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Achebe's Political Philosophy in *Arrow of God*

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Achebe's Political Philosophy in *Arrow of God*

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Letter of Recommendation

Santosh Khanal has completed his thesis entitled “Achebe’s Political Philosophy in *Arrow of God*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2071/07/15 B. S. to 2072/12/23 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Approval Letter

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Abstract

Arrow of God by Chinua Achebe is a political and cultural novel which dramatizes how political power was exercised and colonial rule was legitimized through different strategies during 1920s Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. It highlights the way British people build the infrastructure needed to continue their so-called self imposed project of civilizing and modernizing Nigerian people saving them from the state of barbarism because Europeans take Africans as the antithesis of civilization. Moreover, it accumulates the saga of pains and sufferings, troubles and tribulations, plight and predicament of African people under British rule as well as afterwards. Through this novel, Achebe elucidates his political philosophy that power corrupts people and literature has close nexus with society and can be used as a means of social change. Like his other works, *Arrow of God* also epitomizes the consequences of colonialism and imperialism in Africa and its growing dependency on Europe and European people for everything thereby bellowing universal appeal to change the course of action in time.

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I. Literature as Philosophy : Achebe's Political Beliefs

There is an affinity between literature and philosophy as they are mainly concerned with raising social consciousness and speculating about the good society. They influence thoughts about current political situation and societal relationship prevailed in a particular society. Philosophy and literature offer critical evaluation of existing and possible forms of political arrangements, beliefs and practices. In addition, they provide insights into political concepts and justification for normative judgment about politics and society. They also create awareness of possibilities for social change.

The imaginative writer, through his or her work, can offer critical appraisal of existing political situation and in this way can mould the actions of society, its beliefs, ideas and values. Ideas contained in literature can influence people's perception about politics and the best means of effecting political change. Literature may affect the way people think about politics, the way they perceive their political system and the approach they embrace to the challenge of political change. In this sense, literature also performs normative function. The imaginative writer thinks his or her work can set an ideal standard for society and state. By exposing the political situation, a writer can directly or indirectly tell us about what ought to be or what we ought to do. This way the work of an imaginative writer can serve the function of political philosophy. That is to say, the literature can be significant for understanding the political situation and invariably help to show a way toward. The work of imaginative writer is significant for the understanding of politics in a given socio-cultural context.

Both philosophy and literature broadens our experience and way of thinking regarding the particular ideas and concepts. By employing reasons, philosophy tries to discover not only what is, but what ought to be. A reader going through African

literature is exposed to the conditions, of modern Africa, especially the continent's political culture. He/she comes to know about the pre-colonial days of Africa, the European control of Africa under the guise of civilizing mission and the subsequent subjugation and humiliation of the Africans. In this way, literature and philosophy help readers making conscious about the varieties of way of looking at things which can be significant for the social, cultural and political transformation.

Philosophy and literature broaden the horizons of society by operating outside standard laws and formulae. Philosophy does not limit itself to the past, nor to the present but attempts to probe into what should be, the yet to come. Literature is also not limited to the past or the present, but includes things yet to be. Chinua Achebe asserts that writers write because they see a vision of the world better than what exists, a possibility of mankind rising higher than they have presently risen. Literature and philosophy are thus united in their ability to transcend the empirical realm and enter into a universe of idea, thereby asserting the contemporary socio-cultural, political situation and looking the worldview in a new era.

Literature enlarges the experiences of human being. It provides the vivid depiction about the socio-political phenomenon in a particular country or in a society because it is "a subset of human culture" and it "reflects the human condition" (Raipuri 124). Most of the early poems written by Africans offer a criticism of the political situation under colonialism. These poems helped to mould people's perception and understanding of their political situation. David Diop's *The Vulture* serves as a good example. This poem criticizes Africa's colonial experience the hypocrisy of the European in controlling Africa under the guise of a civilizing mission. The role of Christian missionaries in converting Africa to a religion teaching men to be content with poverty is also shown as a calculated effort to favour tyrants

by giving them passive slaves. By using the image of the vulture, a carrying-eating scavenger, Diop casts doubt on the right to any nation or group of people to impose their reign on other. The works written by Africans are basically based on the tremendous hatred toward the Europeans because “literature advocates change and condemns those which prevent man from progressing” (Raipuri 127). In this sense, literature and life have close affinity.

In the same vein, how literature does have the capacity to capture the socio-political scenario can also be open in the novel *God's Bits of Wood* by Sembene Ousmane. This novel portrays the kind of social and political atmosphere that breeds revolution - a society where injustice entrenches. The white workers are paid more for working less while the blacks workers are paid less for working more. The health service and other things that might promote the wellbeing of mankind are for the whites where the blacks are ignored. This shows the troubled, weak, and sorrowful predicament of the blacks in Africa.

Both literature and philosophy perform social function thereby exposing the social phenomenon at its best. By employing criticism, the philosopher is able to challenge and extend established traditions. Equally, literature is a means that can be used for definite social purposes, acting as an instrument of revolution by challenging and compelling us to take a second look at things that we may hitherto have taken for granted. Achebe insists that the issue of social consciousness is vital to literature, especially to an African writer. Philosophy also serves as a vital tool for social reconstruction, thereby raising the social consciousness of human being. Literature as a philosophy depicts the clear picture about the system, traditions, culture; customs prevailed in a particular society from ancient time. It is also possible through literature to show how people are united in a society due to accepted beliefs and customs.

Literature depicts the societal relationship among different tribes and political systems. In one sense, literature is the mirror of society where everything is reflected as they happen in real life as well. Literature as a philosophy has the capacity to capture its social phenomenon-cultural, religious, economic as well as political. Literature can reveal much about the political arrangements, political principle, beliefs and practices in a place. Literature, through the invention of characters and events, can make an observation on issues concerning about the political situation.

Chinua Achebe tries to capture the socio-political phenomenon prevailed in Africa. Achebe has inspired many generations of African writers to express the African experience through their works at its best. Achebe's pre-independence novels offer invaluable insight into the traditional life and events from colonialism with their burdens, lessons and challenges to the moulding of an African identity. His post-independence works reflect his direct experience and examine defining political event in modern African history. Achebe mobilizes Igbo history and culture to articulate the upheavals and dislocations of colonial and post-colonial existence. They also express faith in the potential through their works of African peoples and suggestions concerning their future. Achebe, through his works, challenges the mischievous, dangerous and unfounded view of Africa by the west as 'the heart of darkness' people by savages, lacking in intelligible socio-political system.

The works of Chinua Achebe have explored the African experience within certain context giving particular attention about the insightful portrayal of political situation in Africa. They also offer views on political reconstruction, a search for a new order in Africa. Achebe holds anti-colonialism view as "he seeks to produce the effect of a pre-colonial reality as an Igbo-centric response to a Euro-centrally constructed imperial reality" (Yousaf 38). His works basically portray the disrupting

effect of an extremely imposed power system (the British) upon the African tradition, cultures, customs and system.

Most of the works by Chinua Achebe deal with the social and political problem facing his country, including the difficulties of past colonial legacy. His works are also concerned with modern African life and history thereby helping to reshape the perception of African history, social and cultural circumstances. It is through the literature, Achebe vividly depicts the African native people. Literary works deserves the strength to capture its detailed social and political circumstances, scenarios prevailed in a particular community or in a society thereby functioning the purpose of political philosophy.

