

Psychoanalytic Theory and the Contending Personalities and Forces in Achebe's *Arrow of God*

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ABSTRACT

Achebe's third novel, *Arrow of God*, is concerned with the question of exercise of power. It focuses on who has limited and unlimited powers in the society. There is therefore power tussle between Ezeulu and Ezidemili, Ezeulu and Winterbottom, Ezeulu and the clan elders and law makers and there is also power tussles between the forces they represent. This research paper examines how relevant Psychoanalytic theory is in the interpretation of *Arrow of God*. Psychoanalytic theory is used not only to decipher the meaning of the text but also to highlight how this literary theory enhances the narrative development of the novel from the contending personalities and the forces in form of the gods; indigenous culture and colonialism; traditional religion and Christianity, to the tragic end of the novel. Psychoanalysis unearths the preconscious level of personality which is the storehouse of memories, perceptions, and thoughts which we are not consciously aware at the moment but we can easily summon into consciousness and the unconscious which contains the major driving power behind all behaviours and is the repository of forces we cannot see or control. The characters in the novel are driven by the three different elements of personality, the id, the ego and the superego, which control their internal and basic needs as well as their reality and morality principles.

Keywords: Psychoanalytic theory, contend, conscious, preconscious, unconscious, personality and tragic end.

INTRODUCTION

Achebe successfully explores the theme of tragedy in [1] through a vision of complexities inherent in Igbo society. The anxiety and tension that arise from the conflicts between the forces and the personalities in the form of Idemili and Ulu, colonialism/Christianity and African culture/traditional religion, Nwaka, Ezidemili and Ezeulu, Ezeulu and Winterbottom is felt by the reader. These

forces and personalities/characters symbolically foster the tragic movement of thoughts in the novel.

Ezeulu, the protagonist of *Arrow of God*, is presented as an honest, dedicated, great and a man of substance who is tragically doomed to fall due to his stubborn nature and thirst for power. Through characterization of the novel, Achebe also presents personalities that

tussle with Ezeulu for powers which add to Ezeulu's predicament. At the end of the novel, he presents the picture of such a great man as Ezeulu, reduce to a mad man sweeping his floor. This pathetic picture awakens the readers' sense of pity as well as fear.

The novel deals with the social and psychological conflicts of Africans due to colonialism or the intrusion of the white man and his culture into the hitherto self-contained world of African society. Achebe also explores successfully the resultant disarray of this white man's intrusion in African's consciousness through the use of the Aristotelian philosophical view of tragedy. [2] *50 Years of the Nigerian Novel (1952-2001)* (2001) in support of this describes Ezeulu as a tragic hero: ... a Sophoclean figure, in 'confrontation with more than man' (55). This is because he is presented with wilful pride as a trait of his character. 'Pride goes before a down fall' and this pride leads to his and his god's destruction.

In the Greek philosophy, the gods endow a man with hubris in order to destroy him. Many other characters in the novel manifest this hubris as traits of their character too which leads to the catastrophe in the society as they contend to ascertain who possesses unlimited powers. In the case of Ezeulu, he is not only contending with fellow human

beings but extends his own contention to the gods. At the end of the novel the destruction of Ezeulu is what [3] in his *Literature and Modern West African Culture* calls, 'ultimate existential defeat' because he lived on crazed (27).[4] in his *Approaches to the African Novel: Essays in Analysis* posits that

Arrow of God could be said to be a novel that not only give culture-conflict but also about major and minor rivalries between various persons and gods in Umuaro whose unremitting and built-in jealousies and envy lead to disquiet in the entire narrative - a disquiet that leads to irreconcilable differences which in turn lead to fragmentation and tragedy' (21).

Psychoanalytic approach to criticism brings out vividly to the reader the psychological attributes of the minds of the characters in the novel and how the tragic flaw, hubris, helps in the narrative development of the novel as a tragedy. The rivalries between various persons and gods are all caused by their pride and that is why this research work is done using psychoanalytic approach to criticism. Psychoanalytic theory is first laid out in the late 19th century by Sigmund Freud. Psychoanalytic theorists believe that

human behavior is deterministic. It is governed by irrational forces, and the unconscious, as well instinctual and biological drives. Due to this deterministic process, psychoanalytic theorists do not believe in free will. Freud later shifted the focus of physiological studies to the study of the mind and the related psychological attributes making up the mind.

