of the colonised in a negative way. Ngugi comments, "it is like separating the mind from the body so that they are occupying two unrelated linguistic spheres in the same person. On a larger social scale it is like producing a society of bodiless heads and headless bodies" (28). Accordingly, the coloniser's language becomes a tool of cultural assimilation even long after the years of colonisation. In that respect, Ngugi's concern for the African languages is derived from the neo-colonial situation of the former African colonies, some of which still use the languages of their colonisers. Thus, African writers have produced a large body of literature in English, French or Portuguese. Ngugi believes that the continuation of maintaining the language of the coloniser as the language of publication further damages the original languages that might have been enriched by those same works. He asserts,

The brilliant minds of a Chinua Achebe, a Wole Soyinka or a Kofi Awoonor went not to revitalise the African novel but to create a new tradition, that of the Afro-European novel. [. . .] Thus the African novel was further impoverished by the very means of its possible liberation: exposure of its

would-be-practitioners to the secular tradition of the critical and socialist realism of the European novel and the entry on the stage of commercial publishers who were outside the colonial government and missionary school. (70)

He condemns the writers who choose to write in English, French or Portuguese for unintentionally taking part in further “impoverishing” their own languages in favour of that of the coloniser. Thus, Ngugi represents the side of the argument which opposes the use of colonial languages in intellectual creations.

The debate over the language of the literatures of former colonies is ongoing and hard to conclude. It is clear that the postcolonial writer is faced with a dilemma in his/her career to choose which language he/she should use. Innes argues, “artists who use language are using a medium which is in itself meaningful, and if they choose the language of their colonizer they are working with words and syntax which express [. . .] thinking of a culture which scorned their own” (98). However, English language can also be appropriated by the colonised to be shaped into a medium through which the experience of the colonised can be conveyed. By integrating new words and phrases into English language, postcolonial writes both enrich and distort the language of their oppressors. It is often argued in postcolonial context that the emergence of pidgin and distorted englishes is the price that English has to pay for becoming a world language. Accordingly, Raja Rao argues, “We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as a part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colorful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it” (Foreword). Chinua Achebe takes up a similar approach to language. He believes that English language, as long as he can use it with skill, can be shaped into an African version which will convey his experience to his readers. He argues,

The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use. The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience. (*MYOCD* 61)

Although the possibility of an international audience seems to be the target of the author here, the fact that English language breaks the ethnic barriers of his country further

strengthens Achebe's standpoint. It should be noted that Nigeria as a country was physically formed by the British through the amalgamation of two separate protectorates. J. O. Irikwu points out, "The process of unifying Nigeria started as far back as 1906 when Lagos colony was annexed to the protectorate of southern Nigeria. [. . .] In 1914, the southern and northern protectorate were finally amalgamated, leading to the birth of a new nation, Nigeria" (8). Even after the formation of Nigeria, the ethnic differences were very sharp in the geography as three large ethnic groups reside in the country. Each of them have their own languages, which also have several different dialects. In that respect, the usage of English as publication language ironically enables Achebe to find a middle ground for his readers from different ethnic backgrounds. The differences are set aside, which is essential to the fashioning of a new national identity on the way to independence. Since the language debate is subject large enough for a whole another study, this thesis will not go into its details. Ngugi's theory will not be referred to in the analysis of the novels as it is based mainly on language as the tool of cultural assimilation.

In order to understand Achebe's efforts to deconstruct the so-called inferiority or dependency complex of the African, Fanon's theory on their foundation will be referred to. First of all, Fanon, in his attempt to refute Mannoni's claims, strongly refuses any idea that the inferiority complex of the African "antedates colonization," which is based on the claim that the pre-colonial myths and legends of the colonised, show an expectation of the arrival of superior characters from the sea (*BSMW* 63-4). The argument holds that the colonised is already psychologically prepared to accept the coloniser as his superior even before their arrival. However, Fanon argues that the racist inclination of colonialism is responsible for the establishment of the inferiority complex of the colonised as the white man never thinks himself inferior to his colonised subject:

A white man in a colony has never felt inferior in any respect [. . .]. The colonial, even though he is "in the minority," does not feel that this makes him inferior. In Martinique there are two hundred whites who consider themselves superior to 300,000 people of color. In South Africa there are two million whites against almost thirteen million native people, and it has never occurred to a single black to consider himself superior to a member of the white minority. (*BSWM* 68)

Thus, the superior-inferior relationship between the coloniser and the colonised is already inherent in the minds of the colonisers. In that respect, he focuses his attention

to create the condition for the natives to acknowledge that pre-determined ideology, which is characterised by “an authority complex, a leadership complex” (*BSWM* 73). As a result, the supposed inferiority complex stands out as the projection of the coloniser’s own psychological defect rather than that of the colonised. The effect which is sought by the coloniser is that the colonised acknowledge that he is the exact opposite of the values of the white man, which is supposed to be a part of his identity. Realising that he is stripped of individuality, Fanon himself finds out that as one of the colonised

I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetichism, racial defects, slave ships, and above all else, above all: “Sho’ good eatin’.” (*BSMW* 84-5)

All the negative connotations that are attributed to his skin colour are the manifestations of the coloniser’s efforts to make the coloniser feel burdened by their own existence, so that he constantly seeks approval of the white man to justify his existence. Fanon’s experience given in the quotation is the mentality that Achebe counters in his writings. The only way to overcome it starts with the rejection of the claims of the white man over the colonised to restore the self-confidence damaged by the stereotypes as Fanon does when he says that “with all my strength I refuse to accept that amputation. I feel in myself a soul as immense as the world, truly a soul as deep as the deepest rivers, my chest has the power to expand without limit” (*BSWM* 108). The revelation he experiences is the one that Achebe wants to invoke in his readers as he goes to the sources of their subjugation to prove them that their feeling of inferiority is the construction of the white man to justify his conquest of the world as the master race and to exploit its resources.

In pursuit of domination, the coloniser constructs images to represent both himself and the colonised. As he marches on conquering the lands of other nations and races, the coloniser needs to justify his actions by masking his true economic intentions. He may argue that he brings civilisation, or education, or Christianity to save their souls. He tries to eradicate the guilt that arises from the conditions he imposes on the colonised. As Memmi argues that “accepting the reality of being a colonizer means agreeing to be nonlegitimate privileged person, that is, a usurper,” (96) the self-awareness of the coloniser only result in further degradation of the colonised in order to relieve himself:

Having chosen to maintain the colonial system, he must contribute more vigor to its defence than would have been needed to dissolve it completely. Having become aware of the unjust relationship which ties him to the colonized, he must continually attempt to absolve himself. He never forgets to make a public show of his own virtues, and will argue with vehemence to appear heroic and great. At the same time his privileges arise just as much from his glory as from degrading the colonized. He will persist in degrading them, using the darkest colors to depict them. If need be, he will act to devalue them, annihilate them. (Memmi 98)

Just to save himself from the psychological burden of his role, the coloniser constructs false images of his subjects and tries his utmost best to force them to acknowledge their role in this power relationship. Jean-Paul Sartre formulates Memmi approach saying, “terror and exploitation dehumanize, and the exploiter authorizes himself with that dehumanization to carry his exploitation further. The engine of colonialism turns in a circle; it is impossible to distinguish between its praxis and objective necessity” (23). With a self-fulfilling machination, through years of colonisation and the institutions of the coloniser, the idea is gradually planted in the minds of the colonised. In his attempt to justify colonialism, the coloniser argues that he “improves” the colonised by teaching them his own culture. Nevertheless, he also denies his subject the possibility of reaching an equal status even by his guidance. “Everything is mobilized so that the colonized cannot cross the doorstep, so that he understands and admits that this path is dead and assimilation is impossible” (Memmi 169). Thus, the colonised finds himself in paradoxical situation in which he is punished for being himself and living by his own tradition and standards while he is also rejected by the coloniser on the grounds that he can never achieve the level of the coloniser no matter how much effort he puts into imitating him. Then, the only option left for him is to acknowledge that he is essentially inferior to the coloniser and accept his domination over him:

Being considered and treated apart by colonialist racism, the colonized ends up accepting this Manichean division of the colony and, by extension, of the whole world. Being definitely excluded from half the world, why should he not suspect it of confirming his condemnation? Why should he not judge it and condemn it in his turn? The racism of the colonized is then neither biological nor metaphysical, but social and historical. (Memmi 175)

By conforming to the division created for him by the coloniser, the colonised surrenders to his nervous condition, which scars him to the point that its derogatory image will haunt him even after his liberation. In order to prevent that, the false myths about the colonised has to be tackled by the intelligentsia of the former colonies. Accordingly,

this thesis will analyse Achebe's novels set in the past as attempts to counter the coloniser's residual damage on the minds of his people.

In the context of the so-called inferiority or dependency complex of the colonised created by the constructed roles and myths of the colonised, this thesis aims to explore Achebe's spiritual journey to his people's past in order show on what conditions they were imposed on them. In that respect, the author acknowledges that the mental domination of the coloniser is established at certain points for each generation under the British rule. Thus, the focus is on the roots of his people's surrender instead of the outcome. While the coloniser forces them to believe that the racial inferiority is an inevitable result of the flawed character of the African, Achebe proves that the colonised has a different story to tell. In accordance, each of the three protagonists and the communities they represent are prompted to be analysed according to their social, economic, and political conditions in the transitory times of their existence. On that note, the subjugation of the Nigerian people is presented to the reader in order to create an understanding between the present generation, who suffers the consequences of the process, and the past ones whose transformation is only made possible with the destruction of the values they uphold before the arrival of the white man.

Correspondingly, the first chapter of this thesis analyses Achebe's first and most famous novel *TFA* which is unique among the three as it includes a picture of the Igbo people before any connection with the missionaries is made. The setting of the Igbo village of Umuofia, which is a part of Umuofia clan, is depicted to be contained and isolated. Lives of the villagers are regulated through strict social and moral codes which also characterise the political, judicial and religious systems of the pre-colonial Igboland. Achebe represents Umuofia "as a portrait of self-made African sociohistorical and sociocultural order, finely tuned by its (collective) makers to be responsive to their human needs, their existential hungers, and their deepest metaphysical yearnings" (Korang 16). The examples of the systems in practise will be evaluated as the author's effort to convey the idea that even before the establishment of the coloniser's administrations, the Igbo possess a closely-knit social structure which contradicts the constructed idea of the Africans living in complete chaos without any hints of civilisation. Mezu argues that "[the book] imaginatively recreates an organized African community that possesses both social hierarchy, traditions, morals and taboos, none of

which can be infringed upon with impunity” (17). Finally, the concept of *chi*, which is a personal god, is interpreted as the projection of the duality that characterises the Igbo world view. It is the spiritual counterpart of every individual as well as a decisive contributor to one’s destiny. An Igbo person can only satisfy his ambitions and goals as long as his *chi* is favourable towards him. It reflects the idea that there are always different perspectives for approaching a subject and nothing is fixed and unchangeable. The arrival and settlement of the white man are handled with an indifference and tolerance deriving from the duality inherent in this view. The Igbo society recognises that while they firmly believe in their own deities and systems, there will always be others with values different from them. Thus, co-existence is not a far-fetched option, which leads to their inability to comprehend the imperialist aims of the white man in the early stages of colonisation.

Even though Achebe’s picture of the pre-colonial Igbo society shows an organic and improving community, he does not try to form a utopic and idyllic setting just to glorify the past, which would not reflect the realities of his people. Thus, this chapter will investigate the pitfalls of the society as the foundations for the manipulative strategy of the coloniser to create divisions in the Igbo society. In accordance, Okonkwo’s failure to rally his people to take up arms against the white man signifies that starting from these cracks, the ties that bind the community together are severed. Their inability to take action marks the beginning of the establishment of the inferiority complex that the coloniser attributes to the colonised. The unbending protagonist remains the only one to reject the notion, which leads to his tragic end. Even though the protagonist seems to fail at the end of the novel, his story remains as the witness to the process in which his people’s resistance is broken. Achebe constructs him to be a standpoint, on which the later generations can return to their ancestors and rediscover the cultural pride that he embodies in order to reverse the feeling of subjugation.

In order to comply with the chronological order of the content, the second chapter analyses *AOG*. Although it is the last one among the three novels to be published, the novel deals with the generation of Igbos that come right after the one in *TFA*. Thus, the setting of the novel corresponds to the time when the British rule is further established in Nigeria as it is already named a protectorate of the Empire. Moreover, the coloniser employs the policy of indirect rule in the area, so the novel presents the effort of the

local administration to employ a warrant chief in Umuaro, which is another Igbo clan. As the novel focuses on the internal conflicts between the Igbo, namely the protagonists struggle for authority against the priest of the god Idemili, and the war with Okperi village, this chapter investigates the destructive process of alienation brought about by the conflicts of power. The British administration regards these conflicts as an opportunity to enact their indirect rule in order to expand their influence over the natives, which is a commonly practiced strategy of the coloniser as Fanon suggests, “colonialism does not simply state the existence of tribes: it also reinforces it and separates them. The colonial system encourages chieftaincies and keeps alive the old Marabout confraternities” (WOE 94). As internal conflicts are clearly supported by the coloniser, the district commissioner Captain Winterbottom tries to invent a chieftaincy in Umuaro where no supreme authority is attributed to a single individual.

In line with the divisions created in the society, this chapter analyses members of Ezeulu’s family, namely his four sons as the representatives of the collapse taking place in Igboland. Obika is regarded as the embodiment of the traditional values. He often stands out as an example of average Igbo man whose life is shaped by the customs and traditions of his community. Accordingly, his death while performing his duty as a masked spirit, indicates the death of the values he represents. Oduche, who is sent to the missionary school, is the embodiment of the effects of Christianity over the Igbo society. Even though he is reluctant to attend at the beginning, he gradually becomes more and more alienated to his original identity to the point that he commits taboo crimes against the community. Through Edogo, Achebe explores the role of the artist in his society. His indifference to the changes and his reluctance to take up social responsibility is emphasised as he selfishly devotes himself to artistic achievement. The youngest son, Nwafo, as presented to be the perfect candidate for next chief priest, represents hope for the next generation. The ambitious nature of his father is not evident in his character. He appears to be eager, yet afraid, to take the responsibility of his father in his absence. Finally, this generation of Nigerians is marked for the vast numbers of conversions to Christianity. Thus, Achebe alludes to the conversions that ironically stem from the internal division of the Igbo which is encouraged indirectly by the efforts of the district commissioner. The moment of mass conversions signifies the surrender of the colonised to the coloniser in the novel. It is a metaphorical

acknowledgement of the superiority of Christianity over the traditional Igbo religion. By showing the reasons that push the people of Umuaro to conversion, Achebe proves that the decision is not an easy one. The members of the community are forced into a state of metaphorical paralysis by the power struggles which are accelerated by the interventions of the coloniser.

Finally, the third chapter analyses *NLE*. Set in the 1950s in Nigeria, the novel focuses on the struggles of the third and final generation of Nigerians under colonial rule. Accordingly, the rural setting of the previous two novels is replaced by the modern setting of Lagos, which is the colonial capital of Nigeria. As a result, the struggles of the modern Nigerian is explored through the theme of corruption, which is a long standing problem of the country starting from the colonial times and reaching the era of postindependence as Achebe points out that “it would be impossible, even if possible, of little value to attempt a comprehensive picture of the types and scope of Nigerian corruption. I will only say that most people will agree that corruption has grown enormously in variety, magnitude and brazenness” (*Trouble with Nigeria* 41). However, he openly refuses the idea that the crime is a characteristic of Nigerian character. It can only plague the society as long as the socio-economic conditions make it possible and easy to achieve. In this respect, the whole narrative of the novel is constructed to challenge that ideology.

Obi stands out as the brightest student in Umuofia among his peers. Thus, he earns a student loan from the Umuofia Progressive Union to travel to England to receive a university education. It is important to note that the money given to him is not a scholarship, he has to pay it back upon his return. The reception of his success by the members of his community is an indication that the inferior status of the African people as opposed to the coloniser is established after long years of colonialism. The mere possibility of an English education is considered as a matter of celebration in his village. As his prospect for greatness is closely associated with his education and taking a European post in the civil service, clearly the institutions of the white man are the norms by which the Nigerian can achieve greatness. The coloniser places himself as the target, which the colonised is measured up to. Moreover, the Union’s members act with a pretentious grandeur as they try to speak complex English and dress like gentlemen even in occasions that do not require them to do so. Thus, Obi is encouraged by a group

of people who are under the influence of the coloniser in a negative way. In compliance, it is during the years in England that Obi forms his false ideals about Nigeria on nostalgia and utopic dreams.

As the protagonist alienates himself from his origins due to the newly acquired identity of the educated Nigerian, he puts the quest of making Nigeria a great nation solely on the hands of the members of his own class. His delusion is analysed as the basis of his downfall. He clearly tries to cut his ties from both tradition and the coloniser. As Gikandi argues:

Like many members of the nationalist generation of 1940s and 1950s, he struggles for a sense of character, the thing which colonialist discourse assumes is missing from the educated African, a forceful sense of self which will at once propel him beyond the prisonhouse of colonialism [. . .]. Obi will, of course, discover that [. . .] it is far more difficult to recapture his African culture. Indeed, his tragedy is aggravated by the fact that Igbo community [. . .] is no longer the custodian of a distinctive Nigerian or African culture; the values of ‘tribe’ promoted by the union run counter to the Pan-Nigerian vision or consciousness which Obi tries to promote. (95)

He fails to sever his ties to the Igbo community due to the fact that his “Pan-Nigerian vision” is based exclusively on fantasies and theories. His inability to implement his ideas to practice proves that with a misguided and snobbish attitude, he traps himself in a confined social space between the coloniser and the colonised. His efforts are doomed from the beginning on the grounds that he fails to recognise that a nationalist movement cannot be successful if it is only attributed to certain group rather than the whole nation.

Finally, this thesis aims to explore the processes in which the colonial power is exerted on Nigerians in order to force the supposed superiority of the coloniser on the colonised. In accordance, all three novels employ a point of surrender by the colonised, which ensures the establishment and the continuation of that ideology. However, each protagonist and their respective societies have their own stories to tell on the subject which constitute Achebe’s writing. By reaching to the roots of the false images of his people, Achebe switches the focus from the outcome to the conditions that lead to that finality with the aim of reaching an understanding and peace with the past of his country so that its citizens can move on with a restored self-confidence. In order to achieve that aim, he refers to three different generations of Nigerians under colonial rule to showcase how their self-confidence was damaged in the first place. By alluding to three different

phases of colonialism in his country, he actually covers the whole colonial history of Nigeria.



CHAPTER I

PRE-COLONIAL UMUOFIA AND THE FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH THE WHITE MAN IN *THINGS FALL APART*

People say that if you find water rising up
to your ankle, that's the time to do
something about it, not when it's around
your neck.

--Chinua Achebe

Achebe's first novel was published at a critical time in 1958 and is considered to be the cornerstone of postcolonial literature as it shapes the history of the colonial and postcolonial societies of its time with its success and accessibility. The publication time of the novel marks a transitory period of Nigerian history. As Ghana is the first country to regain independence in the time period, it becomes an example to follow for other colonies in West Africa. Ghana's independence in 1957 is the outcome of the increasing Pan-Africanism that has started in the 1940s (Dudley 53-54). As a result, the novel was published in a time when the demands for independence and decolonisation were high. Then, the novel reflects Achebe's aim to rehabilitate the damaged self-confidence of the Nigerian people and accelerates the process of independence as well as paving the way to more postcolonial writing in general. The result came in 1960 which is called "the Year of Africa" as sixteen African states, one of which is Nigeria, reclaimed independence in one year (Dudley 53-54). The independence was not the result of an independence war or a revolution but of a process of power shift from the colonial offices to new local powers. As Dudley states, "[f]or the British territories in West Africa [. . .] the process of decolonisation became a graduated transfer of power to an emergent 'middle class' of lawyers, teacher, doctors and journalists, who spearheaded the various nationalist movements which had grown up in the second and third decades of the twentieth century" (56-57). The nationalist movements of the time period accelerated the independence movements of African states. Crawford Young argues:

Finally, speed became of the essence. Acceptable timetables were steadily foreshortened. The first decolonization constitutions of Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone in the 1940s presumed an extended period of tutelage and

adaptation; however, the rise of nationalism compelled an abbreviation of the transitions. By 1960, the code of decolonisation would tolerate no delays; ‘immediate independence’ became the war cry. (96)

Shifting political power dynamics created the emergence of a completely new political system. Democracy was an unfamiliar system for these cultures and a challenge in itself. Thus, the psychological damage that was retained throughout the colonial era needed to be reversed in order to prepare the people for the upcoming difficulties that were going to arise with decolonisation. In accordance, Achebe’s novel goes beyond the boundaries of Umuofia, which refers both to the clan and the geography where the clan is settled, to reflect the “trauma of nations that seeks to expand their horizons without sacrificing cultural values that are traditional and indigenous” (Champion 272). It is clear that in such an era, just like the rest of the intelligentsia, Achebe and his first novel had a deciding role in the nationalist ideologies and independence movements, as Gikandi claims, he “was possibly the first of African writer to be self-conscious about his role as an African writer, to confront the linguistic and historical problems of African writing in a colonial situation, and to situate writing within a larger body of regional and global knowledge about Africa” (5-6). While different African societies were progressing towards independence, *TFA* dealt with not only its contemporary time but also its history. Chinua Achebe’s recognises the rehabilitating qualities of the shared history on his people who have been torn by the colonial rule for decades. Colonisation manifests itself not only physically but also psychologically on its subjects. During the colonisation process of a country, the coloniser makes sure that its people are assimilated and converted which leads to the destruction or damaging of the original indigenous culture. In the process, the Eurocentric views of the coloniser are imposed on the indigenous people by forcing them into submission and a state of inferiority. Apart from the main economic reasons of colonialism and imperialism, Eurocentrism is the ideology behind the so-called humanistic intentions of the coloniser. Ania Loomba comments, “the ideologies that most circulate or gain currency in any society reflect and reproduce the interest of the dominant social classes,” (25) which are the coloniser’s ruling classes in the colonial discourse. Albert Memmi also formulates the process, in which such ideologies are put into practice and the colonised as a community is consistently attributed with negative personality traits, “It is a hoax. It is common knowledge that the ideology of a governing class is adopted in large measure by the

governed classes. [. . .] By agreeing to this ideology, the dominated classes practically confirm the role assigned to them [. . .] It is not enough for the colonized to be a slave, he must also accept his role” (132-133). The image of the colonised, which is created by the ruling classes, gradually becomes prevalent, which results in degradation of self-value and confidence on the part of the indigenous people. Fanon explains the intentions of this process saying that “[t]he effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives' minds the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality” (WOE 211). By doing so, the coloniser puts imaginary chains on the minds of the colonised. On the other hand, colonisation is justified while it becomes desirable as a way of self-improvement for the indigenous peoples. Moreover, the coloniser takes the next step in maintaining such psychological control over the colonised by turning their past into a chaotic mass through misrepresentation and colonial education. The more the coloniser loathes his past, the easier it is to keep him under control. In order to resist the culture of the coloniser, the colonised needs to be freed from these mental chains. Fanon states, “[e]very colonized people—in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with . . . the culture of the mother country” (BSWM 9). The inferiority complex of the colonised is based on a so called “moral inferiority, of which subjugation was a prime consequence and penalty” according to Achebe (*Hopes and Impediments* 79). Understanding the mechanics of the process of colonisation of the mind, he writes about the past, especially the true past of his people from an African intellectual point of view. He is introduced to various literary works and genres that include the imperialist literature during his studies at the university. One of the greatest works that prompts him to write “in a manner of a novelist responding to one famous book of European fiction” (HI 3) is Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899). While reading this novel, Achebe recognises the fact that he does not follow the footsteps of the protagonist in the adventure. He cannot identify with Marlow as he is by birth one of the so-called dehumanised savages of Africa who are described to live in chaos and barbarism, so the narrative is not intended for him. The Africans are described as “the antithesis of Europe, therefore of civilisation” (HI 3). He dismisses such representations of Africa as racist, biased, intentionally far from the saying, “The point of my observations should

be quite clear by now, namely that Joseph Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist. That this simple truth is glossed over in criticism of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unmarked” (HI 11-12). The approach towards Africa and her people is so commonplace among the colonising powers that it manifests itself in literature as well. Also, such manifestations escape negative attention due to the general attitude. Such a realisation shows him the power of storytelling as a tool in writing subjective historical accounts. Other accounts of Africa that he encounters include works such as John Buchan’s *Prestor John* (1910) (MYOCD 11) and Joyce Cary’s *Mister Johnson* (1939) which as a caricature of Nigeria employs a Nigerian protagonist who works loyally for the coloniser (*Home and Exile* 22). He argues that the protagonist, who is supposed to be a relatable character for him and his classmates is “nothing but an embarrassing nitwit” (HE 23) as one student boldly asserts that “the only moment he had enjoyed in the entire book was when the Nigerian hero, Johnson, was shot to death by his British master” (HE 22). Such works only contribute to the coloniser’s idea of history and Achebe believes that it is high time Africa told her own story rather than having it told by others, as Fanon also claims that “The immobility to which the colonized subject is condemned can be challenged only if he decides to put an end to the history of colonization and the history of despoliation in order to bring to life the history of the nation, the history of decolonization” (WOE 15). Both Fanon’s and Achebe’s approach to history are clearly visible in the proverb, which Achebe uses, that “until the lions produce their own historian, the story of the hunt will glorify only the hunter” (HE 73). The accounts of colonial Nigeria, and Africa in general, show a one-sided approach that needs to be countered by new narratives, which are the “reclamation” of the “dispossessed” (HE 80) communities, by writers who are qualified to do so. As a result, a balance of stories need to be achieved.

