The Psychoanalytic Concept of the Unknown in Exploring the text to try and Uncover Underlying Patterns of Significance in Chinua Achebe's novel 'Arrow of God

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***Abstract*—Arrow of God, the fourth novel by Chinua Achebe, is a terrifying tale of catastrophic transformation in which a traditional civilization loses its cultural identity due to both internal and external forces. The protagonist's personality and choices, as well as the colonialists' interference, have frequently been the subject of critical debate. The text has often been interpreted at that level because of the strong sense of facticity throughout. In order to try and find underlying patterns of meaning, this article explores the text using the psychoanalytic concept of the unknown. That would allow us to grasp the scope and long-term effects of the action in this book as well as the depths of a complex protagonist—possibly the most intriguing of Achebe's characters.**

***Index Terms*—change, desire, power, proverb, struggle, sympathy, the unknown, the unconscious.**

I. INTRODUCTION

An account of how things have gone wrong in a once harmonious and orderly traditional community can be found in Obiechina's study of Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God. The forces opposing tradition appear to be deeply ingrained in the Umuaro of Arrow of God, he says. Traditional confidence has been undermined, and the sense of unity and shared purpose that once constituted traditionalism has been shaken by the local school and mission station, irreverent strangers like the catechist Goodcountry, and the inarticulate but tangible reality of the white man's administrative presence (233).

Others have taken a slightly different approach, examining the protagonist Ezeulu's choices, actions, and motivations as well as how they affect the preservation of Umuaro cultural practices. For example, Mahood describes it as "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). In Masagbor and Akhuemokhan (2005), however, Achebe depicts the demise of the Umuaro culture through the fall of Ezeulu, who is initially "indisputably the thriving priest of an equally thriving culture" (67–69).In order for the text to "spring back into life," we apply the psychoanalytic idea of "the unknown" to Arrow of God in this paper. We do this to see how much it improves the analysis of metaphors and specific linguistic usages, such as proverbs, and offers fresh perspectives on the character and action (Ricoeur 2003: 223).

Since "the unknown" cannot be defined in terms of positives, Jacques Derrida would likely refer to it as a non-concept. Generally speaking, anything unknown is included in its area of meaning. It serves as a hinge in psychoanalysis, although psychoanalysis doesn't discuss it much. Although Freud used the term to describe this function in forming the individual's mental existence, it was Jacques Lacan's work that gave us a thorough understanding of its function in that field. According to Lacan, 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).

Because it has a linguistic structure, plays a part in the subject's formation, and appears to be involved in his self-understanding, identity, and defining characteristics, the unknown is relevant to the study of literature for precisely the same reasons that it is of concern in psychoanalysis. Action orientations are

also relevant. It is still elusive at the objectification level, yet without it, it is very impossible to understand a person's inner life.It functions as a blind hole beyond all knowledge at the same time, with all analysis ultimately returning to it while staying unanalyzable. This is what is at stake in Freud's 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 naval, as it were, that is its point of 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 it's 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, the character whose choices affect the main plot points is Ezeulu. These choices are the primary way that the unknown operates, and the secret to its operation is the character's latent desires. His unconscious, which "is simply another name for symbolic knowledge insofar as it is a "unknown knowledge", a knowledge which the subject does not know he knows" (Evans 1996: 96), can be accessed through his fantasies, dreams, and verbal blunders. Similarly, his proverbs and figures of speech, where Paul Ricoeur claims that "everything has already been said in enigma" (1974: 288). However, without examining the dimension of the unknown that Fredric Jameson links to the text itself in The Political Unconscious (1981), this study will be lacking. The text's "wants to be" is a contributing factor to "the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity," according to this interpretation. The protagonist, who is moved at a mystic moment to refer to himself as a "arrow" in his deity's bow, will then demonstrate that what Arrow of God desires is fundamentally at odds with his own; in other words, we are dealing with a narrative whose fundamental values are at odds with one another.

WHAT EZEULU WANTS TO BE

Umuofia of Things Fall Apart and Umuaro of Arrow of God are both traditional communities, yet they function in very different ways. No one person in Umuofia has the authority to make decisions that have an impact on the entire community. Rather, decisions regarding things like war and peace are made by an invisible senate. The opening scenes, in which an outrage has been committed against an Umuaro resident by someone in Mbaino and the elders convene to address the situation, make reference to it. However, we learn that "Ogbuefi Ezeugo was a powerful orator and was always chosen to speak on such occasions" (Things Fall Apart 3) in place of an open discussion by the elders. However, Ogbuefi Ezeugo's speech demonstrates that the issue had been considered elsewhere and a choice regarding the course of action had been reached. His job is to help the elders' congress accept and be accountable for this choice.In Arrow of God, a small group of persons with great titles do appear. They are granted the honor of being referred to as "Umuaro" (208). The rarity of this occurrence implies that Umuaro has "reached the very end of things." But in this case, they appear to have no more weight than a moral authority that may be disregarded when the situation calls for it.