When analysing literary texts, psychoanalytic theory could be utilized to decipher or interpret the concealed meaning within a text, or to better understand the author's intentions. Through the analysis of motives, Freud's theory can be used to help clarify the meaning of the writing as well as the actions of the characters within the text. Psychoanalytic theorists believe that human behavior is governed by irrational forces, and the unconscious, as well as instinctual and biological drives. [5], in their *Theories of Personality* opine that Freud's original conception divides personality into three levels: the conscious which includes all sensations and experiences of which we are aware at any given time, the preconscious which is the storehouse of memories, perceptions, and thoughts which are not consciously aware at the moment but we can easily summon into consciousness and the unconscious which contains the major driving power behind all behaviours and

is the repository of forces we cannot see or control. Sigmund Freud determines that the personality consists of three different elements, the id, the ego and the superego. The id is the aspect of personality that is driven by internal and basic drives and needs. These are typically instinctual, such as hunger, thirst, and drive for power, the drive for sex, or libido. The id acts in accordance with the pleasure principle, in that it avoids pain and seeks pleasure. [5], also stresses that due to the instinctual quality of the id, it is impulsive and often unaware of implications of its actions. The id knows only instant gratification; it drives us to want what we want when we want it, without regard for what anyone else wants. The id is selfish, a pleasure-seeking structure, primitive, amoral, insistent, and rash. It has no awareness of reality.

With regards to this paper Ezeulu, the tragic character and the protagonist of the novel, is presented as an honest, morally good, uncompromising, dedicated and strong willed chief priest of Umuaro. He is the custodian of the community traditions, controls the harvesting of yam, the vital crop of the agrarian society. The nature of his power is that Ulu is placed supreme over other gods in the six villages that made up Umuaro. Ezeulu is therefore overwhelmed by the immensity of his power which is portrayed as the

novel opens. He is full of himself for having such great power which no other person in entire six villages of Umuaro has. He wonders within himself if it is real and this gives a glimpse of the tragic flaw in him because power intoxicates. Nwaka, Ezidemili, also refuses to accept that Ulu, the youngest god in Umuaro should have supreme powers. Idemili to him should be the supreme deity of Umuaro therefore, he secretly asserts his own god as supreme to Ulu. The two priests are driven by the desire to have power. This is id's drive and it is the cause of power tussle between Ezeulu and Ezidemili as well as between Ulu and Idemili deities. The drama and tension they display in the novel help in the development of the novel to its tragic end.

In this paper, superego or instinctual drive drives Ezeulu's son, Oduche to lock up the sacred python in a box to fight the tradition and culture of the people. He does not want to kill the python like the other converts but wants it to die out of suffocation in the box. He has thought over his action and has made up his mind that the python will die, yet he will not be directly accused of killing it. This deliberate action of Oduche is presented to bring the peak of the pressure of the contention of his father, Ezeulu and Ezidemili. It is also seen that it is instinctual drive (id) that prompted Ezidemili's to send an ill-mannered boy to

Ezeulu ordering him to cleanse the land for his son's imprisonment of a python. Oduche's action gives Ezidemili an opportunity he has been looking for to ridicule Ezeulu and Ezeulu's response is that the boy should go back to Ezeidemili and tell him that he should go and fill his mouth with shit. This acting impulsively (id) by both Ezeidemili and Ezeulu are caused by the repressed or suppressed hatred they have in the unconscious for each other. Freud considers the unconscious the major motivating force in life; the superiority conflicts of these two priests are repressed or suppressed out of conscious awareness and this suppressed hatred for each other makes them verbally attack themselves whenever there is opportunity for that. This is so because Freud also opines that aggression is seen as acting out of bottled up emotion resulting from hatred.

Obika, the son of Ezeulu is also presented as a no nonsense man whose actions are always impulsively driven. This is the reason why Ezeulu pronounces his assurance that Obika will be the first to hit the white road engineer. It is the same impulsive drive that made the white road engineer to whip Obika. This acting impulsively is also what charged Obika up and he wants to fight back Mr. Wright, the white road engineer. He would have taught him a lesson of his life if not for Moses Unachukwu's intervention. This

scenario of the whipping of Obika, Ezeulu's son is also purposely presented, to portray the height of Ezeulu's arrogance. Ezeulu's ego is awakened when he heard of the whipping of his son and this made the chief priest to arrogantly describe his powers even to curse people and they are to face the consequences of their actions. All these aid the development of the novel as a tragedy; from the way the contending personalities and forces are portrayed, it is seen that acting impulsively leads people to perform actions they are bound to regret after.