In *TFA*, Achebe aims to restore his people’s mind and self-confidence by reviving their indigenous culture and history. Consequently, he makes use of history with all its imperfections in order to remind his people how they lived before the arrival of the white man. The traditions of the past serve in Achebe’s fictional space to show how proud the Igbo people were, and how prone they were to colonialism and drastic change. They also provide the examples that should counterpart the misrepresentation of

their past by the colonising powers by refuting the negative stereotypes employed in them. In the light of these, the timespan of *TFA* can be pinpointed in history to be from around late 1870s, which is prior to the arrival of the missionaries at Nigerian inlands, to late 1880s. This time period also refers to the partition of Africa among the European Imperial powers which is called Scramble for Africa. The majority of the continent comes into contact with the white man during the Scramble and Nigeria's inland is colonised during the period. "The Scramble for Africa had begun in the early 'eighties. Within ten years the entire continent, where it had not already been occupied [. . .] had been overrun" (Hinsley 263). The Scramble takes place phenomenally fast and Nigeria is among the areas that are invaded. The novel covers both pre-colonial Umuofia and the establishment of the early stages of colonial rule. Thus, the time period is carefully selected by Achebe in order to show his readers how and why the colonisation process took place in Igboland. By including the last years of independence before colonisation, he indicates the pitfalls of his own culture which accelerated their subjugation. Simon Gikandi argues that combining the history and the desire for a better future for his people, Achebe relates "the archaeological role of the novel- its narrative investigation of the social and historical conditions of African societies before and during colonisation – with the utopian impulse [. . .] that is, the desire for a mythical space in which a new society might be articulated" (4). Moreover, he challenges the stereotypical African portrait of European writing. By making use of a seemingly neutral narration throughout the novel which does not specify the protagonist's feelings and disappointments yet pictures and implies them, Achebe reflects Igbo life, traditions and customs in a similar manner. Patrick C. Nnoromele likens the narration to a "vivid picture of the Igbo society" which avoids "any attempt to romanticize or sentimentalize it" (147). Every corner of Africa, even the remotest parts of it, came into contact with the foreign Western culture by the beginning of the twentieth century to a certain extent. By writing about the first encounters of that generation, which is to become the first generation under the colonial rule, with the white man, Achebe shows the initial reactions to that alien culture and the gradual colonisation of Igbo people both physically and psychologically.

After the first physical conquest, colonial rule requires a long time to establish itself. Maintaining colonial supremacy and power depends heavily on the coloniser's ability to

keep his subjects under political, physical and psychological control. Fanon asserts that “[colonialism] is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip,” it also reshapes a people’s past with the intention of creating the idea that “if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality” (WOE 210-11). Being aware of the dangers of such a re-constructed history poses on his people, Achebe, in a video interview for CNN’s *African Voices* programme, reveals that upon reading Eurocentric novels in his youth, he would side with “intelligent” and “civilised” Europeans while he “hated [the savages’] guts.” Realisation that he is in fact one of the depicted savages proves him the strength of literature and storytelling in general. Framing the other, enables the coloniser to claim that he knows his subjects enough and understanding is the key to dominance over them as Achebe states, “to the colonialist mind it was always of the utmost importance to be able to say: “I know my natives,” a claim which implied two things at once: (a) that the native was really quite simple and (b) that understanding him and controlling him went hand in hand. (HI 71) Claiming knowledge of the natives and misrepresenting them as “simple” are challenges that are to be tackled by a counter narrative which proves otherwise. Accordingly, Achebe stresses the importance of reminiscence and the retelling of the past. Influence of storytelling and arts on fashioning identity as well as stereotypes gives him the fictional space in which constructed reality can be reshaped as he believes that “art is a man’s constant effort to create for himself a different order of reality from that which is given to him; an aspiration to provide himself with a second handle on existence through his imagination” (Achebe HI 139).

In the light of these, the storyline of the novel depicts a transitory period in order to enable the readers to make a comparison of before and after pictures of the Igbo society. Taking into consideration the aim of Achebe, these two pictures need to create a contradictory situation where traditional values and character of the former have been deconstructed with the introduction of a new religion and systems on the latter. Accordingly, the depiction of the Umuofia clan of Igboland in *TFA* stands as a sharp contrast to the Western fantasy of Africa. Contrary to the Eurocentric belief, village life of the clan presents its cultural integrity with its social life, political structures, complex religious systems, traditions, judicial systems, diplomacy and economy. These qualities

of the Igbo culture, along with its shortcomings, are exemplified throughout the novel from the point of view of the African telling his own story.

Firstly, the political structure of the Igbo society presents a complex web of inter-villages relationships, in which Igbo villages are independent political institutions that are self-governing in their affairs with outsiders and other Igbo villages. The main characteristic of the Igbo politics is the “lack of centralized political structures” (Ohadike xxii). The governing force of the village consists of the elders and the influential men of that village. Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel, earns himself a seat in the counsel by his personal achievements and efforts. In a society where royalty or aristocracy are non-existent, Okonkwo’s hard work in the field, his victory against the undefeated wrestler Amalinze the Cat (1), and his insatiable prowess in battle are sufficient to gain the respect of his people. Even though every village has its own council, they are also part of a bigger political structure. Achebe summarises the Igbo political system as follows,

The Igbo nation in precolonial times was not quite like any nation most people are familiar with. It did not have the apparatus of centralised government but a conglomeration of hundreds of independent towns and villages each of which shared the running of its affairs among its menfolk according to title, age, occupation, etc. (HE 6)

Clans are confederations of several villages that are allied. Umuofia, of which Okonkwo’s village Iguedo is a member, is one of the several clans who inhabit Igboland. Umuofia is one of the strongest clans among its neighbours as it is “powerful in war and magic,” and its priests and medicine men were feared in all the surrounding country (11). Just like every clan, Umuofia has a council of elders. However, they only gather when situations that concern the whole clan arise. This political structure resembles a modern democracy only in a smaller scale. Diana Akers Rhoads argues that, “The Igbos [. . .] have developed a democratic system of government. For great decisions the *ndichie*, or elders, gather together all Umuofia (pp. 13, 180, 183). The clan rules all, and the collective will of the clan can be established only by the group. Further, as is appropriate in a democracy, each man is judged on his own merits” (63). As well as representing “the collective will” of the people, clan leaders are in diplomatic relationships with other clans. Having political alliances and disagreements with other clans characterise the diplomatic structure of a clan as an institution. Contrary to the

coloniser's view that violence is the driving factor in inter-clans relationships, Don Ohadike points out that "interaction between towns was limited and was regulated by goodwill, mutual respect, and diplomacy. Wars often broke out when these failed" (xxiii). Although clan wars "often broke out," violence still remains the last option as diplomacy takes the first in emergent crises. The prime example of clan diplomacy in the novel is presented when the clan orator Ogbuefi Ezeugo announces to the whole clan at the marketplace that a woman of Umuofia has been murdered in Mbaino (11). Murder of a clan member is a just cause for war in Igbo tradition as the narrator points out, "it never went to war unless its case was clear and just and was accepted as such by its Oracle" (11). However, this is also a chance to exact dominance over another clan and maintain power relationships in the area as well. In accordance, one of the strongest men in Umuofia, Okonkwo is chosen to be the envoy and deliver an ultimatum to Mbaino; "An ultimatum was immediately dispatched to Mbaino asking them to choose between war - on the one hand, and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation" (11). Mbaino is to choose either to go to war or compensate for their deed, of which they choose the latter. With this diplomatic move, Umuofia manages to keep its neighbouring clan in check and serve justice for the murder at the same time. The virgin replaces the dead woman as the wife of Ogbuefi Udo while the boy, Ikemefuna, becomes a prize for the clan just as any son that the deceased wife might have produced. Most importantly, a potential war, which would be inevitable, is prevented non-violently with productive diplomacy. When the process of this political interaction is reviewed, it can be seen that the chain of events is very predictable. There is an existing social code and a collective public heritage that govern the politics among the neighbouring villages as Gikandi suggests that "the meeting of the elders is, strictly speaking, a formality; they put into effect a cultural practice which follows a pre-determined order of knowledge," (33) which is the signifier of "an organic community" (34).

It is the multi layered structure of Igbo politics that the British never expect to find in Africa. The expectation is that the British come across a king or more likely a chief according to their view of the African people. In different parts of Africa, the colonisers do find kingdoms or similar large political bodies, yet Igboland is unique in the sense that they prefer a system in which every member of a village can take part in the

deciding on matters that concern the whole village. Unsurprisingly, this characteristic is not at all reflected in the representations of Africa by the colonisers. The British only anticipates to find a central authority, tribal savagery and chaos, yet having failed to do so, they establish their own system that works on a chain of command, of which the Queen is the head, as Rhoads suggests,

Discovering no functionaries to work with, the British set up their own hierarchical system which delegates power from the queen of England through district commissioners to native court messengers [. . .] Since the natives from other parts of Nigeria feel no loyalty to the villages [. . .] the British have superimposed a system which leads to bribery and corruption rather than progress. (63)

Thus the colonisers set up a political instruction which is avoided by the Igbo due to their world view. A functioning political system is replaced by another that is more open to corruption by the British. Nigeria's problem with corruption is foreshadowed in the novel when a land dispute is brought to the white man's court, which is ignorant and uninterested in Igbo customs. As the case is closed with the decision to unrightfully give the land to Nnama who "had given much money to the white man's messengers and interpreter," (155) it is proven that the white man's legal system paves the way to bribery, a corruption which will plague Nigeria for long years to come. Since Nigeria consists of different ethnic groups and "tribalism" is a challenging factor in its postcolonial state where ethnic differences can "prevent a citizen from living or working anywhere in his country, or from participating in the social, political, economic life of the community" (Achebe *TWN* 7). The fact that ethnic differences are very sharp in Nigeria, brings about corruption if one "tribe" is handed the authority over the others. Moreover, the colonial system is itself far from modern parliamentary democracy which in turn leads to more political instability for the native in the era of decolonisation. As a result, the coloniser clearly does not fulfil the role of the educator and the bringer of civilised institutions which he pretends to be.

Traditional Igbo judicial system is as efficient and functional as the political systems within itself. A just judicial system requires that every member of a group or every citizen of a society is treated equally in the name of law. It also maintains that the punishments of certain crimes are pre-determined by law or tradition. Achebe's pre-colonial Umuofia does not have a written constitution, yet rules to sustain social order and morality are set by traditions and religion which are often in co-operation. Most of

the time the village elders or the oracles of Igbo gods act as the judges for the cases. Although Okonkwo stands as the hero of his society and a firm believer of traditions of his culture, he becomes the offender of social harmony in several cases, first of which takes place during the Week of Peace which is a sacred time of the year before the seeds of next harvest are planted. Any kind of violence is forbidden for a week so that the earth goddess would bless their next harvest. Ezeani, the priest of earth goddess Ani, reminds Okonkwo of the importance of the custom as well as explaining it to the reader saying that “our forefathers ordained that before we plant any crops in the earth we should observe a week in which a man does not say a harsh word to his neighbour. We live in peace with our fellows to honour our great goddess of the earth without whose blessing our crops will not grow” (27). From a social standpoint, the tradition allows every member of the society to experience a peaceful period even if it is only for a week. However, Okonkwo’s uncontrollable temper brings him at odds with his society when he breaks the rules of the sacred week. Ojiugo’s neglect of her domestic duties in order to get her hair braided is the reason why Okonkwo is driven into a fit of temper in which he beats her even though it is the Week of Peace (26). This is considered a very serious offence to the earth goddess Ani. The respect for custom is emphasised by the narrator as follows: “People called on their neighbours and drank palm wine. This year they talked of nothing else but the *nso-ani* which Okonkwo had committed. It was the first time for many years that a man had broken the sacred peace. Even the oldest men could only remember one or two other occasions somewhere in the dim past” (27). Okonkwo’s social status or wealth cannot save him from receiving punishment for his deed. Oracle of Ani warns Okonkwo about the gravity of his sin saying that “Your wife was at fault, but even if you came into your *obi* and found her lover on top of her, you would still have committed a great evil to beat her” (27). The gravity of his example is intended to work as deterrent in order to prevent Okonkwo from committing the same crime again. Moreover, Okonkwo’s repentance is not enough to pay for his crime, so that he is ordered by the Oracle to bring “one she-goat, one hen, a length of cloth and a hundred cowries” to the Shrine of Ani to pay tribute to the goddess (27). Finally, the comments of Ogbuefi Ezeudu, the eldest man, of the village concerning the situation reveals a survey of the progression of the judicial systems in Umuofia, which he recounts saying, “[m]y father told me that he had been told that in the past a man who

broke the peace was dragged on the ground through the village until he died. But after a while this custom was stopped because it spoiled the peace which it was meant to preserve” (28). The observation that the punishment of such a crime is reduced over time according to stand by what the Week of Peace means for them. Also, the principles behind the Igbo traditions are respected more than the traditions themselves. Even the possibility of changing and reshaping the punishment for breaking a tradition is suggestive of cultural flexibility and the freedom of the practitioners to criticise that particular tradition. Hoegberg lists the conditions that are required to make such a change possible saying,

First, a majority of people must have the freedom and the desire to analyse their traditions for moral and logical consistency. Second, they must see the general principles involved as more valuable than specific rituals or traditions [. . .] Finally, people must believe that changing inconsistent traditions makes them stronger as a people, that cultural change is not the same as cultural decay. (70)

The traditional Igbo culture provides all these conditions for the people so that consistency and stability can be achieved through desired changes and modifications of the existent rules, which is an indication that the principles behind the existing traditions and practices are more important to the people of Umuofia than the practices themselves. Munyaradzi Mawere states that stemming from the collective memory indigenous communities like the Igbo “mastered different skills to adapt and change local practices in order to suit the changing cultural, political, and socio-economic needs of their immediate environment” (26-27). As long as the moral and social codes, which certain characteristic of Igbo life refer to, are maintained, cultural change is deemed possible by the members of the society. Such flexibility also creates room for improvement for the better over time with natural progression.

Another indication that the Igbo customs and life are naturally progressing on a positive course is given at the annual ceremony of the *egwugwu*, which are masked ancestral spirits who emerge from the world of the spirits at a given time to solve any disputes among the Igbo villagers. They are adored and feared at the same time by the common people. Their costumes and masks add grandeur to their fearsome characters. However, the costumes also hide their real identities as they are personified by chosen titled, strong and wise men of the village. The ceremony itself is a celebration of justice as *egwugwu*’s decisions are law which presides over every member titled or not as “the

law of the land was no respecter of persons” (Wright 86). The masked spirits act as the judges for the disputes in an almost modern court like manner chief of which is the Evil Forest (78). Both parties of the dispute are listened by the masked spirits before the offender and his punishment is decided. In the *egwugwu* festival that is depicted in the novel, Okonkwo takes his place among the *egwugwu* and they are prepared to settle a domestic dispute.

Okonkwo's wives, and perhaps other women as well, might have noticed that the second *egwugwu* had the springy walk of Okonkwo. And they might also have noticed that Okonkwo was not among the titled men and elders who sat behind the row of *egwugwu*. But if they thought these things they kept them within themselves. The *egwugwu* with the springy walk was one of the dead fathers of the clan. (79)

Okonkwo's wives are aware of the fact that he is missing from the crowd that is watching the ceremony, however, they do not question him about the situation after the ceremony which action proves to the reader that the Igbo do not really believe in the fact that *egwugwu* are real spirits, yet, they respect what they stand for and the justice they serve in the festival. Moreover, “no one could pretend to be wiser than the ancestors or the spirits. And no one ever disclosed the identity of the individual behind the mask” (Ohaide xxx). Their function in maintaining order in their society is enough to cover the fact that they are not the actual spirits of the forefathers. Accordingly, respecting the principle rather than the practise, can be seen as a characteristic of the Igbo traditions. The domestic dispute that is brought before the *egwugwu* is that Uzowulu's wife Mgbafo is taken away by her brothers since Uzowulu beats her every day. They listen to both parties on the matter before they come to the conclusion that Uzowulu should beg for his wife's return and that the final decision is hers to make (82). The festival, which is a celebration of justice and a time to make decisions that concern the whole village, is a serious communal event. The importance of Uzowulu and Mgbafo's story is that their dispute is a not matter pressing enough to be judged by the *egwugwu*. One of the elders of the village comments saying, “I don't know why such a trifle should come before the *egwugwu*” (83). The fact that this comment is made by an elder suggests that matters like domestic problems such as this are considered more important than in the youth of this elder, which is an implication of an increase in welfare over the years in the village as problems get smaller.

Both the political and judicial systems of Umuofia have their basis on Igbo customs and traditions which are often rooted in religious practices and law. Since age and wisdom are revered in Igbo society, the elders are among the rulers of the community, ancestral worship is the most common religious practice in Igbo tradition. Breaking of the kola nut and praying to ancestors at family or community gatherings is a ritualistic practice the eldest of the group carries out as can be seen in the family gathering in the *obi* of Uchendu, Okonkwo's uncle,

All the *umunna* were invited to the feast, all the descendants of Okolo, who had lived about two hundred years before. The oldest member of this extensive family was Okonkwo's uncle, Uchendu. The kola nut was given him to break, and he prayed to the ancestors. He asked them for health and children. [. . .] He prayed especially for Okonkwo and his family. He then broke the kola nut and threw one of the lobes on the ground for the ancestors. (146)

As well as being a social code, the kola nut ritual let the Igbo people remember and praise their ancestors, whose spirits are believed to live on. Achebe explains the Igbo belief of afterlife that the spirits of the ancestors keep living in a plane of existence where the ancestors “recreate a life comparable to their earthly existence” which is “not only parallel to human world but is also similar and physically contiguous with it for there is constant coming and going between them in the endless traffic of life” (*MYOCD* 95). As the Igbo believe in reincarnation, the cycle of life and death brings the living and the dead closer to each other, which is the reasoning behind the belief that the spirits of the dead try to imitate the world of the living in afterlife. Accordingly, the fear of disrupting the circular movement between the two worlds is channelled into a great respect for the dead which acts as a regulator for the daily life of an Igbo.

Apart from the ancestral worship, the Igbo religion is a polytheistic one. Although the religious system is pagan, there are signs that show systematic and organised structures in Igbo beliefs. Contrary to the argument of the coloniser that pre-colonial life is chaotic, the connections between the religious practices and social life prove that social order is maintained by rules and taboos. It can be argued that as a pagan form of religion, the Igbo gods represent different aspects of nature. The fact that Umuofia's most valuable commodities are their farming products, makes Aní, the goddess of earth, one of the chief deities whom Umuofians worship, as Achebe states, “Aní played a

greater part in the life of the people than any other deity. She was the ultimate judge of morality and conduct. And what was more, she was in close communion with the departed fathers of the clan whose bodies had been committed to earth” (32). Ani’s blessing is necessary in order to have a profitable harvest. The village’s fear of offending Ani can be observed throughout the novel such as the denial of burial to any abominations like death by swelling (16), by suicide (182) or disturbing the Week of Peace (26). However, different villages and clans might prioritise one god over another as Achebe suggests, “a man may worship Ogwugwu to perfection and yet be killed by Udo” (*MYOCD* 94). Gods may have conflicting plans for each human being which might put them at odds with each other as well. Among the differentiating system of worship in Igboland, only one god, Chukwu the god of sun, appears supreme over all the others. Achebe explains that Chukwu “is in close communion with the sun” and is called “the Supreme Deity” as he is the creator of life on earth (*MYOCD* 94). Chukwu can be compared to Christian God as Akunna, an Igbo villager, tries to inform commissioner Mr. Brown about the Igbo belief stating that ““you say that there is one supreme God who made heaven and earth. [. . .] We also believe in Him and call Him Chukwu. He made all the world and the other gods”” (158). It can be concluded that every god in the Igbo pantheon and every spiritual and material being is connected to Chukwu through different mediums including messengers, minor gods, oracles and nature.