Chinua Achebe's first novel *Things Fall Apart* indicates the violence which colonial domination had brought to African societies. How the colonial mentality of the whites has caused political disintegration in Africa has been clearly shown in the novel. Contrary to the Western conception of Africa as the 'antithesis of civilization, *Things Fall Apart* indicates that Africa has a sound political past. After the arrival of white man to Africa, the sound structure of African society is replaced by political destabilization with the widespread political power exercised by whites Europeans over African people and society as a whole. The white man's prison becomes full of men who had offended against white man's law. The respect for traditions, customs, rites, rituals are attacked after the emergence of whites to Africa.

Achebe, through his works shows cultural and political disintegration in African societies caused by white Europeans intervention. The intervention upon the culture, tradition has caused alienation in African people. Alienation is the state of being separated from one's cultures environment, community, institution, belief and so on. The new laws and the system of the whites are imposed leading all the blacks'

people to the alienation, who are bound to retain norms and values laws and system of the traditional African society.

Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* depicts the political and cultural disintegration in African communities caused by white man's intervention disconnecting the African from society. The main character of the novel Okonkwo Obi grows up in his native Nigeria, a country that has witnessed the spread of colonialism and mingled those traditions with the traditions of native people's living in Nigeria. In the novel, Obi travels to England in search of an education and then returns to Nigeria. Obi struggles to embrace the way of the British rather than to maintain their own ethnic identity. He is recognized, respected and successful as long as he adopts to European traditions. The attempts of acquiring all the paraphernalia of the new system (the European) and yet still retaining the ideals of one's traditional society (the Nigerian) vividly depict the state of being rootlessness. This very rootlessness of tradition cultures, customs has created the alienation to the African people. Achebe, through this character Obi, tries to expose the situations that the Nigerian/African people have witnessed due to the imposition of colonial power. By showing the effects of alienation that has on the character, Obi Achebe exposes the situation that has brought the political crisis and the social evils in a African society.

Arrow of God accumulates the way Nigeria undergoes colonization process by British government through its officials and Christian missionaries. In this novel two cultures confront their differences. Achebe portrays the disrupting effect of external intervention and interference in Africa. This forceful attack is against the sentiments of Nigerian people. Conflicts within the Igbo society increased with the consequences of external invasion that results disaster in the Igbo society which disintegrates from within and reorients itself to Christianity:

In *Arrow of God* we see that the traditions are undermined by the coming of Christianity the power of the British colonial office and most importantly by Ezeulu's inflexibility and insistence on adhering to tradition . . . lust for power motivates many of the characters in *Arrow of God*. As the British administration's power rises the men in Umuaro discover that their power is diminishing. All the men discover that their power is limited when the British administration steps in and stops the war with Okperi. (Fagrutheen 31)

The indigenous and original Nigerian culture and social systems are under attack of British power and in the name of civilizing it; the British people are infatuated with power motive and destroy Nigerian culture without any reason. With its intricate and complex narrative, the present novel shows how power is exercised and mobilized in order suppress, dominate and dehumanized Nigerian people. The novel is analyzed as "a counter-narrative" because Achebe "portrays Africans as real human beings in order to correct their (colonizers') misrepresentation of African literary texts" (Cook 13). Similarly the politics of colonizers and their diplomacy of indirect rule are also presented in the text as "the idea of indirect rule allows the colonizers to rule the colonized people through appointed native chiefs (Maja-Pearce 18). It means the colonizers leave no stone unturned in order to dominate and rule over the native colonized people.

When two cultures collide, there starts the process of change but in case of Nigeria it is not a positive change rather it is the loss of the culture. People are forced to accept the systems of foreign culture. In this situation, Ezeulu, the main character and the chief priest of Ulu considers himself as "a watchman" of his culture and civilization

(3). But his power was “no more than the power of a child over a goat that was said to be his” (3).

The present research searches the overall political philosophy of Achebe in *Arrow of God*. Achebe believes that power corrupts people and British people have arrogance of their power. Here, power is misused and abused by the so-called colonizers in the name of civilizing and modernizing African people, their culture and civilization. Intrusion of British people over Nigerian only brings rivalry between them and Nigerian people are compelled to revolt this atrocity, cruelty and inhumanity and as a result British arrogance is crumbled down.

Achebe, through his works depicts the white European's imposition of power upon native African people and its impact upon them. Most of the novels by Achebe show the adverse consequence of the misuse of power by whites. Typically, power is the ability of one person to exercise authority, strong influence or even absolute rule on another, to the point of getting total compliance by any means possible. Achebe's post colonial novels offer the view that how colonialism introduced a new political order into African societies by establishing territories and boundaries where none had hitherto existed. Even the state is made up of armies, polices, officials, judges, courts, punishment, prisons that are helpful to force the colonized into submission. The European administrations were also set up in the guise of providing benefits for African people. The construction of road, railway harbours was undertaken to facilitate the movement of goods and raw materials to and from colonizing country,. In this way, colonial power was exercised over African.

The misuse of power is evident in Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*. It shows how the African traditional system is ruptured and supplanted by the white man's intervention along with the establishedment of administration by force. His novels

like *A Man of the People* (1966), *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), *Another Africa* (1998) and his stories and poems are also concerned with the saga of pains and sufferings, troubles and tribulations, plight and predicament and so on of African people under British rule as well as afterwards. In this sense, Achebe's writings are about the problems of colonial rule and its aftershocks. Through an artistic exploration of power at both communal and individual levels, Achebe's novels create vivid awareness in the mind of the reader about the limits of power, its destructive capacity and rude consequences.

Chinua Achebe presents his view regarding the importance of leadership, which is essential for healthy social, cultural and political transformation in a particular society or in a country. Achebe is of the opinion that the strong commitment of the political leaders can solve the nations' problems and shortcomings. Achebe holds the view that only the competent leaders can understand the art of governance and can achieve development promoting the general welfare of the public. For him, in order to transfer the African society, leaders should act as role models. It is these leaders, who should create new order, which will ensure the interests of minorities and others disadvantage people.

Achebe reveals the importance of the role of leaders creating and maintaining a healthy political system thereby solving all the troubles and difficulties faced in a society. In this light, Plato holds the opinion that "unless either philosophers become kings in their countries or those who are now called kings and rules come to be sufficiently inspired with a genuine desire for wisdom; unless, that is to say, political power and philosophy meet together, there can be no rest from troubles" (234). This way, Achebe advocates a gradual reformist agenda which is needed for the transformation of socio-political situation in a society or in a country. The political

ideologies contained in Achebe's works can provoke a critical re-evaluation of ideas and beliefs to understand basic social facts.

Chinua Achebe offers a different insight into the problem of dependency and underdevelopment in Africa. Achebe sees the hindrance in unwillingness of leaders to accept their responsibilities and act as role models for the underdevelopment in Africa. Ultimately, what is needed are committed leaders who can bring about a positive change in general social attitudes, formulate good policies for the development of a country and the welfare of people. Achebe identifies the dominant problems preventing Africa from achieving social transformation, ascribing them to internal factors initiated and perpetuated by African themselves. Achebe adopts the political ideology on a reformist agenda. For him, leaders must act as a role models for the transformation of Africa societies, resolving Africa's problem.

