PTE YEAR II

GRAMMAR II

THE VERB GROUP

VERBS

Verbs refers the action or a state of being. Eg

- Kevin walked home (walked is a verb expressing action)
- Wesley is a good boy (is – is a verb expressing a state of being)

FORMS OF THE VERBS

I) The infinitive – is a grammartical mood or mode of verbs.

The infinitive is a form of a verb before a tense is attached to it. It is not limited to tense or time.

a) The to- infinitive

"to-" infinitive form of a verb is the form of a verb which starts with the word "to" eg

To break to turn to build to do

To bite to cut to become to be

To have to wake

N/B: The only difference btn the infinitive form and the base form is that the infinitive form is preceeded by the word to

b) The bare infinitive

It does not take the word "to" in front of the verb. Eg I will dance to the tune

I heard him talk to the Director

Kevin may come to the field

II) The Participle

Is a form of a verb that modifies the noun and therefore it plays the role of an adjective in a sentence.

There are two types of participle ie. i) Present participle

ii) past participle

i) Past participle

Verbals in the present participle ends in –ed or –en for regular verbs.

eg requested played danced cooked swollen beaten etc

examples in sentences

1. I played football
2. Arsenal was beaten by Barcelona
3. He has a swollen leg
4. I was caught in a trap

Participles are used as:

i) Verbs form egThe dog is running down the road.

I had forgotten to lock the door.

ii) Adjectives form: the broken pipe was repaired

The smocking lorry obstructed us.

iii) Adverbs forms: the baby awoke crying

After reading he decided to write.

After losing he got bored.

iv) Clauses forms: the school, destroyed by arsonists, has never recovered

Most of the children, looking at the sky, did not see the teacher

ii) Present participle

verbals in the present participle end in a gerund (-ing) eg cooking, playing, swimming etc

Examples in sentences.

I) Cooking is her hobby.

II) Keeping a promise is not easy.

III) You saying such things is a surprise to us.

VERB GROUPS.

What is the VG? The verbal element of the sentence: You can drive my car;

She has gone to Exeter for the weekend.

The VG is the morphological unit which realizes the Predicator element in the sentence.

The term "verb" refers to some classes of words with certain morphosyntacticcharacteristics, one of which is their ability to function as elements

of the VG.

Structure of the Verb Group:

Syntactically: Head + Dependents --> Aux. elem. + Main Verb

Morphologically:

Main Verb:

Realization: the verb in its base form

Function: bearer of semantic content of VG (state, action,process)

Auxiliary Element:

Realization:

0 + Head: They play football here.

Inflectional morpheme -ed1 + Head : They played...

Auxiliary verb + Head: They may play football here

Aux. verb + inflectional morpheme (-ed2/-ing)+ Head:

They have played ...

Aux. verbs + inflectional morphemes (-ed2/-ing)+ Head:

They may have been playing...

Function: to modify the main verb with some semanticcontributions: tense, mood, phase, aspect and voice.

Some important distinctions should be established now:

1**. Main verb** is a function (head) within the VG.

2**. Lexical verb** is a class of verbs with certain specific features, different from auxiliaryverbs.

3. **Auxiliary element** is another functional constituent of the VG

4. **Auxiliary verbs**is a class of verbs with certain morphosyntactic features.

The Main verb is a simple element, always formed by the base form of theverb, which functions as the head of the VG. There must be only one in the VG and itis always the last element.

The Auxiliary element is a combination of five modifications, which are, in fixedorder: {Tense}, {Mood}, {Phase}, {Aspect}, {Voice}.

Tense makes a VG be remote, if marked with the -ed1 morpheme in the initialverb

form (They play-ed) or non-remote, unmarked (They play).

Mood can make it modal if marked with a modal verb (They will play) or nonmodalif no modal verb appears.

A VG can be phased (Phase modification) if marked with the combination"have + -ed2" (They have play-ed) or non-phased if it is unmarked.

Aspect makes a VG be progressive if marked with the combination "be + -ing"

(They are play-ing) or non-progressive if unmarked.

Finally, voice makes the VG passive/voiced if marked with the combination "be+ -ed2" (They are interview-ed) and non-passive/non-voiced if unmarked.

We should comment on some other modifications such as number andperson. Classical languages, such as Latin, and some modern ones, such as Frenchor Spanish, have morphological distinctions for these modifications, but Englishlanguage has no such distinctions.

However, we have some vestige of person in the irregular verb "be". In the non remote tense there are first, second and third person (am/are/is); in the non-remote tense there is a distinction between 1st and 3rd person (was) against the rest(you/we/you/they were). About the category of number, the only inflectional morpheme is the "-s" of the singular non-remote tense (come-s/come).

Another very important distinction is that of Tensed and Non-tensed VG.

The difference between them is that Tensed VGs have no restriction on verb modifications, but Non-tensed VGS have a main restriction, they never can take tense: Play-ed is remote tense, to play is neither remote nor non-remote, because It actually has no tense.

In I want to go to Madrid in June it refers to the future; in She would have liked to go but it was impossible, it refers to the past; and in He has to go now it refers to the present. Apart from tense, mood is also affected by the quality of being non-tensed, because modal verbs cannot appear with these non-tensed VGs. About the rest of the modifications there is certain freedom, and Phase, Aspect and Voice can be used with non-tensed VGS.

There are three types of non-tensed VGs: the infinitive VG, either with the particle "to" or without it, the -ing VG and the -ed2 VG. None of them can function as

Predicator of independent sentences, but other functions are open to them:

Here are some examples:

Infinitive clauses:

Subject: To smoke like hat may be dangerous.

Od: I don't like to be hated by people.

A (purpose/result): To have lost his way, he must have been very careless.

Complement in NGs: He is the man to follow.

-Ing clauses:

S: Having to wait for three years deprived him of his title.

Co: I hate anyone listening while I'm telephoning.

A (time/cause/condition): Having been found out, he tried to escape.

-Ed clauses

Od: The genial smile seemed painted on his face.

A (time/cause/condition): Admirably written, it's a good book on English history.

Types of Auxiliary verbs:

-We two major categories of aux verbs ie the primary and modal auxiliary verbs.

-They are sub divided into further groups as follows:

1**. Primary auxiliary verbs**: BE and HAVE. They are used to express aspect

-Progressive modification: He is cooking

- Voice

Passive modification: The room is repainted every year.

Phase modification : He has arrived early.

2. Pro-auxiliary DO: Dummy operator, always followed by the base form of the verb, does not combine with any other auxiliaries (*He does not may come today).

3. Central modal verbs: CAN, MAY, SHALL, WILL, MUST and OUGHT TO.

They express mood modification. They do not have singular non-remote inflection -s.

4. Semi-auxiliary verbs: USED TO (followed by an infinitive; no non-remote form), BE TO and BE GOING TO ("Be to" always in non-remote form), HAVE (GOT) TO, HAD BETTER, KEEP -ING (idea of continuation) and GET -ED2 (voice marker, idea of change).

English verb modification:

TENSE:

- Grammatical category realized by means of inflections (-ed1) attached to first form in VG.

- It expresses:

a. time of event

b. time of speaking

c. the speaker's perspective

- Remote (-ed1): the speaker locates the event as something distant.

- Non-remote: the event is located as something close to the speaker.

PHASE:

- Phased (have + inflectional morpheme -ed2): The event has two points

of reference because it is either anterior to some point of reference or of continuing relevance from a point to another.

- Non-phased: The event has only one point of reference.

ASPECT:

- Progressive (be/keep + -ing): the action is seen as in the middle of its process.

- Non-progressive: the action is seen as a whole.

VOICE:

- Passive (be/get + -ed2): The speaker focuses on a different part of the sentence**.**

- Non-passive: The speaker uses the non-marked word order.

- Voice is a marginal category in the English VG, which presents someconstraints because it is limited to transitive verbs.

MOOD:

- Modal: They express statements depending on the speaker's attitudes,being them prediction, obligation, desire and permission.

- Non-modal: They present the simple statement of facts.

English verb conjugation is based on these five modifications. A verb form isthe result of the combination of either the unmarked or the marked forms of the fivemodifications. Furthermore, all the modifications are equally important because theyare the means that a speaker uses to express him or herself.

TENSE, PHASE and ASPECT

Present Simple:

Being not formally marked by any modification makes it the most neutral form and the one with the widest range of uses.

- Timeless reference (no specific temporal reference):

- Universal general truths: The Earth revolves around the Sun.

- Habitual occurrences (normally adverbial expressions needed): They usually play chess every Sunday.

- Present time reference, to express actions, events and states that have current relevance, e.g., instructions or explanations: You open the box removing the lid...

- Actions which cannot be seen in the middle of their process:

- Verbs of feelings/emotions: like, dislike,...

- Verbs of opinion/believing: doubt, forget, know,...

- Verbs of perceptions of senses: hear, feel, taste,...

- Verbs of possession: belong, own, have,...

- "Being" and "Seeming": appear, look, cost,...

- Other verbs: matter, continue, deserve, require, owe,...

- Future time reference: The future action is considered so close that it is included within the speaker's present perspective.

- In dependent clauses: If-clauses, nominal clauses after "care, matter, hope,..", adverbial time/concessive/manner clauses, adjectival relative clauses.