The sophistication of Igbo beliefs goes even beyond the systematic Igbo pantheon with the spiritual concept of *chi*. One of the common Igbo proverbs, “Wherever Something stands, Something else will stand beside it,” (Achebe *MYOCD* 94) suggests that duality is the main contributor to the balance and stability in the Igbo world view. *Chi*, which is a personal God and a unique spiritual counterpart for every human being, is the reflection of the principle behind such a worldview. Since the concept of *chi* is unique to Igbo culture, Achebe clarifies it to his readers stating that one may visualise “a person’s *chi* as his other identity in spiritland – his *spirit being* complementing his terrestrial *human being*” (*MYOCD* 93). As it is the higher spiritual existence of each man, everybody possesses their individual *chi* which has more influence on a man’s life than any other god of Igbo religion. Moreover, if it is presented with negative

connotations as can be seen with Okonkwo's father Unoka, who "had a bad *chi*," (16) the term might refer to bad fortune, rather than evil personality. In this sense, it can be concluded that *chi* is a comprehensive term which includes the concept of destiny in Igbo belief. In order to emphasise the prominence of *chi* over a person's destiny, Achebe refers to the Igbo proverb "No matter how many divinities sit together to plot a man's ruin it will come to nothing unless his *chi* is there among them" (*MYOCD* 96). As a result, *chi* can be considered to represent a man's closest attachment to the spiritual world. Accordingly, every Igbo man, including Okonkwo has a shrine or a "medicine house" where "the wooden symbols of his personal god and of his ancestral spirits" are kept (13). As a result, the *chi* can be argued to embody microcosm of the overall complexity of the Igbo religious system.

Taking into consideration the practice of worship of ancestral spirits, different Gods of the Igbo pantheon and *chi* as the personal god, Achebe creates an outline of the Igbo belief throughout the novel. In contrast, the claims made by the first messengers of the Christian Evangelical Church in Igboland clearly show that Igbo religion is overly simplified by the missionaries as some of the problematic practises are strategically emphasised as the white man addresses the crowd;

We have been sent by this great God to ask you to leave your wicked ways and false gods and turn to Him so that you may be saved when you die [. . .] All the gods you have named are not gods at all. They are gods of deceit who tell you to kill your fellows and destroy innocent children. There is only one true God and He has the earth, the sky, you and me and all of us. (127)

His lack of understanding of the very religion he condemns is the cause of the crowd's bewilderment. The emphasis on the abandoning of twins and his tendency to present Christianity in a binary opposition of true and false are clear signs of his intention to plant seeds of doubt in the minds of his indigenous attendants. Although the missionary might succeed in converting some of the townsfolk, Achebe's depiction of the Igbo religion throughout the novel is the proof that this religion is far too sophisticated, with different levels of worship, to be dismissed as false with simple accusations which are present in the first missionary's speech.

While all these systems present the pre-colonial Igbo society as an organic one, there are also certain characteristics which make it more vulnerable to colonisation. Achebe

intentionally includes the darker sides of his culture to show that just like any other community, his people has fault as well in the process of their own demise. As an intellectual of the colonised, it is his duty to penetrate every aspect of his culture to bring facts about them to the surface. In line with this, Fanon puts forward that “the colonised intellectual who wants to put his struggle on a legitimate footing, who is intent on providing proof and accepts to bare himself in order to better display the history of his body, is fated to journey deep into the bowels of his people” (WOE 149). The fact that there is room for improvement in especially the cruel or violent practices, creates the possibility of failing to comply with natural progression, which is already existent as implied by the examples given before. Representation of the failure of his societies is another way of freeing themselves from the stereotypes by making peace with the past through self-evaluation which “reflects a single-handed combat and reveals how necessary it is for the intellectual to inflict injury on himself, to actually bleed red blood and free himself from that part of his being already contaminated by the germs of decay” (Fanon WOE 157). The failure to shape and reshape these traditions which the Igbo society is on the verge of outgrowing, results in the crumbling of the values and social codes that the Igbo upholds. That is the reason why Okonkwo, with his fear of appearing weak, fails to grasp the meanings that are conveyed through the principles that govern the life of his society which puts him in a paradoxical vortex where he struggles to become a prominent figure in his village while he continuously offends the social harmony. In this transitory period of the Igbo society, it becomes clear that change is inevitable as the outdated and contradictory aspects of the society must be reconstructed according to the norms of the society.

The abandoning of twin babies is among the traditions dictated by religion, which should be out of practice. It is through one of Nwoye’s memories, it is revealed that twins “were put in earthenware pots and thrown away in the evil forest” (54) where they are left to die as abominations. It is compulsory that the twins are thrown away, so every family who has twins must go through the traumatic process. Even though they are considered abominations, the families still feel sorrow when they carry out the will of Aní, as Uchendu points out to Okonkwo “[i]f you think you are the greatest sufferer in the world ask my daughter, Akueni, how many twins she has borne and thrown away”

(118). Obierika, who is more sceptical towards the problematic traditions than Okonkwo, reflects upon the issue of twins from a logical point of view:

He remembered his wife's twin children, whom he had thrown away. What crime had they committed? The Earth had decreed that they were an offence on the land and must be destroyed. And if the clan did not exact punishment for an offence against the great goddess, her wrath was loosed on all the land and not just on the offender. (109)

Obierika's rebellious thoughts about the dogmatic nature of his religion is suggestive of the need to re-evaluate this destructive tradition. Again it is only possible for Obierika to make that statement due to the flexibility which characterises his culture. Accordingly, Jeyifo suggests that "Obierika's scepticism towards his culture achieves its tremendous force precisely because he bears deep, positive currents of values, predispositions, identity from the very same culture" (60). Thus, Obierika's characterisation is formulated to recognise the pitfalls of his own culture from the Igbo's own point of view and his ability to identify the drawbacks. However, any possibility of self-improvement over these drawbacks is interrupted by the arrival of the missionaries. Consequently, the abandoning of twins becomes an asset for Christian propaganda in Igboland. It is not a coincidence that some of the first converts are among the ones that are traumatised by this tradition:

Nneka had had four previous pregnancies and child-births. But each time she had borne twins, and they had been immediately thrown away. Her husband and his family were already becoming highly critical of such a woman and were not unduly perturbed when they found she had fled to join the Christians. It was a good riddance. (132).

Nneka's conversion is easily dismissed as "a good riddance" which is an indicator that as a bearer of twins, she is not considered a useful member of the society even by her family. She belongs to a marginalised part of the society which is created by the othering that is brought about by religion. The exclusion of a group from an otherwise classless society clashes with the unity and cohesion values. The marginalised group become the easiest targets for the missionaries since they are already at odds with their own culture. Moreover, the divisive effect of throwing away twins is also observed through the sceptical mind of Nwoye as he feels something "snapping inside him" when he hears "the voice of an infant crying in the thick forest" (54). Although Nwoye is not openly marginalised in his society, his recognition that the killing of infants is wrong no

matter what the gods may think about them, causes him to slowly lose his cultural ties with his community which in turn results in his eventual conversion. Earnest E. Champion comments on his approach claiming that “the boy is in rebellion again against his father and the system he represents. [. . .] The new religion appeals to that rather sensitive segment of society whose youth rebel against an established order that appears to them too harsh or too rigid” (276). Although Nwoye and Obierika share the same critique of the tradition, Nwoye does not possess loyalty to his Igbo identity, which Obierika has, because Okonkwo misinterprets his own culture and condemns his son Nwoye accordingly, gradually alienating him.

The missionaries strategic targeting of already the alienated and the marginalised of the Igbo society accelerates the process of spreading Christianity, thus colonial rule. The fact that the cultural ties that bind the society together are already on the verge of disintegrating according to the groups that are looked down upon by their community, paves the way to the formation of a caste of people whose minds are troubled by their customs even before the arrival of the missionaries. Achebe argues in his interview with Kay Bonetti that “many of the people who went over initially were those who did not have much at stake in the old tradition” (76). As a result, the outcasts are the best candidates for conversion in Igboland. The outcasts, or *osu*, are described as follows,

He was a person dedicated to a god, a thing set apart--a taboo for ever, and his children after him. He could neither marry nor be married by the free-born. He was in fact an outcast, living in a special area of the village, close to the Great Shrine. Wherever he went he carried with him the mark of his forbidden caste--long, tangled and dirty hair. A razor was taboo to him. An *osu* could not attend an assembly of the freeborn, and they, in turn, could not shelter under his roof. He could not take any of the four titles of the clan, and when he died he was buried by his kind in the Evil Forest. (138)

The extremity of the outcast's condition is clearly seen in his complete isolation. Moreover, the hereditary nature of the *osu* caste challenges the notion that each man is judged by his own merits in the Igbo tradition. An *osu*'s family, and “his children after him” inherit his derogatory station in an endless cycle from which there is no suggested escape. With the lack of any possible way of leading an honourable life in their own society, the *osu* become the most devout followers of Christianity since the Church allows them to feel fulfilled and valuable in the newly emerging community. Gikandi comments on the Igbo's perception of unity and the *osu*'s exclusion from it as follows:

Igbo culture has created a regime of meanings which gives its members insight into their conditions of existence [. . .] There is no doubt that before ‘things fall apart’ in Umuofia, the circle of culture is shown to have ideological value because it represents the ideal, or possibly the illusion, of completeness and identity. [. . .] The first manifestation of cultural crisis in the novel will be the break-up of this circle: those who are excluded from it [. . .] will become the colonizer’s weapon of exposing the contradictions which Umuofia sought to repress. (34-35)

Taking advantage of the existing divisions of the society is beneficial to the increasing numbers of converts as Mr. Kiaga, the priest, welcomes all the outcasts with open arms as Achebe affirms, “any culture which allows significant numbers of its membership to feel unwanted—this society is looking for trouble, because people who are outside will be centers for disaffection and disruption” (Bonetti 77). Moreover, situation appears to Mr. Kaiga as an opportunity to break any remaining loyalty that his converts might still have to their past traditions. He claims that

The same God created you and them. But they have cast you out like lepers. It is against the will of God, who has promised everlasting life to all who believe in His holy name. The heathen say you will die if you do this or that, and you are afraid. They also said I would die if I built my church on this ground. Am I dead? They said I would die if I took care of twins. I am still alive. The heathen speak nothing but falsehood. Only the word of our God is true. (138-9)

Claiming that the *osu* are equals to the other members of the church who are of higher social status in the village, Mr. Kiaga psychologically enslaves them by ironically promising them freedom. His emphasis on the Evil Forest and the twins is aimed at further alienating the converts from their culture even more. Every word uttered by the priest in this section is condemning and brainwashing. With claims like “before God [. . .] there is no slave or free,” (137) the insecurity of the outcasts is manipulated disregarding the fact that slavery is one of the main drives of colonialism. Nadine Gordimer comments on the missionaries’ hypocrisy saying, “Indeed, the missionaries preceded colonizer in most territories; conquest advanced, gun in one hand Bible in the other. [. . .] The Church establishment was highly ambiguous in its functions of representing Divine Justice, blessing slaves to save their souls before they were shipped” (40-41). In actuality, the priest places the outcasts or the converts in general in an ambiguous state between the white man and the Igbo of the village as they no longer belong to the old customs yet they cannot achieve a higher status than being the loyal servants of the colonisers. Considering the continuous doses of degrading colonialist ideology mixed in the sermons, it is not surprising that the church transforms the

converts, especially the *osu*, into loyal henchmen of the white man. It is made clear by the killing of the sacred python by an *osu* convert (139) that the Church does not only aim to increase its influence by conversions but also tries to damage the spiritual values of the indigenous people for its own ends.

The lack of action by the villagers against the activities of the white man in their territory stems from the proud nature of the Igbo people which can be claimed to accelerate their colonisation. The Igbo's shared values, social codes and traditions are so deeply rooted in their shared history and culture that they fail to recognise and reshape the cracks in their traditions which leads to their subordination. In addition, this flaw can be observed in their dealing with the arrival and settlement of the white man. The fact that the rumours of the white man's arrival are dismissed humorously as leprosy which is called white skin (65) proves that the Igbo have no communication with the white race. Since they do not even believe in the possibility of the existence of such people, the Igbo are completely unprepared for the first encounter with them. Yet the white man's news precedes him as the word reaches Umuofia that the village of Abame, whose oracle orders the murder of the first white man that arrives at the village, is wiped out (122). Okonkwo's interpretation that Abame is at fault as they killed the missionary without knowing his intentions, is an indication that Umuofia would have gone a different path if presented the same situation. Achebe claims that "the Igbo have always lived in a world of continual struggle, motion and change" (*HE* 18) so adaptability, which is a double edged blade in the colonial context, is one of the key characteristics of their lifestyle. Ohadike stresses that "The Igbo had adopted a conciliatory stance in their early dealings with the missionaries, because the Igbo religion was pacific and the Igbo themselves respected the religious views of other people" (xliii). The "pacific" attitude of the Igbo leads to a state of mutual existence where the Igbo refrain from a closer inspection of the missionaries which in turn allows the latter to flourish freely. Their approach is that "the Igbo saw the missionaries as essentially harmless, and shrugged at the uncomprehending priests who fraternized with outcasts and gainlessly occupied themselves with preaching" (Ohadike xliii). The fact that more violent reactions to the activities of the missionaries and the converts only start when the Igbo culture is physically threatened by them indicates that the

established Church and court have grown in power enough to be able to engage. Failure to understand the true intentions of the missionaries that “missionaries were prepared to destroy the entire system of Igbo customs and beliefs in order to convert the people to Christianity” (Ohadike xliii) by the Igbo lessen their chance of resisting later on.

Consequently, Achebe’s depiction of the first generation of Igbo people to come in contact with the white man and his colonising mission, shows how the Igbo society is prone to the impending subjugation. Although the Igbo culture is a close-knit, organic and living entity having fully functional political, judicial and religious systems based on the Igbo values and social codes, its shortcomings and outdated customs, which might have gone out of use through natural progression, accelerates the process of colonisation. The existent anxieties of the people become the primary weapon of the coloniser in severing the weakened ties that bind the society together. Obierika’s observation when he says that “If we should try to drive out the white men in Umuofia we should find it easy. There are only two of them. But what of our own people who are following their way and have been given power? [. . .] How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us” (155) is an indication that the coloniser wins the battle by not by brutal force, but psychological manipulation as they play upon the people’s insecurities to turn them against their own culture and society. Considering the fact that killing a clan member is forbidden as an abomination, the physical resistance is almost out of question as converts constitute the forces of the Church. Obierika also concludes that “our clan can no longer act like one. [the white man] has put a knife on things that held us together and now we have fallen apart” (156). Obierika’s questions to Okonkwo are obviously rhetorical and the conclusion he derives from the situation is an acknowledgement of defeat. It is the same idea of surrender that drives Okonkwo to commit suicide when he understands that his clan accepts subordination to the white man as they refrain from going into battle with him (180). Okonkwo’s violent attitude, for the first time in the novel, reflects his whole community’s psychological struggle as Fanon claims that “at the individual level violence is a cleansing force. It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude” (WOE 51). In parallel with Fanon’s comment, it is clear that Okonkwo is the only person in the clan that the inferiority complex could not take

over. Even though Okonkwo is at a crossroad with his clansmen at the scene, his fate parallels the fate of the clan in a figurative sense as Richard Begam suggests:

Both nationalist history and heroic tragedy demand that he remain unyielding and that the Igbos honor their cultural heritage by refusing assimilation. Even in his final gesture, then, Okonkwo functions as the true representative of his people. For, as he sees it, Igbo culture has willingly succumbed to its own annihilation, committing what is a form of collective suicide by submitting to the British. In taking his own life, Okonkwo has simply preceded his people in their communal destruction. Once again he has lead the way. (401)

In the end, what does not bend, eventually breaks. If bending means abandoning the very cultural norms that Okonkwo fashions his identity from, he prefers death as an abomination which is, even with its negative connotations, a part of his own tradition. Yet, Okonkwo's "final gesture" is nothing more than a bit of material from the point of view of the District Commissioner who intends to write a book titled "the Pacification of the Primitive tribes of Lower Niger" (183). He believes that "the story of this man 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. There was so much else to include, and one must be firm in cutting out details" (183). Pacification might be the correct word to describe the strategy of psychological warfare that the white man employs to subdue the Igbo people. The illusion of glory in the District Commissioner's words reflects "the colonist makes history. His life is an epic, an odyssey" (WOE 14) in which Okonkwo is one of "the listless beings" (15) who "compose a virtually petrified background to the innovative dynamism of colonial mercantilism" (15) while in actuality his account is that of "the history of his own nation's looting, raping and starving to death" (15). However, his tendency to reduce Okonkwo's story to interesting yet insignificant reading material is already rebutted by Achebe's narrative throughout the novel. According to the District Commissioner, "Okonkwo ceases to exist as a person; he is only the part of mute backcloth without form, figure or voice" (Champion 277). Thus, the District Commissioner's book functions in two crucial ways: (a) an example of how the body of misrepresentative literature and historical accounts comes to be and (b) a sharp contrast to the story that is told from the African point of view. In relation to his own generation, Okonkwo can be considered to have failed, yet his example and his story told by Achebe remain as a foundation for the social construction of a new

Nigerian identity for the readers. By showing his readers that “their past—with all its imperfections—was not a long night of savagery,” (*MYOCD* 45) Achebe reclaims his people’s history in order to open new possibilities for fashioning a Nigerian national identity on the verge national independence.



CHAPTER II

POWER DYNAMICS DURING THE EARLY COLONIAL RULE IN *ARROW OF GOD*

One of the truest tests of integrity is its
blunt refusal to be compromised.

--Chinua Achebe

AOG was published in 1964 as Achebe's third novel in the trilogy in which he intended to design a contextual unity where he represented the colonial establishment and rule through three different generations in which he observed not only a chronological timespan but also the process of colonising the minds of his people. Although the novel was the last one to be published among the three, in Achebe's trilogy, *AOG* fell in between *TFA* and *NLE* in terms of the chronology of the contents. In actuality, his intention is to write a novel about his father's generation, which would have Okonkwo's son as the protagonist, right after the publication of the first book, however, this particular generation proves to be the most difficult one of the three to write about as he states,

The middle generation—when I got to it, I got stuck. It's very interesting, it's very strange. That is my father's generation. That was Isaac's—Okonkwo's son's—story. It just didn't have the way, the image—and later on I began to suspect that I did not know enough about this very, very strange generation, my father's generation, to be able to do justice to it in the novel. (Bonetti 75)

Thus he moves on to deal with the generation he knows most about; his own generation resulting in the delay for “the middle generation.” The setting of the novel coincides with the British efforts to establish political control over Igboland apart from the works of the missionaries. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the military presence of the white men in Igboland aimed to “protect the Christians” as “it was only 1900 that the British Imperial government declared Igboland a protectorate and embarked upon formal conquest” (Ohadike xlv-xlv). While the first arrival of the missionaries and the initial encounters of the Igbo with the white man are dealt with in *TFA*, in *AOG*, the

focus moves on to the establishment of the colonial rule which strategically employs indirect rule in Igboland where political institutions consist of smaller, separate, and sovereign bodies of villages and clans. The lack of a central government makes controlling the land and its people and maintaining the political hierarchy harder for the colonisers. On the one hand, the Church still remains the main institution to expand the coloniser's influence over the indigenous people, and on the other appointment of local chiefs by the colonial offices to represent the will of the coloniser in their communities. In the light of this, the struggles to maintain power over the fictional clan of Umuaro by the colonial office, the chief priest of its patron god Ulu named Ezeulu, and the contesting oracles who challenge him construct the theme of the novel. As the clash of the authoritative figures go on in the novel, the Igbo people of the clan, who by the nature of their culture is open to rethinking and reshaping their customs and even gods, are forced to abandon their indigenous ways in order to survive in the density of their situation.

In the era of expanding colonial institutions, Ezeulu, the protagonist and the chief priest of Ulu stands as a powerful local religious leader whose authority is justified by his representation of the patron god of the clan. His devotion to his spiritual identity is so devout that he claims to be the embodiment of the will of the god. Neil Ten Kortenaar suggests, "the priest identifies his own will with the god Ulu's. Ezeulu imagines himself to be an arrow of God and erases the realm of freedom. [. . .] he identifies his self too absolutely with one of its roles: he forgets the man and allows the priest to subsume his whole identity" (34). The power that is bestowed on him from birth as his position is greater than any of the other oracles of priests of the clan, is bewildering and confusing even to the man himself to the extent that he gradually loses the balance between his will and that of Ulu's. Apart from his religious duties, Ezeulu is unable to comprehend that he is also a member of the society who should work for the collective welfare of the village which brings about the dissolution of the boundaries of his two selves. The otherworldly aspect of his identity as a priest grants him more influence over others which Ezeulu unconsciously cherishes. The communal identity of the self blends in and overpowers the individual one while the authority of the former becomes the instrument of the latter in order to maintain a continuity of the values that shape the identity of his people especially the old traditions and customs. Accordingly, Ezeulu's internal

conflicts about his identity and the limits of his power are presented to the reader early in the novel. He often “debated in himself whether he was merely a watchman for the god’s decisions whether he was more than that” (Nwoga 20). His temptation by the power he possesses is hinted at as he questions “what kind of power was it if it would never be used? Better to say that it was not there” (4). The political structure of the Igbo world does not give great power over others to a single man, thus his authority, in theory, should not belong to Ezeulu the man but to Ezeulu the priest who is the voice of a god. Yet, it is clear that in his perspective the line that separates the two is blurring which can be observed as he reflects upon his deciding actions which have impact on the lives of all the members of his community. Major communal events such as the Festival of the Pumpkin Leaves and the New Yam Festival, by custom can only start after he performs certain rituals which inform the society of the date and time of the events as “if he should refuse to name the day there would be no festival – no planting and reaping” (3). The fact that these two festivals mark the times of planting and harvest is the indication of his impact on the pragmatic life of the village as well as his religious authority. The awareness that he can possibly condemn the whole village if he just wished to, gives him the illusion of possessing an unquestionable and unchallengeable power. Also, he is characteristically “a man who had pride in himself and his position, who wanted to prove himself stronger in his age than the young people, who was quick to anger with his family and strangers but slow to take resolve” (Nwoga 20). When his “pride in his position” is combined with the will of the patron god of the clan, possibilities of exacting authority in the name of Ulu come natural to Ezeulu who contemplates on his power and its limits:

Whenever Ezeulu considered the immensity of his power over the year and the crops and, therefore, over the people he wondered if it was real. [. . .] He was merely a watchman. His power was no more than the power of a child over a goat that was said to be his; he would find it food and take care of it. But the day it was slaughtered he would know soon enough who the real owner was. No! the Chief Priest of Ulu was more than that, must be more than that. (3)

By questioning even the reality of his power, he proves that he is aware of its vastness which the ambiguity of the spiritual aspect of his character enables him to make use of. Any conviction that a priest puts forward has its roots in the divinity of the power that he represents and thus to a certain extent is unquestionable, as in an interview with Kay Bonetti, Achebe states, “Have we any right to doubt? And when a priest says this, how

much is his own wish and will and how much of it is the will of gods [. . .] We must take things as they are” (68). His ambitious nature and the desire of self-assertion are implications of impending misuse of power which works as a foreshadowing for the ending of the novel. Although, self-interest becomes the main motive of his actions, he remains to be the representative of the old tradition which he strongly upholds in the changing times even if it leads to his demise. Accordingly, Achebe names him “a saving grace” as the Igbo know “that they had a priest, a chief priest, who said ‘No’ at some point. That stands like a pillar in the course of their history, a place from which they can take bearing” (Bonetti 68-69).