The Congress of Elders is the platform for political choices, yet it is a divisive and contentious body. Even though they were taken for private and personal motives, some of Ezeulu's judgments on matters of public importance in this power vacuum are having a significant impact on the clan as a whole. This may have something to do with his deity's crucial involvement in the establishment and survival of the town. The following is the story of the deity's institution: 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.

Because of the priest's choices and decisions, there is a certain ebb and flow of allegiances in this story. This corresponds to turns and twists, adjustments in the narrative focus, repositioning of protagonists, and problems in the action. First, he refused to support the war against Okperi (chapter 2) and provided a truthful account of what happened, as Captain Winter bottom claims in chapter 3, or as his adversary Ogbuefi Nwaka claims in chapter 13, acting as "the white man's witness that year we fought for our land – and lost." The second is that, as the others of Umuaro, including his best buddy, say, "to join in desecrating the land," he sent his son to the white man's school so that he could be his eyes in the white man's camp (chapter 16). The third is that he declined the warrant chieftaincy that the colonial government gave him because, in his words, "Ezeulu will not be anybody's chief, except Ulu" (chapter 14). "How could he refuse the very thing he had been planning and scheming for all these years?" his rivals wonder in shock. However, Nwaka uses the incredible tale to further his own agenda: "The man is as proud as a lunatic," he declared. "This proves what I have always told people, that he inherited his mother's madness (chapter 15). However, according to chapter 14, the white guy views the refusal as "making a fool of the British Administration in public." Refusing to call the New Yam festival, where "the white man was, without knowing it, his ally," is the fourth option (chapter 15). With the exception of this one ally, he is now completely alone since both friends and enemies have deserted him, believing that he has betrayed them (chapter 12). In this choice, he personally advances the goals of the recently introduced white man's religion in Umuaro in a way that no one, least of all himself, would have anticipated:

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).

Everyone else participating in the event takes note of Ezeulu's decisions, although he shows no public opinion when making them. He sees "being alone" as "as familiar to me now as are dead bodies to the earth," therefore it doesn't cause him any fear (chapter 12). Despite this confidence, he does eventually find himself alone, and it is at that moment that he feels as though his god has abandoned him: Imagine a man who, in contrast to lesser men, never wears a shield when he goes to battle because he is aware that bullets and matchet blows will bounce off his medicine-boiled skin. Imagine him finding out in the middle of a conflict that the power has abruptly abandoned him. When can we expect it to happen again? Will he say, "Hold!" to the matchets, arrows, and guns? I want to get back to my medicine hut as soon as possible to investigate the situation; could it be that a youngster in my home has inadvertently broken the taboo around my medicine? No.

In complete awe, Ezeulu fell to the ground (230; original italics). Ezeulu's self-confidence was based on a strong bond with his god, to the point where he occasionally loses sight of their distinct identities. Instead of any particular "thing" that "beats the drum to which Ezeulu dances," it is this sense (chapter 12).Identity blurring is a significant information gap that most likely results in self-delusion. Ezeulu's knowledge is one thing, but reality is quite another. This also applies to the participants who are observing him. The populace believes that he has been plotting to become king of Umuaro all along. Though he came to it in a different way, the District Officer essentially has the same notion. But when he offers Eeulu the chieftaincy, he does it with a "I-know-this-will-knock-you-over feeling" because he is so certain of it, or at least that it would perfectly serve his goals (chapter 14).

According to chapter 12, Ezeulu is happy to be Ulu's priest on a conscious level and wishes to utilize his

position to "tell Umuaro: come out from this because there is death there or do this because there is profit in it." This goes a long way, and by extension, he wants to be nothing more than Ulu's priest, leading that deity into uncharted territory. Ulu is first and foremost a functional deity, having been made and erected to guard the town during times of conflict. He will eventually develop a personality, albeit one that seems to be limited to the Umuaro universe.

He is currently being recreated by Ezeulu, who is giving him the abilities of paternal providence and omniscience. Ezeulu's status as the spokesperson who declares his will, decisions, and the providentially vouchsafed guidelines for profit and prosperity would be unparalleled throughout Umuaro and its history if Ulu's deity were elevated in this manner. This is most likely what he understands from his role as Ulu's chief and his adversaries' desire to become king. However, Ezidemili would be more accurate in describing him as an envious guy who strives to get as much power and influence, privilege, and dignity as possible for himself (42). Although he is not explicitly aware of what he wants, it is part of the mystery that motivates him and influences his public behavior, including his arrogance.

