

Perspectives in the Nigerian novel: An examination of heteroglossia, double consciousness and multivoicedness in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* and *Things Fall Apart*

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Abstract

At the heart of the novel are speech patterns or voices which play out in its plot sequence. These manifest in terms of perspectives- views, or modes- which are sometimes at variance or conflicting. The relationship between these perspectives or voices is frequently challenged as prevailing voices assume newer outlook or form. This has been explained by the Russian scholar Bakhtin (1984) in Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics and in his exploration of Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment (2000), thereby exposing the multiplicity of voice, speech pattern or language variety which he calls heteroglossia. This essay, thus, appropriates the concept of heteroglossia in the study of speech types, perspectives as an aesthetic design in Achebe's Things Fall Apart (1976) and Arrow of God (1986). Particularly, it sheds light on the nature of the novel as a genre steeped in a convoluted pattern of discourse in order to explain the actual addresser of speeches, or voices inherent in these novels. The method of analysis is critical, hermeneutic and analytical while working within the tenets of dialogism as theorised by Bakhtin (1981) in his text Dialogic Imagination, which stresses that the novel is a discourse and that there is a relationship between context, language and culture in interpreting the discursive features in the novel. This theory also stresses the nexus in discourse construction between the author; the text; the readers, and the socio-historical forces that surround them.

Keywords: Heteroglossia, multi-voicedness, double consciousness, dialogic, voice

Introduction: What is the Novel?

The novel is a sub-type, or component of the prose genre. As a literary art form, it is a very powerful semiotic tool in the Hallidayean sense, where "language has an experiential-logical, interpersonal and textual function" (Halliday, 1978, p. 27) and is deployed as a medium to construct social reality. Three characteristics distinguish the novel from other sub-prose genres like the short story, novella. One of it is its re-presentation of well accentuated voices or speeches, not just that of the characters, but also of the dominant view of the author, and characters as separate entities, through its lengthy or expanded narrative (Udumukwu, 1997, p. 1). This is underscored by its functionality which is to capture, reflect or re-produce its subject matter, which is a response to sociological undercurrents which "crystallize in genuine solicitude about the ordinary people" (Udumukwu, 1998, p. vi). It is this quality that enables the novel set in motion the necessary current for social change and by social change, we meant social transformation. The second quality is that the novel has a plot architecture which is developed from several complications interwoven into its narrative. While the third distinguishing factor is that its characters share semblance with real humans or what is known as a 'sincere verisimilitude' even with contemporary reality (Harzard, 1071, p. 67). This reality is not in its fixed sense but as a dynamic process. The term a sincere verisimilitude needs further clarification as it implies that the novel is a genre which animates real social situation in a multicultural setting and it is a consequence of modernity, where various varieties of language and genre, or world view collage in a convolution. This is why Bakhtin's (1981) summation that any artistic designs or critical approach capable of articulating the rich convoluted speech types of the novel must of necessity be sociological (p. 300).

The emergence of the novel as a modern reality has enabled it garner much attention and critical responses to itself, particularly because of its versed and ubiquitous nature which is quite difficult to account for. Benjamin (1973) clearly articulates this ubiquitous nature of the novel while quoting the Hungarian critic Lukacs, stating that it manifests as “transcendental homelessness” (p. 99). And it appears that no genre of literature has been able to equal the same quality of artistic engagement and linguistic rigour the novel attracts to itself; this may be because it has over time, shown a predilection to sustain the reality it reflects with cadence and inventiveness.

It is this foregoing nature of the novel that must have informed Forster’s (1955) description of it as an “intensely, stifling human quality... sogged with humanity” (p. 24). What Forster (1955) implies by that assertion is that; the novel as an art form and a medium of re-presentation animate human lives, real social experiences in a fictitious canvass. Chukwuma (2003) has also argued that the novel is certainly the dominant and most pervasive literary genre (vi). Chukwuma’s use of the term “pervasive” is contextualised within the sociocultural perspectives of the African novel where the word “pervasive” can be understood not from its denotative sense but as a connotative design, a referential icon, which in the view of Achebe (2001, p.73) enables the African writer to balance the negative colonial narrative about Nigeria as demonstrated in Cary’s (1939) *Mr Johnson*. The overall implication of the foregoing assertions of Chukwuma (2003) and Achebe (2001) suggest that the novel serves as a media or tools, at least for now, which the African writer uses to renegotiate the existence of the African against the background of postcolonial realities.