Although Ezeulu’s strict enactment of Ulu’s will in order to keep the communal Igbo identity fixed and constant is the driving force of his actions, he disregards the fact that the Igbo customs are open to change and reshaping as the society sees fit. Collective memory of the clan keeps the idea that Ulu is a constructed deity which is designed to serve social purposes in the formation of the Umuaro clan, which counters Ezeulu’s endeavours to keep the god’s command, and his own, as the law of the land. The story of Ulu’s origin provides an insight to Igbo’s idea of religion as a regulator of social life:

In the very distant past, [. . .] the six villages [. . .] lived as different peoples, and each worshipped its own deity. Then the hired soldiers of Abam used to strike in the dead of the night, set fire to the houses and carry men, women and children into slavery. Things were so bad for the six villages that their leaders came together to save themselves. They hired a strong team of medicine-men to install a common deity for them. This deity which the fathers of the six villages made was called Ulu. [. . .] The six villages then take the name of Umuaro, and the priest of Ulu became their chief priest. (14-15)

The story indicates that the main motivation of the creation of Ulu is socio-political rather than religious as six different villages unite under the clan Umuaro in order to resist against the common enemy. Accordingly, Ulu becomes the common ground which unification among the people is built upon. Similarly, the role of the chief priest in the major festivals can be observed to be socio-economic rather than religious. Thus, the creation of Ulu is designed in a way that the Umuoran society maintains their staple customs and socio-economic values and they conform with the will of their patron god at the same time. In line with this, Kortenaar argues that “the Umuorans illustrate the first distinction, between moral objects and real programs, when they raise yams for subsistence but tell themselves that they do so to comply with the will of Ulu. What

they must do to survive also fulfils the higher end of uniting them in a community” (34). Thus, the continuation of the traditional daily life of the Umuorans provides a spiritual fulfilment in a communal sense which implies that Ulu, even though he is the chief god, is a means to an end. The flexibility of the Igbo culture enables the creation of new deities to restore or maintain the social order.

Just like the possibility of the creation of new gods, the Igbo gods are prone to be destroyed and lost. If the function of the constructed god in regulating the social life of his/her believers loses its practical effect, it contradicts the nature of the creation of that particular god. As a result, it is plausible to say that people are free to abandon a god whom they no longer have a need for. Stories of such incidents are prevalent and are passed on by rumours. Nwaka, who actively runs a campaign against Ulu in favour of Idemili who is another major god of the Umuaro clan, reminds his followers about Aninta’s actions against their god as follows;

Nwaka was known for speaking his mind; he never paused to bite his words. But many people trembled for him that night in his compound when he had all but threatened Ulu by reminding him of the fate of another deity that failed his people. It was true that the people of Aninta burnt one of their deities and drove away his priest. (39)

As human constructions, the gods are expected to disclose their will through their priest in parallel to the will of the people. Accordingly, Olakunle George claims that “as a matter of principle and historical memory, Umuaro pagans claim the power to discard old gods and create new ones to grapple with *worldly* contingencies” (352, emphasis in the original). Consequently, the fate of the Igbo gods is heavily dependent on the functionality of the social and political roles in the society.

The design of the religious system which covers other spheres such as the social and political ones, grants considerable authority to those who represent it. Then, it is only natural that contesters and rivals, especially ones with political ambitions, should challenge the existent forms of authority and its holders. Due to the lack of ultimate constancy of Igbo gods, Ezeulu is also under the threat of losing his position of Chief Priest along with the perks it provides. Social crisis paves the way to the questioning of Ulu’s stance as the village decides to go to war with Okperi over a land dispute, disregarding the fact that Ulu does not sanctify such an action (14-18). The priest’s rejection to give Ulu’s blessing for the war enables the voices of his adversaries to be

raised. Although Ezeulu bases his argument against the feud on the past transactions between the villages saying that “It was Okperi who gave us a piece of their land to live in. They also gave us their deities [. . .] If you choose to fight a man for a piece of farmland that belongs to him I shall have no hand in it” (15). His approach to the situation is objective and just, yet contradictory to the interest of the village. Presented with the chance to challenge Ulu’s authority, Ezidemili, the priest of Idemili, manipulates the political situation to establish his god as the new chief God of the village. The power struggle between the representatives of two gods appears to be on the religious level when inspected superficially. However, the fray is much more personal than it is first presented. Ezidemili and Nwaka, who is one of the wealthiest men among the villagers, intentionally make use of the political unrest in order to replace Ezeulu and have further respect and power. In parallel, Gikandi comments that “the conflicts in Umuaro are not a rivalry between two gods Ulu and Idemili [. . .] [they] are actually a struggle between two conflicting ideological interests and authorities” (RAN 153). Accordingly, Nwaka’s initial attack on Ezeulu is based on derogatory claims directed to him on the personal level. He is accused of being manipulative and motivated by a desire for power:

The man who carries a deity is not a king. He is there to perform his god’s ritual and to carry sacrifice to him. But I have been watching this Ezeulu for many years. He is a man of ambition; he wants to be king, priest, diviner, all. His father, they said, was like that too. Umuaro showed him that Igbo people knew no kings. The time has come to tell his son also. (27-28)

Nwaka’s words are aimed to deny Ezeulu the authority over matters that concern the whole community. Moreover, he goes beyond criticising the priest himself by accusing his father of having a similar ambitious attitude. Considering that priesthood is a hereditary position, Nwaka manages to discredit not only the man but also the source of his authority. In a society where fathers are presumed to never lie to their sons, “Nwaka’s attack is directed at the very source of the knowledge that Ezeulu is claiming. [. . .] Ezeulu’s father could have been wrong. His knowledge of the land could have been faulty. In which case, he could have unintentionally passed on faulty knowledge to his son” (Okechukwu 572). Yet, he does not disclose the fact that the major contender for the chief priest’s place is his childhood friend. His relationship with Ezidemili is what makes the struggle for authority between the two parties a contest for power. It is

clear that both sides of the argument are aware of the political importance of the roles they play in their social circle as George argues that “the battle between Ezeulu and his rivals is understood by both parties, and by the entire community, as being at once spiritual and secular-political. Their understanding of what is at stake operates on a spiritual-metaphysical level as well as a political one” (353). Considered in a democratic context, Nwaka’s movement against Ezeulu can be considered to represent a campaign by an oppositional party.

Even though Umuaro is mostly out of the white man’s influence at the time, the internal disputes and the war with Okperi create the conditions for the white man’s first interference with the village’s dealings. The actual fighting is narrated to be in a small scale:

The war was waged from ne Afo to the next. On the day it began Umuaro killed two men of Okperi. The next day was Nkwo, and so there was no fighting. On the two following days, Eke and Oye, the fighting grew fierce. Umuaro killed four and Okperi replied with three, one of three being Akukalia’s brother, Okoye. The next day, Afo, saw the war brought to a sudden close. The white man, Wintabota, brought soldiers to Umuaro and stopped it. The story of what these soldiers did in Abame was still told with fear, and so Umuaro made no effort to resist but laid down their arms. (28)

Even if it is called a war, the number of casualties on both sides combined is only nine and the actual fighting takes up three days. Contrastingly, the story of Abame at the end of the quotation refers to the eradication of the whole village of Abame who killed a white man. Even so, the district commissioner Captain Winterbottom takes it upon himself to put an end to the fighting. With the subjugation of both sides by the British military, the fighting comes to a halt. He finds great pride in his role as the bringer of peace to the warring savages, yet the small scale of the fight complicates the situation and opens up different ways to read the intervention. Clearly, the inter-villages warfare is an opportunity for Winterbottom to step up and expand his, in turn the British rule’s, authority in the area. The underlying motives of the intervention is further complicated by the fact that the Igbo are dispossessed of their guns at the end of the war as “the white man, not satisfied that he had stopped the war, had gathered all the guns in Umuaro and asked the soldiers to break them in the face of all, except three or four which he carried away” (28). Moreover, the land dispute is resolved in favour of Okperi, who is already in good relationship with the white man. Even though Ezeulu,

who does not support an unjust war in the name of his god, is under the impression that truth is victorious in the end, he still loses his people's favour. Accordingly, D. Ibe Nwoga comments that "Ezeulu gained some reputation from the realization of prophecy about Ulu not fighting a war of blame, but he also lost local reputation because he was the witness that brought the verdict against Umuaro" (27). The results of war damages his authority as members of the community such as Nwaka question his loyalty even further. Consequently, the British intervention to end the dispute can be observed to provide beneficial results only for the coloniser. First of all, as the haunting memory of the Abame massacre is still fresh in the minds of the Igbo, the coloniser shows with his military prowess that he is at their doorstep ready to cut in whenever necessary. The sole fear for survival becomes the instrument of maintaining control over the villages. Secondly, from a military perspective, the breaking of the guns weakens Umuaro in the battlefield should they decide to go to war against the coloniser. It is clearly stated that the clansmen do not have the courage to resist, yet Winterbottom does not take chances.

The story of the enmity between the two villages is distorted and reshaped through different narratives as well. While Ezeulu's recounting carries indications that Winterbottom's interference serves only his ends as well as being unnecessary. On the other hand, the district commissioner's side of the story reflects the constructed role of the coloniser. Through three different narrative voices, the incident becomes an assertion of power. Merry Allen B. Lewis suggests that

One of the central background issues of the novel has to do with land rights, which village or group owns a particular plot of farmland, decision and action being dependent on historical legendry, of beginnings of that locale. The various beliefs vying with one another for ascendancy actually affect the behaviour of the novel's characters and the outcome of the book. (49)

Although the reason of the dispute is openly stated to concern land ownership, the fact that the war breaks out after the destruction of Ebo's *ikenga*, which is a wooden idol created for one's ancestors, by Akukalia, an envoy for war negotiations (23-4) fascinates Winterbottom to the point that he believes that religious fanaticism is the driving motive behind the clash. He distorts the story of the war to his own ends while he tells it to Clarke as follows:

The people of Okperi and their neighbours, Umuaro, are great enemies. Or they were until I came into the story. This feud was made worse by the fact that Okperi welcomed missionaries and government while Umuaro, on the other hand, has

remained backwards. [. . .] This war started because a man from Umuaro went to visit a friend in Okperi one fine morning [. . .] this man from Umuaro, having drunk his friend's palm wine reached for his *ikenga* and split it in two. (37).

He clearly bases his theory about the war on the assumption that Umuaro and Okperi are enemies in a long history of feud which is far from the facts. Also, he transforms an Igbo affair into an attack on colonial rule and authority as he claims that Okperi's involvement with the white man is resented in Umuaro. Thus, he legitimises his interference. Moreover, the reduction of the cause of war into religious fetishism is achieved through the emphasis of the destruction of the *ikenga*. Just by retelling a small story to Clarke, he distorts history and facts. Ambreena Manji claims that his misreading is intentional on the grounds that it works toward the benefit of the British Administration (635). As his version grants the sense of success and accomplishment to his character, he finds glory in his actions. In this sense, Captain Winterbottom presumes the role of "the coloniser who accepts" as Albert Memmi theorises as follows:

A usurper claims his place, and if need be will defend it by every means at his disposal. This amounts to saying that at the very time of his triumph, he admits that what triumphs in him is an image of which he condemns. [. . .] This explains his strenuous insistence, strange for a victor, on apparently futile matters. He endeavours to falsify history, rewrites laws, he would extinguish memories-anything to succeed in transforming his usurpation into legitimacy. (96)

By creating the illusion of glory for ending a battle which is presented to be very small in scale, he creates the false image of victor for himself which justifies his existence in the colony. To that end, his narrative greatly differs from that of Ezeulu's. By recounting the same event through different narrative voice, Achebe indicates the ideology of false glory behind the coloniser who is in need of legitimacy for his actions for both political reasons and self-assurance. In that sense, Captain Winterbottom can be observed as both the subject of colonial ideology and its prosecutor at the same time.

The conflicting images of power and the struggle to expand influence on Umuaro characterises the political situation of the village. As the internal questioning of authority destabilises the local rule, the British try to establish indirect rule in Umuaro in order to centralise the colonial administration through representatives appointed by the district commissioner. The indirect rule policy of the British is dependent "on the advisory relationship between the political officer and the native authority, usually a

chief, heading a local government unit that corresponded to a pre-colonial political unit” (Crowder 199). The idea is that the existing political structures of the colonised are maintained, yet the local authority is bound to abide by the advice and command of the coloniser. In such a system, the British refrain from interfering directly in every decision making process, instead they advise the local leader on subjects that their advice is deemed necessary. The first reason which makes indirect rule policy essential is the lack of manpower on the side of the coloniser as “Nigeria is a vast country, British colonial administrators found it difficult to recruit enough European staff to carry on the administration” (Nwabughogu 66). Since there were not enough colonial officers to maintain a direct rule, local authorities, usually chiefs, were given the opportunity to sustain or even enhance their powers with the support of the coloniser. Moreover, the image of the African on the coloniser’s view strengthened the ideology behind indirect rule because “the African [. . .] was an ‘inferior’ being who must be treated differently. It was futile to try to make him look like an European by establishing schools to train him in European education, and in ruling him through institutions modelled on European lines” (Nwabughogu 70). The lack of both understanding and respect for the indigenous culture makes indirect rule the best solution for governing Nigeria in the eyes of the coloniser. The system is employed in Nigeria in the 1900s as Cornelius Ogu Ejimofor summarises:

As early as 1900 Indirect Rule had become policy in the administrative system of the North. By 1914 when the Northern and the Southern Provinces were amalgamated, Indirect rule was applied in the western half of the Southern Provinces. By 1928 it had been extended to the Eastern half of the South in such a modified form that some writers of Nigerian constitutional history prefer to describe the system as local government. (34)

Ejimofor’s statement establishes that the Igbo part of Nigeria proves to be the most difficult to establish indirect rule. The Igbo’s denial of unquestionable authority to anyone in their community, cripples the coloniser’s efforts to find figures to appoint as warrant chiefs to whom other British officers give advice. The role of the white man is determined to be the master who acts behind the scenes in this power equation. However, in the problematic areas such as Eastern Nigeria, where the Igbo reside, the advisory role is often blurred due to the lack of institutionalised political leadership. As Michael Crowder argues, “where chiefs governed small political units, and in particular where their traditional executive authority was questionable, the political officer found

himself interfering in native authority affairs more frequently than ideally he should” (198). As a result, even when indirect rule aims to reinforce local governments, it only achieves to create agencies through which the colonial rule can be asserted while the indigenous peoples are kept under the illusion of having a self-governing system. In reality, “on matters of general policy, [the native chief] strictly followed the advice of [the British Officer] but issued his orders and instructions to his own people in such a way as if they originated from him,” (Ejimofofor 37) and if “the chief failed to carry out his oath of allegiance or misused his traditional powers [. . .] natural justice demanded that he be relieved of his position” (Ejimofofor 35). The native authorities position is volatile and open to change. The chief can only maintain his place by following the instructions of the British officer unquestionably. The power to govern his people does not originate from his prowess in leadership, rather from the fact that he is regarded qualified to do the job by the coloniser.

Winterbottom’s efforts to enact indirect rule in Umuaro fails totally because of the reason why indirect rule proves problematic in Southern-Eastern Nigeria. Failing to understand the Igbo idea of temporality of authority, he misinterprets Ezeulu’s position in the clan as the chief priest. At the abrupt end of the war against Okperi, his testament against Umuaro complicates Ezeulu’s relationship with the white man. While he thinks that he stands for what he believes to be the triumph of truth against and unjust war, the district commissioner perceives the situation as an opportunity for co-operation in establishing indirect rule even though he clearly states that he is against it. He rules out the possibility that the Igbo should have any political authority over their own people saying, “We do not only promise to secure old savage tyrants on their thrones [. . .] but we now go out of our way to invent new chiefs where there were none before” (36). As the representative of the British government, it is his duty to abide by the general policy that is applied throughout Nigeria. Yet, he cannot find a chief in Umuaro, so he has to “invent” one himself. Being a first-hand witness to the “savagery” of the natives, he is against the policy that

was designed to accomplish the following important objectives: (1) to preserve and foster British rule through the traditional political institutions; (2) to encourage the spontaneous evolution of these institutions in particular directions; and (3) to use Native Authority system as a training-ground for the education of two groups. (Okafor 460).

His experience in the area as the district commissioner makes him so biased towards the Igbo that he denies the possibility of the so-called educational purposes of the indirect rule, which are actually humanitarian masks that cover the main motivation of colonialism. Still, in order to comply with the general policy, he decides to invent a chieftaincy for Umuaro, to which Ezeulu is his prime candidate. Winterbottom mistakes Ezeulu to “a kind of priest-king” (38) and misguidedly assumes that he holds the most authority in the clan. The first real attempt to establish warrant chieftaincy in Umuaro is set in motion only when he receives an order which prompts him to take action with instructions to

Purge the native system of its abuses to build a higher civilization upon the soundly rooted native stock that had its foundation in the hearts and minds and thoughts of the people and therefore on which we can more easily build, moulding it and establishing it into the lines consonant with modern ideas and higher standards., an yet all the time enlisting the real force of the spirit of the people, instead of killing all that out and trying to start afresh. (56)

The reasoning displayed in the order provides contradictions in itself as the emphasis is seemingly laid upon the protection of “soundly rooted” native systems even though the aim is clearly to reconstruct them in the direction of the coloniser’s ideology. Captain Winterbottom’s lack of faith in the indirect rule can no longer delay its enactment in Umuaro. Accordingly, Ezeulu is hastily summoned to his office for the proposition. The narrative difference presented in the recollection of the Okperi conflict further complicates the power relationship between the priest and the district commissioner during the first negotiations of the new system. The district commissioner’s self-deception over his interference in the war is the basis of again a self-claimed authority over and respect from the natives. In his mind, the chain of command, on top of which he places himself, is legitimised by his supposed good will and judgement in the affair. As a result, summoning of the priest to his office works both as an indication of the power relation between the coloniser and the colonised, and as the foundation of a legal superior-inferior relationship between him and Ezeulu, who should gratefully accept chieftaincy as a gift coming from the British rule. However, the priest’s perception of the situation differs from that of Winterbottom’s in the sense that the two men are equal in social standing as witnesses of truth in their objection to an unsanctified war. Since their objectives and assertions of power over their communities are in line until the initial undertaking to establish indirect rule, the two figures of power appear to have an

understanding with each other to enjoy their authority in their respective social spheres. Yet, the arrival of the messengers to deliver the summoning order to Ezeulu brings the parties in conflict for the first time. His rejection to travel to Okperi in order to see the district commissioner shows that he is not willing to take part in anything that might make him appear to be under the command of the white man to his people. During the meeting between the priest and the messenger, the authority of the chief priest is constantly challenged. First of all, the messenger is introduced as “the Chief Messenger of the great white man, the Destroyer of Guns” (136). As titles are symbols of social grandeur in Igbo tradition, the naming of both the white man and his messenger is aimed to attract the listener’s utmost attention and respect. Secondly, the messenger fails to recognise the highest priest of the whole clan as he asks “Which one of you is called Ezeulu?” (137). His failure to identify Ezeulu without asking, even in his own hut, is the cause of astonishment and anger, especially for Obika, Ezeulu’s eldest son. Lastly, the messenger further insults him by claiming that “there are many people waiting to see the white man and you may have to wait in Okperi for three or four days before your turn comes” (139). The extremity of the insult goes even higher as the comment is followed by a proposition of bribery to arrange the meeting earlier. Even though disrespecting the chief priest in his own hut is an great offence, Ezeulu’s attitude towards the messenger is based on humility and respect appropriate for his position as he does not hold the man responsible for the message he brings. Yet, the assertion of his own authority lies in the sharpness of his answer to the summon as he responds:

‘You must first return, however, and tell your white man that Ezeulu does not leave his hut. If he wants to see me he must come here. Nwodika’s son who showed you the way can also show him.’ [. . .] ‘Do you know what you are saying, my friend?’ asked the messenger in utter disbelief. ‘Are you a messenger or not?’ asked Ezeulu. Go home and give my message to your master. (139)

By reversely summoning Winterbottom to his hut, Ezeulu effectively dislocates the district commissioner’s supposed authority over him. The emphasis on the master-servant relationship between the messenger and the white man indicates that the priest does not recognise such a relationship between himself and Winterbottom, rather he is hinted to be an equal to Ezeulu. In effect, his response acts as an insult to the district commissioner’s authority equivalent to that of the messenger’s.

As opposed to the priest's diplomatic response to the summons, the district commissioner's reaction is far different as he issues a restraining order for Ezeulu so that he can be taken into custody (149). The fact that he is uncompromising when dealing with the natives results in a violent response as his authority is challenged by a mere priest. Moreover, the district commissioner is represented to show symptoms of a serious illness, possibly malaria, up until the arrival of Ezeulu's refusal. His temper, combined with the weakness of his body, puts him into a fit as "perhaps it was Captain Winterbottom's rage and frenzy that brought it on [. . .] but when two policemen set out to arrest Ezeulu in Umuaro Captain Winterbottom suddenly collapsed and went into a delirium" (149). This moment is build up throughout the novel, so from the reader's perspective the commissioner's collapse does not come as a surprise. However, the timing of it complicates Ezeulu's relationship with the white man in the minds of Umuaro's villagers who are now aware of the commissioner's condition. Moreover, the astonishment of the natives who work for the white man in the connection of their master's illness with Ezeulu implies that even though they choose to abandon their native culture, they are still very much attached to it. Initially it is John Nwadika who proposes that the commissioner is cursed by Ezeulu's magic:

The sudden collapse of Captain Winterbottom on the very day he sent policemen to arrest the Chief Priest of Umuaro was clearly quite significant. The first man to point the connection was John Nwodika, the Second Steward to Captain Winterbottom himself. He said it was just as he feared; the priest had hit him with a potent charm. In spite of everything then, power still resided in its accustomed place. (155)

The unexpected turn of events in the timing of the commissioner's illness, grants Ezeulu a welcome restoration of his power. Furthermore, Nwodika and others who fears the priest's magic, are evidently the proof of the fact that Winterbottom's authority is shaken even in the British administration in the area, of which he is the head. As a result, the district commissioner's illness provides the basis for the reinstitution of Ezeulu's authority as it challenges the idea that the priest works in collaboration with the white man. Besides, the incident tips the scale in favour of Ezeulu in the struggle to maintain power in Umuaro which is the first victory for Umuaro against the white man.