Even though the Chief Priest, Ezeulu, that is discussed in this paper sometimes act impulsively, he also builds his honesty and moral commitment by thinking before acting to control the id drive. This moral display as the Chief Priest of Ulu encourages socially accepted behaviour (superego) which builds more proper human relationship in the communities. He as the Chief Priest of Ulu cannot tell a

He is imprisoned for thirty-two days by Captain Winterbottom in order for the British Administrator to teach him a lesson for being so proud and full of himself. Winterbottom is driven by ego because he wants to show Ezeulu his sense of worth. He thinks that he is very important and valuable to be insulted by a black, 'primitive culture driven witch

lie. He refuses to join his people of Umuaro during the land dispute but testifies the truth in favour of the people Okperi. It is superego that prompts his rationally dedicating his life to stick on the truth. This testimony he gives against his people, Umuaro makes the British Administrator, Captain T.K. Winterbottom decides to appoint him a warrant Chief. Rationalizing the id instinct, Winterbottom wants Ezeulu to be rewarded for his honesty. Though he also has his own personal interest of establishing indirect rule in heart and seeing that Ezeulu is an honest man, he concludes that he has found the right individual for the high office of a warrant chief. Ezeulu in order to maintain his high sense of responsibility to his god, Ulu and to Ulu alone judges Winterbottom's sense as making a wrong choice and refuses his offer. He cannot serve any other person or god. He will exhibit the only socially accepted duty for him which is his duty as the Chief Priest of Ulu.

doctor'. [6], in his *'The structure of psyche'* stresses that the ego is the centre of unconsciousness; the part of the psyche that is concerned with perceiving, thinking, feeling and remembering. [5], posit that the ego is driven by the reality principle. The ego works to balance both the id and superego. In order to balance these, it works to achieve the id's drive in

the most realistic ways. It seeks to rationalize the id's instinct and please the drives that will benefit the individual in the long term. It helps separate what is real, and realistic of our drives as well as being realistic about the standards that the superego sets for the individual. Winterbottom feels that Ezeulu needs to be taught a lesson of his life because he sees his rejection of the high political office of a warrant chief as an act of treason. He also thinks that this detention will make Ezeulu to come back to his right senses. This misunderstanding of motives by both Ezeulu and Winterbottom is presented in the novel to lead to a disaster that enhances the development of the novel to its tragic end. Winterbottom wants to display superiority complex. A. Adder in his *The practice and theory of individual psychology* (1963) points out that persons with a superiority complex are given to boasting, vanity, self-centredness, and a tendency to denigrate others. Winterbottom is driven by ego to belittle Ezeulu for rejecting his offer.

[7], in their *Personality: Classics Theories and Modern Research* opine that the superego is driven by morality principle. It acts in connection with the morality of higher thought and action. Instead of instinctually acting like the id, the superego works to act in socially acceptable ways. It employs morality,

judging our sense of wrong and right and using guilt to encourage socially acceptable behaviour. In novel, *Arrow of God*, when the clan elders and law makers of Umuaro try to persuade Ezeulu to eat the remaining two customary tubers of yam and name the date for the new yam festival, they have thought over it and seen that the gods would not allow the people, their worshippers, to die even if it entails changing the precept of worshipping the god, Ulu. By thinking before acting to control the id's drive they come to a realization that Ulu is the creation of the community. Its legitimacy depends on its being capable to protect and solve the community's problems and once it ceases to do that, it loses its existence as a god. This decision encourages socially accepted behaviour (superego) thereby it is for the building of a more proper human relationship and survival strategy in their communities. They refuse to accept the rigidity of norms and culture that want to keep them suffering; they refuse to die in hunger while their yams are spoiling in the soil. By rationally embarking on this peace talk with the Chief Priest of Ulu, they want him to know that 'it was a fight of the gods' and he was no more than an arrow in the bow of his god' (192). They want him to know that if they all die out of hunger, he, the Chief Priest of Ulu will not worship Ulu alone. Rationalizing the id

instinct, these clan elders and law makers of Umuaro that are discussed in this paper judge Ezeulu's sense of wrong and encourage him to exhibit a socially accepted behaviour but Ezeulu is blind and vindictive. He is vindictive because his people did not react to his detention by the British Administrator as the Chief Priest of Ulu. He refuses to compromise his duty whether the people die or not. He, a man who is portrayed as 'half-man and half-spirit' (192); a man that has insight more than ordinary human being becomes blind. Even though it is Ezeulu's foresight that makes him to send one of his sons to learn the white man's tradition because he foresees a change yet his ego did not allow him to accept that the time for the change has come. He is blind to see that some of the people are already carried by the changing tide and others may still join the boat. Ego drives Ezeulu to chastise his people at the wrong time and the community deserts and finds solace in the new religion which seems to provide a solution to their problems. The result is that traditional religion is shattered as it has to give way for Christianity.