One of the 19th century scholars whose critique of the novel as a genre expanded the critical perception on it is the Russian scholar; Bakhtin (1981). He argued that a unique texture or quality of the novel manifests as “a diversity of social speech types”, that is, the various manner of expression conveyed through the speech of characters as they interact in a novel which occur as a convolution of multiple voices or ‘heteroglossia’ (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 262). These social speech types reveal some-things fundamental about the characters in a novel, which are, their social status, sex, ideological inclination, motivation. And the diversity of speech types include: authorial speech, that is, the speech of the author or novelist, another is the speech of the narrators either the first person narrator or the second person; inserted genres, or how other forms of discourse like dialogue as oppose to diegesis which is the conventional pattern of the novel is deployed through the communication exchange as one character holds the floor or arena of discourse and later relinquishes this arena or floor for another character to take over in terms of turn-taking, move and exchange.

An examination of the Nigerian novel

The Nigerian novel is a subset of the African novel. A further delineation circumscribes it into the West African novel. And it important to stress that the African novel according to Chukwuma (2003) is not wholly western (p. xi). Thus, while the Nigerian novel espouses or share similar commonage with other African novels, and the novels of the Americans, Europeans, Asians, in terms of their diegetic flow or cause and effect, it diverges or differs in its capacity to construe the Nigerian experience, represented through the Nigerian socio-cultural context and artistic flavour either in English Language, code-mixed language or other linguistic forms of expression evident in Nigeria. And whether it is written by a Nigerian resident in Nigeria; a Nigerian in diaspora or a non-Nigerian who shares the Nigerian sentiments and is committed to writing about it, the focal concern should be on the thematic preoccupation of the novel as a medium for social engineering. This is important if we consider the role of globalisation in shrinking vast geographical space into a community of people with shared interest. A flurry of texts and authors have emerged in the Nigerian literary space after Nigeria’s independence to establish that literary niche called the Nigerian novel. Some of them are: Achebe’s *Things Fall part* (1976), Nwapa (1989) *Efuru*; Soyinka’s (1980) *Interpreter*; Okri’s (1991) *Famished Road*; and Adichie (2003) *Purple Hibiscus*. They offer the literary artist an opportunity for social participation and which is suggestive of what Udumukwu (2008) articulates as social responsibility.

There is a texture of the Nigerian novel which could be described as the “Nigerian Tradition” according to Nnolim (2009); and it is a stylistic nuance, literary accoutrements which draw inspiration from the oral literature of the Nigerian people (Nnolim, 2009, p. 89). Chukwuma (2003) also reiterate similar view, stressing that the Nigerian novel owes a lot to the oral tradition in terms of form and style which it

adopts (xi). The Nigerian novel draws heavily from this resource and supplements it with modern realities to explore issues about Nigeria. Thus, even as it opens itself to a plethora of interpretations from fields of human endeavours such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, rhetoric, cultural studies, law, linguistics and much more; its eclectic and ubiquitous nature makes it a major literary form for critical endeavor, as it offers new insights which broaden the horizon of its scope.

At the centre of the Nigerian novel is a struggle, which manifests in form of conflict of voices, contesting for space. Voice as used in this essay implies a presence, an existence which is circumscribed in a given spatio-temporal milieu. It is a fundamental constituent of characterisation in the Nigerian literary space, this is because a character is assumed to be developed if it is given a voice of expression, and this voice determines the nature of the characters agency or subjectivity in the linguistic sense. Udumukwu (2015) imbues this voice with a form of power dialectics as he notes that the relationship between the voices in a novel as constructed by the author, or characters is continually contested as dominant voices yield to newer forms (p. 113).