The fear and respect that incites in the hearts of anyone who hears the story of Ezeulu's supernatural powers characterises his idea of Ulu's supremacy over his subjects.

Accordingly, by imposing authority over one another, Winterbottom and Ezeulu unintentionally support each other in line with their own aspirations as Solomon T. Masenda points out, “the irony is that by refusing to go along with Winterbottom, Ezeulu is helping him because Winterbottom is personally opposed to the concept of indirect rule. Winterbottom, by ruling against Umuaro, is exonerating Ezeulu who has been bitterly opposed by Nwaka” (80). Paradoxically, the two men’s assertion of their own power clash and co-operate at the same time. Yet, Ezeulu is the only one that benefits from this mutual relationship as the district commissioner’s personal views are restrained through the orders from his superiors. The recurring pattern of Ezeulu’s resistance to white man’s rule through chieftancy continues to empower his position in Umuaro as he is arrested by Tony Clarke who takes charge of the administration in the absence of the district commissioner. The anti-climactic negotiation of warrant chieftancy between the acting district commissioner and Ezeulu marks the impossibility of the enactment of indirect rule in Umuaro under the chief priest’s authority. Although Clarke expects him to welcome the title with open arms “with the feeling of a benefactor,” (174) the priest stands firm in denying any legitimacy through the coloniser: “Tell the white man that Ezeulu will not be anybody’s chief, except Ulu” (175). Even though the presence and the power of the white man are undeniable at this stage of colonisation, the priest puts a dent in their administration strategy all the while strengthening his own office back at the village. It is clear that after exchanging blows with the white man, Ezeulu does not consider them to be the main threat to his authority at the time. Sola Soile claims that “the whole episode is just a side comment, an ironic digression which the author does not allow to interfere with the more serious pattern of the action” (290). The ending of the novel also creates the atmosphere that without the internal conflicts of the village, the interference of the white man cannot be successful, at least this easily. In that sense the priest’s rejection of the appointment is a personal achievement rather than a communal one. He is now proven to be a servant to no one but his god, which he needs to emphasise only to his clansman rather than the white man. Thus, the only attempt to enact indirect rule in Umuaro fails as “the much embarrassed British Administration soon retreats in a rather total disarray over the appointment, and [. . .] the governor retracts his earlier directives and puts a stay on the appointment of new Paramount Chiefs” (Soile 290). Although the narrative puts stress

on the internal tensions of the village according to Ezeulu's ambitions, denial of indirect rule in Umuaro marks a cornerstone in history of colonialism represented in Achebe's work. Any act of resistance to the coloniser is unimaginable in Umuaro when Ezeulu performs the deed. Thus, he is greeted as a hero after his return. A visitor praises him saying that "the white man has met his match in you" (184). The possibility of matching the white man in power and authority is open to the minds of the villagers now and they are proud of it. The priest's popularity and respect grows immensely among the whole clan so much that on the second day of his return fifty seven visitors bearing gifts come to see him in his compound (186). Even though his reputation is cleared and authority is restored, which is presented to be his main objective in life, Ezeulu, drunk with the power he possesses now, does not seek reconciliation with his people. His plans to get his revenge for the past challenges pointed at him indicates that power hunger of the priest is growing in the direction that by punishing his people, he wants to make sure that his authority is never challenged in the same way again. It is at this point when the holders of power transform into tyrants that the fate of the villagers sealed by their upcoming disaster. What appears to be a victory at the first glance quickly turns into the basis of destruction as he possesses too much authority and credibility which contradicts the traditional idea of power in Igbo thinking.

While Ezeulu's struggle to maintain his position as the most influential priest in Umuaro, his family, especially his four sons, act as the microcosm for the different aspects of his society which are under the threat of both internal and external attacks. Edogo, Obika, Oduche and Nwafo are his possible heirs to pass down his title, from the eldest to the youngest respectively. Each of them are set in different paths according to either their father's or their own will. George comments on the parallelism between the social and domestic sphere saying, "what interests me most is the sense in which the public conflict is complicated by the undercurrent of family tension in Ezeulu's polygamous household. It is in this domestic sphere that Achebe figures a level of change and social realignment that none of the main actors recognize" (355). Obika appears to be the embodiment of the traditional, yet reckless, Igbo man who upholds customs and social codes of the village. Oduche, on the other hand, is the example of the Christian influence on the Igbo people as he attends the missionary school with his father's encouragement in order to learn more about the white man and his ways. The

third son, Edogo, is absorbed with the spiritual and artistic values of his society as he carves masks for the ancestral spirits. He represents the spiritual side of his father's identity in the sense that he dedicates himself more to the artist's social responsibilities, the title of Ezeulu can safely be passed on to him. However, the title is already reserved for Nwafo, the youngest son, in his father's plans. Nwafo, with his innocence and the lack of his father's ambition for power, represents the future of the Igbo. He is a member of the next generation to whom the priest wants to transfer his experience just as he received it from his father and ancestors. If Ezeulu shapes him for the job from an early age, he can become the continuation of what's traditional and sacred. However, Ezeulu's plans fail in his own compound as George suggests that "In addition to the struggle for supremacy between Ezeulu, on the one hand, and Ezidemili and Nwaka, on the other, the text poses domestic and familial competition as a second possible source of Ezeulu's calculations. The tragedy at the end of the novel is that Ezeulu is defeated politically and in the domestic sphere" (354). Trapped in the dilemmas of the changing times, Ezeulu's sons demonstrate the cultural changes and dislocation in the microcosm of the family. In that respect, the priest's ambitious pursuit to maintain control over his people is distorted by his inability to maintain control over his own sons.

The first introduction of Obika in the novel focuses on his masculinity, a quality that is appreciated in a young man like him, as he approaches the compound his "great, manly voice [rises] louder and louder into the night air" (7). However, soon his courage is questioned by the narrator in the same chapter. Upon encountering a white man during the night he is terrified at the sight as the apparition is "taller than any man [. . .] his skin was very light" (8). The contradictory passages of his introduction create the impression that he is a respectable young man who is susceptible to the shifting dynamics of the times just like any member of his society. In the encounter with the white man, he is actually interchangeable with anyone from his village in the sense that the terrifying experience is a foreshadowing of the disturbance to come later on. It is openly established that, though handsome and skilled, he is an average Igbo man with temper and drinking problems. Unlike his father, he belongs to the ordinary group of people that constitutes the majority of the community. In compliance with his social stature, his first conflict with the white man in a colonial context institutes the master and slave relationship. As the white man takes up building roads in Igboland, Obika is among the

unpaid labour force working in the construction. His showing up late for work after drinking heavily the night before aggravates the overseer Mr. Wright (81). The following passage is the depiction of the typical relationship between the coloniser and the colonised as Obika is whipped for disobedience: “At the same time, Mr. Wright’s two assistants jumped in quickly and held Obika while he gave him half a dozen more lashes on his bare back. He did not struggle at all; he only shivered like the sacrificial ram which must take in silence the blows of funeral dancers before its throat is cut.” (82) His submission to unpaid labour and violence are the characteristics of the colonial discourse experienced in Africa in general. Apart from the episode of whipping, Obika’s role in the plotline of the novel is often marked with supporting his father and taking part in the traditional, ritualistic ceremonies that shape the daily life of the village. He is the one standing next to Ezeulu when Oduche’s abomination to lock up the royal python to suffocate takes place (45). He assumes the role of the protector and the practitioner of the traditional and sacred. Furthermore, it is through chapters that concern him that we learn more about the commonly practised traditions in detail such as marriage customs (115-121) and his successful slaughter of the sacrificial goat in the introduction of a new masked spirit (201). Clearly, he is the representative of the traditional Igbo identity which is shaped by the reflections of the society on themselves. His public identity is formed through social codes that are retained through generations and are rooted in collective history. In that sense, his death is the final event that drives Ezeulu to madness. Although the priest’s denial of the initiation of the festival disrupts the lives of all villagers, his son’s determination to participate in Aneto’s father’s funeral as a masked spirit both to clear his name and that of his father’s, prove to be the indication of Obika’s loyalty to the village and its customs. As he collapses and dies during the ceremony trying to fulfil his role, Ezeulu loses both his authority and his connection to the cultural ties that bind his society together (227). At the moment of his death, Obika is the personification of the spirit that protects the village as Manji suggests, “engaged in a communal ritual of energetically circling the village to cleanse and replenish it, Obika-as-Ogbazulobodo symbolically becomes the spirit and life-force of communal historicity itself. He embodies the very motion of history that the Umuaro community is shown enacting in the novel” (357). Accordingly, the priest’s response to his son’s death is the implication of a detachment from his duties and its socio-historical origins

as he questions “Ulu, were you there when this happened to me?” (228). Moreover, the death of the champion of customary and traditional values marks the climatic point where the mass conversions to Christianity takes place.

Contrary to his elder brother, Oduche’s characterisation is the signifier of a departure from tradition and its symbols. His first reluctance to attend the missionary school implies that the cultural transformation that is initiated by conversion is not voluntary but situational in his instance. In fact, he is encouraged to blend in with the members of the newly found Church by his father. The priest’s lack of insight to persuasiveness of the Church is evident as his motivation is to gain intelligence on the white man in a cautionary manner. He prompts Oduche to do the deed, saying:

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. (emphasis in the original 45-6)

Realising the threat of the white man, Ezeulu’s response to obtain knowledge about his new adversaries is very political and strategic. “The only way now open for handling the situation was not resistance but acquiring the ‘power and magic’ of the white man. Oduche was, therefore, a sacrifice for the new medicine for conquering the new sickness” (Nwoga 36). Disregarding the priest’s plans, the missionary school provides the young mind of Oduche with the possibility of grandeur in the emerging system at the expense of his ingenuity. On account of Gikandi’s idea that the ideology and meaning in the Igbo tradition are generated through “signs” and “symbolic manifestations,” (68-69) Oduche’s conversion to the new faith is the beginning of the distortion of symbolic system. As he is in a new “universe of meanings,” (Gikandi 69) the former relation of ideology and order through the traditional practises which are also the source of his father’s authority are no longer valid. Accordingly, the head missionary Mr. Goodcountry’s efforts are directed at the dissolution of native symbolic meanings. In the light of this, Oduche is immediately baptised and renamed Peter (49). The impossibility of a mild approach to the village customs is definitive in Goodcountry’s perception of the power relations between the coloniser and the indigenous. As a result, Oduche is challenged to kill the Sacred Python in order to prove his devotion to the new faith. Such an abomination is the example of the conflict

between set meanings in two different discourses. The Python is called “Father” and is a holy symbol in the Igbo system while in Christianity, “[i]t is nothing but a snake, the snake that deceived our first mother, Eve” (47). The analogy to Satan is the implication of his condemning manner towards the natives. In response, Oduche’s attempt to kill the snake indirectly by letting it suffocate in a box rather than committing the deed by himself shows that the transfer into a new set of meaning is not as immediate as suggested. The failure of the attempt further establishes the dilemma of the Igbo man in adapting to the new religion. The first attack on tradition gives way to the efforts to establish the indirect rule while the missionaries and Oduche are subjected into a state of passivity after the commotion about the snake. Branded as a betrayer in his father’s eyes, the young man refrains from taking any action in the contest to local authority even though he is absorbed more and more in Christian faith throughout the novel. In accordance, his contribution to Ezeulu’s fall at the end stems from a lack of action. His reluctance to inform his father of the Church’s policy to recruit new members through utilising the delay of the New Yam festival brings about the conversion of many villagers due to the priest’s punishment. He is interrogated by his father on the subject as “Ezeulu called Oduche, asked him it was true that his people were offering sanctuary to those who wished to escape the vengeance of Ulu. Oduche said he did not understand” (220). As the young man’s only answer is silence, the communication between the two is lost. At this point, Oduche’s conversion is clearly complete and he no longer belong to the world that his father represents. Moreover, he indirectly lends aid to his demise as by the time Ezeulu finds out the plans of the Church, the damage is already done.

While Obika and Oduche create their own paths for better or worse at a time when their society is unstable and in transition, Edogo, the eldest son, appears to be self-absorbed in his craft as a carver, away from the conflicts that characterise the times. As a passive and flat character, he does not contribute to the plotline of the novel in any major way. His portrayal as an artist whose only concern is the reception of his work among his people proves that his only narrative function is to let Achebe to explore the role of art and the artist in their society. Achebe is persistent in his claim that art can never be separated from its social duties and motivations. He points out that

art is, and was always, in the service of man. Our ancestors created their myths and legends and told their stories for human purpose (including, no doubt, the excitement of wonder and pure delight); they made their sculptures in wood and terracotta, stone and bronze to serve the needs of their times. Their artists lived and moved and had their being in society, and created their works for the good of that society. (MYOCD 19)

His standpoint in the fundamental role of art in social structures shows that he is against artists like Edogo who turn a blind eye to the society's anxieties in order just to perform their craft. Correspondingly, he is represented to be completely shut off from the outside world when he works on the design of a new mask. His desire for seclusion indicates the artist's intentional withdrawal from the social responsibilities. "[h]e could not do it in the home under the profane gaze of women and children but had to retire to the spirit house built for such work at a secluded corner" (51). Even when the finished mask is worn by the new ancestral spirit at the festival, his only wish is to find out how his artwork is received rather than the introduction of *egwugwu* himself. His desire for recognition is reflected on his attempt to hear praises for his mask among the crowd as

Edogo went from one part of the crowd to another in the hope that someone would make the comparison he wanted to hear, but no one did. Many people praised the new Mask but no one thought of comparing it with the famous Agaba of Umuagu, if only to say that this one is not as good as that. If Edogo had heard anyone say so he might have been happy. (200)

His lack of interest in the social aspect of his work is evident. Similarly, he is reluctant in inheriting the Ezeulu title even though he is more suitable to do the job than his two younger siblings. His escapist manner prevents him from taking part in any of the crucial events that shape the plot. As a result, he remains to be a passive and uninfluential character throughout the novel. Through his idleness, Achebe criticises the idea that art exists in its own space detached from the realities of the social world in which it is constructed. Thus, he emphasises the artist's duty towards his audience to educate and raise awareness which he takes up in his own works.

Lastly the youngest of the four sons, Nwafo, is the representative of the future of the Igbo of Umuaro. His father's plans to establish him as the next Ezeulu are utterly unknown for him, yet it is evident that Oduche is sent to join the missionaries in order to make way to Nwafo as the two eldest sons are not considered to be candidates for the title. The priest often keeps Nwafo close to himself in order to spend more time in shaping his character into that of his heir. In turn, his loyalty and obedience to his father

are the fundamental characteristics of the relationship between the teacher and his pupil. As the experience and the knowledge of the ancestors are passed on from one Ezeulu to the next, the priest intends to teach his son by practice. While Nwafo closely investigates the duties of his father, the plan's revelation to Edogo presents a crisis in the family. The priest's relationship to his four sons is tainted with favouritism as he reflects upon it saying that

Some people said Nwafo was in every way an image of Ezeulu's father. [. . .] But as Ezeulu had turned Oduche over to the new religion he could no longer be counted. A strange thought seized Edogo now. Could it be that their father had deliberately sent Oduche to the religion of the white man so as to disqualify him for the priesthood of Ulu? (91-2)

It is obvious that Edogo is right in his assumptions, Nwafo is completely oblivious to his father's plan. Moreover, his innocence is further emphasised by the fact that he does not understand any of the power struggles and tensions that define his father's dealings with both the clansmen and the white man. Two separate occasions focus on Nwafo's innocence and his separation from his father's ambitious nature. The first one is described to be his aspiration to embark on his father's duties in his absence as "Nwafo took his position his father always sat. He did not wait very long before he saw the young thin moon. [. . .] He reached for the *ogene* and made to beat it but fear stopped his hand" (emphasis in the original 166). He evidently knows what must be done when the full moon is out, yet he is not ready for the responsibility. What he aims to do in the scene is exactly what Ezeulu refrains from doing in order to take vengeance, which is an indication that Nwafo is not troubled by the internal conflicts of the village. Similarly, his playing with the Sacred Python implies his unawareness of the white man's interference with the system of symbols as he teases it saying that "run, python! There is a Christian here" (204). The unaffectedness of the boy from the social crises that surround him is the reason why there is still hope for the future generations with the right guidance. Nevertheless, his father's actions against his own people negates the possibility of Nwafo's inheritance of the Ezeulu title, thus continuing the accumulated experience of his ancestors to generations to come.

The simultaneous crumbling of Ezeulu's authority both over his family and the society is concluded with his final attempt to strengthen his position as the chief priest. Even though his rejection of becoming a warrant chief restores his respectability among the

villagers, his authority is not absolute as long as the former challenges put forward against him are not punished. Obviously, while trying to act in the name of the god, he wants to make sure that his position is never questioned again by the villagers. A harsh punishment is his idea of deterrent to that end. Accordingly, his refusal to eat the remaining yams so that the new harvest can start, puts him in a paradoxical situation where the source of his power becomes the target of his vengeance. Although “his authority and function is not fixed or determined by taboo,” (Gikandi 75) the priest’s ambitious search for constancy of authority negates the nature of the Ulu. By then, it is clearly established that the boundary between the two selves of Ezeulu are completely disintegrated to the point that he speaks to Ulu directly as the deity warns him saying that

I say who told you that this was your own fight to arrange the way it suits you? [. . .] Beware that you do not come between me and my victim or you may receive blows not meant for you! [. . .] Go home and sleep and leave me to settle my quarrel with Idemili, whose envy seeks to destroy me that his python may again come to power. (191-2)

In the extract, the god appears to be the source of the priest’s final punishment on his community by denying them the yam harvest. However, the fact that Ulu’s condemnation comes at the time when the priest starts to feel compassionate towards his people for the last time, implies that the vision is the projection of his subconscious desire to settle his quarrel with the priest of Idemili. The chapter with Ulu is the ultimate justification of Ezeulu’s plan for vengeance. Consequently, the priest’s condemnation of his own people to famine by delaying the harvest, is brought about by the clash of three authoritative figures. The power struggle between Ezeulu and Ezidemili is what fuels the revenge of the priest while Winterbottom’s imprisonment of him is what paves the way to the conditions in which it can be executed. Akuebue’s conclusion that “Or perhaps a God like Ulu leads a priest to ruin himself” (213) is the most notable analysis of Ezeulu’s situation as he implies that the power justified by a god may lead a man to his demise. He clearly realises that the priest is at point of no return even though he is the best friend of the man and his constant defender. The ones who suffer most under the shifting power dynamics in this particular time prove to be the villagers as they are stuck in a state of immobility under the circumstances. As their pleas are disregarded by the holders of power, the psychological conditions in which their subjugation is assured

are created for the Church to employ a strategy to win new converts. With their survival at stake, the people of Umuaro turn to the Church which offers a way of escape:

In the ensuing confusion, the Christian mission subverts Ezeulu's authority by urging Umuaros to harvest their crops once they make offering to the Christian God, who will protect them against Ulu. Initially, the response is slow, but, as the threat of starvation looms, even the important members of the community openly seek the sanctuary of the church for immunity against Ulu, thereby subverting the authority of the traditional priest. (Awuyah 217)

The fact that Ezeulu refuses to end the conflict even after he forced the village elders to submission shows that he is beyond rational thinking then and sinks more and more into insanity. As Mr. Goodcountry promises immunity to those who accept the Christian god and harvest their crops, "with the ecological cycle and their livelihood threatened, the people of Umuaro defect to the Christian church. [. . .] They have pragmatically accepted the offer of one spiritual force to protect them from the wrath of another" (George 351). Instead of offering sacrifice to Ulu, the villagers bring their yam to the Church. The conversions take place in huge numbers as the priest is stripped of his authority and his god is abandoned. As he brings upon his own downfall, "Ezeulu will be a passive observer as his ideology becomes fractured and his authority is rendered useless" (Gikandi 75-6). By then the priest's madness works as a saving grace for him as he does not witness his people succumb to the white man's religion. Still, the abandoning of the indigenous religion marks the Igbo history as the colonial power grows stronger in Nigeria.

Consequently, by writing about the middle generation which he refers to as "those who were Christianized," (Lindfors 8) Achebe revisits the era when the British rule in Nigeria is reinforced through the enactment of indirect rule and explores the reasons why and how Christianity expands its influence over the Igbo people. Contrary to the converts in *TFA* who are predominantly the outcasts and the untitled villagers, the ones in the middle generation come from all layers of the Igbo society. The Christianisation of the second generation certainly is not a matter that comes to the people easy considering that the Church's influence in Umuaro is almost non-existent at the beginning of the novel. He establishes that the social instability deriving from the shifting power dynamics of a transitory time accelerates the Christian impact at this stage of colonial history. The depiction of the struggle for authority by three different

sides ensures that Christianity is not readily accepted by the Igbo society, but the compelling situation forces them to adapt in order to survive. Although the protagonist of the novel is motivated by a personal pursuit of power, the fact that he refuses to originate it from the coloniser's imposition of indirect rule, remains as a brave instance of resistance against colonialism. Departure from the traditional god that shaped the socio-economical life of the village, on the other hand, is represented to be inevitable under tensions of different figures of authority. Even so, by narrating the process in which the lives of the Igbo people are reshaped, Achebe urges his reader to come into terms with the generation that converts to Christianity, knowing that their chance of survival depends on their adaptability under the threat of the coloniser and the internal conflict.



CHAPTER III

IDEOLOGY AND CORRUPTION IN THE FORMATION OF THE NEW NIGERIAN IDENTITY IN *NO LONGER AT EASE*

If I were God I would regard as the very worst our acceptance—for whatever reason—of racial inferiority. It is too late in the day to get worked up about it or to blame others, much as they deserve such blame and condemnation. What we need to do is to look back and try and find out where we went wrong, where the rain began to beat us.