Even if Ezeulu's proverbs are wonderfully provocative, they are usually ad rem. He expresses to himself his current awareness of the issue that has just reached a climax in the thought-representative and spontaneous poem "Who ever sent his son up the palm to gather nuts and then took an axe and felled the tree?" He is completely submissive to the god and serves as Ulu's tool in the conflict with the Umuaro people, but he is ultimately captured and killed in the middle of the battle. It also conveys his perception of his connection to the god. It is a shared characteristic.

Ezeulu applies this to the white district officer who, after the warrant chieftaincy affair, turns out to have less fight in him than he had claimed. "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." However, it is even more about him and represents a different interpretation of this work, specifically as a series of the information seeker. Therefore, it relates to another of his sayings, "The curious monkey gets a bullet in the face" (44). This story could be interpreted as the unconscious desire to learn what the power he is supposed to possess is. Ezeulu, who lacks the Hegelian understanding "that he who knows about a limitation is already free of it" (Cassirer 1961: 75), is brought to nothing by the existence of constraints in the power he is believed to possess in the following crucial section. Not only does he desire power, but he also wants complete control over its reality:

Ezeulu often questioned whether his immense control over the year, the crops, and consequently the populace was real. Although he did not select the day, it was true that he named the day for the feast of the pumpkin leaves and the feast of the new yam. He was only an observer. He had no more influence than a youngster might have over a goat that was supposedly his. He would find the goat food and take care of it as long as it was alive. However, he would discover its true owner the day it was killed. It must be more than that, since the Ulu Chief Priest was more than that. There wouldn't be a festival—neither planting nor reaping—if he didn't specify the day. But could he say no? Never had a Chief Priest declined. Therefore, it was impossible. He wouldn't risk it (3).

According to Ezeulu, power is any ability he has to exercise influence over the populace. The ultimate definition and purpose of power is this exercise of control. According to Ulu rituals, he must consume one sacred yam at the start of every lunar month and celebrate the New Yam Feast after he has used up all of his stock. He would never know if he had the authority to call the feast or not as long as everything went according to plan. This knowledge, which he could only acquire by experience, is what stimulates his mind in this situation; it is equivalent to banned knowledge because he lacks a valid means of testing it.Despite this prohibition, he doesn't appear to have given up on the idea of learning. He now responds by attacking the unseen adversary who first used the word "dare" in his thoughts:

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 fightand 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.

Although it is a figure of speech, Ezeulu's adage here announces a funeral. But in the end, it will come to pass. Obika's burial is the actual one that will be held, but as his passing makes it seem as though Ezeulu himself had passed away (228), the funeral is also Ezeulu's, and on a symbolic level, it is also the funeral of the gods and Umuaro culture. These funerals, which start with Obika, are the result of the crisis that Ezeulu helped to start. Despite having a fever and being unable to lead the Ogbazulobodo, Obika consents to do so because, he told himself, "If I say no, 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). However, a psychological process known as "the transference" is also occurring, which is brought on by "the synchronic intersection of the diachronic fantasy" (Boyko-Head 2002). Ezeulu unwittingly shifts responsibility for the looming disaster to his son Oduche, as though he already knows what is happening. 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. His status as a "good man" (Aristotle, chapter 13) and his complete rights as a tragic hero are unaffected by any of this. 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:

Returning to the obi, Nwafo asked his father if he understood what the bell was saying. Ezeulu gave a headshake. "Leave your yam, leave your cocoyam, and come to church," it says. That is Oduche's statement. "Yes," Ezeulu responded carefully. "Does it instruct them to abandon their cocoyam and yam? The song of extermination is then being sung. (42-43)In a nightmare that strikes him just as his son Obika's Ogbazulobodois is soaring past his complex on his route to the plaza, where he dies, Ezeulu hears this song of annihilation again, and it is beautifully portrayed in the laments of Idemili Python. As Freud would remark, the hero in this dream is not "his majesty the ego," in contrast to the awful enough dream he had while imprisoned at Okperi. In the former, Nwaka and the Umuaro people condemn, abuse, and expel his grandfather, who is the Ezeulu.

According to Bishop and Philips (2009), this is in line with the "dream work pattern as Freud describes it (overdetermination, condensation, and displacement)." In order to prevent the ego from being humiliated in his own fantasy, he is himself displaced. Other individuals are playing important roles in the nightmare that marks Obika's calamity, intruding and blindly breaching his privacy while he is helpless to stop them, acting as like he didn't exist. His sense of his own futility, with the concomitant horror and despair, is cemented when he realizes that in his desperation, there is utterly no one to hear his plea for help. In tragic words, this is a moment of discovery (anagnôrisis): he already has unconscious knowledge of the implications of his wish to know. What is hollowed out in the dream is the core of Arrow of God's desire for status as the divine son, absolute power, the ability to recreate Ulu in his own image, and Umuaro to comply with all of his wishes. This is what the nightmare means to a man who was so confident in himself that he snapped at his older son Edogo's report on Obika being flogged by the white road maker: "Were you there? asked his dad. Or would you make a vow in front of a god based solely on what an inebriated man says? If I was sure of my son do you think I would sit here today, talking to you while a man who pokes his finger into my eyes goes home to his bed? He would understand the power in my mouth if I did nothing else, only said a few words to him (98–99).