An example of this contest among the voices for space, manifests at the psychological level is in the mind of characters who inhabit the world the novel recreates. In Achebe's (1986) *Arrow of God* this is demonstrated in the scene where Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu, contemplates on what to do to avenge the insult to him by the people of Umuaro. As he thinks about it, the voice of Ulu emerges and subsumes his own voice. Attention should be paid to the fact that this is a psychological manifestation and it exposes the levels of perspectives, consciousness and the source or motivation of utterances or speech types in the text. This manifestation portrays Ezeulu as having two minds which manifest as two voices or consciousness competing for space. Usually, this is expressed in terms of a dilemma. These voices are Ulu's voice which is represented by the boldfaced and the third person narrator. This is evidenced in the excerpt below:

Ezeulu was not allowed to remain in two minds any longer. **"Ta! Nwanu!** Barked Ulu in his ear, as a spirit would in the ear of an impertinent human child. **"Who told you that this was your own fight?"** Ezeulu trembled and said nothing, his gaze lowered to the floor. **I say who told you that this was your own fight to arrange the way it suits you?** (Achebe, p. 191)

From the example above, these two voices competing for the space in the expression above are the narrator's voice and the voice of Ulu. Abram (2005) stresses that such voices are socially entwined as they struggle for space or the narrative position (p. 63).

Critical and theoretical issues

A concern which reverberates in this essay is the term multivoiced-ness, and heteroglossia. Heteroglossia is the manifestation of more than one perspective or views in a text. Bakhtin (1981) notes that this is realised through language as characters interact. And every character has a zone from which he speaks from, this zone or ideological stance informs their language use (p. 320). Heteroglossia also means another speech in another language, or double-voiced discourse internalised in a text and it could be social and even a form of technique like ironic, parodic discourse, and even comic (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 324).

Heteroglossia, Multivoicedness and Multiple consciousnesses are metalanguages or technical terms introduced by Bakhtin (1981) to explain the manner of narration that is evident in the novel. When we say narration, we mean diegesis- how a story is told in such a way that one event or incident leads to another as characters interact (Udumukwu 2007, p. 6-7). This idea is based on the notion that the novel is a discourse, a conversation where characters who inhabit the fictitious world or pseudo-universe attempt to participate in the story-telling. And as the narrative develops, each character takes a position based on the idea they support. For a better understanding of the term, we can compare the novel to a meeting where people are asked to express their opinion. The coordinator of the meeting can be described as the writer or narrator, and each time the coordinator tries to ensure that the meeting is coordinated properly his voice seems to loom larger than others. However, other participants in the meeting are allowed to express their view. These views may conflict with the coordinator's view and may also align with it. Everybody participates in ensuring their voices are heard. Thus, there are many narrators in a novel.

This idea of having more than one narrator in a novel negates the concept of narrative in the traditional approach to the novel which stresses that the narrator could either be a first person, a second

person or a third person narrator (Udumukwu 2007, p. 69-81). Bakhtin's (1981) view exposes the weakness of the above approaches to point-of-view and narratology. From a logical standpoint, it is obvious that though a storyteller may claim to be the one telling the story, in the true sense, he only recounts a story he was told and adds creativity to make it appear as if he/she is the actual story teller. In fact, Bakhtin views contradict the idea of an all-knowing, one-source omniscient-narrator.

And we cannot downplay the importance of language in construing this reality because the medium of expressing thoughts in a novel is through language. Wordsworth (2007) points out that Bakhtin's theory of dialogism which investigates heteroglossia is possible through what Emerson calls "aesthetic distance" which to Viktor Schlovsky is a form of estrangement (p.115). It facilitates writers with the right mental frame and enable them produce novels that have the tension of a drama, the scope of an epic poem, the type of commentary found in an essay, and the imagery and rhythm of a lyric poem. Over the centuries writers have continually experimented with the novel form, and it has constantly evolved in new directions. Multivoicedness or double-consciousness can be explored at the level of the semantic universe or different world view inherent in a novel. We can recall, as stated earlier in this study that the term "voice" implies speech and "multiple" implies that there are more than one speech or voice manifesting at the same time.