- In independent clauses:

- Immutable events (on calendar/activities already fixed)

- Plans and arrangements (very definite and closed, it expresses formality)

- Past time reference:

- To express vividness/immediacy, it may be either extremely colloquial or very formal.

- Verbs of communication in conversations or letter-writing.

Present Progressive:

Marked with the be -ing combination, the modification adds the meaning of "action-in -the-middle-of-its-process"

- **Present time reference:**

- Action in progress at the time of speaking (normally not finished).

- The ideas "Present simple = habitual action" and "Present Progressive = current action" are not part of the meaning of the verbs, rather it is contextualization the deciding factor.

- Future time reference (adverbial/contextual specification always needed):

- Unfinished action already started

- Plans or arrangement (present simple is too formal).

- **Past time reference:**

- To express vividness and/or immediacy in formal writing or informalconversation: "Three weeks ago, I'm walking along the street when a man comes to me and..."

- Timeless reference:

- Frequent actions (adverbial required) expressed in an emphatic subjective form.

Sometimes used to express annoyance, disapproval or surprise or the contrary.

Past Simple:

Marked with the -ed1 inflection, the action or event is seen as remote from the speaker's perspective.

- Past time reference:

- Actions occurred in the past, usually finished.

- With some adverbials, the idea of "frequency of occurrence" is added to the verb.

- Future time reference:

- Future-in-the-past: the event is future in relation to another past point "Ben asked him to hurry because his plane left at 5"

- Hypothetical reference, idea of counter factuality: With linkers "if/as if/ifonly/I wish/it's time". The proposition has the value of being remote from actual or future realization (distancing effect).

- Present time reference:

- It is called the attitudinal past because it is used to express the speaker's attitude, for instance, in requests, to make them more distant, formal and polite: "I wanted to ask you something"

Past Progressive:

Marked with the combination be -ing (action-in-the-middle-of-its-process) and the -ed1 inflection (remote).

- Past time reference:

- Usually frame for a shorter action: "I was having a bath when the phone rang"

- Also in past descriptive narrative contexts: "The sun was rising. Cars were already moving along the streets..."

- Habitual reference with adverbial/contextual specification: marked emphatic subjective information, either negative or positive.

- Future-in-the-past reference: Hypothetical clauses, idea of counterfactuality.

- Present time reference:

- Attitudinal past progressive: polite requests with present reference.

Present Perfect Simple:

Marked with the have -ed2 combination, it expresses that there are two points of reference, one of them is anterior, when the action began to take place, the other one

is posterior, included in the speaker's present perspective and still relevant.

- Present time reference:

- It links the past point (beginning of the action) with the present point, when the action is still relevant.

- The action may still be relevant either because it continues up to the moment of speaking (continuative perfect) or because the result of the past action is relevant at the time of speaking (resultative perfect) or because the action is a habit continuing from the past up to the moment of speaking (habitual perfect).

- Past time reference:

- To refer to some indefinite happening occurred in he past: Have you been to America?

- Future time reference with adverbial future time clauses: "Wait till I have finished"

Present Perfect Progressive :

Marked with the have -ed2 combination (two points of relevance) and the be - ing combination (action-in-the-middle-of-its-process).

- **Present time reference:**

- It links an action presented in the middle of its process, occurred or began in the past, with a present point to which the action is relevant. It may be a continuative, resultative or habitual perfect, as above.

- Past time reference:

- Contexts which refer to some indefinite action prior to the speaker's present perspective.

The Semantic of Modal verbs

Two types of modality:

- Knowledge modality: Predictions about the truth of some fact.

- Influence modality: Necessity or possibility of an action being influenced by the speaker or the circumstances.

Knowledge Modality:

They are concerned with the truth value of propositions. They establish a classification in terms of possibility and necessity. These two poles can then be a conjecture or a deduction; then these ones can be either neutral or tentative.

- **Neutral possibility:** CAN (deduction) and MAY (conjecture, guess-work)

Can as "capacity" or "ability": prediction of qualities inherent in person involved; the idea of capacity/ability is included in the main verb, not in the modal aux.

- Tentative possibility: COULD (deduction) or MIGHT (conjecture); they aremore hypothetical and hesitant predictions.

- Neutral necessity: MUST (deduction) and WILL (conjecture)

SHALL is a formal variant of WILL.

BE GOING TO is interchangeable with WILL in many contexts;stylistically, it is more colloquial; semantically, it represents the ideas of certainty, inevitability and imminence.

HAVE (GOT) TO is equivalent to MUST (BrE HAVE GOT TO, AmeHAVE TO)

IS TO expresses certainty, inevitable events; it is quite formal (for instance, to announce formal arrangements or public duties).

- Tentative necessity: Remote forms of modals in neutral necessity.

WOULD (conjecture) expresses a tentative prediction; it is used either with past prediction or with present tentative prediction.

SHOULD is the formal first person variant, but it is mainly used as the remote form of MUST.

So, it expresses a weaker element of necessitythan MUST.

OUGHT TO is the alternative to SHOULD, which is more frequent.

Influence modality: Necessity or possibility of an action being influenced by the speaker or the circumstances.

There are three semantic fields: Obligation, Desire and Permission.

Obligation:

IS TO: strong obligation, formal register, authority of speaker over addressee.

HAVE (GOT) TO: Strong, external obligation (circumstances compel)

MUST: Strong obligation, either because of the authority of the speaker or because of some external obligation.

NEED: Impersonal obligation because of some physical or intellectual requirement.

Desire:

Volition:

SHALL: Strong determination, formal register.

WILL: "Be inclined or prepared to"

WOULD: Polite requests

BE GOING TO: Present decision or intention to act; it is more colloquial than SHALL

and WILL.

Advice:

SHOULD and OUGHT TO: Soft, polite obligation; there is evenan option of not fulfilling the obligation; SHOULD is morefrequent.

HAD BETTER: Fairly strong advice about the best course of action; implication of unpleasant consequences.

Permission:

MAY and CAN: They serve to ask for and give permission; may is more formal.

MIGHT and COULD: They serve only to seek permission;

COULD is more frequent.

The Passive Voice

Semantically, the speaker is not interested in how an agent performs an action, but in how an object is affected by a certain process.

Formally, it is created by the addition of the combination of the Auxiliary verb BE + the -ed2 inflectional morpheme to the main verb.

Syntactically, it is a transformational process in which the subject of the ative sentence becomes the passive by-agent, and the active subject becomes the passive subject.

Regular and Irregular Verbs

In English there are two main types of verbs: regular and irregular verbs.

Regular verbs are those to which –ed is added to for the simple past and the past

Participle:

I counted my books last month – I have two.

I have counted my books again– I still have two.

The –ed forms of regular verbs have three pronunciations:

a. /i/ after verbs ending in /d/ or /t/:

a. pat – patted /-tid/

b. /d/ after verbs ending in voiced sounds other than /d/, that is, vowels, nasals, voiced sibilants, /b/ and /g/:

a. call – called

c. /t/ after verbs ending in voiceless sounds other than /t/, that is, /p/ and /k/:

a. pass – passed

The spelling of regular verb inflection:

Doubling of consonant before –ing and –ed:

A single consonant letter at the end of the verb is doubled before –ing and –ed when the preceding vowel is stressed and spelled with a single letter:

Bar – barring – barred

The only exceptions in BrE are travel (travelled), program (programmed) and worship, handicap and kidnap (worshipped).

Deletion of and addition of –e

If the verb ends in an unpronounced –e, this –e is normally lost before –ing and –ed.

Before the –s ending, an –e is added after the following letters, representing sibilant consonants:

Pass – watch – buzz – wash – coax

An –e is added after –o in go, go, echo and veto.

Treatment of –y

In verbs ending in a consonant followed by –y, the following changes take place:

a. –y changes to –ie- before –s: carry – carries

b. –y changes to “i” before –ed: carry – carried

The –y remains, however, where it follows a vowel letter: stay – stayed.

A different spelling change occurs in verbs whose bases end in –ie:

Die – dying, lie – lying.

Irregular verbs are all those which do not follow the rule above.