--Chinua Achebe

In the third and final novel of the trilogy, in terms of the chronological context, Achebe changes the setting to the pre-independence era of Nigeria, especially the 1950s. In terms of the generational structure of the trilogy, the novel presents a clearer perspective as the protagonist, Obi Okonkwo is a direct descendant, the grandson, of Okonkwo of *TFA*. After more than half a century of colonial history, Nigeria is under the influence of the white man more than ever in the final years of British colonialism. Clearly, the colonial institutions of religion, language, education and economy are established thoroughly by the time of the novel. The rural setting of the previous two novels gives way to the metropolis of Lagos, which is the colonial capital of Nigeria, in order to explore the problems of the “modernised” generation of the novel. In accordance, the focus on the struggle to adapt to the changes to tradition brought about by the arrival of the white man, switches to the anxieties of the modern world. Thus, the protagonist of the novel is the representative of “the new Nigerian” who is torn by the remnants of his original culture and the modern ones that define his life in the 1950s. As the novel revolves around the corruption of a seemingly idealistic and promising young man, Achebe explores the origins of the problem that plagues his country through his representation the last generation to be under colonial rule. The damage dealt to the traditional value systems results in a high esteem and respect to the colonial education

and institution due to their privileges. As a result, a new class of collage educated Nigerians emerge to be appointed in civil service positions, of which Obi is a member. Although, the education sets these young people apart from their rural counterparts, a complete disintegration of former cultural ties is impossible. Trapped in a social sphere that is equally cut off from both that of the white man's and the traditional man's, they constitute the portion of the society whom Fanon calls "the town dwellers" and characterises as follows:

Dressed like a European, speaking his language, working alongside him, sometimes living in his neighbourhood, he is considered by the peasant to be a renegade who has given up everything that constitutes the national heritage. [. . .] This is not the traditional opposition between town and country. It is the opposition between the colonised excluded from the benefits of colonialism and their counterparts who manage to turn the colonial system to their advantage. (WOE 67)

Obi fits into this category perfectly, thus he is excluded from the part of the society that is most suitable for decolonisation in Fanon's terms. His Marxist approach to the possibilities of decolonisation condemns Obi's class to a state of incapability due to the source of their education and their social status. Accordingly, Achebe presents him to be a failure from the very start of the novel. His reduction from the pride of Umuofia to a criminal evokes curiosity in all Lagos as "anyone who could possibly leave his job was there to hear the judgement" (1). Even the aptly named British judge Mr. Justice William Galloway finds Obi's fall very surprising as he says, "I cannot comprehend how a young man of your education and brilliant promise could have done this" (2). The problem is presented very early on in order to prepare the reader to question the reasons behind it. Thus, the rest of the novel provides the economic and psychological basis of the protagonist's downfall in a cyclical fashion. In his representation of the process in which Obi is transformed, Achebe takes up a satirical approach contrary to the previous two novels. The young man is never granted the influence which Okonkwo and Ezeulu possess in their societies. In that sense, Obi's personal case works only as a testament to the idea that, unlike the stereotypes of the coloniser, corruption is not an inherent part of Nigerian, or African, identity. Accordingly, by bringing individuality to the picture, Achebe challenges the essentialist ideology of "the corrupt African" underlining the view of the coloniser.

Even though the internalisation of corruption is objected to by Achebe, it is clear that he recognises the problem to be a real challenge. In that sense, corruption is not completely denied by the author as a myth created by the coloniser on unreal grounds. Instead, it is accepted to be a growing menace to the Nigerian society which is to be affected by it in the upcoming decades. Starting from the colonial era, and continuing in the postcolonial Nigerian state, corruption stands out to be the main dysfunction of the country's institutions. He clearly states his standpoint on the issue saying that "anybody who can say that corruption in Nigeria has not yet become alarming is either a fool, a crook or else does not live in this country" (*TWN* 37). The tendency to attribute it to the Nigerian character rather than tackling the roots of the problem is what he aims to discredit. He is openly against claims like "keeping an average Nigerian from being corrupt is like keeping a goat from eating yam" (*TWN* 38). Even though the practice is widespread among the citizens of Nigeria, such a negative characteristic cannot be made out to be an irrefutable fact for a whole nation. He intends to focus on the socio-economic situations that make corruption an option for the holders of power as he refutes the statement commenting that

A goat needs yam because yam is food for goats. A Nigerian does not need corruption, neither is corruption necessary for nourishment for Nigerians. It is totally false to suggest, as we are apt to do, that Nigerians are different fundamentally from any other people in the world. Nigerians are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and profitable; they will cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient. (*TWN* 38).

Moreover, such negative stereotyping of the Nigerian works only to the benefit of the coloniser as it is the reflection of the ideology behind colonial discourse. Achebe's rejection of the internalisation of corruption marks a break off from the power relations retained in the coloniser and the colonised dichotomy. He retains this approach in the novel as bribery is depicted to be a common practice as a member of Umufia Progressive Union points out: "Obi tried to do what everyone does without finding out how it was done" (5). However, his motivation and the availability of the practise are clearly main contributors to the action. In that sense, the plot structure that builds up Obi's bribery is formed and presented to the reader so that they can analyse the conditions which lead up to the act and question if the protagonist's folly is personal or communal.

The main practitioner of the essentialist stereotyping of the Nigerian in the novel is Mr. Green. As he is Obi's boss, he is closely related to the case through which his colonialist ideology is revealed and the function and Mr. Green's role in colonialist discourse can be analysed through Louis Althusser's theory of interpellation on how individuals are turned in to subjects by an ideology. In order to interpret the protagonist's downfall at the end of the novel as a challenge to the ideology of his boss, its basis is to be analysed through interpellation. Even though from a superficial standpoint, Obi seems to comply with the image of the African, his individual process and ideals, even though based on false grounds, characterise his transformation. So, it is important to note that Althusser's theory is larger than what is referred to in this part. Only the section where the interpellation process is formulated will be referred to rather than his whole theory. Interpellation is a tool of ideology to confine its subjects in a fixed and unchanging status according to the benefit of the centre. First of all, an ideology is exempt from the concept of time in the sense that its doctrines are claimed by the powerful to surpass the confinement of one historical period as "an *omni-historical* reality" whose "structure and functioning are immutable, present in the same form throughout what we can call history" (emphasis in the original Althusser 161). This grants a justification to the basis of the ideology disregarding the time period as the subject is always attributed in the same structure. Secondly, ideology creates the possibility of reshaping reality into new forms of existence by representing "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 162). In the fantasies of the prosecutors of the ideology, their "real conditions" are switched with assumed realities in accordance with their interests. And finally, ideology by setting one of its subjects, usually the ones who benefit from it, at the centre, starts to turn individuals into subjects of that particular ideology, who are described in relation to the centre through interpellation (Althusser 174-5). In the process, individuals are transformed into either the practitioners of the ideology or its subject. As a result, the function of the ideology is formulated by Althusser as follows:

The duplicate mirror-structure of ideology ensures simultaneously:

1. the interpellation of 'individuals' as subjects;
2. their subjection to the Subject
3. the mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, the subject' recognition of each other, and finally the subject's recognition of himself;

4. the absolute guarantee that everything really is so, and that on condition that the subjects recognise what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be all right (181).

In the context of the novel, Althusser's formulation can be observed in corruption's relation to Nigerian identity. The coloniser's ideology claims that the African is inferior to the European due to their very nature disregarding the social and historical structures that shape this identity. Then the supposed superiority of the European is the justification of his rule over the African. This constitutes the imaginary relationship of the two parties based on the desires of the ones who have power. Thus, the white man is placed in the centre of the ideology as the Subject, who brings civilisation to the places where savagery and chaos rule. As the Subject, Mr. Green recognises his role in the function of colonialist ideology, which can evidently be observed in his words: "The African is corrupt through and through. [. . .] [O]ver the countless centuries the African has been the victim of the worst climate in the world and every imaginable disease. Hardly his fault. But he has been sapped mentally and physically. We have brought him Western education. But what use is it to him?" (3). His negative stereotyping is the tool of the interpellation process to grant fixed identities to subjects. The roles assigned to the Subject and subjects are thus maintained as the existentially corrupt African and the civilising European. Thus, the ideology works in the direction that both sides agree to their roles and act accordingly. The phase of recognition is already in motion as corruption is deemed to be a crime that everybody commits by the Nigerians themselves. And finally when Obi, who is sincerely against the practice of bribery throughout the novel, gives in by taking a bribe himself, he succumbs to the ideology. He becomes yet another subjects who learns his place in the eyes of the coloniser. His condemnation based just on his national identity shows how ideology denies any individuality to the subject by reducing him to a stereotype. In this respect, the whole novel becomes the embodiment of the interpellation process of the protagonist. Yet, from a postcolonial perspective, by basing Obi's subjection to the colonialist ideology on his personal insecurities rather than a flaw of communal identity, Achebe discredits the foundation of interpellation even in the moment of its triumph.

As a counterpart to Mr. Green, Umuofia Progressive Union, which is a branching social institution aiding people living in different parts of Nigeria depending on their ethnicity, is the representative of Obi's traditional ties even in their new forms after decades of

colonial influence. The Union employs some of the most influential men of Umuofia, thus they embody the will of the town's Igbo community. While celebrating a traditional collective identity, their ambitions for Obi as the most important prospect, show that in colonial Nigeria the supposed superiority of the values and institutions of the white man is already etched in the minds of the natives. The fact that the possibility of socio-political achievement can only be obtained through the knowledge of the coloniser is the motivation behind the establishment of the Union in the first place as "Umuofians abroad had formed their corporation with the aim of collecting money to send some of their brighter young men to study in England" (6). Although the loan is to be repaid after the return of the student, the intention of the Union appears to be to promote the bright minds of their own community. Their support for Obi even after he changes his major to English from Law is dependent on the idea that he still can "get a 'European Post' in Civil Service" (6). Possibility of a job attributed to the coloniser is enough to justify the young man's imposition of his own will over that of the Union's. Moreover, the prospect of receiving English education is perceived as a matter of celebration in all Umuofia. Accordingly, his father Isaac Okonkwo, named Nwoye in *TFA*, organises a gathering in which Christian values are respected and Mr. Ikedi prompts Obi to engage only in enhancing his knowledge refraining from anything else saying, "I know that we have no fear where you are concerned. We are sending you to learn book. Enjoyment can wait. Do not be in a hurry to rush into the pleasures of the world like the young antelope who danced herself lame when the main dance was yet to come" (9-10). The advice is an implication that the advancement of their small community is heavily dependent upon their success in adapting the set values of the colonial system which puts western education in the main role of civilisation. Similarly, Obi's achievement in becoming the first person to have a degree from a British university shows that such education is limited to this part of the community even when it is deemed necessary by the white man. Thus, the accessibility of high civil service positions to marginalised groups of the society is related to the education from which they are exempted due to their financial situations. Accordingly, Obi's graduation is a bigger reason for celebration than his grant of a scholarship. Upon his return, the young man is dubbed to be the hero of his community in line to his grandfather. To Isaac's embarrassment, one of his visitors, Odogwu makes the comparison saying that "he is a

son of Iguedo. [. . .] he is the grandson of Ogbuefi Okonkwo who faced up to the white man single-handed and died in the fight” (48). The invocation of Okonkwo’s heroism also carries the implication of his failure in parallel to that of Obi’s even though the speaker does not mention it in the scene. However, the grave mistake lies in his further analysis of the changes brought to land by the white man as he points out: “Today greatness has changed its tune. Titles are no longer great, neither are barns or large numbers of wives and children. Greatness is now in the things of the white man. And so we too have changed our tune. We are the first in all nine villages to send our son to the white man’s land.” (49). His idea that greatness comes with the prowess of the Igbo man in achieving the norms set for them by the white man proves that the naturalisation process of the coloniser’s ideology is already complete in the case of Umuofia. Ironically, his theory is simply based on the suggestion that one can only be great if his progress is approved by his coloniser, which is an indication that the conditions of the society after the establishment of colonial rule is based on the creation of the inferiority complex underlining the continuation of the rule of the white man. Fanon describes the enforced inferiority complex as a social construction of the coloniser saying:

If he is overwhelmed to such a degree by the wish to be white, it is because he lives in a society that makes his inferiority complex possible, in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of this complex, in a society that proclaims the superiority of one race; to the identical degree to which that society creates problems for him, he will find himself thrust into a neurotic situation. (*BSMW* 74)

Thus the comparison of Obi to his grandfather is already refuted by the fact that the conditions of social stature is transformed in favour of the white man to which Okonkwo would never yield. In Okonkwo’s situation, the values that mark social achievement are decided by the Igbo society themselves. Thus, the inferiority complex is not yet established in their minds. The “neurotic situation” that characterises Odogwu’s claims is set in motion when the people of Umuofia first lose their will to resist the white man’s influence. Here, it is clearly established already. Even though he perceives the process as achieving glory in the name of their own community, he actually is haunted by a desire to live up to the expectations of the coloniser. The dominant ideology of the Umuofians over their ascent in the conditions of their society is fully demonstrated in the reception party thrown by the Union to welcome Obi. Their expectation to see their young member to be dressed formally for the party and to speak

English exquisitely shows that they want him to be Europeanised. Their disappointment is eminent as he wears a sleeveless shirt and his English is “most unimpressive” (29). Heavily influenced by the ideology of the coloniser, the Union tries to fit Obi into a category which they believe is the key to success in colonial Nigeria. Yet, as Gikandi suggests “Obi refuses to acknowledge that the community has rights over him” and “since the community can only realise its fantasies through the individual, it will always lay claim to Obi even against his will” (97). From this perspective, the protagonist is equally distant from both his traditional society and the coloniser represented by Mr. Green.

The protagonist’s detachment from the norms that fashion him a pre-determined identity by both his own community and the colonialist ideology is the marker of the common mindset of the pursuit of a national identity in the 1950s as Nigeria is on her way to independence in 1960. He believes rather selfishly that the corruption of the country he knows can only be challenged by the appointment of the educated new generation, of which he is a member, in high governmental and social positions. He mistakenly identifies bribery and corruption with the older generation of Nigerians. However, his own downfall shows him the deficiency of his ideals in the hard way. Thus, Obi’s transition to a corrupt civil servant from an idealistic young man can be traced to three underlying reasons. First of all, his false sense of Nigerian identity is based on his own nostalgic and unrealistic assumptions which are far from the truth. Secondly, his financial problems that start with the repayment of his student loan and continue with his inability of monetary planning. And lastly, his failure of emotional fulfilment as his relationship with Clara collapses due to unbreakable ties to his past and traditions. With the combination of the three elements, Obi sinks into depression, which brings about his subjection to the colonial ideology which he used to strongly refuse.

Obi’s seemingly nationalistic ideas about Nigeria reach their maturity during his four years in England. In a society where he is clearly the alien, he starts to see Nigeria as home. By identifying himself against the other, he fashions himself a new identity which he does not feel strongly until then as it is evidently stated that “it was in England that Nigeria first became more than just a name to him. That was the first great thing that England did for him” (11). Similarly, Lagos, the capital of Nigeria at the time, holds a special place in his heart as a city of opportunities and a symbol of modernity in

the country. His admiration of the city stems from his childhood memories as its image is created by a soldier's stories in which "Lagos was always associated with electric lights and motor-cars" (12). As a result, the image of his country in his mind is constructed on a romanticised nostalgia which is suddenly countered by reality upon his return. The juxtaposing of his poetry about Nigeria and the rotting body of a dog on the street in the slums of Lagos proves to him that he bases his ideals on false grounds (14). However, facts only encourage him further and fuel his nationalistic ideals. By then, his mind is set on higher standards for his country and he is ready to be the example for others. He mistakenly feels unbound from both ethnic (Umuofian) and colonial ties in his quest for new Nigeria, as Gikandi suggests:

As a nationalist, he has revolted against the colonial ideology; as a would be Nigerian, he has loosened ethnic and regional ties; as an African in search of his traditions, he values Igbo culture even when he cannot live by its prescriptions. He cannot abandon any of the above ties completely, nor can he embrace any of them wholly. (96)

These fragments that make up his identity put him in a paradoxical situation in which he has to both reconcile and challenge each of them at the same time. In the light of these, corruption becomes the major common ground on which he can start his resistance. By complying with his strong ideal, he believes that he can be a pioneer in such a desperate situation. His emphasis on social responsibility of the educated is revealed in his speech in the reception party as he argues that "with our great country on the threshold of independence, we need men who are prepared to serve her well and truly" (29). His claims in the earlier stages of his return to Nigeria appear legitimate and sincere. Bingsu Shen suggests that "Obi is praiseworthy in the sense that he actually returns to Nigeria with the initial intention to build his country. Therefore, unlike those of the social elite who are indifferent and numb, Obi is aware of the social responsibilities he should take on" (43). As a result, he consistently refuses to take part in any act of corruption and does not take any bribes. His first act of resistance takes place at the customs after he disembarks from the ship. When he is offered a three-pounds reduction if he does not ask for a receipt, he strictly rejects the notion saying, "Don't be silly. If there was a policeman here I would hand you over to him" (27). The fact that he stands loyal to what he believes to be right fills him with a sense of achievement. He sees himself as a revolutionary figure fighting a long standing tradition of bribery. Yet, he is more proud

of his accomplishment when he denies any possibility of corruption in front of the white man in his job interview for a position in the British Council. When addressed the question “why do you want a job in Civil Service? So that you can take bribes?” (36), Obi is enraged because, in fact, in his eyes the old Nigerian interviewer is the one who asks it, is the corrupt portion of the society according to his theory. According to Gikandi, that ideology is rooted in “Azikwean notion that the nation will awaken to its destiny when the young generation is emancipated from the colonial mentality internalized by their elders” (86). However, this claim completely disregards the socio-economic conditions that make corruption desirable for the average Nigerian. Thus, when Obi reflects upon the nature of tragedy in his conversation with the white interviewer, he contradictorily foreshadows his own downfall. He refers to the words of a man from his village saying that: “I remember an old man in my village, a Christian convert, who suffered one calamity after another. He said life was like a bowl of wormwood which one sips a little at a time world without end. He understood the nature of tragedy. [. . .] Real tragedy is never resolved” (36). At this point, he is not burdened by the financial and emotional failures, so he cannot relate to the tragedy he describes. Nevertheless, the continuous unfulfilled material and sentimental desires ensures the dissolution of his incorruptible nature. As he does succumb to bribery, he commits the metaphorical suicide which he argues to go against the nature of tragedy. In that sense, Obi’s refusal to set up a scholarship for Mr. Mark’s sister is his last stance against corruption. Having secured the position of secretary of the Scholarship Commission in the British Council, he has the power to secure a scholarship for someone if he wishes to. Nonetheless, he stands firm to deny both Mr. Mark’s bribe in cash (80) and his sister’s offer for sex as payment (84). In his self-claimed battle with corruption, it is a clear victory for Obi as “after his first encounter with Mr Mark he did feel like a tiger. He had won his first battle hands-down. Everyone said it was impossible to win” (80). His exhilarating sense of success stems from an unconscious desire to counterattack the colonialist ideology which puts him and his people in the framework of a corrupt nation by nature. Even though he associates the corruption with the older generations, it only makes it clear that he is not aware of the sources that form the basis of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Accordingly, Fanon argues that “the black man among his own in the twentieth century does not know at what moment his inferiority

comes into being through the other” (*BSWM* 83). It results in a misguided attempt to direct the faulty characteristic to his own people. Still, his refusal at this instance is an active resistance, thus generates a feeling of masculine conquest in him. Fanon theorises that the sexual self-assertion of the black man is a way of attaining recognition by the other, rather he is led to believe that due to the emasculating colonial discourse (*BSWM* 55-60). Even though there is no physical conquest in Obi’s case, the feeling of sexual potency is parallel to it as it reminds him of the time of his first sexual experience as clearly referred to in the following passage: “Throughout that morning Obi felt strangely elated. It was not unlike the feeling he had some years ago in England after his first woman. He had heard that it was possible to disappoint a woman. But he did not disappoint her, [. . .] she said she thought she had been attacked by a tiger” (80). He evidently feels victorious at this moment over the tainted image of the Nigerian. Yet, the fact that he misplaces his theory about the sources of that false image brings about that he cannot maintain his position on the subject. In opposition, his eventual corruption reverses his masculine feelings as Philip Rogers argues that “the collapse of Obi’s values at the end of the novel is conveyed in a sexual metaphor that epitomizes the effect of the white world on Obi: emasculation” (177) as he reflects on the story of the breaking of the guns in Aninta concluding that “so successful had been the emasculation of the clan by the white man’s religion and government that the matter had soon died” (151). His situation is not much different from the fate of the clan. He manages to evade it for a time, but he can no longer resist. As a result, his first act of resistance proves to be his final victory due to the tightening of his monetary problems and emotional breakdown.

Apart from his stance against corruption, Obi’s approach to Nigerian politics and colonial struggles does not go beyond utopic and superficial fantasies. The juxtaposing of the realities of Lagos with Obi’s romanticised ideals maintains that his nationalistic views always stay abstract. AbdelRahman comments on the shattering of his ideals saying, “As Obi moves from the ideal world of his fantasy to down-to-earth world with all its harsh realities, his idealism is gradually translated into a retreat into the realm of day-dreaming or void literariness and theorization without being capable of either constructive thinking or any real action” (135). In other words, Obi’s fantasies about Nigeria remains to be fantasies throughout the novel without having any real life

consequences. In his mind, he has the solutions to Nigeria's residual problems, yet he can never truly achieve them due to his lack of action. One of the first instances of his reflections on the situation arises when he witnesses the bribing of the policeman by the driver on his way to his village:

‘What an Augean stable!’ he muttered to himself. ‘Where does one begin? With the masses? Educate the masses?’ He shook his head. ‘Not a chance there. It would take centuries. A handful of men at the top. Or even one man with vision- an enlightened dictator. People are scared of the word nowadays. Bu what kind of democracy can exist side by side with so much corruption and ignorance?’ (40)

In one mere train of thought, he proposes several different and contradictory political solutions for Nigeria. His patronising tone indicates that he possesses a mastery over the situation even though his logic is clearly flawed and unrealistic. Moreover, his utopic and abstract approach to political problems is shared by the class of educated Nigerians as well. Christopher, Obi's close friend is another London educated Nigerian who is depicted to often debate over politics with him. Whenever they “met they were bound to argue very heatedly about Nigeria's future. Whichever line Obi took, Christopher had to take the opposite” (17). The fact that they intentionally and consistently take different sides in an argument shows that instead of focusing on the subject and their own ideals on it, they try to heat up the argument for the sake of engaging in intellectual yet pretentious conversation. Evidently subject matter is not at the foreground as the argument is made for the sake of arguing. In that respect, their intellectual pursuit is more egoistic than nationalistic. Thus, a character such as Obi or Cristopher is “a bookish snob who is unable to cope with reality or to translate his knowledge into real convictions or attitudes” (AbdelRahman 137). Even so, the saving grace of the educated Nigerian such as the two friends is that they have the enthusiasm for the formation of the new Nigerian identity in the eve of independence, which is the only coinciding point between Obi's idealism and Achebe's ambitions for the postcolonial Nigerian identity.