An examination of heteroglossia, double consciousness and multivoicedness in Achebe's Arrow of God and Things Fall Apart

We will begin our analysis from Achebe's two novels Arrow of God (1986), and Things Fall Apart (1976). And for the purpose of clarity, we will further explore multivoicedness and double-consciousness from the angles of tradition and modernity. The word tradition could be interchanged for the culture of a people in this study and it means the world view or totality of a people's existence which is reflected in language or speech act and both material and non-material elements like norms, values, customs, and rites-of-passage (Atemie & Girigiri, 2006, p. 1).

Tradition is represented at multiple levels in Arrow of God (1986), we can think of tradition or the world view reflected through discourse in the novel, in terms of the views of the people of Umuaro and Okperi. This manifests as the voice of characters in terms of different perspectives. At the level of characters' voice, we have the voice of Ezeulu, Nwaka, Ezidemili, and at the level of deity we have the voice of Ulu and Idemili subsumed in the voice of their servants Ezeulu and Ezidemili.

At this level, the voices that emerge are the voices championing the ways of life of the people of Umuaro and sometimes, these voices are in conflict. This tradition unfolds on the basis of interaction or conflict among the characters. There is a particular incident where this interaction or voices manifest and it is that scene where they discuss whether to carry the war to Okperi or not.

If we recall the interaction and the nature of the discourse, the manner of representation of this voice fall into what Bakhtin calls the voice of characters and inserted genre. The inserted genre manifests as dialogue. We must note that it is through dialogue that drama achieves its discourse, unlike the prose which realises its process of representation through diegesis. Thus, though, Arrow of God is a novel, there is a genre inserted into it, manifesting as dialogue which allows the characters to express their voice outside the voice of the narrator.

Also, worthy of note is that there is a grand narrator in Arrow of God, but in this scene of dialogue, the voice of the grand narrator is overshadowed often by the perspective of the characters which manifest as the characters through a forceful take-over of the floor expresses their view. We see this from the example below:

I know, my father said this to me that when our village first came here to live the land belonged to Okperi. It was Okperi who gave us a piece of land to live in. they also gave us their deities- their Udo and their Ogwugwu. But they said to our ancestors- mark my words, the people of Okperi said to our fathers: We give you our Udo and our Ogwugwu, but you must call the deity we give you not Udo but the son of Udo, and not Ogwugwu but the son of Ogwugwu. This is the story as I heard it from my father. If you choose to fight a man for a piece of farmland that belongs to him, I shall have no hand in it. (Achebe, 1986, p.15)

Ordinarily, the voice from the excerpt seems to be that of Ezeulu. But it is not just Ezeulu's voice because there are other voices subsumed in the narrative, under the guise of Ezeulu's voice. The voice above is not also, that of the voice of the grand narrator, or that of the author. A careful observation brings to the notice of a reader that the voice is that of Ezeulu's father articulated through Ezeulu.

In the excerpt and it is shown below: **"My father said this to me...** when our village first came here to live the land belonged to Okperi. It was Okperi who gave us a piece of land to live in. they also gave us their deities- their Udo and their Ogwugwu. **This is the story as I heard it from my father** (Achebe, 1986, p.15).

Apart from the fact that the above explanation gives us an insight into whose voice is conveyed through Ezeulu's speech, it cannot be overemphasised that the voice is the voice of Ezeulu's father. Ezeulu's father's voice is not the only voice subsumed in his voice, there is also the voice of the ancestors of Umuaro, manifesting as the voice of the ancestors or **forebears**, in the excerpt, which re-echoes in the narrative. This is evident in the expression below:

They said to our ancestors- **mark my words**, the people of Okperi said to our fathers: We give you our Udo and our Ogwugwu, but **you** must call the deity we give **you** not Udo but the son of Udo, and not Ogwugwu but the son of Ogwugwu. **The people of Okperi said to our fathers....** (Achebe, 1986, p.15)

The excerpt above shows that while it supposedly seems that Ezeulu holds the floor of discourse to speak, there are several other voices which form the layers of the voice of Ezeulu which informed his opinion about life, these are the voices of his father and his father's fathers (ancestors). This is where the concept of double-voice comes to bear, for as a character speaks make utterances, the voices of other individuals re-echoes in his or her speech. This I further demonstrated in the speeches of the protagonist Ezeulu who seems to be the one holding the floor of the arena of discourse, while his mind is an omnibus of several voices.