The community unlike Ezeulu has thought wisely before they confronted Ezeulu.

Psychoanalytical Overview of Tradition and Culture of the People and the Contending Personalities and Forces in the Novel

When Ezeulu turns deaf ears to their demand, they quickly divert to a second option for a way out of their predicament. Tragedy then befalls Ezeulu and his god, Ulu, because of the disintegration through his people's finding solace in Christianity. This tragedy reaches its climax with Ulu's wrath release on Ezeulu. Obika, his son is snatched away from him by Ulu in death showing that the god he tries to serve also rejects him at that crucial time and this is what he could not comprehend. Questions cluster in his mind. Why has Ulu allow the death of his son? What has he done? The pains become too much for him to bear and madness instinct in his mother manifests in him. He finally goes mad. This kind of tragedy in which he lives on suffering is too terrifying. It would have been better if he has died. The sense of pity and fear is therefore awakened on the readers. We are made to realise that we are only but toys in the hands of the gods. This theory, Psychoanalytic approach to criticism, is therefore, very relevant to this study as it reveals the conscious and unconscious actions of the characters - the contending personalities and forces in *Arrow of God*.

Ezeulu is presented in the novel as a legendary, honest, a man of practical morality and dedicated Chief Priest of

Ulu. Ulu is the 'youngest god' in the six villages that make up Umuaro clan. Ulu is created because each village of Umuaro has its own god and it is not easy for the villages to establish the 'highest god' among the gods. The people fear that proclaiming one of the gods the highest god can cause quarrel which will in turn cause them their unity. [8] in *Studies on the Nigerian Novel* in support of this posits that 'It is not easy to establish the "highest god" without creating inter-village tensions which may destroy the union as a whole' (55). Umuaro clan overcomes this problem by creating a new god, Ulu, which is placed above the other six gods. Ulu is very valuable to Umuaro as it is an agricultural community. [9], in his *Chinua Achebe's Novels: A Sociolinguistic Perspective* puts it that 'for an agricultural community it is natural that one of their important deities should be a god of yam, "the king of crops"' (94). The priest of Ulu is chosen from the smallest of the six villages and that is how Ezeulu becomes the most powerful Chief Priest of Umuaro. This is just an example of the historical description of a typical African society's problem solving strategy. The people of Umuaro do not fold their arms when the problems of which god will be the highest arise. They did not act on impulse rather they sat down and gave the issue a thought. At last the problem is solved, Ulu is created and

Ezeulu is presented being dedicated to the service of this strong god, Ulu. As the custodian of his people's tradition, [10] in his 'Ezeulu as World Historical Figure: Preliminary Notes on Chinua Achebe's [1] points out that Ezeulu seeks to go beyond his role as representative of the community in merely a political and social sense but also to embody the moral and spiritual principles on which he considers his community to be grounded in because it is this principle that governs his attitude despite the internal tensions and stresses (100-101). He takes time to think about his noble position as a chief priest and finds out that it is moral and spiritual principles that will enhance his cordial and deep relationship with the god, Ulu.

Another very valuable deity in Umuaro is Idemili which is described as '... Pillar of Water. As the pillar of this house holds the roof so does Idemili hold up the raincloud in the sky so that it does not fall down' (41). Idemili in the absence of Ulu is therefore likely to be the 'highest god' in Umuaro. For this reason, Ezidemili holds Ezeulu in great contempt and secretly affirms Idemili as supreme to Ulu. Ezeulu and Ezidemili are always in opposition to each other and they extend the strife to the forces they represent which is Ulu and Idemili. The extension of their strife to Ulu and Idemili is portrayed in Nwaka's boasting that his god is not

man made. 'Every boy in Umuaro knows that Ulu was made by our fathers long ago, But Idemili was there at the beginning of things. Nobody made it (41). [9] argues that whether a god is made or not, the people believe in its power to protect and Ezeulu's argument is also that Ulu is a powerful deity that protects his people. He further stresses that Ulu is regarded as more powerful than the lesser deities, except of course [11]. It is clearly portrayed that either of the priests thinks he is right in claiming that his god is the strongest. Psychoanalytic theorists believe that human behavior is deterministic; Ezeulu's contention for power is determined by the position the six villages place his god while Nwaka's contention for power is determined by his god being there before Ulu. No body will easily give away his position in a platter of gold, therefore, these two characters are presented in the novel so that their strife will aid in the narrative development of the novel to its tragic end.