There are several types:

1. Those which do not change:

1.1. Cost

1.2. Cut

1.3. Hit

1.4. Hurt

1.5. Let

1.6. Put

1.7. Shut

2. Those which change the vowel sound:

2.1. Become

2.2. Begin

2.3. Come

2.4. Drink

2.5. Find

2.6. Get

2.7. Hold

2.8. Light

2.9. Meet

2.10. Read*

2.11. Ring

2.12. Run

2.13. Shine

2.14. Shoot

2.15. Sing

2.16. Sit

2.17. Stand

2.18. Swim

2.19. Understand

2.20. Win

3. Those which end in “-ought”:

3.1. Bring

3.2. Buy

3.3. Catch

3.4. Fight

3.5. Teach

3.6. Think

4. Those which end in “-t”

4.1. Build

4.2. Feel

4.3. Keep

4.4. Leave

4.5. Lend

4.6. Lose

4.7. Mean

4.8. Send

4.9. Sleep

4.10. Spend

5. Those which end in “-d”

5.1. Have

5.2. Hear

5.3. Make

5.4. Pay

5.5. Say

5.6. Sell

5.7. Tell

6. Those whose past participle end in “–en” or in “-n”:

6.1. Beat

6.2. Bite

6.3. Blow

6.4. Break

6.5. Choose

6.6. Do

6.7. Draw

6.8. Drive

6.9. Eat

6.10. Fall

6.11. Fly

6.12. Forget

6.13. Give

6.14. Go

6.15. Grow

6.16. Hide

6.17. Know

6.18. Lie

6.19. Ride

6.20. Rise

6.21. See

6.22. Show

6.23. Speak

6.24. Steal

6.25. Take

6.26. Tear

6.27. Throw

6.28. Wake

6.29. Wear

6.30. Write

The verb “be” is a bit special: BE/am/is/are – was/were – been

The following verbs can be regular or irregular:

Burn: burned or burnt

Dream: dreamed or dreamt

Learn: learned or learnt

Smell: smelled or smelt

Activities

1. Identify the modifications present in the following verb groups and explain their uses.

1. The Earth revolves around the Sun.

2. Snow fell throughout the day on London.

3. They have gone ahead with the project.

4. She is digging in search of an ancient bracelet.

5. We had been cooking for three hours before their arrival.

6. I wanted to ask you something now.

7. Have you ever been to America?

8. My child is always playing with her computer.

9. He has been working hard for the money since October.

10. The fast-ferry was crossing the Straits of Gibraltar early in the morning.

2. What do the following modal verbs add to the meaning of the verb group?

· They will not wait for us more than ten minutes.

· He must be mistaken about his daughter's age.

· You can't be so cheeky to say that.

· Ben should take two tablets every day.

· There may be a traffic jam on the motorway this afternoon.

· I must have the baby vaccinated today.

· They ought to be silent while the pianist is playing.

· He will telephone us immediately if he can.

· With their fast patrol-boats, the police can capture drug-traffickers operating in the Straits.

· Prices may go up while everyone is on holiday.

3. All the underlined VPs are wrong. Explain why and write the correct form of the VP (1.5 points).

· Jenny has left school in 1981.

· The moon is going round the earth.

· Are you believing in God?

· Have you seen the news on television last night?

· Can you hear those people? What do they talk about?

· The Chinese have invented printing.

· Bob is a friend of mine. I know him for a long time.

· I like your house. How long are you living there?

· My mother said to me that my boyfriend was having an accident and he stayed in the General Hospital.

· It seems difficult to think that I had been arrived here two weeks ago.

LITERATURE.

GODS ARE NOT TO BE BLAMED BY CHINUA ACHEBE.

MAJOR THEMES ANALYSIS.

THE POWER OF UNKNOWN.

ABSTRACT: *Chinua Achebe's fourth novel, Arrow of God, is a harrowing story of traumatic change in which a traditional society loses its cultural identity under pressures internal and external. Critical discussions have tended to focus on meddling by the colonialists and the character and decisions of the protagonist. The impression of facticity is strong throughout, and the result is that the text has generally been taken at that level. This paper applies the psychoanalytic concept of the unknown in exploring the text to try and uncover underlying patterns of significance. That would enable us to see the dimensions and far-reaching implications of the action of this novel and the depths of a many-sided protagonist who is probably the most fascinating of Achebe's characters.*
KEYWORDS: *change, desire, power, proverb, struggle, sympathy, the unknown,the unconscious.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In this study of Chinua Achebe‟s *Arrow of God,* there is a sense of an account of how things have gone wrong in a previously ordered and harmonious traditional society. He writes: The forces working against tradition seem already entrenched in the Umuaro of *Arrow of God*: The local school and mission station, irreverent strangers like the catechist Good country, and the inarticulate though palpable reality of the white man‟s administrative presence, all these have undermined traditional confidence and shaken the sense of common purpose and solidarity which in the past constituted the spirit of traditionalism (233). Others have focused some what away from the system and explored the actions, decisions, and motivations of the protagonist, Ezeulu and their implications for the survival of the cultural ways of Umuaro. For instance, Mahood calls it „a story of frustration and of the suicidal defiance which is an individual way of escape from that frustration‟ and „also a story of resilience‟ (1978: 204), while in Masagbor and Akhuemokhan (2005), it is through the fall of Ezeulu who is at the beginning indisputably the thriving priest of an equally thriving culture‟ that Achebe presents the demise of the culture of Umuaro (67-69).In this paper, we bring the psychoanalytic concept of „the unknown‟ to bear on *Arrow of God* to see to what extent it provides new insights into the character and action and enhances the analysis of metaphors and certain linguistic usages like proverbs so as to enable the text „to spring back into life‟ (Ricoeur 2003: 223). „The unknown‟ is probably what Jacques Derrida would call a non-concept, since it is not definable using positive terms. In general, its field of signification embraces everything not known. In psychoanalysis, it has a hinge function; yet psychoanalysis says very little directly about it. This function in shaping the individual mental life was recognized from the very beginning, and the term is present in Freud, but it is in the work of Jacques Lacan that we have a fairly clear sense of its role in that realm. As Lacan puts it, Finally, on the level of objectification or of the object, the known and the unknown are in opposition. It is because that which is known can only be known in words that which is unknown offers itself as having a linguistic structure. This allows us to ask again the question of what is involved at the level of the subject (1981: 33). The unknown is pertinent to the study of literature for exactly the same reasons that it is of concern in psychoanalysis, namely that it has a linguistic structure, has a role to play in the formation of the subject and seems to be involved in his self-understanding and identity as well as his defining traits. It also has to do with action orientations. It remains elusive at the level of objectification; yet the inner life of the individual is quite impossible to analyze without it. At the same time, it operates as a blind spot beyond all knowing: all analysis comes back finally to it while itself remaining gun analyzable. This is what is at stake in Freuds metaphor of the navel, which arises in his study of dreams: And even Freud, a propos of the Irma dream, suggests a depth in human beings beyond their ken. „There is at least one spot in every dream at which it is unplumbable – a navel, as it were, that is its point of *The Power of the Unknown* contact with the unknown‟ []. Lacan, commenting, describes this as a point „ungraspable in the phenomenon, the point where there arises the relation of the subject to the symbolic. What I call Being is this last word, which is not accessible to us, certainly, in the scientific stance [position] but the direction of which is indicated in the phenomena of our experience‟[ ]. Is it possible to think of this „unknown,‟„ungraspable‟ depth, then, as the Being of the subject? If so, then the

subject's want of signifiers in order to remain a subject may be simply its want-to-be, its being-in-want. But „want-to-be‟(manque a etre) is Lacan's formula for desire (Kristeva 72). In Arrow of God Ezeulu is the character whose decisions influence the action in its main outlines. It is in these decisions that the unknown mainly functions; and the key to its functioning lies in what that character wants to be of which he is unconscious. His dreams and fantasies, his slips of the tongue can all give us access to his unconscious, which „is simply another name for symbolic knowledge insofar as it is an „unknown knowledge‟, a knowledge which the subject doesnot know he knows‟ (Evans 1996: 96); similarly, his proverbs and figures of speech, in which, according to Paul Ricoeur, „all has already been said in enigma‟ (1974: 288).This study, however, will be incomplete without exploring the dimension of the unknown which Fredric Jameson associates with the text itself in The Political Unconscious (1981). In this account, what the text „wants to be‟ is an input in „the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity‟ (19). We shall then see that what Arrow of God wants is in fundamental opposition to that of the protagonist, who is moved at a mystic moment to refer to himself as an „arrow‟ in the bow of his deity; in other words, we really are dealing with anarrative of which the fundamental values are mutually opposed.

II. WHAT EZEULU WANTS TO BE

Umuofia of Things Fall Apart and Umuaro of Arrow of God are both traditional societies, but they function in profoundly different ways. In Umuofia, there is no single individual with power to make decisions capable of affecting the whole community. Instead there is an invisible senate which makes the decisions, for instance, about war and peace. It is alluded to in the opening scenes where an outrage has been committed against a citizen of Umuaro by someone in Mbaino and the elders meet to discuss the matter. But instead of an open discussion by the elders, we read that „Ogbuefi Ezeugo was a powerful orator and was always chosen to speak on such occasions‟ (Things Fall Apart 3). We do not see who has chosen him to speak, since the narrator‟s passive form seems to connive at the implied rule of silence over the identity and constitution of this senate. But Ogbuefi Ezeugo‟s speech shows that the matter had been discussed elsewhere and a decision made as to what to do. His task is to guide the congress of elders to accept and take responsibility for this decision.A select senate of men of high title does make an appearance in Arrow of God, who have the privilege of being called „Umuaro‟ (208), the rareness of this event suggesting that Umuaro has „reached the very end of things‟. Here however they seem to carry no more than a moral authority which can be set aside as circumstances may demand. The forum of political decisions is the congress of elders which, however, is polarized and fractious. In this power vacuum, some of Ezeulu‟schoices and decisions on issues of public interest, though made for private and personal reasons, are having far-reaching consequences for the entire clan. The essential role of his deity in the founding and continuation of the town may have something to do with this. The institution of the deity is narrated as follows: soldiers of Abam used to strike in the dead of night, set fire to 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. Half of the medicine was buried at a place which became Nkwo market and the other half thrown into the stream which became Mili Ulu. The six villages then took the name of Umuaro, and the priest of Ulu became their Chief Priest. From that day they were never again beaten by an enemy. Ezeulu, therefore, has a high profile as a public figure and cultural leader. He is also influential in the congress of elders because of his formidable oratorical skills. In this forum, however, decision appears to be by consensus. But Umuaro is divided, as he notes in his ruminations in the opening scenes, and he is not able to forge a consensus around any of the issues he espouses.