The speech expresses the consciousness of Ezeulu and the various sources that have influenced it which include: the views of Ezeulu's father and that of his father's fathers, which are subsumed in Ezeulu. But how do we differentiate Ezeulu's voice from that of other voices in the above excerpt since it was Ezeulu who uttered the above expression? What is exhibited in the above excerpt is what Bakhtin calls an indirect speech or manner of speaking, where the voice of a character subsumes in another character's voice and this voice can be identified through the trace element of the person's unique voice accent or mannerism. The clue is obvious in this expression, "Mark my words... This is the story as I heard it from my father. If you choose to fight a man for a piece of farmland that belongs to him, I shall have no hand in it (Achebe, 1986, p.15). The expression **mark my word** draws the attention of the audience to the point where Ezeulu intends to tell them his own opinion, his own stand, which constitutes his voice. And his voice is marked by the expression, **I shall have no hand in it.**

From the above examples, Ezeulu's voice is identified by the use of the pronoun "I" which serves a deictic function of identifying the addresser. Hence, the voices subsumed in Ezeulu's voice are the voice of his father, Ezeulu's voice and the voice of tradition, the voice of the way of life of the people of Umuaro which expresses their world view, their cosmology and even their ontological stance, and justice system couched in this expression that "Ulu does not fight an unjust war" (Achebe, 1986, p. 15). Thus by implication, Ulu is a god of justice. This conclusion is not clearly stated but is implied. After Ezeulu's voice or speech comes the voice or speech of the overall narrator, which is expressed in the view of an observer's perspective:

But Nwaka had carried the day. He was one of the three people, in all the six villages who had taken the highest title in the land, Eru, which was called after the lord of wealth himself. Nwaka came from a long line of prosperous men and from a village which called itself first in Umuaro. (Achebe 1986, p. 15)

However, there is something striking about the overall narrator. This is a lapse in the narrative which indicates that the overall narrator is not an omniscient narrator. As the narrator refers to another narrator in other to sustain the veracity of the narrative. The overall narrator calls this narrator "they" which in the real sense serves the deictic function as the collective voice of the people. "They," said that when the six villages first came together they offered the priesthood of Ulu to the weakest among them to ensure that none in the alliance became too powerful (Achebe, 1986, p.15). This other narrator which the overall narrator refers to, and calls they, is the voice of myth, the voice of the oral tradition of the people of Umuaro, what Carl Jung describes as the collective unconsciousness, and

within this study this constitute the voice of the collective memory, the traditional data bank of the people of Umuaro.

Another excerpt from our analysis is the speech of Nwaka which begins with a traditional mode of entry of the Igbo people:

Umuaro kwenu! Kwenu! Kwezuenu! Wisdom is like a goatskin bag; everyman carries his own. Knowledge of the land is also like that. Ezeulu has told us what his father told him about the olden days. We know that a father does not speak falsely to his son. But we also know that the lore of the land is beyond the knowledge of many fathers. If Ezeulu had spoken about the great deity of Umuaro which he carries and which his fathers carried before him I would have paid attention to his voice. But he speaks about events which are older than Umuaro itself. I shall not be afraid to say neither Ezeulu nor any other in this village can tell us about these events. My father told me a different story. He told me that the people of Okperi were wanderers. He told me three of four different places where they sojourned for a while and moved again. They were driven from Umuofia, then by Abame and Aninta. Would they go today and claim all those sites? Would they have laid claim on our farmland in the days before the white turned us upside down? Elders and Ndichie of Umuaro, let everyone return to his house if we have no heart in the fight. We shall not be the first people who abandoned their farmland or even their homestead to avoid war. (Achebe, 1986, p. 16)

Nwaka speaks to deride or spite Ezeulu's initial statement and to contradict the voices subsumed in Ezeulu's earlier statement. To do this, Nwaka inserts the genre of the proverb in his speech to validate his argument. And this is the voice of wisdom. **Wisdom is like a goatskin bag; everyman carries his own.** Also, the speeches from Nwaka and Ezeulu create a kind of dilemma or conflicting voices in the mind of the people of Umuaro, as there were murmurs of approval and disapproval (from the people of Umuaro) but more of approval from the assembly of elders and men of the title (Achebe, 1986, p. 16).