The responsibility attached to Ezeulu's priesthood prompts him at the beginning of the novel to reflect on the immensity of his power and he engages in a dialogue with himself. [12], in 'Achebe's Exploration of European Penetration of Igboland Through An Aristotelian View of Tragedy' (1991) opines that Ezeulu asks himself disturbing question that he does

not want to make rhetorical because he needs an arena to experiment the potency of his power (131). The answer to his questions according to [4], in his *Approaches to the African Novels: Essay in Analysis* seems to lie in Achebe's attempts to give a classical twist to the character of Ezeulu in which Ezeulu, as Oedipus, bears a fate that rightly belongs to the unjust and the malicious - but neither of the two is unjust or malicious. [4], further stresses that Ezeulu in his blindness fails to take a long, critical look at the true position of things out of his own exaggerated opinion of himself (213). The tragedy of the novel lies in the fact that from the beginning of the novel he has deliberately refuses to face the truth:

Whenever Ezeulu considered the immensity of his power, over the year and the crop and, therefore, over the people he wondered if it was real ...It was true that he named the day of the feast of the Pumpkin Leaves and for the New Yam Feast, but he did not choose the day. He was merely the watchman. His power was no more than the power of a child over a goat that was said to be his... What kind of power was it if everybody knew

that it would never be used? Better to say that it was not there, that it was no more than the power in the anus of the proud dog who tried to put out a furnace with his puny fart (3-4).

The reality of the limitation of his power is thrown upon his face but he still refuses to accept it. He chooses to be blind. He nips himself on finding out the limitation of his power because he is presented as destined to be destroyed. He continues to engage himself in a dialogue thus: 'Take away that word dare... Yes I say take it away. No man in Umuarao 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' (4).

The way the conflict of wills between Ezeulu and Nwaka, Ezidemili is presented in the novel assumes narrative and dramatic interest. The conflict helps to bring out more the complexity of characters in them. The conflict also serves as a mode of exploration of their mental disposition. This is seen as Ezeulu sends his son, Oduche to join the people that learn the white man's tradition claiming that he like the wise bird 'Eneke-nti-oba ... wants Oduche to be his eye there' (45). He turns deaf ears to

all the critics because he does not want to loose out rightly in the new wave of power. He has seen that the future of those that join the white man's tradition seems brighter and this is why he sends his son there. To be in position of authority has always been his pleasure and as he can not join them because of his position as a Chief Priest of Ulu, when his son gets it invariably he has got it too. When Oduche, a new Christian covert imprisons a python, the sacred symbol of Idemili in a box all hell breaks loose. This gives Ezidemili the opportunity he has been looking for to ridicule Ezeulu. Ezidemili therefore sends an ill-mannered boy to Ezeulu ordering him to cleanse the land. Ezeulu's reaction to the message and the messenger gives a glimpse of what he would have done if Ezidemili has gone to deliver the message by himself.

'... Ezidemili wants to know how you intend to purify your house on the abomination that your son committed.

'Go and tell Ezidemili to eat shit. Do you hear me? Tell Ezidemili that Ezeulu says he should go and fill his mouth with shit. As for you, young man, you may go because the world is no longer what it was. If the world had been what it was

I would have given you something to remind you always of the day you put your head into a mouth of a leopard.' The young man wanted to say something but Ezeulu did not allow him.

'If you want to do something with your life, take my advice and say not another word here.' Ezeulu rose threateningly to his full height; the young man decided to heed his advice and rose to go (54).

Ezeulu reacts that way because his son has not actually killed the python and it is also his duty as the Chief Priest of Ulu to cleanse the land. Why then should his enemy send such an outrageous message to him? He would have taught Ezidemili that nobody teaches him his duty and at the same time let Ezidemili know that his enemies are permitted to castigate him and leave unpunished just because of the intrusion of the white man and his culture which has brought changes with it. This There is another chain of misunderstanding of wills here and this misunderstanding is presented in the novel for a purpose; to aid the narrative development of the novel as a tragedy. Ezeulu is driven to reject this high

scenario displays the ego driven actions of the two contending personalities which they extend to the gods they are representing. Even when Ezeulu has first admitted that the outrage his son has committed to the scared python is a very serious matter, he according to [8], wants the people to be reminded of the dignity of his person (56).