In short, Achebe's works deal with the misuse and abuse of political power by the white people in Africa in order to prolong their hegemony. White domination according to him hinders African people in their social and political development. *The Arrow of God* deals with western mobilization of religious power to capture, to colonize and to dominate Nigerian people. The effects of Christianization and Westernization are clearly observed throughout the novel. Superiority complex and big brother arrogance of the western people support them to inferiorize Nigerian indigenous people, culture and religion. In this context of the novel, political view and concept of Achebe is studied in this research. In order to organize the research in standard format, it is divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with the overall political view of Achebe as expressed in his different books. It also comprises of literature review, significance of the study, Achebe's literary achievement, the relationship between literature and politics as well as literature and philosophy. The

second chapter is concerned with the textual analysis of *Arrow of God* with the help of his overall political philosophy. Similarly the third chapter remains as the conclusion which squeezes the crux and kernel of the research in its recapitulated and summarized form.

II. Achebe's Political Philosophy in *Arrow of God*

Political philosophy as a theoretical discipline is mainly concerned with the critical evaluation of existing and possible forms of political arrangements, beliefs and practices. In addition, it influences thoughts about political currents and conditions. As there is an affinity between literature and philosophy, both engage in similar speculation about good society, good government and what is good for the humanity. The ideas contained in literature can influence people's perception about politics and about the best means of affecting political change because “what happens in a society is reflected in literary works in one form or another” (Dubey 84). It is through literature, which offers the existing political situation of particular society or country, that people raise the awareness to criticize or support the existing political beliefs and systems of their country. Political philosophy can be defined as the philosophical reflection on the ideal standards for society and government analyzing and interpreting the political ideas and political situation. Political philosophy thus serves as a vital tool for social reconstruction thereby raising social consciousness of people living in a particular society or country. It helps us to analyze political beliefs and general political principle.

African literature as political philosophy helps in understanding the contemporary African political situation, thereby giving knowledge of European control of Africa under the guise of the civilizing mission and the subsequent subjugation and humiliation of the African people. African literature offers the criticism of political situation under colonialism as “the primary duty of literature is to initiate the erasure of discrimination based on nation, country, color, ethnicity, class or religion and to represent the group that takes practical steps with this aim in mind” (Raipuri 128). By exposing the ills and evils of colonization, African literature makes

people conscious of their fundamental rights. This helps to figure out people's perception and understanding of their political situation.

Achebe's political philosophy is grounded on the existing political situation of Africa giving expression to the tremendous hatred to the superiority and colonial tendency of Europeans towards the native African people. Achebe, through his works, depicts that the greatest hindrance to the national development in African state is the perpetuation of historical legacy of colonialism. He believes that “the gesture of writing about the colonized generates a counter-hegemonic discourse which not only debunks the dominant mythologies of empire, but also helps constitute the modern community of the nation” (Kwame 156). The effect of colonialism can be noticed through the subordinate relationship which is evident between the west and Africa. Having known the negative consequences of colonialism and its effects upon colonized country and its people, Achebe totally disregards the colonial mentality of whites. In this regard the term colonialism may be defined as control by one power over a dependent area or people. Colonialism tends to dominate and exploit the colonial subjects in the strength of political power.

Achebe, in *Arrow of God*, shows the legacy of colonialism in African state making African people subordinate to the Europeans who exercise their power over them. The direct intervention of Europeans towards the native African land makes the clear indication of exercise of colonial power. How the white European leader is domineering and decisive over native people can be realized from this quote from the text: “The white man, winter bottom brought soldiers to Umuaro and stopped war” (27). This exposes the decisive power of white man in the African land. It is the white European leader who has the power to declare and stop the war. The novel *Arrow of God* dramatizes the situation that the war is ended from the initiation of whites. The

power of maintaining peace and declaring war is in the hand of white Europeans instead of the native African people in their land. In this sense, African people are powerless and helpless in their own land.

Chinua Achebe has functional view of art. He is against “art for art’s sake” and he “asserts that art is for the service of human beings” (Kalu 195). Literature has a social function. It makes the people conscious about their situation and in this sense encourages challenging the atrocity and inhumanity. As Achebe supports the function of literature to change the society and people; his ideas are similar to that of Akhtar Husain Raipuri:

The benchmark of true literature is that it relays the aims of humanity in a way that enables the greatest number of people to accept its influence. For this, one needs to be inclined towards serving humanity in the first place, because just like prophet-hood, literature demands self-sacrifice rather than the harangue of a professional pontiff! It is important for the writer to understand the past, the present and the future so that his compassion is not wasted and he can explain the signs and intimations implicit in history. (127-28)

Like Raipuri, Achebe believes in functional aspect of literature i.e. literature has the purpose of revealing the facts and realities of people thereby making them conscious about the problems of the society. For him “literature not only presents palpable subjects like alienation, assimilation and transformation in society but also reflects the palpable issues, such as, historical, political and social facts” (Dubey 85). In this sense, literature should be used for the benefits of people.

Achebe holds the opinion that the white Europeans have the direct power over the native African people. They cause the war between natives directly or indirectly

and ultimately the war, conflict and struggle is stopped only in the interest of the white Europeans. With the claim of civilizing mission, the white Europeans enter and try to interrupt the affairs of the native people having the underlying interest of overpowering them.

As the story *Arrow of God* in develops there is the war between Umuaro and Okperi over a piece of land. The war becomes intensified when the people of Umuaro killed four men of Okperi making others threatening about the forth coming danger. The sense of fear and danger covers the faces of all people living in the villages. This war is settled with the arrival of white man to the native African land making direct intervention. The settlement of war by British colonial administration which is between Umuaro and its neighboring village focuses the British rule in Eastern Nigeria. This is further intensified by these following lines:

The white man, not satisfied that he had stopped the war, had gathered all the guns in Umuaro and asked the soldiers to break them in the face of all, except three or fourth which he carried away. Afterwards he sat in judgment over Umuaro and Okperi and gave the disputed land to Okperi. (28)

The above lines constitute a powerful evidence to prove the fact that the white Europeans have the colonial power over the native African people. As a master and controller of the land the white man gives the disputed land to Okperi. It is because of the exercise of his power; the white man stops war and gives judgment to the native people. Achebe's political philosophy regarding the white Europeans as the master of the African land and people, who try to rule over the native land in various ways is proved from the above lines.

Achebe has the tremendous hatred to the colonial intention and big brother arrogance of the Europeans towards the native African people. Achebe depicts that the Europeans regard Africa as the heart of darkness peopled by savages, lacking intelligible socio-political system. The Europeans try to make others believe that they have come to African land with the mission of making uncivilized people (African people) civilized. But beneath the surface lies the legacy of colonialism. Achebe, in *Arrow of God* shows that the white Europeans (the British) think themselves superior in knowledge and power. They regard the African people living in a state of *tabula rasa*. The white Europeans consider their duty to civilize the African people and save them from the pervasive darkness. The same sentiment that the white Europeans' big brother arrogance regarding African people as native, raw, uncivilized and ignorant can be clearly visible in the following lines expressed by Captain Winterbottom, who with self-indulgence noted the transformation in his houseboy, Boniface: "He is a fine specimen isn't he? He's been with me for four years. He was a little boy of thirteen by my own calculation; they've no idea of years-when I took him on. He was absolutely raw" (35). These lines reflect the thinking of Europeans towards the African people who are in Europeans' view nothing more than raw materials that need to be specified to give actual shape. The terms like civilization, knowledge, power, capability, and kindness are attached to Europeans giving positive connotation whereas the terms like un-civilization, emptiness, barbarism, and incapability are attached to African people giving negative connotation. The Europeans regard African people living in pervasive darkness. The political philosophy of Chinua Achebe regarding European's big brother arrogance is truly reflected in the above lines.