In this narrative, there is a certain ebb and flow of allegiances by reason of the priest‟s choices and decisions, corresponding to turns and twists and shifts in narrative focus, with repositioning of protagonists and complications in the action. These decisions are firstly, his refusal to back the war against Okperi (chapter 2) and giving a true account of the events, according to Captain Winterbottom (chapter 3) or according to his antagonist, Ogbuefi Nwaka, serving as „the white man‟s witness that year we fought for our land – and lost‟ (chapter 13).The second is his decision to send his son to the white man‟s school – to be *his eyes* in the white man‟s camp(chapter 16) or according to the rest of Umuaro, including his closest friend, „to join in desecrating the land‟ (chapter 12). The third is his refusal of the warrant chieftaincy offered him by the colonial administration – for according to him,„Ezeulu will not be anybody‟s chief, except Ulu‟ (chapter 14). In disbelief, his enemies ask, „How could he refuse the very thing he had been planning and scheming for all these years?‟ But Nwaka turns the amazing story to his own end: „The man is as proud as a lunatic,‟ he said. „This proves what I have always told people, that he inherited his mother‟s madness‟ (chapter 15).To the white man, however, the refusal is tantamount to „making a fool of the British Administration in public‟ (chapter 14). The fourth decision is the refusal to call the New Yam festival in which „the white man was, without knowing it, his ally‟ (chapter 15). Apart from this one ally, he is now utterly alone as he is abandoned by both friend and foe:all feel that he has betrayed them (chapter 12). In this decision, he himself serves the interests of the white man‟s religion newly introduced in Umuaro in a way no one would have thought, least of all himself: The Christian harvest which took place a few days after Obika‟s death saw more people than even Good country could have dreamed. In his extremity many an Umuaro man had sent his son with a yam or two to offer to the new religion and to bring back the promised immunity. Thereafter any yam that was harvested in the man‟s fields was harvested in the name of the son (230). Ezeulu‟s decisions are taken note of by everyone else involved in the action, but he himself displays no sense of public opinion in making them. To him „being alone‟ causes no anxiety: it is„as familiar to me now as are dead bodies to the earth‟ (chapter 12). But contrary to this certainty, he does come to a point when at last he is alone; and that is when he feels abandoned by his deity: Think of a man who, unlike lesser men, always goes to battle without a shield because he knows that bullets and matchet strokes will glance off his medicine boiled skin; think of him discovering in the thick of battle that the power has suddenly, without warning, deserted him. What next time can there be? Will he say to the guns and the arrows and the matchets: Hold! I want to return quickly to my medicine hut and stir the pot and find out what has gone

wrong; perhaps someone in my household – a child, maybe – has unwittingly violated my medicine's taboo? No. Ezeulu sank to the ground in utter amazement (230; italics original). Ezeulu‟s self-assurance had been founded on a sense of a close relationship to his deity to the extent that his awareness of their separate identities sometimes becomes blurred. It is this sense, rather than any specific „Thing‟ that „beats the drum to which Ezeulu dances‟ (chapter 12).The blurring of identities is a serious gap in knowledge and probably leads to self-delusion. What Ezeulu knows is one thing, in short, the reality quite another. That is equally true of the participants who are watching him. The people think that he has been scheming all along to be king in Umuaro. The District Officer basically has the same idea, having arrived at it from a separate route. But he is so convinced of it, or at any rate that this would suit Eeulu‟s purposes to perfection, that when he proposes the chieftaincy to him, he does so with an „I-know-this-will-knock-you-over feeling‟ (chapter 14). At the conscious level, Ezeulu is contented to be Ulu‟s priest and wants to exercise that priesthood in such a way that he can „tell Umuaro: come out from this because there is death there or do this because there is profit in it‟ (chapter 12). This is going far indeed – and by that token, since he wants to be nothing but Ulu‟s priest, taking that deity into unknown territory. Ulu is first of all a functional deity, having been created and installed for the purpose of protecting the town in time of war. In due course, he is to acquire a personality – although apparently still constrained to the world of Umuaro. Ezeulu is now in the process of recreating him, endowing him with properties of omniscience and paternal providence. If Ulu‟s deity should be enhanced in this way, Ezeulu‟s stature, as the spokesman who announces his will and decisions and the guidelines providentially vouchsafed for profit and prosperity, would be unmatched throughout Umuaro and throughout its history. This is probably what he understands by being Ulu‟s chief and his enemies as his wanting to be king. Ezidemili, on the other hand, is probably nearer the mark in thinking of him as an envious man, exercised by the desire to acquire for himself power and influence, privilege and dignity to the highest degree possible(42). He himself does not know in clear terms that this is what he wants; but it is part of the unknown that drives him and shapes his conduct in public affairs, his cocksureness and all. Ezeulu‟s proverbs are always *ad rem*, and yet richly suggestive. In „Who ever sent his son up the palm to gather nuts and then took an axe and felled the tree?‟ – which is represented thought, and also spontaneous – he articulates to himself his current understanding of the crisis that has just come to a head. It is Ulu‟s struggle with the people of Umuaro; he, utterly docile to the deity, is Ulu‟s instrument in the struggle, but ends up being seized upon and cut him down in the midst of the fight. It also captures his understanding of his relationship to the deity. It is one of a shared nature. „I prefer to deal with a man who throws up a stone and puts his head to receive it not one who shouts for a fight but when it comes he trembles and passes premature shit‟ is applied by Ezeulu to the white district officer who over the warrant chieftaincy affair proves to have less fight in him than he had made out. But it is even more about himself and signifies another way of understanding this work, namely as a sequence of the knowledge seeker. As such it connects to another of his proverbs that „The inquisitive monkey gets a bullet in the face‟ (44). For this narrative could be read as the fulfillment of the unconscious wish to find out the content of the power he is supposed to have. The following is a key passage in which Ezeulu who lacks the Hegelian wisdom „that he who knows about a limitation is already free of it‟ (Cassirer 1961: 75), is brought up short by the existence of limitations in the power he is said to have. This is someone who not only wants power, but wants total

certainty of its reality in his firm grip: 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. It was true he named the day for the feast of the Pumpkin Leaves and for the New Yam feast; but he did not choose the day. He was merely a watchman. His power was no more than the power of a child over a goat that was said to be his. As long as the goat was alive it was his; he would find it food and take care of it. But the day it was slaughtered he would know who the real owner was. No! the Chief Priest of Ulu was more than that, must be more than that. If he should refuse to name the day there would be no festival – no planting and no reaping. But could he refuse? No Chief Priest had ever refused. So it could not be done. He would not dare (3). For Ezeulu, power consists of what is possible to him, whereby he would exert control over the people. This exercise of control is the ultimate meaning and content of power. He is obliged under the ceremonial of Ulu to eat one sacred yam at the beginning of each lunar month and call the New Yam Feast when he exhausts his store. As long as things follow their normal course, he would never find out whether he had power to choose to call or not to call the feast. What exercises his mind here is therefore a knowledge which he could only gain from experience: it is as good as forbidden knowledge since he has no legitimate way of putting the matter to a test. He does not seem to have renounced, in the face of this prohibition, the idea of finding out. At this point, his reaction is to round on the invisible enemy who had introduced the word dare in his ruminations: „Take away that word dare," he replied to this enemy. „Yes I say take it away. No man in all Umuaro can stand up and say that I dare not. The woman who will bear the man who will say it has not yet been born." However, detention for thirty-two days in Okperi affords an opportunity – quite unsought – to follow the old question through. He now has opportunity to find out, and he dares. He continues to picture to himself that the ensuing struggle is between Ulu and Umuaro. But it rather appears to be a question of throwing up a stone and taking the chance of being hit on the head. The proverb about sending a son up a tree and felling that tree under him, which is part of a string of proverbial sayings making up his lament, as in the traditional *kommos* of Greek tragedy, seems to be rather a conceit. Ezeulu is aware, at least at another level or another stage in the unfolding of this history, that the fight is between him and Umuaro. He spells this out as he receives John Nwodika"s congratulations for confounding the white man. His attention is homeward, wondering what the people who hadsaid that he betrayed them to the whiteman would now think. But he knows they would never change their tune: „You should not give too much thought to that," said John Nwodika. „How many of those who deride you at home can wrestle with the white man as you have done and press his back to the ground?" Ezeulu laughed. „You call this wrestling? No, my clansman. We have not wrestled; we have merely studied each other"s hand. I shall come again, but before that I want to wrestle with my own people whose hand I know and who know my hand. I am going home to challenge all those who have been poking their fingers into my face to come outside their gate and meet me in combat and whoever throws the other will strip him of his anklet" (179). Ezeulu is aware of his enemies as people „poking their fingers into [his] face". As far as we know, these are people whose views are opposed to his, but of course in the case of Ogbuefi Nwaka, we havea naysayer with malice in his heart. Ezeulu does not in this passage give indication of an offence they may have committed against Ulu. But at home in Umuaro, his story is that it is a fight between Ulu andUmuaro, suggesting that he is only a „whip" being used by the God to beat Umuaro. The reference to a whip may be a wrong choice of words or a slip of the tongue, but all the more