The financial insecurity that forces Obi's hand into taking bribes is one the main reasons of the failure of the young prospect. Several monetary problems faced by the protagonist can be summarised in two main categories: (a) the financial burden put on him by others including the Umuofia Progressive Union and his family, (b) his inability to plan his expenses and extravagant lifestyle according to his social stature as a high ranking Civil Servant. Among the former group, his monthly repayment of the student

loan for his education from the Union stands out. Obi is expected to “repay his debt over four years so that ‘an endless stream of students will be enabled to drink deep at the Pierian Spring of knowledge’” (29). Although the intention is to access even more bright minds of the community, twenty pounds a month scheduled repayment puts Obi in financial distress. In perspective, it is almost equal to his father’s yearly pension, thus it is not an amount to be underestimated. Furthermore, his realisation that with his mother’s deteriorating health, his family is unable to cope with their expenses, he feels obligated to give them money regularly and pay for his brother’s tuition fees. Even though the situation is not at its worse, it is enough to keep him awake at night: “Obi did not sleep for a long time after he had lain down. He thought about his responsibilities. It was clear that his parents could no longer stand on their own. They had never relied on his father’s meagre pension. [. . .] ‘I must give them a monthly allowance from my salary’ How much? Could he afford ten pounds?” (55). Being the eldest son of the family, whose support he cherishes throughout his education, it is now his turn to take care of his family and provide his siblings with the opportunities he has had. At this level, the feat of covering all these expenses appears manageable for him, yet the mere act of arrogance towards the Union instead of reconciling with them over a lighter repayment schedule marks Obi’s impending bankruptcy, as Linus T. Asong points out, “if he had chosen not to discuss the relationship with Clara, he would still have been allowed to work out a more convenient way of paying back the debt” (242). Clara’s *osu* identity denies her the right to marry anyone outside her class which Obi disregards in his eagerness to break the boundaries of tradition imposed on himself. When more pressing financial matters such as Clara’s abortion (133) and the expenses of his mother’s funeral (144) appear, he can no longer sustain himself and tend for the ones he cares for. By then he clearly traces his misfortune to his debt to the Union: “Take this matter of twenty pounds every month to his town union, which in the final analysis was the root cause of his troubles” (141). This works as the breaking point for Obi as he yields to the temptation of corruption after his breakdown over the death of his mother and his break-up with Clara. He takes his first bribe by fixing a scholarship for the son of a wealthy man (152). The situation proves ironical on two levels. First of all, the idealistic young man who refuses to take a bribe to enable the young girl to take a scholarship when she really needs it transforms into one that takes a bribe from the

already wealthy man whose son clearly does not need financial support. Secondly, while Obi's corruption is brought about by his repayment for the student loan, financial relief comes from making sure that other young Nigerian's receive scholarships to study in England. In effect, the desire to receive an English education becomes both the root and the consequence of his corruption.

Although he tries to put all the blame on his student loan, his corruption is the result of his uncontrolled material desires as well. His social position in the Civil Service places him above the average town-dweller and below the white man. However, the financial gap between the lower civil servants and him portrays him closer to the white man than his fellow Nigerians. Thus, he intends to live according to the norms of the class he belongs to, in pursuit of which he disregards limitations on his budget frequently. The first incident of his reckless indulgence in material desire is presented when he immediately buys a car as soon as he learns that he is appointed in the British Council, as stated: "Obi bought a Morris Oxford a week after he received his letter of appointment. Mr Green gave him a letter to the dealers saying that he was a Senior Civil Servant entitled to a car advance. Nothing more was required. He walked into the shop and got a brand-new car" (60). The absurdity of the situation is enhanced through the very simplistic narration of such an expensive transaction. Moreover, the fact that he even appoints a driver for himself proves that his materialism is not easily quenched. Asong comments on his thoughtless spending of the money he has not even earned yet saying that "his actual handling of money proves to be even more disastrous than his judgement of societal norms" (243). He is evidently disillusioned by his new position to the point that he is oblivious to the possibility that his irresponsible money spending paves the way to the destruction of the values which he sets himself. Similarly, Obi's rash decision to buy an engagement ring for Clara only worsen his situation. He is obviously incapable of rational thinking when he learns that she is an *osu*. The fact that he buys an engagement ring before even trying to settle the complications deriving from her identity (65), is an indication that he takes up an escapist approach toward his problems while "a more clear-headed lover would have hesitated indulging in any unnecessary expenditures in Clara's behalf until he had successfully overcome all impediments to their marriage" (Asong 244). Obi's failure to take the necessary precautions in his financial dealings pile up throughout the novel in the forms of the

salaries of his employee, huge bills, a bank loan, insurance fees and taxes to the point where he is completely crushed by the expenditures. By giving in to the desire of acquiring riches that the newly emerging educated Nigerian class enjoys, he abandons his origins. In accordance, Shen comments that “the hybrid class of intellectuals [. . .] are supposed to play a fundamental role in their society by transcending their class limitations” (47). In this sense, Obi is successful in “transcending” his original rural background, yet the seductive materialism of his new ascended class tricks him into his demise. As a result, even though his student loan is revealed to be the root of the problem, his extravagant lifestyle contributes greatly to the acceleration of his financial fall.

In line with his economic problems, the protagonist’s pursuit of emotional fulfilment is hindered by the fact that he cannot completely sever his ties with the Igbo tradition. His emotional challenge stems from the failed marriage attempt with Clara, barricaded by the fact that marrying an *osu* is ruled out completely due to the social codes of the Igbo. She appears as a love interest for Obi during his stay in England. Their first meeting takes place in a party organised by the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons where “Obi was immediately struck by her beauty and followed her with his eyes round the hall” (19). Although the narrator points out that it “could not strictly be called love at first sight” (19), it appears that it is so, at least for the protagonist. At this point, it is clear that Obi has no solid foundations for his love affair apart from the fact that he is enchanted by her beauty. During his years in England, it is made obvious that he is driven by romanticism and nostalgia. Thus, the way he falls in love with Clara reflects his mood as well. It is no coincidence that the first encounter with the girl, the source of his infatuation, is parallel to the formation of his ideals about Nigeria in England. Setting aside that they both have a London education, the two characters appear to have nothing in common, which portrays their relationship to be lacking in emotional depth. Their different tastes are emphasised in the following passage:

It never ceased to amaze Obi that Clara should take so much delight in these orgies of killing on the screen. [. . .] But while he was there he could feel nothing but annoyance. Clara was well aware of this, and tried to her best to ease the tedium by squeezing his arm or biting his ear after whispering something into it. ‘And after all’ she would say sometimes, ‘I don’t quarrel with you when you start reading your poems to me.’ (17)

Evidently Clara obliges him to go to the cinema with him while he read poems to her which she does not enjoy. The relationship is stuck in a cyclical movement in which both characters force each other to take part in activities against their will. The sexual connotations of biting Obi's ear prove that sensuality cloaks the lack of real communication between the two. In accordance, AbdelRahman characterises it as "a relationship that soaks itself in the physical without genuine interaction or understanding between the two partners. Many of the conversation between them are incomplete and one-sided" (136). In addition to the physical side, the reconciling factor of the relationship is their social class. Clara herself receives education to become a nurse, so both characters belong to the newly emerging educated class. In line with this, they lead a semi-luxurious life befitting their social standing in Lagos as they take residence in a neighbourhood which used to belong to the white settlers. It is indicated that the two characters do not love each other, yet love the flashy modern lifestyle that they can share. In that respect, C. A. Babalola describes Clara as "an image of modern young women who seek to go into profession of nursing, and whose pastime varies from buying expensive dresses and riding out in motor-cars to watching exotic films or dancing at night with their boyfriends" (141). As a result, London becomes a point of transition to materialism for both of them.

The love affair between the two does not go beyond being the definition of their social class until Clara's role as Obi's trial in his self-imposed estrangement from everything he associates with the older generations, becomes clear when the prospect of their marriage is obscured by her *osu* origins. The changes in her mood indicates that she is keeping a secret from him, so when he pressures her for answers the truth is revealed: "'I can't marry you,' [. . .] 'I'm an *osu*,' she wept. [. . .] 'So you see we cannot get married,' she said, quite firmly, almost gaily. Only the tears showed she had wept" (emphasis in the original 63-4). Even though he strongly disagrees with her on the subject, the silence before his abrupt answer proves that he is not as ready as he thinks he is to ignore a long standing tradition. Just like his determination to change the stereotypical characteristic attributed to his society, he decides to take on the tradition with self-encouragement which puts hi at odds with first the Union and later on with his family. When Clara's ancestry is brought up in the meeting, he takes the first step to cut himself free from traditional bonds as in a raging fit he screams "don't you dare

interfere in my affairs again. And if this is what you meet about [. . .] you may cut off my two legs if you ever find them here again” (75). From his perspective, the outrage has a just cause in his idealism, yet the members perceive it as an offence to their customs. As he adopts a similar approach to the advice of his friend Joseph (66), the true motivation behind his stubborn attitude is revealed. He claims that “in future, when we are all civilized, anybody may marry anybody. But that time has not come. We of this generation are only pioneers” (68). Interestingly, he does not propose his love for the girl as the main base of his argument. However, the situation is made out to be an ideological struggle more than an emotional one.

In accordance, the consent of his parents to his marriage with Clara is the only way Obi can achieve ideological fulfilment. Even though they are both Christians, they are the embodiment of the idea that deserting the very values and customs that shape one's identity is not an easy task, which is exactly the what Obi tries to tackle in his revolutionary mind. In this split, Obi's mother Hannah becomes the other, against whom his determination is to be measured. Thus, he constantly thinks about winning his mother over before the confrontation as “Obi knew better than anyone else that his family would violently oppose the idea off marrying an *osu*. [. . .] There was a special bond between Obi and his mother. [. . .] When he said to himself: ‘If I could convince my mother,’ he was almost certain that he could” (68-9). The scene is set where Hannah's acknowledgement of Clara could mark a victory for his son over the will of the society on the individual. As the matter is first taken up by his father, he strategically tries to use the Christian doctrine towards his benefit saying that “our fathers in their ignorance called an innocent man an *osu*, [. . .] and thereafter he became an outcast, and his children, and his children's children forever. But have we not seen the light of the Gospel?” (120-1). Still, Isaac's rejection is final. His mother's reaction on the other hand proves that any reconciliation is impossible. She rules out even the possibility of his marriage by claiming that she would commit suicide saying that “if you do the thing while I am alive, you will have my blood on your head, because I shall kill myself” (123). The fact that his parents, after living as Christians for long years, still resist against the eradication of such a custom shows that Obi's task is based only on fantasy than the real conditions of his people. Thus, Clara creates the conflict of the two sides of his character as “the rural Nigerian society of the novel still has prejudice

against her, while the urban, more westernized world of Lagos embraces her” (Shen 41). Through the episode with his family, his relationship with his community form a paradox where both sides fail to assert their will on each other.

Clara’s own approach to the issue, on the other hand, is fixed throughout the process. The enthusiasm that Obi has for the prospect of their marriage is lost on her. Upon learning about the reaction of Obi’s parents, her response is not surprising as she points out to him that “you are making things difficult for yourself. How many times did I tell you we were deceiving ourselves? But I was always told I was being childish. Anyway, it doesn’t matter. There is no need for long talk” (129). Her quick surrender indicates that her role in the narrative scheme is over as the Obi is already at odds with the society on the matter. Now that she ends her relationship with Obi, she is reduced to a flat character who does not go beyond being a narrative tool to demonstrate the impending demise of his ideology. She is important only as “the excuse as well as the touchstone for all the irrational behaviour which is the prelude to Obi’s eventual fall from grace” (Asong 246). Her characterisation is designed solely for that purpose which makes her only a “prop” as her stance on *osu* matter proves illogical: “Being an *Osu* is obviously important to her and she tells Obi that right at the beginning. [. . .] If she was sufficiently Westernized her being an *Osu* would not have mattered” (Palangyo 131). As a result, even after their break-up, her pregnancy only works towards enhancing Obi’s emotional downfall. The combination of the death of his mother, and the unfulfilling relationship with Clara consequently contributes greatly towards the crumbling of his already shaken ideals.

Resulting from his elitist and self-absorbed quest to change the history of his people, he finds himself going against the principle that he is the product of the community who raises and supports him. His frustration stems from the clash between the society and the individual in the sense of tradition versus modernity. In order to exert his ideals, and stand firm to make his family and the Union accept them, he is ready to challenge customs with a sense of constructed idea of modernity. The problem lies in his over-awed image of the educated class. In accordance, Gikandi argues that

Obi is fighting for the yet unrealized Nigerian community in which cultural, linguistic, and ethnic differences are overcome or harmonized, and the integrity of the national body is established. It often appears that for the subject to achieve his

individuality, and hence inscribe himself as a Nigerian, he must reject kinship and regional ties. The only problem with this proposition is that Obi is an invention of his kinsmen: they have educated him to serve their communal interests and thereby projected their own fantasies to him. (95)

Clearly, his idea of a communal identity is paradoxically based on alienation from the norms and traditions that define the to-be members of that same society. As he zealously commits himself to that end, he eventually finds himself in an impasse which is granted further devastating effect by his financial and emotional problems. Unable to cope with the problems of the modernised setting of Lagos, he also fails to change the mindset of the people of Umuofia. Then the only outcome of his endeavours stands out to be his estrangement to both sides. In that sense, he is never granted the grandeur and heroism that the protagonists of the previous two novels possess. While Okonkwo and Ezeulu's failures are undeniable, their characterisation provides them with a dignity that makes their fall dramatic and unexpected. Obi, on the other hand, is doomed from the very start of the novel. His "character [. . .] must assume as its first premise that he belongs to that category of protagonists for whom failure, defeat, absurdity and inconsistencies are a way of life, the rule rather than the exception" (Asong 240) which is solidified by the trial scene in the first chapter. Moreover, "the ceaseless inability to live a well-adjusted life, to insist on a way of life that inevitably alienates one from his loved ones" (Asong 240) ensure that by trapping himself in a liminal space, he creates himself the conditions on which the situation of his corruption is built upon. When he is reduced from an individual with high prospect to a common subject of the ideology Mr. Green represents, he is interpellated according to the pre-determined norms of the centre. However, his disgraceful transformation is based on his own incompetence instead of a generalised flaw of character attributed to the African identity. It is only when he gives in to the temptation of bribery that he realises his mistake in placing himself in opposition to his community with a disillusioned idealism.

His psychological condition after he starts taking bribes shows a strange sense of relief. It is also reflected on the indifference to his condemnation in the trial scene as well. As someone who takes pride in his education and social status, Obi strangely distorts the stance he shows up until that point by accepting corruption as a way of escape. It is almost as if he dies inside as reflected in his thoughts "he no longer felt guilt. He, too, had died. Beyond death there are no ideals and no humbug. Only reality" (151). He

understands that the reality, which he manages to evade through his fantasies finally catches up with him, which means that he is now aware that the pedestal on which he places himself and his class is nothing more than a projection of misconceptions. He now acknowledges that he is an “impatient idealist” who says “give me a place to stand and I shall move the earth” (151). With that realisation, he shortly starts taking bribes in the form of both cash and sexual intercourse. He is subjected to a moral decay resulting from the metaphorical death of his ideals. In line with this, Gikandi comments that “when Obi becomes corrupted, in the end, his spirit seems to have been released from the moral fantasy with which he enshrouded himself” (100). Thus, the escape from the real conditions of the country becomes the crack in his ideology to create a new national identity. By putting a distance between himself and his community, he elevates his nationalistic views to a theoretical level away from the down-to-earth realities of his society. Fanon comments on the role of the intellectual in creating a better future for his community saying that “the colonized intellectual [. . .] who strives for cultural authenticity, must recognize that national truth is first and foremost the national reality. He must press on until he reaches that place of bubbling trepidation from which knowledge will emerge” (*WOE* 161). In the construction of national culture, an intellectual’s starting point has to be the conditions of his times, otherwise he cannot go any further than being “irrelevant to present” (*WOE* 161). Fanon’s view clearly sums up the fracture in Obi’s thinking. By turning his back on the truths about his community, he takes up an escapist approach which is bound to fail. In that respect, he becomes the exact opposite to Achebe himself in comparison. In the early years of Nigerian independence, Achebe claims that the feelings of national unity are far from maturity saying that “it has occurred to me that Nigeria is neither my mother, nor my father. Nigeria is a child. Gifted, enormously talented, prodigiously endowed, and incredibly wayward” (*EPBC* 45). The attribution of paternal qualities to a nation is a commonly used tool in the invocation of nationalistic feelings in the societies all around the world. Considering, Nigeria comes into being as a united entity under colonial rule, it is not surprising that the development of a national identity does not come naturally to its members in the years of independence. The responsibility of forming that tie falls on every member of the society in order to run a healthy state so that the following

generations can inherit the nationalistic naturally. Achebe calls every Nigerian to duty in order to achieve such an aim claiming that

Nigeria needs help. Nigerians have their work cut out for them—to coax this unruly child along the path of useful creative development. We are *the parents* of Nigeria, not vice versa. A generation will come, if we do our work patiently and well—and given luck—a generation that will call Nigeria father or mother. But not yet. (emphasis in the original *EBPC* 46)

Obi is too eager to take part in such an endeavour, yet he believes that it can only be achieved by the educated classes of the country. Achebe and Obi differs exactly on that point as he believes that “Nigeria is a country where nobody can wake up in the morning and ask: what can I do now? There is work for all” (*EBPC* 46). While Obi takes up an alienating stance, Achebe’s approach is all-inclusive. Finally, the protagonist realises the fault that he mistakenly sets himself apart, in his ideology as reflected in his words: “We all have to stand on the earth itself and go with her at her pace” (151). As a result, “now that he recognized the imaginary nature of this existence, he can engage Nigeria on its own terms” (Gikandi 100). Then, Obi is finally starting to emerge from his delusion of pioneering identity, yet, it proves to be already too late. As he is caught red-handed for bribery, there is no hope for the fulfilment of his reshaped ideals. The fact that the Union decides to hire a lawyer for him even after their fallout indicates that no matter how hard he tries to alienate himself, his only defenders are the representatives of his traditional identity.

Consequently, by switching the setting from the rural Igbo village in the previous two novels to the urban “modernised” setting of late colonial Nigeria of the 1950s, Achebe explores the anxieties of the last generation of Nigerians under colonial rule. Very early on in the novel, Achebe presents the problem of corruption to the reader as an alarming threat to Nigerian identity. While the socio-economic conditions of the country make corruption easy and desirable for the financially challenged or greedy civil servants, the colonialist discourse holds that it is an essential and inevitable part of the African character just because of the geography they live in. Such stereotyping ideology is represented by Obi’s boss Mr. Green and it interpellates the Nigerians into subjects who are corrupt by nature, denying them any form of individuality. In the grand scheme of the narrative, the idea seems to be etched in the minds of the average man as bribery is accepted as a common practice which is especially common among the higher ranked

civil servants. The unions pretentious gentlemanly behaviours and the celebrations over the protagonist's education in England further establish that the supposed superior-inferior relationship between the coloniser and the colonised is prevalent in the society. In this context, Obi Okonkwo stands out as a young and bright Igbo man who has high hopes for the future of Nigerian unity as he takes corruption as the first challenge to be tackled. The enthusiasm behind his ideals is what makes his initial aims respectable, yet the fact that he perceives the duty as belonging predominantly to the emergent class of educated Nigerians remains to be the flaw in his ideology. Thus, everything he believes in is based on fantasies rather than the realities of his community, which results in an alienation from his roots further and further. In that respect, he finds himself trapped in a conflict of tradition and modernity, both of which he cannot completely adapt to. The Union, his family and even his fiancé Clara become props of the narrative to bring the protagonist at odds with his Igbo identity. Moreover, his inability to financially comply with the norms deriving from his social status causes him to sink deeper into moral decay. In addition, he cannot have emotional relief either. Due to the collapse of his relationship with Clara, which is presented to be built upon only physical and material foundations, Obi reaches an impasse in his life from which corruption emerges as the only escape. Once a strong protestor of the deed, his false image of individuality and grandeur crumbles with the bribes he takes. Even though his succumbing to the colonial image of the corrupt African is realised in the end, Obi's fall is founded on his own incompetent and fragile assertions of pioneering the generation of Nigerian who are to change the fate of the country. Again, Achebe focuses his narrative on the process in which his protagonist falls victim to the colonial discourse rather than his actual fall. The young man's inability to form his idealism on solid grounds and the realities of his people are presented in juxtaposition with the essentialist flaw of character attribute to the African.

CONCLUSION

Our human compassion binds us the one to the other- not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future.

--Nelson Mandela

The three novels that constitute the African Trilogy of Chinua Achebe whose settings in the context of colonial history of Nigeria create a chronological unity, can be set apart from the other fictional works of the author in the sense that they refer to times of direct contact with the British colonisers. Later novels can also be traced to represent a certain period of Nigerian history, yet the trilogy is separated from them due to its depiction of the struggles of the people under colonial rule rather than the residual damage of colonialism in the postcolonial Nigeria. By retelling the history of his people, the author challenges their constructed image and that of the Africans in general in order to restore their self-confidence before the problems of the postcolonial stage can be tackled. Escapism stemming from the “anxiety” of a tainted identity is not acceptable as every African intellectual should work towards reversing this false image as he explains, “running away from myself seems to me a very inadequate way of dealing with anxiety. And if writers should opt for such escapism, who is to meet the challenge?” (*MYOCD* 27). Staying true to his argument, he decides to go to the roots of the problem instead of offering superficial solutions or running away altogether. Realising the social responsibility that characterises his writing, this thesis tries to analyse the self-image created in the novels and its deconstruction due to both innate cracks of the society in the changing times and their manipulation by the arrival of a new force in the shape of the coloniser. In the light of these, all three novels are marked with a climactic point in which a psychological surrender of both the protagonists and their society takes place. In that respect, all three protagonists can be understood as failures by the writer, yet their downfall should be regarded as the consequence of the accumulative reasons that accelerate the process, which is analysed in this thesis as the process of colonising the mind. The condition on which the final fall may vary, but the outcome, which is the loss

of the innate spirit of resistance, is the same in all three occasions. This thesis tries to put the emphasis on the processes that make the final surrender inevitable rather than focusing on the outcome itself, as the whole narratives of the novels are rebuttals of their actual results. When both the characters and their societies cannot find the courage in themselves to fight back, the basis of the colonialist ideology that presumes an inferior-superior relationship between the colonised and the coloniser is established. Actual history proves that such a power relationship is established between the coloniser and the colonised, thus Achebe's narratives probe into the minds of the people of those generations to build a bridge of understanding between his reader and their ancestors. By returning the dignity, which is stripped from them through a vast body of colonial writings, to his predecessors, the author deconstructs their tarnished image while also presenting their mistakes as examples from which lessons should be derived. Only then, the damaged self-confidence of his people can be restored especially in a time when they need it most as independence of Nigeria is around the corner.