The views of Ezeulu and Nwaka generate confusion in the mind of the people of Umuaro, such that they are thrown into a dilemma, which manifests as a murmur. At this juncture, it is very important we note that what is known as view-point is predicated on ideology, especially the ideology of the person holding the floor of discourse. This ideology could be used to sway the people and also for personal interest as exhibited by Nwaka. In such situation of conflicting ideology, of dilemma and internal conflict only, the dominant and most emotional appealing ideology prevails.

The next statement by Nwaka does not just complicate the dilemma of the people of Umuaro and cloaked them in a web of indecision, it leaves them weak and indecisive and open to manipulation as he discredits Ezeulu's historicity and speech as false, through the voice of his own father. This is evident as he stresses that what he says also emanates from his father, making it very difficult to discredit his story, because of the respect the Igbo worldview has for the opinion of the elders, talk more of the ancestors. In his words, Nwaka states thus, "My father told me a different story. He told me that the people of Okperi were wanderers. He told me three of four different places where they sojourned for a while and moved again. They were driven from Umuofia, then by Abame, and Aninta" (Achebe, 1986, p. 16). This statement further extends the conflict as it pitched it between the words of Ezeulu's father against that of Nwaka's father. However, there is a note of mischief in Nwaka's earlier speech where he contradict himself by saying that, "I shall not be afraid to say neither Ezeulu nor any other in this village can tell us about these events" (Achebe, 1986, p. 16) for while stressing that no one can actually narrate the authentic incident or event, he presents his father's voice and narrative as the authentic story.

Nwaka's manner of expression in *Arrow of God* (1986) reveals something fundamental about him as an arrogant man who does not value another persons' opinion except that of his. His expression also depicts him as an instigator of conflict with his neighbour as he pushes the people of Umuaro to go to war with Okperi. His voice gives him away as a troublesome person even as he tries to hide under the cloak of a patriot of Umuaro. He stirs the emotion of Umuaro, and he leaves the people of Umuaro with no other option but war by challenging their "manhood" and pride as a brave people, and that only the cowards are scared of war. From the traditional level, the voices inherent in *Arrow of God* from the analysis above are:

1. The voice of the overall narrator
2. The voice of Ezeulu
3. The voice of Nwaka
4. The voice of Ezeulu's father and his father's father

5. The voice of Nwaka's father and the voice of the oral tradition, myth of the people of Umuaro While the genre of proverb and dialogue (drama) are inserted into the narrative, indirect speeches permeate this dialogue notably the speech of Nwaka and Ezeulu. The next analysis of the text is from the semantic universe of modernity to show how multi-voicedness or double consciousness manifest in Arrow of God:

It was five years since Ezeulu promised the white man that he would send one of his sons to church. But it was only two years ago that he fulfilled the promise. He wanted to satisfy himself that the white man had not come for a short visit but to build a house and live. at first, Oduche did not want to go to church. But Ezeulu called him to his Obi and spoke to him as a man would speak to his best friend and the boy went forth with pride in his heart. He had never heard his father speak to anyone as an equal.