II. REALM OF FREEDOM AND REALM OF NECESSITY

According to Roland Barthes, literary conflict is the accomplishment of one of the "major articulations of praxis" (1977:107); depiction of these is regarded as an independent activity in Aristotelian critique. Marxist criticism, on the other hand, acts very differently. "The detection of a host of distinct generic messages - some 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" is the only purpose of this analysis of the relationships of struggle (Jameson 99). With what may 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, the superstructure/substructure dyad is the general rule for "detection of [the] host of distinct generic messages." A second, less popular paradigm is Lukács's, in which power struggles can occur within the same class, leading to "quantitative" change (1976: 434).

Ezeulu and Ogbuefi Nwaka, Ezidemili's surrogate, Ulu and Idemili, Ezeulu and the colonial government, and Ezeulu or Ulu and Umuaro are the main lines of conflict in Arrow of God. This conflict eventually turns into one between Ulu's cult, or tradition, and the Christian church, or modernity. Naturally, there are other patterns that overlap and contribute to the dense tissue of the text, but they are smaller in scope than any of the aforementioned. Although the conflict between Ezeulu and Umuaro seems to get the most attention, it is one that is evolving in surprising ways. Early on in his tirade, Nwaka seems to be threatening Ulu with a fight on Umuaro's behalf. However, there is also a mystic moment in the story where Ezeulu is certain he has heard the deity speak to him and lay out the problems in detail:

“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.

"Who told you that this was your own battle, which you could control to your liking?" "You want to save your friends who brought you palm wine he-he-he-he-he!" The god chuckled in a skeletal, dry manner, just like spirits do. "Take care not to stand in the way of my victim or you might get strikes that aren't intended for you! Are you unaware of the consequences of an elephant fight? Leave me to resolve my dispute with Idemili, who wants to ruin me in order for his python to gain power, and go home and sleep. Now you tell me how it concerns you. Go home and sleep, I say. 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)

Nwaka would have issued the challenge on behalf of Idemili rather than Umuaro in light of this experience. However, Ezeulu appears to disregard this mystic insight in the end and acts as though he is the main character in the battle rather than just "an arrow in his god's bow" (192). In fact, in the story's final movement, the people are positive that they have been fighting against Ezeulu, with the god siding with them 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 calendarand 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 falls 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.

III. CONCLUSION

Despite Ezeulu's misdirected longing as the unknown, his actions reveal his complexity, making him perhaps Chinua Achebe's most complicated figure. As if by "emulation," the text reveals and proceeds to its final reference, which is the first question he asks himself on the truth of his authority (Foucault 2005: 22). He already considers himself to be half-spirit, half-man (Arrow of God192), and his unidentified yearning is driving him to the point where he is losing the ability to distinguish between Ulu and himself. This Unknown may have divined for him in the mystic experience where he hears a voice he takes to be that of his deity since he has gotten so uptight and psychologically conditioned. "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) despite having heard the voice and deciphered its meaning. He is the only actor in this situation, or he has replaced the deity and assumed control of the battle. In Greek tragedy, this anarchic drive is characterized by a lack of moderation (sophrôsinē). As for the writing itself, it is unsure of its own desires. 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.

Although Ezeulu breaks several rules in his novel, he comes out as a "hard-pressed hero" who suffers rather than a villain for a number of reasons (Jauss 1974:298). Though it may be operating in the background, the strength of Ogbuefi Nwaka's unwavering animosity, which verges on hatred, may be overlooked despite the narrator's compassionate demeanor and the severity of his tragedy being sufficiently apparent. Ezeulu, who is obviously

feeling more and more alone, may have been impacted by this animosity as well because the elders seem to take pleasure in the phony arguments as a show rather than using what he would consider sound judgment. As though the unseen forces at play in human events had also chosen a side, Ezeulu's house ultimately collapses, his life and hopes are ruined. However, his tragedy is not the only one. In addition to Ezeulu, Ulu and the ancient order—including the worship of Idemili—also lose everything. The sight of Christians now makes their Python flee. For the populace, their system represents a lack of freedom. Although the number of Christians has undoubtedly increased, it is unlikely that any genuine conversions have occurred. The people of Umuaro themselves have benefited from being liberated from Ulu's presumed supervisory control over the agricultural cycle and from their fear of the old gods. They can now produce and harvest their crops based only on the seasons' natural progression.

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