Achebe as an African writer tries to rupture the so-called thinking of Europeans towards African advocating boldly about the richness of his cultures and

customs. Achebe in *Arrow of God* points out that the Europeans think themselves superior to the native people in all aspects like cultures, customs, knowledge and so on. What Europeans expect is that the outward reputation of Europeans rich in cultures, customs, language, knowledge and so on should reflect their superiority. They do not want to be inferior and submissive in the eyes of native African people. The so-called thinking of 'Big Brother Arrogance' is reflected through these lines: "It was absolutely imperative, captain Winterbottom told Wright that every Europeans in Nizeria, particularly those in such a lonely outpost as Okperi should not lower themselves in the eyes of the natives" (32). These lines clearly show what Europeans are and what they think. The white Europeans are always worrying about the maintenance their superiority in terms of culture, civilization and way of life. They rule over the native African people in the name of their burden of civilizing mission. The inner ideology of superiority of the white Europeans is nicely reflected in the above lines when captain Winterbottom tells Wright that they should not lower themselves in the eyes of the native people.

Achebe opines that the white Europeans have the colonial motive in order to rule the African land. The Europeans or the British administration wants to have the authority over the territory of the African land which is the first and foremost step to move forward so as to fulfill their colonial intention. Supporting this idea of colonialism Michel Foucault puts forward his notion in the following way:

Colonialism as a type of subjugation was a spatial imposition because it involved in the conquest of ethnics groups and political entities and the subsequent deprivation of African and other indigenous people of control over their territory, a concept which is not doubt a geographical

notion, but it is first of all a juridico-political one the area controlled by a certain kind of power. (68)

As stated above, in the novel *Arrow of God* the Europeans have set the British administration in the African land that is Eastern Nigeria with the intention of colonialism. The occupying of territory helps them to know the systems, customs and lifestyles of people living in their native country thereby making easier to rule over them. It shows the white Europeans craze for spatial authority over the African land which is visible in the following dialogue from *Arrow of God* between two Europeans Clarke and Captain Winter bottom.

We set up a commission to discover all the facts, as though facts meant anything. We imagine that the more facts we can obtain about our Africans the easier it will be to rule them. But fact . . . Facts are important, cut in winter bottom, and commission of inquiry could be useful. The fault of occur administration is that they invariably appoint the wrong people and set aside the advice of those of us who have been here for years. (109)

The above quote transparently exposes the colonial mentality of the white Europeans who want to prolong and continue their direct rule on the basis of collection of facts regarding the African land and people. It is also clear that they want to set up a commission to discover the facts which enable them to know their systems, customs and lifestyles of people. Achebe exposes the fake activities of the white Europeans in the native African land by bringing this very occupying intention of the Europeans into the light. Although the Europeans are seen busy in doing different activities, their underlying colonial intention discloses in the above dialogue and situation.

Chinua Achebe, in *Arrow of God*, explores the administrative and political power exercised by the white Europeans justifying the legacy of colonialism towards the native African people. In the novel, *Arrow of God* Achebe attempts to prove the European's exploitation, colonization and oppression over the native African people. The white Europeans enact their colonial power grasping the ultimate freedom of indigenous African native people which is evident in the following line as spoken by captain Winterbottom to his friend, Clarke, "Leave him inside until he learns to cooperate with the Administration" (177). This line clearly depicts the situation where the complete freedom of indigenous African native people has been seized by the white Europeans for being unable to cooperate with the white Europeans Administration set in Africa. As the British administration attempts to appoint Ezeulu as a warrant chief, he totally rejects the white man's offer which has infuriated him. It is because of the rejection of white man's offer to be a warrant chief, Ezeulu is severely punished leaving him inside the prison which visibly proves the fact that the ultimate freedom of the native people is in the hands of the white Europeans. Ezeulu is not given the freedom of choice to be a warrant chief rather he is completely misbehaved for being against of the British Administration.

Achebe in *Arrow of God* shows the colonial mentality and ruling ideology by the British administration in Eastern Nigerain as British administrartion attempts to appoint Ezeulu, a spiritual chief of Umuaro as a warrant chief which is considered to be the best way to govern the native people . It is the slow and gradual process of rulling the native people in their own land. The British has no hesitation about exploiting the social order of Umuaro in an attempt to legitimize the colonial rule. It is the attempt to appoint Ezeulu as a warrant chief which triggers key events in the novel around which the issue of power and authority reveals:

The expression on the priest's face did not change when the news was broke to him. He remained silent, Clarke knew it would take a little time for the proposal to strike him with its full weight, "Well, are you accepting the offer or not? Clarke glowed with the I-know-this-will-knock-you-over feeling of a benefactor. 'Tell the white man that Ezeulu will not be anybody's chief, except Ulu.' What! Shouted Clarke. 'Is the fellow mad?' 'I think so, Sah', said the interpreter. In that case, he goes back to prison' Clarke was now really angry, What Cheek! A witch-doctor making a fool of the British Administration in public! (81)

It is through these lines that the attitude of the British administration towards the native African people is reflected. The British wants to rule the African native people through the various means. Ezeulu is severely disrespected merely for disobeying to cooperate with the British administration set in African state. The rejection of Ezeulu to be a warrant chief clearly indicates his rejection of British involvement in Eastern Nigeria. Achebe is of the opinion that the native African wants freedom from the colonial grip of the white Europeans. This very rejection of Ezeule to be warrant chief stands as a strong evidence of rejection, hatred, and revolt of the native people towards the white European's direct rule in their land.

Ezeulu is the mouthpiece character of Chinua Achebe in his novel *Arrow of God*. Having shown the open rebellion of Ezeulu against British administration Achebe hints towards his hatred attitude to the legacy of colonialism exercised by the European in African land. Chinua Achebe totally opposes the imperialism and colonialism thinking them as the detrimental factors to the eventually loss of cultural identity and backwardness of the country. Chinua Achebe is convinced that until and

unless Europeans are swept away from the African land the native people would not be free from the burden of exercise of colonial power upon them. In this sense, his all writings are against colonialist ideology and politics.

Achebe holds the belief that the culture, custom and tradition are the basic identity of a nation. Through the means of cultures and traditions, nationalism blooms among the people. Achebe strongly opposes the colonial intervention upon the African cultures and traditions. In the novel, *Arrow of God* Achebe dramatizes his basic ideology. He makes Ezeulu, a chief priest of Ulu responsible for the safeguard of customs, traditions, and cultures of the community. He thinks about the preservation of customs and rites which are at the verge of extinction because of whites. The sentiment expressing the sense of worry is exposed by these lines:

As daylight chases away darkness so will the Whiteman drive away all our custom? I know that as I say it now it pass by your years, but it will happen. The white man has power which comes from the true God and it burns like fire. This is the God about whom we preach every eighth day. (85).