important for that reason, as it offers access into his unconscious. It does raise a question immediately which he is saved from having to answer by an elder trying to prevent a dire situation being antagonizedany further: „Do not say that I am over fond of questions," said Ofoka. „But I should like to know on whose side you are, Ezeulu. I think you have just said that you have become the whip with which Ulu flogs Umuaro….. „If you will listen to me, Ofoka, let us not quarrel about that," said Ezekwesili (209). Whose side he is on is a question that strikes at the very ground of Ezeulu"s consciousness and would have led the leaders of Umuaro or Umuaro for short to see whether they have an interlocutor or some remorseless enemy taking revenge against them from behind the mask of Ulu, and who has mistaken himself for the mask. At the opening of the story, Ezeulu has two well-known and powerful enemies, Ogbuefi Nwaka and his mentor, Ezidemili. Unconsciously he has generalized the conflict to include all of Umuaro, forgetting his proverb used elsewhere that „When two brothers fight a stranger reaps their harvest". He is fixated on this fight and this mode of stating the case because he has not succeeded by force of argument to win to his side the supporters of Ogbuefi Nwaka"s position on the war with Okperi, but stubbornly reject his very interpretation of the outcome as proof of Ulu"s opposition to the war. The „unconscious knowledge" driving his actions and view of the events is that Umuaro has not reacted like one man in absolute obedience to his directive: „come out from this because there is death there or do this because there is profit in it". Although he knows from his friend Akeubue that he had not been alone in his position on the war (134), he still has a grouse that there are some on the other side. It is for him a question of *who* tells Umuaro what it believes, a question he raises pointedly to Akuebue: „What troubles me is what the whole clan is saying." „Who tells the clan what it says? What does the clan know? Sometimes, Akuebue, you make me laugh" (131).„ Who tells the clan what it says" is something Ezeulu would contest at all costs. It is a struggle for power, for absolute power, and one that exhausts Umuaro quite fatally – because they have been stamped and trampled to shreds by „two elephants" fighting. Its culture and system collapse; the bonds holding it together as a society are undone, and the people with action orientation towards the pragmatical, turn to the Christian church and the Christian God with their tribute of yams in exchange for „protection from the anger of Ulu" who they now desert (216). Ezeulu does not blame the disaster on his own rashness, but on others; for example, Oduche his son who he had sent to the Christian school to serve as his *eye* there is denounced as „lizard that ruined his mother"s funeral" (221), for failing to bring intelligence that the missionary had promised those who patronized his harvest thanksgiving immunity from retaliation by Ulu. Ezeulu"s proverb here introduces a funeral, though as a figure of speech. However, it will become reality in the end. The real funeral that will take place is that of Obika; but since in his death it is as if Ezeulu himself had died (228), the funeral is Ezeulu"s too, and at the symbolic level, that of the gods and the cultural tradition of Umuaro.These funerals, beginning with Obika"scome about because of the crisis Ezeulu has helped to trigger off; for though Obika has been having a fever and therefore in no condition to run the *Ogbazulobodo*, he nevertheless agrees to do it, because „If I say no," [he] told himself, „they will say that Ezeulu and his family have sworn to wreck the second burial of their village man who did no harm to them" (224). But there is also a psychological operation taking place, namely „the transference", which occurs by reason of „the synchronic intersection of the diachronic fantasy" (Boyko-Head 2002). As if he already has a sense of what is afoot, Ezeulu unconsciously transfers to his son Oduche responsibility for the impending

catastrophe. By a similar operation, he had transferred from Nwaka to Umuaro the provocation to a fight and to Ulu the violence that he unleashes upon Umuaro, just as in dreamwork at Okperi, his grandfather had become the receiver of the assault and degradation he unconsciously anticipates from Nwaka and his enemies. None of this, however, affects his standing as a „good man" (Aristotle chapter 13), with full entitlementas a tragic hero. The role of the yam crop in unravelling the Umuaro system has a trace of cruel irony in it; for it features in early school-child ditty in a context interpreted by Ezeulu as boding the worst for Umuaro and its way of life: Nwafo came back to the obi and asked his father whether he knew what the bell was saying. Ezeulu shook his head. „It is saying: Leave your yam, leave your cocoyam and come to church. That is what Oduche says." „Yes," said Ezeulu thoughtfully. „It tells them to leave their yam and their cocoyam, does it? Then it is singing the song of extermination" (42-43) This song of extermination is heard again by Ezeulu clearly articulated in the Idemili Python"s lamentation in a nightmare which visits himjust at the moment his son Obika"s *Ogbazulobodo*is passing his compound in his flight to the square where he drops dead. Unlike the dream,horrible enough, which he has while in detention at Okperi, in the present one, the hero is not „his majesty the ego", as Freud would say. In the former, his grandfather is the Ezeulu being denounced, manhandled, and cast out by Nwaka and the people of Umuaro. This follows the pattern of „dream work as Freud describes it (over determination, condensation, and displacement)" (Bishop and Philips 2009). He himself is displaced so that the ego does not directly suffer humiliation in his own dream. In the nightmare marking Obika"s disaster, other people are playing the key parts, trespassing and mindlessly invading his privacy, while he is powerless to stop them, just as if he didn"t exist. His sense of his own futility, with the attendant terror and despair, is sealed when he finds that in his extremity, there is utterly no one to answer his call for help. In tragic terms, this is a moment of discovery (*anagnôrisis*): he already has *unconscious knowledge* of the import of his desire to know. The desire at the heart of *Arrow of God* for status as the divine son, for the absolute power of the divine son, the power to recreate Ulu in his own image and Umuaro to be compliant to his every wish is what is hollowed out in the dream: that is the meaning of the nightmare for a man who had been so sure of himself as to snap out at his older son Edogo"s report on the flogging of Obika by the white road maker: „Were you there?" asked his father. „Or would you swear before a deity on the strength of what a drunken man tells you? If I was sure of my son do you think I would sit here now, talking to you while a man who pokes his finger into my eyes goes home to his bed? If I did nothing else I would pronounce a few words on him and he would know the power in my mouth" (98-99).

III. REALM OF FREEDOM AND REALM OF NECESSITY

For Roland Barthes, struggle in literature is realization of one of the „major articulations of praxis‟ (1977:107); and representation of these is understood in criticism deriving from Aristotle to be a self-sufficient activity. Marxist criticism, however, behaves quite differently. Here the analysis of the relationships of struggle is only to enable „the detection of a host of distinct generic messages – some of them objectified survivals from older modes of cultural production, some anticipatory, but all together projecting a formal conjuncture through which the "conjuncture" of coexisting modes of production at a given historical moment can be detected and allegorically articulated‟ (Jameson 99). The rule of thumb for „detection of [the] host of distinct generic messages‟ is the superstructure/substructure dyad, with what might be „the passionate immediacy of struggles between historical individuals‟ (77) at the political level reflecting deep-level struggles either within the forces of production or the relations of production. A second model which is not very commonly used is that of Lukács,where the struggle for power may take place within the same class, giving rise to „quantitative‟ change (1976: 434). The main lines of struggle in *Arrow of God* are between Ezeulu and Ogbuefi Nwaka, surrogate of Ezidemili, between Ulu and Idemili, between Ezeulu and the colonial administration, and between Ezeulu or Ulu and Umuaro, which metamorphoses to a struggle between Ulu‟s cult – tradition – and the Christian church – modernity. There are other patterns, of course, which have lesser scope than any of the above, but intersect and help to account for the text‟s dense tissue. The one with the highest profile appears to be that between Ezeulu and Umuaro, but it is a struggle which is changing and transforming in unexpected ways. In Nwaka‟s diatribe early on, he appears to be challenging Ulu on behalf of Umuaro to a fight. But the story also features a mystic moment in which Ezeulu is sure that he has heard the deity speaking to him and clearly setting forth the issues: „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. „I say who told you that this was your own fight which you could arrange to suit you? You want to save your friends who brought you palm wine he-he-he-he-he!‟ laughed the deity the way spirits do – a dry, skeletal laugh. „Beware you do not come between me and my victim or you may receive blows not meant for you! Do you not know what happens when two elephants fight? Go home and sleep and leave me to settle my quarrel with Idemili, who wants to destroy me so that his python may come to power. Now you tell me how it concerns you. I say go home and sleep. As for me and Idemili we shall fight to the finish; and whoever throws the other down will strip him of his anklet‟ (191-192)