Ezeulu, a man of practical morality is bound to speak the truth at all times because of his position as the Chief Priest of Ulu. His honesty is portrayed when he refuses to be involved in what he calls 'a war of blame' but rather testifies against the people of Umuaro during the land dispute with Okperi and his people never forgive him. Ezeulu exhibits this act of morality because his responsibility as a priest of Ulu is uttermost to him. Though his people may misunderstand him, he knows his duty as the chief priest and is dedicated to his responsibility. To Captain T.K. Winterbottom, Ezeulu's honesty needs to be rewarded. Though he wants to establish indirect rule by appointing Ezeulu as a warrant chief; Ezeulu will only serve Ulu and no other.

political office by ego. He thought over it in his mind; his travelling to such a distance as going to the Government Hill is enough offence to his god, Ulu not to talk of accepting to serve any other person rather than Ulu. It is ego that

makes him aware that he has the absolute power which no other person has in Umuaro because of his position as the chief priest of Ulu and for that he does

Psychoanalytical Overview of the Intrusion of the White Man and His Culture into the Hitherto Self-Contained World of African Society in the Novel

Before Ezeulu is invited to the Government hill by Captian T.K.

Winterbottom his ego has been awoken by the action of Mr. Wright, the white road engineer. Mr Wright is driven by the id to whip Obika, the second son of Ezeulu. Ezeulu on hearing this, does not want to know what has prompted the road

‘... If I was sure of my son do you think I would sit here now talking to you while a man pokes his finger into my eyes goes home to his bed? If I did nothing else I would pronounce a few words on him and he would know the power in my mouth.’ (98-99)

Ezeulu brags arrogantly to his friend Akuebue in the above statement of the immensity of his power but Moses Unachukwu who has been converted to

not need to serve any other deity or person who he see as have limited powers.

engineer’s action; all he is after is that Mr. Wright has poked his finger into his eyes and has gone free because Obika refuses to tell him how it happened. Although nobody will feel happy that an adult is beaten like an animal, this episode is presented to bring out the arrogance nature of Ezeulu. He is puffed up by the powers he possesses as the Chief Priest of Ulu.

Christianity and has been working with the white man for a long time gives a better description of the unlimited powers of the white man. Moses is talking out of experience that it is foolish to contend with white man over powers.

‘... I saw with my own eyes what the white man did to Abame. Then I know there was no escape. As daylight chases away darkness so will the white man drive away all our customs. I know that as I say it now it passes by your ears, 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...' (84-45)

This interpretation of the white man's power by Moses Unachukwu is what makes [10] call him 'a harbinger of a new dispensation and the symbolic meaning that the new road as movement symbolizes transition' (106). Ezeulu is therefore boasting of the powers he has because he is blind of the changeover of the powers to the white man.

The people see Ezeulu invitation to the Government Hill as an extension of his friendship with the British Administrator, while Winterbottom sees his rejection of the political office of a warrant chief as treason. Winterbottom's ego is awakened. He decides to deal with this 'primitive witch doctor' that does not want to accept the favour he is showing him. The result is that Ezeulu is detained for thirty-two days for his actions to teach him a lesson by the British Administrator. Ezeulu is unable to eat the customary yams for three months as a result of the imprisonment. The British Administrator acted impulsively and also he did not care to look deep into what had made this honest man to reject his offer. He (Winterbottom) is driven by his ego. He wants to prove to Ezeulu that he (Winterbottom) has the power to do

whatever he wants and Ezeulu must obey him. To him, Ezeulu has made mockery of his personality by rejecting the favour he wants to give him and must not go unpunished to learn his lessons.