The above lines justify the basic assumption of Achebe regarding the importance of customs and cultures. He not only valorizes the native customs and cultures but also exposes the danger of extinction due to the brutal interruption of the Europeans colonialism. Ezeulu says that the customs and cultures are in constant threat due to the presence of white man in the African land. Ezeulu is pensive thinking cultures and culture are being threatened.

Achebe dramatizes the increasing consciousness among the native African people. Slowly and gradually they learn the way how to be successful and sustain themselves independently. The traditional way of protest has been changed according

to the time and situation. Achebe depicts his character, Ezeulu as a changed and intellectual leader who sends his son, Oduche to learn and adopt western knowledge and civilization only to use them as the means of defeating the colonial ruler. Ezeulu is convinced that it is only by understanding their ways that he can challenge the white man. He confides his close friend, Akuebue in following ways:

Shall I tell why I sent my son? Then listen. A disease that has never been seen before cannot be cured with everyday herbs This is what our sages meant when they said that a man who has nowhere to put his hand for support puts it on his own knee. (133)

These lines give answer to the question why he has sent his son, Oduche, to join Christian mission. Ezeulu is of the opinion that the understanding of the white man is possible only when one gets involved in their activities thereby making it possible to challenge them.

Chinua Achebe, being a post-colonial writer, is nearer to Michael Foucault's idea of 'Knowledge as Power'. In his argument, Achebe claims that it is the power of knowledge which enables to rule over those people who do not have the knowledge. He further states that to be powerful one should have the knowledge, intellectuality and rationality Achebe concludes that the white Europeans have become successful to rule over the African people because of their knowledge and intellectuality. He sees the dire need of acquiring knowledge to compete with them. Therefore, Achebe practically shows his African character, Ezeulu obsessed with getting knowledge, education and intellectuality.

The chief priest has assumed that the power of the white man derives largely from literacy, especially the ability to write with the left hand. Ezeulu's statement to

Oduche about the need to acquire western literacy is putatively a favonian discourse of language as power which is reflected in these lines:

I saw a young white man who was able to write his book with the left hand; he could shout in my face; he could do what he liked, why?
Because he could write with his left hand . . . I want you to learn it and maste this man's knowledge so much that if you are suddenly woken up form sleep and asked what it is you will reply. You must learn it until you can write it with your left hand. (189)

It is through this expression we can come to the understanding of how European got success to show their superiority over others. Ezeulu is of the opinion that one can shoot against his master only when one gets knowledge form his master about the ways to shoot the gun. When Ezeulu is rebuked by his friend for sending his son to join the Christian mission he defends himself arguing that the best way to challenge the Europeans is the understanding of their leaning and other activities. Ezeulu wants his son to get the white man's knowledge until he becomes perfect. Ezeulu believes that by learning to read and write, Oduche acquires a powerful tool to express himself to proclaim the richness of his culture and even to protest against the presence of the colonizers.

Achebe's anger towards his native people who gave shelter, helped and took their help is seen spilled in the dramatization of his character, Ezeulu, who is furious with the people who showed the way to the white Europeans to the African land. It means he does not like the presence of the white Europeans in his native land. Ezeulu's anger towards the white Europeans presence along with the hatred towards the supporters of the white Europeans is exposed in the following lines:

It is other elders in the past and now who have shown the white man the way to our house and given him a stool to sit on. He argues that with all their power and magic the white man could not have penetrated and destroyed whole village if they were not assisted by Africans from other villages and clans; 'let nobody come to me now and complain that the white man did this and did that. The man who brings ant-infested faggots begin to pay him a visit. (132)

Through these lines, the attitude of Ezeulu towards the white men becomes clear, who are described as ant-infested faggots. Ezeulu strongly protests the arrival of the white Europeans in their native land expressing his deep dissatisfaction towards the people who encourage to the white Europeans in order to rule them. He further clarifies his hatred saying that it is because of the mistake of the Africans, the colonizers got chance to colonize their native land which gives disorder, chaos and loss to them in spite of any drastic change in terms of progress and development.

Chinua Achebe never accepts the slogan of the white Europeans mission of civilization in the native African land. The crooked face of the colonizers is unmasked when they loot over the virgin land instead of developing and civilizing it. It is only the tactics of colonizers to have the access over the African land in order to rule, grab and exploit the land. The basic intention of the white Europeans is not to develop and civilize the African land and people rather it is guided by their vested interest of colonizing and grabbing the land. As Ezeulu is the mouthpiece of Achebe, his political philosophy as stated above is perfectly applied in the following line delivered by Ezeulu "I know that the white man does not wish Umuaro well" (86). This line spoken by Ezeulu gives us ample ground to claim that white men never come to the African land with the mission of civilization even though they have made it as the

proper slogan to rule over them. Since the white men are preoccupied with the ill-intention towards the native people, the presence of whites will inevitably bring the disorder to their village.

Achebe dramatizes the white Europeans exploitation over the native African people in the name of civilizing mission. Although the colonizers seem to do for the betterment of colonial land but actually they are exploiting the native land and people. The development projects are only the deceptive token which is thrown to fool the native people because the white Europeans mobilize the native African to do the nominal developmental project. They always gain and take more than they give and invest in the land only to prolong their rule in the land.

Achebe's novel *Arrow of God* depicts the exploitation of the native African people along with the presence of the white Europeans. The underlying interest of the arrival of the white Europeans is to colonize, exploit and rule over the African people instead of civilizing and developing them. The white European agent Mr. Wright thinks to build new road to connect Okperi with its neighboring village Umuaro. But the real intention of the white Europeans is exposed as the leader of Umuaro is told to provide necessary laborers for the white man's new wide road. The villagers of Umuaro held a meeting and decided to offer their labour supporting the white Europeans plan. The native people are used to build the road without having being paid. The white man only claims their contribution in construction and development without any investment of their labour and capital. It is the African people who are exploited by the white Europeans to materialize their plan to prove them as provider and superior. The tactful exploitation of the native people by the white Europeans is as apparent as the broad day light in the following narration.

Mr. Wright had then toyed with the idea of reducing the labour's pay from three pence a day to something like two pence. Anyhow there was only one alternative left to Mr. Wright if he was to complete the road before June and get away from this hole of a place. He had to use unpaid labour. He asked for permission to do this and after due consideration captain Winterbottom gave his approval. In the letter conveying it he pointed out that it was the policy of the administration to resort to this method only in the most exceptional circumstances. The natives cannot be an exception to the aphorism that the labourer is worthy of the hire. (77)

The plight of the native Africans is clearly reflected from the above narration. The native people are ordered to invest their labor without being paid. The construction of the road is done from the side of the native but the credit of it is taken by the white Europeans colonizers. The hypocritical nature of colonizer is exposed when they try to rule over the colonized people in the name of development to the African land. But in actuality they do nothing except exploiting, mobilizing and ruling the natives proving their superiority. The construction of the road is guided through the interest of their (colonizers) welfare rather than for the development of the native Africa. For Achebe, the colonizers are the brutal exploiters of the native African people. They not only misbehave towards the natives as their servant but also violently and forcibly compel them to do the assigned work.