In the light of this experience, Nwaka would have hurled the challenge on behalf of Idemili, not Umuaro. But Ezeulu seems ultimately to disregard this mystic insight he has received and acts as if he is the protagonist in the fight, instead of merely „an arrow in the bow of his god‟ (192).Indeed in the concluding movement of the narrative, the people are certain that their struggle has been with Ezeulu, with the god taking their side against the priest. The people‟s struggle may legitimately be called a struggle for freedom since Ezeulu wouldforce them into an agricultural calendar unhinged from the solar calendar and running several months behind the natural cycle. There seems to be no other way to explain a struggle waged to enforce such an irrational order except as an affect of madness –that of the high priest. As a

struggle between the two deities, however, there would only have been quantitative change. One deity in overpowering the other would have created room to impose his own ritual and laws. In the event, the struggle has proved to be suicidal for the culture itself. Even the traumatic death of Ezeulu‟s favourite son at this critical moment has an ominous ring to it, for we read that, Obika‟s death shook Umuaro to the roots; a man like him did not come into the world too often. As for Ezeulu it was as though he had died (228). The reference to „a man like him‟ recalls the immense energy, strength,and promise marking his brief career. He seems to have carried for Umuaro the sense of self-confidence in its own future; and he has carried it to a premature grave. With his demise the field is thrown open; and there is no one to challenge an opportunist taking advantage of Umuaro in this moment of weakness and confusion. The Christian mission hard by simply moves in and seizes the spoils, as it were. Still the outcome fall short of the specifications of a qualitative change. In taking possession, Mr Good country has adapted his language so that it reflects the old relationships in which fear of a vengeful god is maintained as motivation for action. Here the leaders of the Christian church plan their strategy for widening participation in their harvest thanksgiving with a view to maximizing their profit: „I understand but I was thinking how we could tell them to bring more than one yam. You see, our custom, or rather their custom, is to take just one yam to Ulu.‟ Moses Unachukwu, who had come into full favour with Good country, saved the day. „If Ulu who is a false god can eat one yam the living God who owns the whole world should be entitled to eat more than one.‟ So the news spread that anyone who did not want to wait and see all his harvest ruined could take his offering to the god of the Christians who claimed to have power to protect such a person from the anger of Ulu. Such a story at other times might have been treated with laughter. But there was no more laughter left in the people (216). Christianity, though a new and fundamentally different religious system, finds itself employing the methods of the old traditional culture. Gaining the loyalty of the people with an argument like the above means that the psychological reorientation required in switching from traditional religion has not taken place. The people, like Moses Unachukwu himself, an older convert, continue to see the world with the eyes of traditional religion. They can hardly be said to have been converted. But decidedly the Christian religion has gained in numbers. In terms of modes of production, we have to recall the „song of extermination‟ calling upon all to turn their backs on yams and cocoyams and come to school. The Idemili Python, in its own „song of desolation‟ appears to have grasped the full meaning of the school bell‟s song.The school is a threat to the continued relevance of this totemic animal, the way of life, and the land-based mode of production associated with it. And it – must scuttle away in haste When children in play or in earnest cry: Look! a Christian is on the way (222). The school is not in itself a mode of production. It is one of the super structural elements associated with modes of production. In a place like Umuaro, it is not just the sign of a new mode of production, but is paving the way for the new mode of production and has a foundational role in institutionalizing that new system. Literally, abandoning yam and cocoyam and opting for school is a message of extermination, but as a message addressed to school-age children, its vision is long term change.Whereas to argue by reference to the promise of education that school pertains to the realm of freedom would seem to be going beyond the limits of the text and of questionable value as literary criticism, that is precisely what Jameson calls a „generic message‟ of the anticipatory order, which may legitimately be sought in the textual unconscious.

IV. CONCLUSION

As the unknown, Ezeulu‟s desire is unfocused, but by its motions, one can see how complex a character he is, possibly the most complex creation of Chinua Achebe. The initial question he poses to himself as to the reality of his power is what the text as if by „emulation‟ (Foucault 2005: 22), exposes and follows to its ultimate reference. He who already thinks of himself as half-man, half-spirit (*Arrow of God*192), is driven by his unknown desire to a point where the distinction between himself and Ulu is becoming blurred to him. He may have become so tensed up and psychologically conditioned for this Unknown to have *divined* for him in the mystic experience in which he hears a voice he believes to be that of his deity. But having heard the voice and interpreted its meaning, nevertheless, „After a long period of silent preparation Ezeulu finally revealed that he intended to hit Umuaro at its most vulnerable point – the Feast of the New Yam‟ (201).He alone is the actor in this event or has displaced the deity and taken over the fight from him. Such is the anarchic desire that features in Greek tragedy as lack of moderation (*sophrôsinē).* For its own part, the text itself does not know what it *wants.* By contrast, notions like „theme‟ in literary studies suggest that the literary text *knows* what it wants. But it would be no different from a treatise if it did. In *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu is treated with irony from time to time, but there is no doubt that the narrative voice is fundamentally sympathetic towards him. Similarly, the report of the impact of Obika‟s death on Umuaro does reflect back to some extent on the narrator. But the „textual unconscious‟, apparently designates a new direction opening for Umuaro, and quite unrelated to what has been hitherto. Ezeulu‟s story involves significant norm breaking actions, but he makes out more as a suffering and „hard-pressed hero‟ (Jauss 1974:298) than a villain; and there are several reasons for this. The narrator‟s sympathetic attitude and the magnitude of his catastrophe are obvious enough, but something that may be missed out even though it may be working in the background is the power of Ogbuefi Nwaka‟s implacable hostility, bordering on hate. The sense of this hatred may also have affected Ezeulu himself who is clearly feeling increasingly

Bearing the Burden of Native Experience

In all his literary works, the famous West-African Anglophone novelist Chinua Achebe has creatively Africanized the English language. In the process of writing counter-narratives to Euro-centric misrepresentations of Africa, Achebe has successfully harnessed the colonizer's language to make it bear the burden of his native experience. Reading his novels, which are set in Nigeria during different historical periods, one can hardly miss the fact that his narrative strategies change in accordance with the time and message of each novel. As Gikandi puts it:

In every novel Achebe has written to date, what we know about Igbo or Nigerian culture is less important than how we know it: Achebe's narratives seek to create the initial situation in which the African

problematic developed and to express the conditions in which knowledge about phenomena is produced. (qtd. in Hu 18)

Thus, the narrative strategy becomes an important element in elucidating the various paradigms of socio-cultural reality and human experience. The present paper proposes to analyze the third novel by Achebe, *Arrow of God* (1964), for the dissection of the narrative strategies involved in it. This stylistic analysis aims to illustrate in effect how Achebe creatively

accommodates the various shades of Nigerian reality within an adopted language, English, that is foreign to the native soil.

Set in the early decades of the twentieth century, *Arrow of God* (1964) portrays the initial years of British colonialism in Nigeria. Based on a true story recorded by Simon Nnolim in the *History of Umuchu* (Innes 64), the novel recounts the story of an Igbo priest Ezeulu in a fictional, west-African village-cluster named Umuaro. Focusing on the tragic downfall of Ezeulu (on account of his abortive attempts to reconcile the contending orders of British and Igbo reality), the novel effectively illustrates the metamorphosis of a traditional Igbo community in the wake of the new dispensation brought about by the Europeans. A highly complex novel by technique, *Arrow of God* uses a multi-voiced narrative strategy to portray in full complexity the "diffused tumult arisen out of the tragic encounter" (Lindfors 91) between Igbo and the British in the early decades of the twentieth century. The third-person omniscient narrator maintains an un intrusive stance, rotating the point-of-view among various characters in the novel, in order to defy any sort of misrepresentation or biasness. The dialogical objectivity of the narrative is maintained by three ways. First, by incorporation of multiple versions of an objective reality. The most significant instance of this is seen during the Okperi land dispute, where Nwaka gives a different account of clan-history in contradistinction to that of Ezeulu's; but nonetheless both establish that the reason of dispute is Umuaro's (un)justified claim over a piece of land in Okperi. This version is totally overridden by Winterbottom, who deems the real cause behind the dispute to be a petty feud between two drunken men from Umuaro and Okperi. Such juxtaposition of the native version with the European one projects the communication-gap between the British Administration and the Africans. The debate between Nwaka and Ezeulu displays the propensity among Igbos to resist any absolute version of reality. The objective stance thus effected in the narrative through this, is further buttressed by a second method, namely the inclusion of two probable explications for a single incident with the use of a non-committal 'Perhaps'. Here goes an example: "Perhaps it was Captain Winterbottom's rage and frenzy that brought it [his mysterious illness] on; perhaps his steward was right about its cause [that he is struck down by Ezeulu's magic]"(184). Such balancing of alternatives, which is rampant in the narrative, highlights the assiduous effort of the narrator to include as many options as possible to make a sense of the imponderable ambiguities characteristic of the nebulous times portrayed in the novel. The third method that enhances objectivity in the narration is the balanced response (of sympathy and apathy) evoked in the readers towards every seminal character in the novel. For instance, if at some place Ezeulu is held responsible for the crisis he brought upon Umuaro, there are also ample statements that portray him as a helpless victim. Here goes one:

[No] one came near enough to Ezeulu to see his anguish…But although he would not

for any reason see the present trend reversed he carried more punishment and more suffering than all his fellows… Beneath all anger in his mind lay a deeper compassion for Umuaro…(274)

This shows that the Chief Priest is not altogether a hard-boiled villain who brings his people to grief solely out of intentionality. That the clan has also been guilty in impelling him upon the precipitous decision is evident in Ofoka's statement:

'What we told him was to go and eat the yams and we would take care of the consequences. But he would not do it. Why? Because the six villages allowed the white man to carry him away…and now he has the chance [to punish Umuaro].' (266)

This shows that clan has also got a share in the present impasse, because it has let the Chief Priest go away, without considering for a moment the serious consequences his prolonged absence would bear upon the clan's agricultural calendar. But then, the clan has also its own reasons to behave likewise. As Ofoka confesses to Ezeulu after the latter's return from Okperi: 'I am one of those who said that we shall not come between you and the white man…The elders of Umuaro are confused…First you, Ezeulu, told us five years ago that it was foolish to defy the white man. We did not listen to you…But just as we are beginning to learn our lesson you turn round and tell us to go and challenge the white man. What did you expect us to do?' (232)

Thus it emerges that the tragedy of Ezeulu is as much consequent upon the communication gap between him and his clan, as much it is on the inevitable tides of time. In this way, the narrative point-of-view is deftly maneuvered with precise objectivity to bring out palpably the highly plastic times portrayed in the novel.