The world is changing. I do not like it. But I am like the bird Eneke-nti-oba. When his friends asked him why he was always on the wings he replied: men of today have learnt to shoot without missing and so I have learnt to fly without perching." I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eyes 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. (Achebe, 1986, p. 45-46)

The excerpt above represents the voice of modernity. By modernity, we mean the voice of change associated with newness. The advent of the white man brought change to Umuaro. This change manifests as a new religion, new government etc. Ezeulu promises the white man that he will send one of his sons to learn the ways of the white man. We must note that Ezeulu, is the custodian of the tradition of the people of Umuaro and he is bound by necessity to uphold and sustain this tradition. But his action is on the contrary and contradicts what he represents as the custodian of the tradition of his people as he sends Oduche to learn the white man's ways. The voice of modernity manifests in terms of indirect speech act or a way of signalling his interest in the white man's religion. From the above excerpt, we can extract several voices and the first is the voice of the overall narrator who tells us of Ezeulu's promise to the white man.

It was five years since Ezeulu promised the white man that he would send one of his sons to church. But it was only two years ago that he fulfilled the promise. He wanted to satisfy himself that the white man had not come for a short visit but to build a house and live. at first, Oduche did not want to go to church. But Ezeulu called him to his Obi and spoke to him as a man would speak to his best friend and the boy went forth with pride in his heart. He had never heard his father speak to anyone as an equal. (Achebe, 1986, p. 45)

Underneath the grand narrator's voice is the voice of Ezeulu, and why he made the promise.

The world is changing. I do not like it. But I am like the bird Eneke-nti-oba. I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eyes 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. (Achebe, 1986, p. 45)

Ezeulu thus prepares himself for modernity or change, even though he represents the traditional system and its view. And underneath Ezeulu's voice is the voice of Eneke-nti-oba, the bird, which is subsumed in his voice and constitutes multiple voices, a double voice. Which is the voice of other persons other than the self, "Men of today have learnt to shoot without missing and so I have learnt to fly without perching" (Achebe, 1986, p. 16).

Another voice noted in the excerpt is the voice of Ezeulu's spirits, an inner self, different from the physical Ezeulu. This may be the voice of his alter ego, because he accepts this voice as the voice of his spirit and it is a part of Ezeulu's self which is not visible. This is proven below, "My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying had we knew tomorrow" ((Achebe, 1986, p. 46). The alter ego or Other-self also manifests in *Things fall Apart*, as Okonkwo comes back from the murder of Ikemefuna. The voice of his alter ego emerges and speaks to him which is also the voice of Okonkwo's Other-self, "When did you become a shivering woman,' Okonkwo asked himself, 'you are known in all the nine villages for your valour in war? How can a man who has killed five men in a battle fall to pieces because he added a boy to their number? (Achebe, 1976, p. 45).

Okonkwo has two Selves: one ruled by fear, and another ruled by his relation to other people as a social being. It is his inner Self that dictates his relations with other people within his sphere of existence. This inner Self (fear), ruled Okonkwo's life and also directed the accent of his voice until his death. The voice of his inner self-articulates his hatred for whatever assumes a nature of weakness, and he would not want to be associated with it for it makes one to be described as weak and womanly. This informs all he does and how he treats his fellow men as shown from this example:

Only a week ago a man had contradicted him at a kindred meeting which they held to discuss the next ancestral feast. Without looking at the man Okonkwo had said; 'This meeting is for men.' The man who had contradicted him had no title. That was why he had called him a woman. (Achebe, 1976, p 19)

In another instance, we see this manifest during the journey with his kinsmen to sacrifice Ikemefuna:

As the man who had cleared his throat drew up and raised his machete, Okonkwo looked away. He heard the blow. The pot fell and broke in the sand. He heard Ikemefuna cry, "Father, they have killed me!" as he ran towards him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak. (Achebe, 1976, p. 43)

It is worthy to mention that it is the character's (Okonkwo) paranoia and fear that leads to his suicide. It circumscribed his relationship with other characters in constant conflict and opposition and defined his existence as one who is never really in peace. Thus, fear fashioned out for Okonkwo his existence and life for while he could have tamed man, and woman, he could not tame his fear nor the dictates of his alter ego. This in spite of the fact that he is described a man of substance, means and high social standing. From the analysis above, it is obvious he exhibits traces of insecurity, bully and the need to assert himself through forceful means. In fact, his suicide was an act of arrogance, and obsessive hubris borne out of insecurity, and his communication deficiency. As he could not engage in meaningful dialogue, but brute force and violence in resolving conflict. In fact, Unoka, his father seems a man of well controlled emotion than he is.