In the novel *Arrow of God*, Achebe practically exposes the situation where the native people are misbehaved, the workers are ill-treated even though they are working in their native land. The exploitation and violence upon the native workers is exposed through these lines, "Obika made to pass Mr. Wright who, unable to control

his anger may more lashed out violently with his whip. It flashed again and this time caught Obika around the ear and stung him into tress" (82). The lines showing the situations above present the wicked picture of the colonizers. How the innocent natives are exploited, ill-treated and humiliated is nicely shown in the situation where Obika, a native African is physically manhandled in the charge of his late coming. On the other hand, it is equally visible the poor plight of the native Africans in the brutal rule of the white European. The act of Mr. Wright shows that he is vacant of humanity and brotherhood.

Achebe holds the ideology that the white Europeans as the colonizers are the sole cause of identity crisis of the native African people due to the mistreatment upon them as non-human beings. Chinua Achebe, in his novel *Arrow of God*, depicts the plight of African native people who are bound to lose their identity. This identity is in crisis due to the arrival of whites in African land. The native people during the time of building the road are treated as if they are animals. These working class people are threatened time and again along with being whipped by the whites if the native Africans fail to fulfill the orders and demands of the whites. The identity crisis along with the mistreatment of native African people during the course of working hours is clearly evident through these lines below:

Shut up. You black monkeys, and get down to work ! Mr. Wright had a granting voice but one that carried for. Truce was immediately

established. He turned to unachukwo and said;

"Tell them I shall not tolerate anymore slackness"

"Tell them this bloody work must be finished by June".

"The white man says that unless you finish this work in time you will know the kind of man he is".

"No more lateness".

"Pardin"?

'Pardon what? can't you understand plain, Simple English? 'I said there will be no more late coming". Wright shouted that if they did not immediately set to work they would be seriously dealt with. There was no need to translate this; it was quite clear. (83)

The above lines and situation truly reflect the political philosophy of Chinua Achebe in practical ground showing the brutal monstrous and animalistic behavior of the white Europeans enacted upon the native African people. The white European, Mr. Wright addresses the native African people as black monkeys. It means the native African people are treated as animals snatching their human identity. The term 'black' used by the whites also implies the racial discrimination with which the white Europeans are preoccupied. The native people are not given the status of human being, leave alone the status of citizen. It is seen in the constant threats, whips, and ill-treatment of the colonizers without listening any petitions and request for pardon by the native African people. The poor native Africans are helpless, docile and submissive in front of the exploitation of the white Europeans.

Chinua Achebe finds that the white Europeans presence and rule in African land is totally guided by their selfish interest of exploiting the native Africans and the land in various explicit and implicit ways. The white Europeans range of exploitation does not halt to the station of labour exploitation along with the exploitation of natural resources, rather it also goes beyond to the limit of sexual exploitation.

The exploitation of the native African people by the whites approaches to the climax when the native people are taken as the means to fulfill their sexual thirst. The white man, Winterbottom has been thinking of sleeping with native women in order to

quench his sexual thirst satisfied. The evil intention of winter bottom is reflected as Mr. Wright gives the details of winter bottom saying:

The real trouble with winter bottom, said Wright after deep thought, "is that he is too serious to sleep with native woman". On more than one occasion during his present tour he has become up in his mind against the question: How widespread was the practice of white men sleeping with native women? (104)

Through the above quotation it is justified that the white Europeans apply manifold exploitation including sexual exploitation upon the native African women. From the expression of Mr. Wright, it is obvious that the white Europeans take the native African as the sex object to quench their thirst of sexual passion. It is common for the white Europeans to exploit and consume the native women forcefully being intoxicated with their power, position and superiority.

Achebe's political philosophy is grounded on his concept of 'power politics'. Typically, power is the ability of one person to exercise authority, strong influence or even absolute rule on another to the point of getting total compliance by any means possible. Chinua Achebe regards power as "the powerful weapon to dominate the other people" (23). Achebe, in his novel *Arrow of God*, depicts the white man's imposition of power over African people making them submissive to the whites. The native people are expected to do what the white Europeans like and if these expectations of whites are not fulfilled and given top priority, the African people are made bound to face the cruel punishment. The white Europeans through different means try to mould the society and political system as well with their intention of making change in their favour. Achebe explores the African experiences giving the portrayal of the events from colonialism. His works offer the invaluable insight into

the traditional life, and events from colonialism with their burden lessons, challenges to the moulding of an African identity.

Chinua Achebe, in his novel *Arrow of God*, shows the unbridled use of power exercised by the white Europeans which is in the benefits of them. They leave no stone unturned to make change in their favour in course of appointing Ezeulu, as a warrant chief but Ezeulu rejects the very order of the government challenging the colonial mentality of the white Europeans. The British Administration wants him to make a warrant chief thinking it as the effective means to govern the native people. But Ezeulu refuses to be a white man's chief, as a result he is frequently threatened to be punished and whipped on the charge of showing disrespect and contempt to the British Administration. The extreme use of power and rude behaviour of the white Europeans is unmasked through the following lines:

It is the way the white man does his own things. The Whiteman watched Ezeulu with something like amusement on his face. When the interpreter finished he tightened up his face and began again. He rebuked Ezeulu for showing disrespect for the order of the government and warned him that if he showed such disrespect again he would be severely punished. (174)

From the above lines, it becomes apparent that the native African people are never treated well by the white Europeans. On the strength of power, they expose the superiority and challenge to the native people giving warning them to give the cruel punishment. What Ezeulu faces the hardships and sufferings from the white Europeans are due to his refusal to cooperate with the British Administration.

Achebe demonstrates the heavy use of power on the African people by the white European colonizers. The native African people are supposed to be obedient

and submissive towards the white Europeans ruler. Any native African who attempts to go against the command of European Administration they meet the severe punishment. The white Europeans in the native Africa wants to prolong their hegemony by using the native people as puppet at their hands. In the novel *Arrow of God*, Achebe shows the same ideology of the white European colonizers. In the story, when Ezeulu does not become ready to obey their plan to appoint him as a warrant chief, he is badly punished. Captain Winter bottom in this context orders his agent, Clarke to give him the punishment of imprisonment. The ensuing narration explicitly depicts the utter oppression and exploitation of the white Europeans to the native African people.

As soon as Captain Winter bottom comes, he told Clarke, you are to lock him up in the guardroom. I do not wish to see him until after my return from Enugu. By that time, he should have learnt good manners. I want have my natives thinking they can treat the administration with contempt. (150)

The above narration is a strong evidence to support Achebe's political philosophy regarding the concept of 'power politics'. By appointing the native African, Ezeulu, as a warrant chief, winter bottom plans to fulfill his politics to make the native in his favour. But when his grand plan does not succeed by the refusal of Ezeulu, he becomes furious at him and orders his agent, Clarke to lock him in the guardroom. Captain Winter bottom discloses his crook intention by which he is guided to behave the native African people. He further challenges the native people not to go against him and administration with the sense of contempt.

Chinua Achebe further exposes the naked use of power exercised by the white Europeans at the expense of cruel punishment. How the power can be manipulated for

personal benefits is nicely reflected in the activities of the white Europeans. When Ezeulu rejects the white man's offer to be a warrant chief, he is frequently asked to change his mind accepting the offer because the white man does not want to go the reputation of the administration to the ground especially in Umurao. The white Europeans agent, Clarke tries his best to persuade him to change his mind but he does not become success in his mission. After the series of failures, the white man becomes so furious that he orders him to be imprisoned. The misuse of power while behaving the native African people is reflected in the following narration.