Language in *Arrow of God* is another site of excellence, which displays the novelist's sensitivity towards various idiolects, and also his artfulness in harnessing the same in integrating English with various shades of Nigerian reality. First comes up the manipulation of language in accordance with characters. The English placed in the mouth of the rural speakers contains copious amount of non-translated Igbo words like *ofo*,*ikenga*, *alusi*, "*Onwa atuo*" (2) etc., and also directly-translated Igbo sentences like, "'We do not want Okperi to choose war; nobody eats war'" (21). They serve to integrate the foreign language plausibly in the mouth of the native speakers, who are totally unacquainted with the newly-arrived white man's tongue. But even among the rural folk there is a difference in idiolect, or speech-mannerism. The clan elders like Ezeulu and Nwaka talk in complex rhetoric, which signify the well-developed conversational skill among the Igbos. A speech in a clan-meeting is customarily comprised of an opening salutation, an elaborate introduction of the topic of discussion, a skilled persuasion of the viewpoint taken by the speaker, a conclusive statement and a closing salutation. The entire speech remains rife with proverbs that both display the wisdom and demonstrative capacity of the speaker. Compared to the aged people of the clan, however, the young men show much ineptitude in handling rhetoric. Being still learners "'to speak in riddles'" (65), they are more direct and rash in communication. As the narrative puts it, "'the language of the young men is always *pull down and destroy*, but an old man speaks of conciliation'" (189). The speech of the women-folk is characteristically comprised of superstitions, religious concerns and household affairs. Here goes an example:

'Moon, may your face meeting mine bring good fortune. But how is it sitting? I don't like its posture.'

'Why?' asked Matefi.

'I think it sits awkwardly—like an evil moon' (2).

It is important to mention here that other than speaking such 'trivia,' no woman is allowed to speak her mind on the important affairs of the clan or even regarding her husband's or father's decision. Anyone found straying in that direction is snubbed to silence. This portrays the marginalization of women in the clan.
Other than the unlettered village folks, the clan also consists of semi-literate people who have learnt English on account of their proximity to the Europeans. They use it in the form of broken English or pidgins while conversing with the white men. There are instances of such broken
English in Unachukwu's dialogues to Mr. Wright, like: "'Pardin,'" "'Yessah,'" "'Dat man wan axe master queshon'"(102). The deliberately misspelled words put in his mouth are intended to bring out the nuances of his unaccustomed phonetics. Pidgin English is used by Mr. Winterbottom's household-workers to commune with him. For example, in reply to his queries about the native children in his compound, his steward says, "'My pickin na dat two we de run yonder and dat yellow gal. Di oder two na Cook im pickin'"(37). Pidgin thus serves as an inevitable go-between medium of communication between the natives and British. Incidentally, when the same natives converse with their clan-fellows they switch from pidgin to Igbo. However, a reverse-case to this is established by the two Igbo officers who go to Umuaro to arrest Ezeulu. They purposefully address each other in pidgin and the villagers in Igbo. In this process they intimidate the latter by their supposed command over the white man's language. This displays the "linguistic chauvinism"(Ngara 69) which the British have effectively inculcated among the native Igbos.
The English used by the Europeans is also at variance. The language of Captain Winterbottom is that of a typical colonial who views himself as a god-sent messenger to bring civilization among the savage races of the world. His speech contains the decorous idiom of a typical 'gentleman'
European: "'It will be fairly cool for a couple of days that's all.[. . .] Do sit down. Did you enjoy that?'"(42). His bigoted attitude towards the Africans becomes evident in his condescending manner of referring them, namely "'savage tyrants'"(43) whose thrones are "'filthy animal skins'"(43). He boastfully misinterprets the religious symbol (*ikenga*) of an Igbo man as "'fetish'"(45). "These terms," as Ngara observes, "are not used by the Africans themselves. So Achebe shows that they are inventions of the white man's subjective image of the African"(Ngara 67). In fact, this subversive attitude is immanent in the speech of all the European characters in the novel.
The words of the Lieutenant Governor display a high-falutin style that echoes any zealous pamphleteer of Western colonialism propagating racial myths. Here goes an instance of the same:
'In place of the alternative of governing directly through AdministrativeOfficers there is the other method of trying while we endeavour to purge the native system of its abuses to build a higher civilization upon the soundly rooted Native stock...' (67)
Aptly enough, Winterbottom refers to the likes of the Lieutenant Governor as "'starry-eyed fellows'"(68) and "'old fossils in Lagos'"(43), who seek selfrighteous pleasures through impractical drafts that are couched in stock, idealistic words. The speech of the young colonials like Wright and Clarke are easy-going and direct, free from the smugness and pretentiousness of either Winterbottom or the High Officials. For example: "'Well,[. . .] I cannot say myself that Old Tom is the most hard-working man I've ever met; but then who is? Certainly not that lot at Enugu'" (129). However, both easily switch to slang-English while addressing the natives, like, "'Tell them this

bloody work must be finished by June'"(102). This brings out their disdainful attitude towards the Africans.

The Igbo technique of oral narration is retained in the narrative, signifying the still-intact order of native-communication. This includes indicating time in accordance with the native calendar, i.e. in terms of moons and Igbo weekdays. Here are two such instances: "the six villages would be locked in the old year for two moons longer[. . .]"(263); and, "Tomorrow would be Afo and the next day Nkwo, the day of the great market"(3). Another technique of oral narration is vague time-referencing, which is used to indicate events that happened long back, like: "In the very distant past, when lizards were still few and far between, the six villages [. ..] lived as different people, and each worshipped its own deity"(17). This evinces that time is approximated rather than pin-pointed in the unlettered memory of the Umuaroans. While recalling an incident from the recent past, they however mention the numerical years, but the stress remains on some important events occurred in the same, which act as clue in the reminiscence. For instance, the day of Okperi land-dispute "five years ago"(18) stand out in the communal memory on account of the dispute ensued between Ezeulu and the clan during that time. As the narrative goes: "On the day, five years ago, *when leaders of Umuaro decided to send an emissary to Okperi* [. . .] Ezeulu spoke in vain"(emphasis added 18).

It gives a fairytale-effect to the narration, much in contradistinction to the precise exactitude of the Gregorian calendar like: "'*Old Tom is always reminding you that he came out to Nigeria in 1910* [. . .]'"(129). The clash in the time-view between the British and Igbo orders is succinctly brought out in Winterbottom's following statement: "'They understand seasons [. . .].

But ask a man how old he is [year-wise] and he doesn't begin to have idea'"(42). This shows that the rural Nigeria is yet to assimilate the Western way of viewing time. Apart from Igbo time-refencing, the other elements that are used to evoke the oral tradition are parataxis or usage of the connective 'But' to begin sentences with, and aetiological endings, i.e. the use of explicative phrase "That was why." Here goes an example of parataxis: "But for Ezeulu there was no next time"(225). It serves to maintain the lucidity of oral narration. The same purpose is served by aetiological ending. For instance: "He [Ezeulu] must go on treating his grown children like little boys, and if they ever said so there was a big quarrel. *This was why* the older his children grew he seemed to dislike them"(emphasis added 113). In this way the narrative persona while attaching itself to an Umuaroan, effectively vivifies the lore-tradition of the rural West Africa.

The narrative employs beautiful images, metaphors and similes, some of which evoke the African locale. An instance of lucid imagery comes up in the following statement depicting a tropical storm: "Palm trees and coconut trees swayed from their waists; their tops looked like giants fleeing against the wind, their long hair streaming behind"(36). It not only brings about a fabulous effect, but also evokes the local fauna that is characteristic of the country's latitudinal position. Metaphors indicating the African setting are also vivid in their quality and are appropriate in dispense. For example, the metaphor contained in the statement "'I shall slap okro seeds out of your mouth'"(188) draws association from an African crop whose corn-cobs effectively resemble broken teeth. Same purpose of highlighting the African setting is served by the mention of puff adder—a venomous snake commonly found in Africa—which is metaphorically attached to the avenging attitude of Ezeulu. The narrative also contains racial metaphors that are used by the Europeans to refer to

the natives, like “pet dogs”(94) and “black monkeys”(102); they signify the initiation of colonial debasement in Africa. Other than images and metaphors, the similes also play a role in vivifying the African ambience. Here goes two examples from an African fable: “‘the leader of the spirits then produced a flute shining like yellow metal,’” and “‘Then he produced another flute shining white like the *nut of the water of heaven*’”(236). A refreshingly de-automatized view to see things, these similes not only reflect the African world-view, but also hint at the African’s newness to the commercial nomenclature of the above metals, namely gold and silver.