In line with the aspirations of the writer, *TFA*'s depiction of the precolonial village life of Igboland provides insight of the indigenous people's social, economic, political and daily lives untouched by the colonial influence. Contrary to the misrepresentations of the colonised by the historians and writers of the coloniser, the rural life of Igbo people proves sophisticated and systematic. Such misleading images of the African infects the western mindset with "the vast arsenal of derogatory images" in order to justify and "defend the slave and trade and later colonialism" (Achebe *EBPC* 79). However, Achebe's picture of the Igbo people differs from the prevalent images in that it restores dignity to the people whose history is distorted and reinvented to serve the purposes of colonialism. The detailed infrastructure of life in the village includes several aspects that shape the lives of the community. Through the representation of the village, its ruling system, the inter-villages diplomatic structure and the formation of clans as larger bodies, the political sophistication of Igbo systems are presented to the reader. It is made clear that the decision-making processes in the community are not driven by savagery, tyranny or chaos. Rather every member of the society is entitled to have an opinion on matters that concern the whole village. Moreover, the elders who work as the representatives of the will of others, constitute a proto-democratic system in the precolonial times. In this organic society, the protagonist, Okonkwo stands as the

champion of the traditional values. He is the embodiment of personal achievement. His rise to success is the indicator of a classless society where every man is judged on his own merits. His fall, on the other hand, is due to the conditions created by the arrival of the white man in his village. The second half of the novel focuses on the disintegration of the cultural ties that form the fabric of this organic society. Achebe's realistic approach in creating the Igbo setting in his fictional space enables him to handle the subject with both its positive and negative aspects. While the society shows signs of a natural progression over its tradition depending on their social codes, some problematic practices still exist. It is the missionaries' success in finding them out and playing strategically on the existent insecurities of the people mark the beginning of colonialism in the novel. Consequentially, the division created by the white man brings about the inability of action at the end. The state of immobility that the Umuofians find themselves in is their acknowledgement of the white man's power over them. Their shortcoming to predict the intentions of the missionaries early on is the flaw that results in their downfall. Such inaction contradicts with the character of the protagonist since his reputation is based on his liability to violent action. In accordance, his suicide might be regarded as a failure for both himself and his society. However, every misfortune that befalls on him up until that point remain to be the testament to the fact that the process is not as simple as a western coloniser would have made it out to be. In accordance Achebe comments on Okonkwo's death saying, "Did Okonkwo fail? In a certain sense, obviously yes. But he also left behind a story strong enough to make those who hear it [. . .] wish that things had gone differently for him" (*EBPC* 129). As a result, the efforts of the white man to pacify the Igbo by dividing them due to the cracks in their systems are presented in his story as a testament for the future generations. By focusing on the process, Achebe urges his readers to come to terms with their past so that they can move strongly towards new challenges as united. In the end, what matters is not Okonkwo's way of death, rather the inevitable crumbling of his ideals as summarised in the Igbo proverb "the thought which leads a man to kill himself cannot be merely one night old" (*EBPC* 129). Thus, by constructing two contradictory images of Umuofia in the novel, the author presents evidence of how the first generation to encounter the white man are cornered into submission.

AOG, which is similar in structure to *TFA*, switches the time period to the 1920s when Nigeria was a protectorate of the British Empire and the indirect rule administrative system was being established. Although it is published four years later than *NLE*, in terms of its setting, it is the second one in the chronological order. Thus the people of Umuaro belong to the second generation under the colonial rule. As Umuaro becomes the battleground of three conflicting parties, including the chief Priest Ezeulu, Ezidemili and the District commissioner Winterbottom, for authority the major theme of the novel is the ambitious pursuit of domination. The claims of each figure over a personal power over the members of the society are based on their individual aspirations, thus they are hardly based on an improvement of welfare for the rest of the Igbo community. Moreover, it is clear that the divisions created by the internal and external threats to the protagonist's authority are reflected in his family, which works as a microcosm for the whole society. The parallelism is made more obvious at the end of the novel as Obika, who is the representative of tradition in the family, dies performing his role while Christians earn converts in great numbers. Even though he has a fever, he does not shun attending the funeral ceremony as a masked spirit, which is one of the most explicit symbols of Igbo ancestral worship. His effort is interpreted as a final attempt to cling on the customary values both by himself and in the name of his family. Then clearly his death in the form of an *egwugu*, works as hard evidence for his father that by eradicating the boundary that separates the spiritual and the physical aspects of his duty, he indirectly contributes to the inevitable cultural decay of his people. Thus, the priest's failure is juxtaposed with his victory by the rejection of a justification of power by the coloniser. It is the death of tradition which drives the priest into madness. Even though his rejection of warrant chieftaincy is considered a great victory on the political level against the white man, his act of revenge proves that the internal divisions are the real danger to the preservation of cultural values. Through his ambitious search for authority, he goes against the very foundations of his title. Just like the Umuofians of *TFA*, the villagers are put into a state of helplessness by their own pries this time. Faced with the threat of famine after the delay of the New Yam Festival, it is only natural that they unwillingly surrender to the Church in order to ensure their survival. The manipulation of the situation to serve the missionaries' ends is presented to the reader as an example of how the coloniser's forces expand their dominion over the people of

Nigeria. Torn apart by the ambitious claims of three different figures of authority, the conversions are presented to be analysed with sympathy. The role of Ezeulu's imprisonment by the district commissioner in exacting his revenge on his own people is crucial in the sense that it enables the priest to put his plans in action. The whole process proves how the existence of the white man further complicates the struggles of the Igbo into divisive and destructive conditions. The centralisation of the idea that no individual is bigger than his/her community, stands as a value to be upheld in the Igbo society. As a result, the hero "even when, like Ezeulu, he is a leader and priest, he is still in a very real sense subordinate to his community" (Achebe *HE* 57). The destruction of this line, combined with the manipulations of the white man, characterise the process in which the second generation loses their faith and become subordinates in the colonial discourse.

In the final novel of the trilogy, *NLE*, while moving on to the next generation of Nigerians under the British Imperial rule before the independence in 1960, the setting switches from the rural village to the modern urban city of Lagos, which is the colonial capital of Nigeria. Achebe's focus is set on the problems of the modernised colonised, from whom an educated class emerges, in the late years of colonisation. By then, fifty years of colonisation creates a mindset that in these times greatness can only be achieved through one's prowess in the institutions and the education of the white man, which is why the protagonist, Obi Okonkwo, is sent to England for university education on a student loan as a bright Igbo youth of Umuofia. The concept of formal education can be regarded as one of the positive institutions that is brought to the colonies by the British, yet in Obi's case, it only expands the gap between him and his traditional culture. Due to his intellectual status, he is disillusioned to the point that he misguidedly thinks that he has the solutions to the problems of Nigeria in theory, including corruption which is a long standing problem of the country. The narrator's approach to the protagonist's ideas are cynical unlike the previous novels. The lack of any real use of his theories further establishes that Obi is a pretentious mock intellectual. Although his heart is in the right place, the fact that he bases his ideology on false grounds achieves only his alienation from his roots. Thus, the financial and emotional struggles he goes through are the challenges to his firm stance against bribery and corruption. As his monetary issues stem partly from his inability in economic planning and ironically

from his student loan, his make belief ideals are bound to crumble. It is clear that he can stay loyal to his battle against corruption so long as he is comfortable enough to deny the possibility of taking bribes. As a result, when he is pushed enough into depression by financial burdens and emotional dissatisfaction with the collapse of his relationship with Clara, his ideals are no longer valid to himself, let alone the rest of the society. Through the colonial discourse, the corrupt Nigerian image is already created on essentialist grounds as Obi's boss Mr. Green argues that corruption is an innate characteristic of the African due to the geography that he lives in, which through the course of history moulds him into a mentally and physically deficient being. Thus, the protagonist's downfall is the transformation of a disillusioned bright young man into a generic colonial subject without individuality. However, the process in which Obi is driven deeper and deeper into financial and emotional crisis is analysed as the counter narrative to the claims of the colonial discourse in the sense that his downfall is based on his own terms instead of a general degrading characteristic of the colonised. While a stereotyping approach would attribute his final surrender to bribery as a defect inherent in Obi due to his identity, Achebe proves that Obi on his own has himself and the system which forms his class to blame. As a result, Achebe shares his ambition for the creation of a new Nigerian national identity, yet with caution, he shows that the enthusiasm should be based on solid grounds rather than utopic fantasies. The protagonist's relief after taking his first bribe is an indication that he realises how mistaken his ideals are, albeit too late. In compliance, Obi's process is an example for the reader in which the approach to the formation of a Nigerian national identity is both supported and handled with caution. As the novel is published in the year of national independence, the reader is invited to take a level-headed approach in his/her pursuit for national unity in order to found an independent state with political stability after their partition from the British Empire.

This thesis, by analysing the three different cases of subjugation as the result of a process of colonial interference and dominance puts forward how Achebe distorts the colonial discourse by focusing on the reasons of the surrenders of three generations rather than the results. When looked at separately, each novel explores the interaction of their generation with the coloniser in their own conditions. However, studied together, the three generations actually cover the whole colonial history of Nigeria from its early days in *TFA* to the final years in *NLE*. Investigation of the different stages of British

colonialism shows how the domination is maintained by different factors and manipulations in each case. In this sense, the novels enable their readers to look at themselves in a new and different light than the one imposed on them. With the relative failures of the three protagonists, how the supposed “inferiority” of natives is etched in the minds of the Igbo people. Nevertheless, their fate is presented to be an example for the new generation so that they can take pride in their history, origins and ancestors in order to fuel nationalistic feelings that are to bind them together in the future. The reader is invited to question and criticise their colonial conditions by relieving themselves from the self-denigration constructed through colonial discourse. Only then, the efforts to form a new national identity can be successful.



Works Cited

Primary Sources

Achebe, Chinua. *Arrow of God*. Second Edition ed. Oxford: Heinemann, 1964. Print. African Writers Ser. 1974.

---. *The Education of a British-Protected Child*. New York: Anchor, 2009. Print.

---. *Home and Exile*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.

---. *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays*. New York: Double Day, 1988. Print. Anchor Books 1990.

---. *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. London: Heinemann, 1975. Print.

---. *No Longer at Ease*. London: William Heinemann, 1960. Print. African Writers Ser. 1963.

---. *Things Fall Apart*. Oxford: William Heinemann, 1958. Print. New Windmill 1971.

---. *The Trouble with Nigeria*. London: Heinemann, 1984. Print.

---. "African Voices." Interview. *Youtube*. 27 Apr. 2009. Web. 20 May 2016.

Secondary Sources

Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Trans. Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review, 1971. Print.

- Asong, Linus T. *The Anti-Hero in African Fiction: An Examination of Psychological Constructs and Characterization Techniques in Six Selected Novels*. Diss. The U of Alberta, 1984. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses [ProQuest]*. Web. 12 Oct. 2016.
- Awuyah, Chris Kwame. "Chinua Achebe's 'Arrow of God': Ezeulu's Response to Change." *College Literature Teaching Postcolonial and Commonwealth Literatures* 19/20.3/1 (1992): 214-19. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 19 Sept. 2016.
- Babalola, C. A. "A Reconsideration of Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*." *Phylon* 47.2 (1986): 139-47. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.
- Begam, Richard. "Achebe's Sense of an Ending: History and Tragedy in *Things Fall Apart*." *Studies in the Novel* 29.3 (1997): 396-411. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 19 Sept. 2016.
- Bonetti, Kay. "An Interview with Chinua Achebe." *Missouri Review* 12.1 (1989): 61-83. *Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP]*. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.
- Champion, Earnest A. "The Story of a Man and His People: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*." *Negro American Literature Forum* 8.4 (1974): 272-77. *Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP]*. Web. 17 Aug. 2016.
- Crowder, Michael. "Indirect Rule: French and British Style." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 34.3 (1964): 197-205. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 13 Sept. 2016.
- Dudley, Billy J. "Decolonisation and the Problems of Independence." *The Cambridge History of Africa*. Ed. Michael Crowder. Vol. 8. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984. 8-47. Print.

Ejimofofor, Cornelius Ogu. *The Colonial Roots of The Nigerian Crisis: A Study of British Policies and Administration in Nigeria*. Diss. The U of Oklohama, 1971. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses [ProQuest]*. Web. 12 Oct. 2016.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Wiedenfeld, 1967. Print.

---. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove, 1965. Print.

George, Olakunle. "The Narrative of Conversion in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*." *Comperative Literature Studies* 42.4 (2005): 344-62. *Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP]*. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.

Gikandi, Simon. "Chinua Achebe and the Invention of African Culture." *Research in African Literatures* 32.3 (2001): 3-8. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 19 Sept. 2016.

Gikandi, Simon. *Reading Chinua Achebe: Language & Ideology in Fiction*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1991. Print. Studies in African Literature.

Gordimer, Nadine. "Introduction." *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. By Albert Memmi. Trans. Howard Greenfield. London: Earthscan Publications, 1974. 27-44. Print. Ser. 2003.

Hinsley, F. H. "Great Britain and the Powers 1904-1914." *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*. Ed. E. A. Benians, Sir James Butler, and Charles Edmund Carrington. Vol. 3. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1967. Print.

Hoegberg, David. "Principle and Practice: The Logic of Cultural Violence in Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart'." *College Literature* 26.1 (1999): 69-79. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 17 Aug. 2016.

Innes, C. L. *The Cambridge Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. Print.

Irikwu, J. O. "Early History." *Nigeria at 100: What Next?* Oxford: African Collective, 2014. 3-14. *Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP]*. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.

Jeyifo, Biodun. *Chinua Achebe: A Celebration*. Ed. Kirsten Holst Petersen and Anna Rutherford. Oxford: Heinemann, 1991. 51-70. Print.

Korang, Kwaku Larbi. "Making a Post-Eurocentric Humanity: Tragedy, Realism, and Things Fall Apart." *Research in African Literatures Achebe's World: African Literature at Fifty* 42.2 (2011): 1-29. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 19 Sept. 2016.

Kortenaar, Neil Ten. "Beyond Authenticity and Creolization: Reading Achebe Writing Culture." *PMLA* 110.1 (1995): 30-42. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 19 Sept. 2016.

Lewis, Merry Allen B. "Beyond Content in the Analysis of Folklore in Literature: Chinua Achebe's 'Arrow of God'." *Research in African Literatures* 7.1 (1976): 44-52. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 19 Sept. 2016.

Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. New York: Routledge, 1998. Print.

Manji, Ambreena. "'Like a Mask Dancing': Law and Colonialism in Chinua Achebe's 'Arrow of God'." *Journal of Law and Society* 27.4 (2000): 626-42. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 05 Apr. 2016.

Masenda, Solomon T. *Psychohistorical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" and "Arrow of God"*. Diss. The U of Oklahoma, 1989. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses [ProQuest]*. Web. 12 Oct. 2016. Mezu, Rose. *Chinua Achebe : The Man and His Works*. N.p.: Adonis & Abbey, 2006. *Ebrary*. Web. 10 Dec. 2014.

- Mawere, Munyaradzi. "Culture, Indigenous Knowledge and Development in Africa since Colonialism: The Silenced Narrative." *Cuture, Indigenous Knowledge and Development in Africa*. Oxford: African Collective, 2014. 23-42. *Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP]*. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.
- Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Trans. Howard Greenfield. London: Earthscan Publications, 1974. Print. Ser. 2003.
- Nnoromele, Patrick C. "The Plight of a Hero in Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart'." *College Literature* 27.2 (2000): 146-56. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 19 Sept. 2016.
- Nwabughuogu, Anthony I. "The Role of Propoganda in the Development of Indirect Rule in Nigeria, 1890-1929." *The International Journal of African Historical Stories* 14.1 (1981): 65-92. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 14 Mar. 2016.
- Nwoga, D. Ibe. "The Igbo World of Achebe's 'Arrow of God'." *Research in African Literatures* 12.1 (1981): 14-42. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 17 Aug. 2016.
- Ohadike, Don. Introduction. *Things Fall Apart*. By Chinua Achebe. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1996. Xix-lix. Print. African Writers Ser. Classics in Context.
- Okafor, S. O. "Ideal and Reality in British Administrative Policy in Eastern Nigeria." *African Affairs* 73.293 (1974): 459-71. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.
- Okecukwu, Chinwe Christiana. "Oratory and Social Responsibility: Chinua Achebe's 'Arrow of God'." *Callaloo* 25.2 (2002): 567-83. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.
- Osterhammel, Jürgen. *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. Trans. Shelley Laura Frisch. N.p.: M. Wiener, 1997. Print.

Palangyo, Peter Kishili. *The African Sense of Self with Special Reference to Chinua Achebe*. Diss. State U of New York at Buffalo, 1980. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses [ProQuest]*. Web. 12 Oct. 2016.

Rao, Raja. "Foreword." *Kanthapura*. Bombay: New Directions, 1963. Print.

Rhoads, Diana Akers. "Culture in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*." *African Studies Review* 36.2 (1993): 61-72. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 19 Sept. 2016.

Rogers, Philip. "'No Longer at Ease': Chinua Achebe's 'Heart of Whiteness'." *Research in African Literatures* 14.2 (1983): 165-83. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 19 Sept. 2016.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. "Introduction." *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. By Albert Memmi. Trans. Howard Greenfield. London: Earthscan Publications, 1974. 17-25. Print. Ser. 2003.

Shen, Bingsu. *Strangers in Their Own Land: The Issue of Social Class & Dilemma of Individuals in Three Novels by Chinua Achebe*. Diss. U of Regina, 2000. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses [ProQuest]*. Web. 12 Oct. 2016.

Soile, Sola. "Tragic Paradox in Achebe's *Arrow of God*." *Phylon* 37.3 (1976): 283-95. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 01 Nov. 2016.

Uzoigwe, G. N. "European Partition and Conquest of Africa: An Overview." *General History of Africa VII: Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*. Ed. A. Adu Boahen. London: Heinemann, 1985. 19-44. Print.

Wa Thiong'o, Ngugi. *Decolonising the Mind*. Harare: Zimbabwe House, 1987. Print.

Wright, Derek. *Chinua Achebe: A Celebration*. Ed. Kirsten Holst Petersen and Anna Rutherford. Oxford: Heinemann, 1991. 76-82. Print.

Young, Crawford. "Decolonization, the Independence Settlement, and Colonial Legacy." *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960-2010*. Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin, 2012. 87-121. *Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP]*. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.



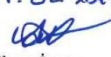
APPENDIX.1.1

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KURUL İZİN MUAFİYETİ FORMU	Appendix 1
HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA		
Tarih: 23/01/2015		
Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Chinua Achebe'nin <i>Parçalanma</i>, <i>Tanrının Oku</i> ve <i>Artık Huzur Yok</i> adlı Romanlarında Zihnin Sömürgeleştirilmesi Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmam: 1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır, 2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir. 3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir. 4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullar ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim. Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim. 23.01.2015  Tarih ve İmza Adı Soyadı: Alican Erbakan Öğrenci No: N13222826 Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Programı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Yüksek Lisans Programı Statüsü: ☒ Y.Lisans ☐ Doktora ☐ Bütünleşik Dr.		
<u>DANIŞMAN GÖRÜŞÜ VE ONAYI</u>  (Unvan, Ad Soyad, İmza) Y. Doç. Dr. Alev Karaduman		
Detaylı Bilgi: http://www.sosyalbilimler.hacettepe.edu.tr Telefon: 0-312-2976860 Faks: 0-3122992147 E-posta: sosyalbilimler@hacettepe.edu.tr		

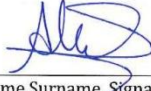
APPENDIX.1.2

	HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK	Appendix 1
HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE TO THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENCY		
Date: 23/01/2015		
Thesis Title / Topic: Colonising the Mind in Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i> , <i>Arrow of God</i> , and <i>No Longer at Ease</i>		
My thesis work related to the title/topic above:		
1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people. 2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.). 3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity. 4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).		
I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.		
I respectfully submit this for approval.		
		23.01.2015  Date and Signature
Name Surname: Alican Erbakan		
Student No: N13222826		
Department: English Language and Literature		
Program: English Language and Literature MA Programme		
Status: ☒ Masters ☐ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D.		
<u>ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL</u>		
 (Title, Name Surname, Signature) Y. Doç. Dr. Alev Karaduman		

APPENDIX.2.1

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ YÜKSEK LİSANS/DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU	Appendix 2
HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA		
Tarih: 07/02/2017		
Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Chinua Achebe'nin <i>Parçalanma</i>, <i>Tanrının Oku</i> ve <i>Artık Huzur Yok</i> adlı Romanlarında Zihnin Sömürgeleştirilmesi Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 93 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 07/02/2017 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezin benzerlik oranı % 2 'dir. Uygulanan filtrelemeler: 1- Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç, 2- Kaynakça hariç 3- Alıntılar hariç/dâhil 4- 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orjinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim. Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim. 07. 02 2017  Tarih ve İmza Adı Soyadı: Alican Erbakan Öğrenci No: N13222826 Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Programı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Yüksek Lisans Programı Statüsü: ☒ Y.Lisans ☐ Doktora ☐ Bütünleşik Dr.		
<u>DANIŞMAN ONAYI</u> UYGUNDUR.  (Y. Doç. Dr. Alev Karaduman) (Unvan, Ad Soyad, İmza)		

APPENDIX.2.2

	HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES THESIS/DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT	Appendix 2										
HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE												
Date: 07/02/2017												
Thesis Title / Topic: Colonising the Mind in Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i> , <i>Arrow of God</i> , and <i>No Longer at Ease</i>												
According to the originality report obtained by myself/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options stated below on 07/02/2017 for the total of 93 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled as above, the similarity index of my thesis is 2 %.												
Filtering options applied: 1. Approval and Declaration sections excluded 2. Bibliography/Works Cited excluded 3. Quotes excluded 4. Match size up to 5 words excluded												
I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.												
I respectfully submit this for approval.												
		07.02.2017  Date and Signature										
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">Name Surname:</td> <td>Alican Erbakan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student No:</td> <td>N13222826</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Department:</td> <td>English Language and Literature</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Program:</td> <td>English Language and Literature MA Programme</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Status:</td> <td> ☒ Masters ☐ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D. </td> </tr> </table>			Name Surname:	Alican Erbakan	Student No:	N13222826	Department:	English Language and Literature	Program:	English Language and Literature MA Programme	Status:	☒ Masters ☐ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D.
Name Surname:	Alican Erbakan											
Student No:	N13222826											
Department:	English Language and Literature											
Program:	English Language and Literature MA Programme											
Status:	☒ Masters ☐ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D.											
<u>ADVISOR APPROVAL</u>												
APPROVED.												
 (Title, Name Surname, Signature)												
Y. Doç. Dr. Alev Karaduman												