Leave him inside until he learns to cooperate with the Administration. The situation thus became quite intolerable. Should he keep the man in prison or set him loose? If he let him go the reputation of the Administration would go to the ground especially in Umuro where things were only now beginning to look after a long period of hostility. What would he put down in the log? For making an ass of the Administration? For refusing to be a chief? This apparently small point relaxed Clarke like a fly at siesta. (177)

From the above lines, the evil intention of the white Europeans is reflected as they want to use the native people for their benefits guided by selfish motive. They express their reality as Ezeulu refuses to be a warrant chief. The white man does not hesitate even to imprison Ezeulu on the charge of his disrespect for his offer, which indicates the insanity of the white Europeans being guided by the strength of the widespread power.

Chinua Achebe views that the white Europeans are the exploiters and oppressors of the native African people. By the misuse of power, they are able to terrorize the native African people. The same spirit of Achebe's political philosophy

regarding the misuse of power is well depicted in the novel *Arrow of God*. The native African people themselves have realized this very bitter truth which is evident in the following conversation between the native Africans, Akeuebue and Ezeulu.

The corporal thought about it and agreed. But we cannot come and go for nothing. When a masked spirit visits you, you have to appease it footprints with presents. The white man is the masked spirit of today. Very true said Akuebue. The marked spirit of our day is the Whiteman and his messengers. (154)

The above lines sum up the power politics introduced to Africa by the white man. Without a mask, the white Europeans are able to spread terror and fright in the minds of the native African people, just as their masked sprite does. Widespread use of terror by the white Europeans leaves no options but to obey for the native African people.

Achebe finds the sense of resistance among the native Africans. After the extreme use of exploitation by the white Europeans, the native Africans begin to show their refusal for the colonizers' order and command. When Captain Winterbottom sends the messengers to call Ezeulu, he utterly refuses his command with the sense of contempt. He further challenges the authority saying he must come here if he wants to meet him. The following lines, exposing the refusal and resistance of Ezeulu to the white European power, document Achebe's philosophy quite practically.

You must first return, however and tell your white man that Ezeulu does not leave his butt. If he wants to see me, he must come here. Nowodika's son who showed you the way can also show him. Do you know what you are saying, my friend?" asked the messenger in utter disbelief.

Are you a messenger or not? Asked Ezeulu. Go home and give my
message to your master. (139)

The above shocking resistance of Ezeulu to the white Europeans command pictures the rebellious attitude of the native African people for the suppression of the Europeans colonizers. This very rejection of Ezeulu hints towards the tremendous hatred to the white Europeans, who are exercising their colonial power upon the native. Achebe's presentation of such character, Ezeulu who is furious with the white European indicates the disgust and hatred attitude of Achebe to the whites, who are preoccupied with colonizing mission with the arrival in Africa. Achebe's anti-colonialist vision is reflected from the above situation as Ezeulu makes resistance and challenge to the white Europeans refusing his command.

As Chinua Achebe holds the anti-colonialist view, he consents to the point that the arrival of the white Europeans to the African land will inevitably bring the disintegration, chaos, disorder and confrontation to the Africans and the society. Achebe shows the disrupting effect upon the culture, custom and political system, which results from the external invasion by the white Europeans to the Africa. Achebe, in his novel *Arrow of God*, depicts that with the coming of whites to the Africa, the sound political system and cultural integration of the African society is replaced by political destabilization and segregation of culture on the strength of widespread power exercised by the white Europeans over the native African people and the society as a whole. In *Arrow of God* " there is a sense of an account of how things have gone wrong in a previously ordered and harmonious traditional society." (Akwanya 35). The intervention and invasion of white Europeans upon the African land made native people disintegrate from the indigenous cultural and custom reorienting them to a new religion, Christianity. This reorientation leads them not

only to the assimilation of western values and beliefs but also the eventual loss of indigenous culture and identity as well.

Contrary to the western conception of Africa as anti-thesis of civilization in terms of culture and political system, Achebe, in the novel *Arrow of God*, indicates that Africa has a sound political past along with cultural integration. This novel presents the religious rites and rituals regarding The New Yam Feast and The Fest of Pumpakin Leaves among the six villagers, which provides the ample evidences of unity and boldness with regard to culture and politics.

Ezeulu is the chief priest of Ulu created by the six villages of Umuaro. As a chief priest, Ezeulu is responsible for safeguarding the tradition and ritual of the people. According to the tradition and ritual, only the chief priest can name the day for the Feast of Pumpkin Leaves or for the New Yam Feast. Ezeulu watches new month for the new moon. He eats a scared Yam and beats the ogene to mark the beginning of each new month. The traditional rite and ritual indicating the cultural unity is given in the following line, "It was true, Ezeulu named the day for the feast of pumpkin leaves and for the New Yam Feast" (3). This line shows the unity among six villages of Umuaro with regard to culture having a sound political system.

Quite opposite to the western conception of Africa and its people with hollow culture and political system, Achebe, in the novel *Arrow of God*, presents Africa with civilization, unity, bondness, in terms of culture. The tradition and ritual has brought all the six villages of Umuaro together that indicates the cultural unity in them. The following lines show the African tradition and custom as Ezeulu performs the activities of eating a scared Yam to mark the beginning of new month.

Ezeulu rolled the Yam out of the fire with the stick and quickly felt it between his thumb and first finer, and was satisfied. He brought down

a two-edged chief from the rafters and began to scrap of the coat of black on the roast Yam. His hands were covered in soot when he had finished, and he clapped them together a few times to get them clean again. His wooden bout was near at hand and he cut the Yam into it and waited for it to cool. When he began eating Obiageli started to sing quietly to herself. (5)

The above extract gives the sense of African custom and tradition as Ezeulu eats a scared Yam to name the day. When he refuses to name the day, there will be no festival, no reaping and no planting, which indicates the importance of tradition and ritual. This shows the importance of customs, rites rituals of a particular society and community.

Chinua Achebe, in the novel *Arrow of God*, clearly depicts the indirect rule of the white Europeans, who have imposed the new religion by making the native African people divided and apart. The traditional cultures, customs, rites, rituals are attacked with the arrival of white Europeans in African land. They want to make the native people follow the new religion. The white Europeans contaminate the purity of the African cultures, customs and traditions. As Ezeulu does not perform the ritual, they face the great crisis over the New Yam Feast. The villagers do not want to see their harvest ruined and their wives and children die of hunger. Thinking it as a fine opportunity to rule them, the white Europeans persuade them to make thank-offering to Christian god in order to be safe from the forthcoming danger. The vile and corrupted intention of white Europeans who impose the new religion, Christianity is disclosed in the following lines.