There are also instances of similes apportioned in accordance with the character. For example, Ezeulu feels “like one stung in the buttocks like a black ant”(21), while Winterbottom is “stung like three wasps”(132) at moments of sudden irritation. This once again highlights the difference between Igbo and European way of naming sensory perceptions.

A reference may be made of the effective use of onomatopoeic words that once again highlight the distinction between Igbo and British way of naming reality. For example, the ‘African drum’ “throb”s (36) for Winterbottom whereas it—the *ogene*—“GOME”s (2) for Ezeulu. Similarly the church bells ‘ring’ to all ears while the *ekwe* speaks “*kome kome kokome*”(280).

The narrative of *Arrow of God* is richly contained with proverbs, which play an important part in establishing the conversational skill of the Igbos. Being mini-folktales in themselves, they aptly encapsulate complex issues in pithy statements. For example: “‘When an adult is in the house the she-goat is not left to suffer the pains of parturition on its tether’”(21). Ezeulu uses it to remonstrate the clan-elders, who agree with Nwaka to indulge Umuaro in a “‘a war of blame’”(21) against Okperi. It is ironically table-turned on Ezeulu by the clan, when he condemns Umuaro to hardship and hunger by not naming the Feast of the New Yam. Proverbs are also used to foreground or highlight certain events in the narrative.

The oratory of the night spirit *ogbazulobodo* is potent with such proverbs. For instance, “‘The fly that struts around on a mound of excrement wastes his time; the mound will always be greater than the fly’”(282). Its implications may be connected with the futile efforts of Ezeulu and his people to resist the pressures of the new religion and administration.

Another example is, “‘It is *ofo* that gives rain-water power to cut dry earth’”(282). It signifies that the power of the Chief Priest is actually a benediction of his people.

The narrative also employs the linguistic devices of humour and irony, though the usage of the former is kept at a low key in keeping with the somber ambience of the novel. There is humour in the narrative statement, “Clarke opened his mouth to say that love of titles was a universal human failing but thought better of it”(133). It is a dig upon the smugness of Winterbottom who looks down upon the narratives for their lust for title, but himself conveniently ignoring that he too is meticulous about his two titles, namely ‘Captain’ and ‘Otiji-Egbe, or the Breaker of Guns.’ Such kind of pure humour is also present in the rare pieces of friendly banter between Ezeulu and Akuebue. However, more often than not, humour takes a satirical hue, as is the case in the following statement:

Mr. Goodcountry, not knowing the full story behind the growth of his school and Church put it down to his effective evangelization…He wrote a report on the amazing success of the Gospel in Umuaro for the *West African Church Magazine*, although, as was the custom in such reports, he allowed the credit to go to the Holy Spirit. (269)

It signifies the self-complacency among the Christian missionaries and their tendency to misread situations. The limited use of humour is balanced by an

effective use of the ironic device, which renders a gravity and depth to the tragic situation in the novel. It is ironical that Ezeulu, the Time-Keeper of his clan himself becomes instrumental in jeopardizing it. There is pungent irony in the fact that the Chief Priest who claims himself to be omniscient, cannot see his own doom in over-exercising his power. The white man 'Wintabota' whom Ezeulu befriends to keep abreast of the new dispensation, ironically becomes an agent in bringing about Ezeulu's downfall. In this way, various shades of irony enhances the tragic effect in the novel.

A lot of children's tales and songs are included in the narrative that portends the upcoming events in the novel. The story of the jealous mother and her son that Ugoye tells Nwafo and Obiageli bears the moral that the sin of avarice never go unpunished. Similarly, the song-exchange played between Obiageli and Nkechi contains the understatement that offence is followed at heels by retribution. Both forebode that Ezeulu will be punished for attempting to "dare"(4) too far in his priestly powers. The song sung by Obiageli to placate little Amechi is equally apprehensive of the priest's fate. It says: "'Father's goat is in the barn/ And the yams will all be eaten,'" and "'Look! He's [Deer has] dipped one foot in water/ Snake has struck him!/ He withdraws!'"(153) Indeed, the yams will all be eaten by the goat (catechist) of the Father (Christianity), and the Deer (Ezeulu) has already got struck by the Snake (Winterbottom) while he dipped one foot in the water (new dispensation), and thereby has retreated from it. Apart from these children's lilts, there are also songs sung by the native workmen while working under the white man's supervision. This indicates the natural propensity among the blacks to resort to music to mitigate the labours of life and also to defy oppression.

A lot of motifs are employed in the narrative to enlighten various issues in the novel. The most prominent of all is the dream motif. A "para-linguistic affective device," Ngara observes, the dream motif is used "for foreshadowing subsequent events [in the novel] [. . .]"(Ngara 73). The dream Ezeulu has on his first night at Okperi vividly prophesies the very way of his fall—that he will be stripped of power and become "the priest of a dead god"(197). The second dream comes at the penultimate stage of the novel, when "the struggle between the various opposing forces has reached its peak"(Ngara 73). It contains signs of death and disintegration not only of Ezeulu's own home—portending Obika's death and his own insanity, but also that of all the Chief Priest stands for—his religion, his way of life, and his culture.

The sacrificial motif comes up of and on in the novel. Both Obika and Ezeulu are compared with the sacrificial ram. While he is whipped by the white man in public, Obika "shivered like the sacrificial ram which must take in silence the blows of the funeral dancers before its throat is cut" (101). In the end he actually becomes one as he gives up his life to atone for his father's guilt by running *ogbazulobodo* in ailing health. Ezeulu, himself the carrier of a deity who is formed of human sacrifice, becomes a "funeral ram"(286) for his clan by sanctifying through his agony his people's defection to the new faith. Earlier in the novel, the priest confesses to Akuebue that his son Oduche is meant to be a metaphorical sacrifice to the new religion on his behalf, so that he could retain centrality in the alien order as well. The monthly yams offered by Ezeulu to Ulu are "death"(280) or symbolic sacrifice to the deity in recognition of the protection given by the deity to Umuaro.

The madness motif is another feature that comes up time and again in the novel. Almost every character in Ezeulu's household is ascribed to it. Ezeulu's mother is said to have died of lunacy. It amply foregrounds the priest's mental derangement at the end of the novel.

Finally, lack of communication is another important motif in the narrative. Both Ezeulu and Winterbottom are at ill-communication with their respective community, which baulks their every attempt to do something positive. Ezeulu and Winterbottom are improperly communicated by an incompetent messenger, which contributes in the precipitous events that follow by. The British Administration is at ill-communion with the natives, which is evident in its attempts to appoint Warrant Chief among the fiercely democratic Igbos.

Finally, a discussion is necessary regarding the use of symbols in the narrative. The new moon is the symbol of the unattainable desired— the mother-figure around whom takes place the phallic play for power in the clan. Ezeulu's "fear of the new moon"(2) is actually a signifier of the castration complex, since it reflects the priest's dread of old-age when he would have to let go his position of power on account of his incapability to locate the moon in his failing sight. Nwaka's rivalry against Ezeulu's priestly privilege of declaring the new moon represents usurpation attitude, which is best-evident in his following-statement: "'Why should we rely on him [Ezeulu]?…Is there anybody here who cannot see the moon in his own compound?'" (197). In the fight for centrality in the clan's affairs, it is noteworthy that each rival—Nwaka and Ezeulu terminologically attempts to establish the other as impotent. The annual cycle of productivity (planting and harvest) associated with the new moon also reinforces its connection the mother figure by evoking the monthly cycles of female fecundity. Ezeulu attempts to jeopardize this cycle of time by not naming the Feast;

he does so to establish his exclusive rights over the new-moon and its demarcated Time. This excessive exertion of phallic authority finally leads Ezeulu to his dethronement and also symbolic emasculation—as is suggestively hinted in the children's song in chapter eighteen. The real owner of Time—the clan moves on to discard its namesake father Ezeulu, and adopts a new one—the Christian God. Apart from this, the new moon is also associated with lunacy, since Ezeulu's mother "was seized by madness…at the new moon" (278), and ironically Ezeulu too falls from sanity on a new moon. This establishes the long-debated connection between lunar cycle and lunacy.

Python is an ambivalent phallic symbol. The phallic connotation isestablished in the song of the workmen in chapter eight. Representative of the Igbo tradition, the python becomes a natural target for the castrating intentions of the new religion. Also, the python stands for Idemili—the rival deity of Ulu. It thus embodies resentment against Ulu's paternal finality,

which Ezeulu tries to repress on the deity's behalf.

Finally, communication may be seen as a representative symbol of the hierarchical British administration impinging over the democratic clanadministration of the Igbos. The white man communicates with the natives through interpreter, by which the natives are pushed to passivity. They are also denied the right to question, as it is shown in chapter eight. So they are left with no option but to accept whatever the white man bids. This comes in contradistinction to the Igbo way of handling clan-affairs, where every communication becomes a part of collective deliberation in a community-gathering, whereby each person is accountable to the clan for his statements and thereby inevitably takes into account the listeners' responses.

In this way, Achebe has explored the various possibilities of the English language to capture vividly and credibly the overall ambience of Nigeria of the early 1920s. The stylistics employed by him in the novel form a subtext by itself, enlightening various subtle paradigms of theme and characterization.

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