Ezeulu's distension triggers confusion and catastrophe in Umuaro because of the customary yams that remain to be eaten. The New Yam Festival cannot be named until the customary yam is eaten by the Chief Priest of Ulu. What is then to be done? A change is needed in the culture of Umuaro but the problem lies on if the ego in the Ezeulu will allow him to embrace the change. When things are running out of hands because of hunger in Umuaro, the clan elders and law makers of Umuaro decide to try to convince Ezeulu to eat the remaining customary yams. One of the elders, Onenyi Nnanyelugo speaks their mind thus:

'... Shall we sit down and watch our harvest ruined and our children and wives die of hunger? No! Although I am not the priest of Ulu I can say that the deity does not want Umuaro to perish. We call him the saver. Therefore you must find a way out, Ezeulu, If I could I would go now and eat the remaining yams. But I am not the priest of Ulu. It is

for you, Ezeulu, to save our harvest.' (207)

The elders and law makers even affirm their stand for a change and own up to face the consequences of the outcome. They assert:

'Umuaro is now asking you to go and eat those remaining yams today and name the day of the next harvest... if Ulu says we have committed an abomination let it be on the heads of ten of us here. You will be free because we have set you to it ... (208).

Ezeulu like a wounded lion allows his personal feelings to overrule his usual lucidity. He is vindictive and this makes him to forget that no man is an island. [12], argues that his anger emanates from the fact that the people did not react to his detection as the Chief Priest (135). He sees the fight as that of humans but 'it was the fight of the gods and he was no more than an arrow in the bow of his god' (192). He bluntly refuses by saying: 'You have spoken well, but what you ask me to do is not done. Those yams are not food and a man does not eat them because he is hungry. You are asking me to eat death ...' (207)

This Ezeulu's blindness and stubbornness is presented to show that he refuses to accept the change while he claims to have

sent his son to church because of his foresight. He that describes himself as the only man that sees while others are blind is ironically the blind. This makes the reader to reflect back at the beginning of the novel when power intoxicates Ezeulu like palm wine; when he considers the immensity of his powers. 'If he should refuse to name the day there would be no festival - no planting and no reaping' (3). The tragedy of the novel actually centres on this intoxication of power in him because he is created in the novel to be endowed with hubris for his destruction. Ezeulu as firm as the northern stars affirms on his refusal to eat the customary yams and even claims that it is the will of Ulu that he should not eat the yams. How can a mortal man claim that his will is that of the gods without asking from the gods if not that his is puffed up by pride? 'You cannot say: do what is not done and we shall take the blame. I am the Chief Priest of Ulu and what I have told you is his will not mine.' (208)

It is therefore pride and his vindictiveness that made him to take the place of the gods. He is not Ulu but the Chief Priest of Ulu and should not have said the mind of the god. His blindness prevents him from seeing the power of intrusion of Christianity or the white man's religion into the hearts of his people. He is blind to see that Christianity has come with its full force to

usurp the position of traditional religion. His refusal to eat the remaining customary yams is the final act that is presented and the community turns against him. The people takes solace in a place where there problems are solved. The new religion provides solution to their problems; they harvest and sacrifice to the 'son' instead of to Ulu. Ezeulu is destroyed and his god too. [4], in support of this opines that 'Many people and the gods they serve behave with blind envy and ruin their own cause, like the proverbial lizard that ruined his own mother's funeral - a proverb that is repeated *ad nauseam* in the novel' (21). Ulu unleashes his wrath on Ezeulu by snatching his son, Obika in death. The pain becomes too much for him to bear. This is the climax of his destruction and it

leaves questions pile up in his mind: 'What happened to him? Who did this? I said who? ... My son,' he cried 'Ulu, were you there when this happened to me?' He hid his face on Obika's chest (228). The pathetic picture of Ezeulu is shown where he is mad, sweeping the floor with a broom. This awakens a sense of pity as well as that of fear on the readers. The height of the destruction is also seen during the Christian harvest. The Christian harvest takes place few days after the death of Obika and the foreign religion is portrayed blossoming while the traditional religion is shattered. The people take solace in the new religion that brings back the promise immunity; 'the harvest are made in the name of the son' (230).

CONCLUSION

It is true that the mind is not the physical things one can see but the effect of the actions of the mind on the people's lives in the novel are felt physically. From the analysis of the novel *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu is presented as tragically doomed to be destroyed by his obstinate nature and thirst for power. The tragic flaw in him does not manifest out of free will, but is driven by the id, the ego and the superego; it is governed by irrational forces, the unconscious, as well instinctual and biological drives. Ezeulu is

presented to remain blatant instead of trying to learn from his mistakes. Other characters and forces that are contending with him for powers keep frustrating him till he takes the position of the god instead of being its servant. He has to bear the consequences of his pride and stubbornness because he faces the Sophoclean dilemma of being made to confront what he is mostly afraid of.

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