Now Mr. Good country saw in the present crisis over the New Yam Feast an opportunity for fruitful intervention. The new Yam festival

was the attempt of the misguided heathen to show gratitude to God, the given of all good things. They must be told that if they made their thank-offering to God, they could harvest their crops without the fear of ulu. 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 Christianity, who claimed to have the power of protection from the anger of ulu. (216)

The aforementioned lines depict the wicked picture of the white Europeans who have caused the cultural disintegration and fragmentation among the native African people. The white Europeans persuade them to join the new religion abandoning their traditional custom and ritual. The native people are left with no option but to obey what the whites ask them so as to be safe from the dangerous outcome. As the people of Umuaro go hungry they respond by abandoning their traditional faith and by adopting the new religion.

Chinua Achebe expresses the sense of hatred and disgust to the colonial mentality of the white Europeans thinking them as the sole cause of disorder and chaos. Achebe regards the white Europeans responsible for the cultural disintegration due to the encroachment of colonialism upon Africa and the Africans. The overall view of Achebe can be summed up in the words of Simon Gikandi as:

Achebe's seminal status in the history of African literature lies precisely in his ability to have realized that the novel provided a new way of reorganizing African cultures, especially in the crucial juncture of transition from colonialism to national independence. Achebe's anxious quest for a post-colonial aesthetic is predicated on the belief that narrative can indeed propose an alternative world beyond the

realities imprisoned in colonial and pre-colonial relations of power. In his poetics, questions of national identity are closely related to narrative strategies, but fiction allows the writer to express an alternative order of things to the realities framed by imperialism and Western domination. (30-31)

Achebe raises the issues of national identity, importance of indigenous culture, and politics of colonization and so on. The respect for tradition, rite and ritual are neglected due to the arrival of the whites to the African land. The African tradition and custom is at the verge of collapse as the white Europeans spread the Christianity in Africa on the strength of widespread power. The white Europeans have imposed the new religion, Christianity upon the Africans by not letting the natives to perform their tradition and custom. Ezeulu does not perform the ritual during the time of his imprisonment. When Captain Winterbottom attempts to appoint him a chief warrant officer as a part of the new British effort to decentralize political power and impose indirect rule, Ezeulu rejects the patronizing offer. He is jailed for disobeying imperial authority; as a result he cannot eat the ritual yam to mark each new moon. Though Ezeulu is released after Winterbottom becomes ill, he refuses to perform the feast. He is furious at his people for not helping him to save from the whites and decides to hit Umuaro by not performing the ritual. All these things happen due to the encroachment of the white Europeans upon Africa and native African people. Ezeulu takes the rigid decision of not performing the rituals because he is not saved from the villagers. But the people of Umuaro are afraid of thinking of their harvest ruined and children and wives dying of hunger.

Arrow of God is a true story of British colonial rule in Nigeria. It amasses pains and sufferings of African people under colonial rule. In fact, African people do

not have freedom and liberty in their own land; neither have their inborn human rights. Everything is in control of colonial power. Their politics, religion and education are in the grasp of European people. European colonizers exercise their power directly and indirectly in Africa. Moreover, they use different cruel, ruthless and insensitive strategies to maintain domination, exploitation and suppression over African people. African people are physically tortured, mentally tormented, sexually harassed and politically abused in order to fulfill their vested interests. In order to achieve their selfish motives, European people render political instability in Africa. They bring social conflict among native people of Africa. They even interfere religious practices of the people.

Thus, in *Arrow of God*, Achebe elaborates political disruption of Nigeria by British interference and intervention in their process of colonization. The native people of Nigeria are compelled to leave their culture and religion and forced to follow western style and their religion which has brought the sense of alination being away from the ethnical identity. The very rootlessness regarding the traditions,cultures and customs is fully experienced by the African people due to the colonial power by the whites. Nigerian people are crushed amid colonial hegemonization, domination, dehumanization and cultural transformation which are inevitable results of colonization. In this context, the present research explores the ways colonial power is exercised and its legacy is gained in native land of Africa.

III. Major Concerns of Achebe in *Arrow of God*

After doing thorough and deep analysis of *Arrow of God* by Chinua Achebe, the researcher comes to conclusion that the present novel dramatizes Achebe's overall philosophy regarding the politics and ideology of colonization, the pathetic plight and predicament of the colonized people, and brutal atrocity and aggression of the colonizers. For, Achebe literature and society have close nexus and literature can be used as a means of social change. Through his popular book, *Arrow of God*, Achebe appeals African people to awake, stand and fight against tyranny, exploitation and domination of colonial rule for regaining their inborn natural rights. Unveiling hidden and concealed interests of colonialism, he asserts its painful demise not only due to resistance of colonized people, but also due to its own internal intricacies and wrong concept to abuse power in order to exploit people.

Achebe believes that literature offers the existing political situation of particular society or country and aspires to form good society by reforming its ill practices and traditions. By exposing the ills and evils of colonization through *The Arrow of God*, Achebe makes people conscious of their fundamental rights which helps to figure out people's perception and understanding of their political situation. He is against superiority complex and colonial tendency of Europeans towards the native African people. European intrusion for him is a great hindrance to national development as well as identity crisis of African people. Achebe wants freedom and liberty from the cruel crutches of British rule. He advocates a gradual reformist agenda needed to liberate and release African people.

By means of novel *The Arrow of God*, Achebe dramatizes the way colonial legacy is maintained and political power is exercised over African people. African people are made powerless and helpless in their own land. Everything in Africa is in

control of European people. Achebe is against the concept of art for art's sake rather he believes in functional aspect of literature. He believes functional aspect of literature i.e. literature has the purpose of revealing the facts and realities of people thereby making them consciousness about the problems of the society. So, he wants to trigger anti-colonialist feelings in people in order to wage a war against colonial power. He discloses different ideologies and strategies adopted by colonialists in order to subjugate, dominate and suppress African people. British rulers in Nigeria utilize native politics, education and religion as well in order to legitimize their hegemony. They appoint political leaders to rule Nigeria. They implement laws in their favour. Courses in the academia are designed. Even the chief priests in the churches are appointed by them. Through different strategies they try to mould the society and political system as per their wish and intention. In this way they spread tyranny of their direct as well as indirect rule is spreaded in different spheres of social life.

European people use their popular strategy of divide and rule in Africa as well like in other colonized countries. They have created conflict among African people and take the advantage of the situation. This situation is exemplified through the war incidence between Umuaro and Okperi over a piece of land, which is solved with the help of white European people. Big brother arrogance of European people is severely criticized in *Arrow of God*. For Achebe this concept of European people in not originated from realities but it is self-imposed and self-assumed. He never accepts the slogan of the white Europeans mission of civilization in the native African land. Africa is not in the condition to be saved from the state of barbarism as assumed by European people. So, he wants to challenge European encroachment and interference over African and its sovereignty.

Thus, *Arrow of God* prominently sensationalizes Achebe's political philosophy that is heavily grounded on power politics. As power is a weapon to dominate other people, European whites impose their power in order to dominate, suppress and inferiorize African people through different strategies. Achebe also deals with the ways colonial agenda get legitimized and implemented in Nigeria through politics, education and religion. As an anti-colonialist writer, he strongly demands freedom and upliftment from the encroachment and intervention of European power, and calls for protection and promotion of African native culture and tradition. He is successful to implant anti-colonialist feelings in the minds of people by exposing the ills and evils of colonialism, by disclosing their vested interests and selfish motives, and by revealing internal intricacies inherent in colonial rule. In this sense, his principal outlook that literature has strong power to awake, transform and modernize the society is duly justified.

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