Conclusion

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1976) and *Arrow of God* (1986) will continue to attract critical attentions and new interpretations in scholarship. This is because of their texture as canons of literature. The notion of a canon as used in this essay is that of Guillory John's (1990) who stressed that a canon is the feature of a work of literature which "over successive generations, readers continue to affirm a judgement of greatness, to it, almost as though each generation actually judged anew the quality of the work" (p. 236). Another crucial reason is the literary status of Achebe within the Nigerian literary space. Chukwuma (2003) quoting Nnolim acknowledged that he is the progenitor of the great tradition of the Nigerian novel" (p. vii).

What makes Achebe's novel stand out is their polyphonic nature. The novels are composed of several equally balanced voices or multivoiced-ness as a feature, rather than taking them as a single point of view expressed by one omniscient author. And like Harold Bloom, the progenitor of the concept of "anxiety of influence", the choice of selection of these texts is based on their sublimity and representational nature (Bloom, 1994, p. 2). This is because they reflect Achebe's creative essence, dexterity and conscious manoeuvre of the repertoires of rhetoric. For an artist like Achebe, heteroglossia, multivoicedness or double consciousness as discussed in this essay are foci signatures of his artistry and a dominant pattern of his discourse style.

The aforementioned have serious implications particularly in Nigerian literature and African/ world literature in a wider context, at the level of style and thematic issues it raises. Heteroglossia is a more-democratic stylistic form of writing and it enriches the novel as a genre, instead of a one-dimensional first-person narrative. It also highlights the discourse formation pattern in African narrative, spiced with proverbs, idioms, indirections. This a unique style which could be described as Achebean. Achebe's manner of writing has also influenced the writings of future generation of African writers notably Chimamanda Adichie as it constitutes a part of Adichie's evolutionary development and experience as a writer (Eisenberg, 2013, p., 10). There are also other group of scholars who cut their literary teeth as they follow in the footsteps of Achebe by their aesthetic organisation of their art through the imitation of *Things Fall Apart* (1976). Nnolim (2009) contends that these "writers were so fascinated with the

subject matter and technique which Achebe so admirably perfected that they set out to consciously or unconsciously imitate him" (p. 203). Nnolim's (2009) list of these writers are:

John Munoye (*The Only Son, Obi, A Wreath for Maidens, Bridge to Wedding*); Elechi Amadi (*The Concubine, The Slave, The Great Ponds*); Onuorah Nzekwu (*Wand of Noble Wood, Blade Among the Boys*); T. M. Aluko (*One Man, One Wife, One Man, One Matchet, Chief the Honourable Minister*); Flora Nwapa (*Efuru, Idu*), are writers that must be identified as "sons" of Achebe in more ways than one (p. 204).

While outside Nigeria, other writers who imitate Achebe are Ngugi and Armah in terms of archetypal narrative (Nnolim, 2009, p. 203). Another writer whose work reflected an influence by Achebe's aesthetic and narrative design is Okri's (1991) *Famished Road*. Achebe's influence on these writers involves the use of rich anecdote and proverbs and the ability to infuse myths, beliefs, cultural practices into literature. The infusion of myth can be used to make history come alive like what Osofisan (1982) did with the Titubi myth in recreating the historical reality- Agbekoya farmers' revolt in the play *Morountodun* (1982).

At the national life of a nation like Nigeria, Achebe's novels illuminate the need for self-evaluation and a people centred or oriented leadership in terms of the democratisation of communication. The major characters in *Arrow of God* (1986) and *Things Fall Apart* (1976) Ezeulu and Okonkwo displayed inefficiency in communication skills which was made more difficult by their vindictive and temperamental nature. And as social influences or opinion makers, their actions adversely affected their people in the long run. Thus, when opinion makers, social influencers are more open in their discussion, and allows a discourse formation strategy that encourages sincere participation, it will help curb or checkmate conflict and promote a healthy society or nation in the long run.

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