

Research article

Theistic Panpsychic rationality of African literature and history

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Abstract

Theistic Panpsychic rationality of African literature and history is an exposition of the uniqueness of African values planted naturalistically in the superstructure of African oral and modern literature and history. This enterprise is therefore predicated on: The uniqueness or Africanity of Black man's epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and methodology from which their values and the ones they share with other races emanate i.e., there is a commonality and universality of values and philosophies; The need to unify human races, globalizing universal, enduring and progressive values from the center and distant corners of the world by tracing back cultures through philosophy, literature and history. In other words, there is need to go 'beyond culture' to 'convey the idea that there are beliefs, perceptions, outlooks, values and practices that are not features or properties or characteristics of a particular culture. The fact of history that in the evolutionary ladder, African was advertently or inadvertently left out in history, exalted the Renaissance Enlightenment Modernity and the Development in Europe exclusively and above the African being. Hence Theistic Panpsychic rationality of African literature and history is a search for Africanity with the objective of re-launching it back to world civilization. The value in African philosophy whose existence and inculcation has been the preoccupation of African literature and history is rock foundation in the subconscious subjectivity and objective reality of African mind. A subjective capacity and an objective rational principle but a dimension presupposed by both which allows for their final reconciliation in Theistic panpsychic animism.

Keywords: Theism, Panpsychism, Animism, Literature, History and Rationalism

Theistic panpsychism and the Africinity of Literature

It is necessary to determine the definition of African literature and history as theoretical and methodological tools of this enquiry. Debate on what constitute African literature has vacillated between writing in African languages and using English or French as meta-languages, writing by an African or the African writing on Africa. I would agree with Ezekiel Mphahlele that African literature is "creative writing in which an African setting is authentically handled or to which experiences originating in Africa are integral" (Egudu, 1986). For instance Chinua Achebe's remark in *Things Fall Apart* that proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten" is an Africinity and as such applies not only to the Igbo but to all other tribes in Africa. According to R.N Egudu, proverb constitutes a significant dimension of African traditional literature and is as important as palm oil is for seasoning and making meals attractive (Egudu). Chinweizu and others pointed out some elements in Okot P'Bitek works, which like Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* are most consistently influenced by African literary traditional and vernacular modes of expression. These elements are "African imagery, proverbs, laments, invocation and curses" (Egudu). Egudu has added folk songs which are used by these to create comic effects, reinforce points and generate humor. Oral literature as it concerns African philosophy and development is a very important vehicle of thought transmission from one age to another and the mirror of Africinity or African civilization. Theo Vincent rightly captured oral literature as the "rich, orally expressed and transmitted literary inheritance of African societies comprising the folklore, legends, myths, songs and praise songs, heroic recitals, festivals and ritual enactments based on their world view. It is an articulate medium for expressing the people's idea of society and human relations, aesthetics and philosophy. This literature is communal, is still vibrant. The significant fact about the historicity of the oral literature of Africa is its paradoxical antiquity and contemporality, for these reasons, it has remained a problematic part of reference in determining the character of the other literary activities" (Vincent, 1986). African literature, in terms of metaphysical superstructure because of its religiosity or onto theology, is theistic humanistic and panpsychic. It expresses an Africinity, a unique cultural and metaphysical type. Developing from a theistic humanistic and panpsychic phenomena, Africinity expresses the cultural synthesis and unity of Black Africa. It is both a mysterious and empirical essence. In terms of ethics and public sphere, it is the attitudes, ideas and behavior arising from life experience in small aggregating communities which coalesce into communicative and political rationality of Theistic panpsychic type.

African poems have this philosophy of Theistic humanism and theistic panpsychism being re-echoed in every one of them because it is the philosophy that informs and controls existence generally whether individual, human, object or the natural. In the poem, above, there are elements of providence, creation, creator, life here and thereafter, the sovereignty of God and salvation. African poems also dwell on issues and facts of life like, feminism, man and woman, righteousness and communally based lyrical songs that portray the finitude and mortality of man etc.

Like the aboriginal African poems above, the subjects of African drama are "human nature, life and death, fate and its operation, and conflicts that dominate and give meaning to human life. African dramatists use African social circumstances and myths to give universal implications to these themes" (Vincent, Op.cit). The myths in African

drama also relay the message of Theistic humanistic communalism and Theistic Panpsychic rationality.

The African character in African novel is also in question as it is undisputedly one of the means of promoting the Africanity of African literature. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is a good attempt to render in fictional prose materials, history, cosmology and metaphysics extant in African-Igbo communal culture as a novel and as a philosophy, as Africanity and as a Theistic humanistic and panpsychic rationality.

Historical objectivity in *Things fall Apart*

This book reflected the history, culture and philosophy of the pre-colonial Igbo society. And in it are many signs of history, values and cultural identity otherwise, known as facts in history which constitute historical objectivity.

First, town crying in *Things Fall Apart* is symbolic of communicative rationality and the acceptable medium of mass information in Igbo villages. The town-crier called a meeting of the whole Umuofia village to let them know that the people of Mbaino had killed their daughter, the wife of Ogbuefi Udo. Town crying is a system of communicative rationality transcendently justified but specifically in a theistic animistic and panpsychic sense.

There existed the Oracle of hills and caves who ministered to the clan god of Umuofia: And in fairness to Umuofia, It should be recorded that It never went to war unless Its case was clear and just and was accepted as such by its Oracle - the Oracle of the hills and caves (Achebe).. Consulting of oracles was and is a tradition and a religion among Igbo society.

Human sacrifice was common among the pre-colonial Igbo society. Ikemefuna and a young virgin were sacrificed to Umuofia by the people of Mbaino. This act was to appease them for killing their daughter (Achebe). However, the modernizing value that Christianity brought to the African society is the abolishment of human sacrifice which is a local primitive culture of anti-humanity.

There were certain things considered as abomination *Nso-ani* in Umuofia village. Okonkwo beat his wife in the week of peace and committed a great evil against the land (Achebe). In other word, peace is recognized in the society as both a universal absolute but also intrinsic in its ontology..

Wrestling March was also common in Umuofia village (Achebe). It is a symbolic game and ritual for unity and communication among the people. It was not bloody and suicidal like the modern European wrestling.

Ekwefi suffered a great deal in her life (Achebe). She had borne ten children and nine of them died in infancy. It was the Oracle who confirmed that she had been giving birth to *Ogbanje* children. The pre-colonial Igbo society believed in *Ogbanje* reincarnation. Okonkwo was told that the child was an *Ogbanje* one of those wicked children who, when they died, entered their mother's wombs to be born again (Achebe). African traditional religion has some

cardinal structures of which belief in spirits is one. Every object or structure has a spirit *Ogbanje* spirits are "born-to-die spirits. The belief is that they are wandering mischievous panpsychic animistic spirits who find their way into the wombs of women in order to die immediately or later after birth. It is believed that there is a league of spirits (panpsychic animistic kingdom) whose real pre-occupation is to undertake this bad assignment.

There was *egwugwu* a kind of masquerade or spirit (Achebe). There were no courts and lawyers. The only way of dispensation of justice among the Igbo clans was through the gods of the land like *egwugwu*. Judgment here is based on true evidence. Hence Igbo African traditional justice system is based on natural law and justice reducible to the Theistic Panpsychic animistic truths and asymmetrically deducible from them.

We learnt that Ekwefi and her son used to gather and tell each other stories (Achebe). Story-telling was common in pre-colonial Igbo society. There was no radio or television to relate during their leisure time. So they turned to the act of storytelling, as one, an oral tradition and communication and two, as an instrument of communicative rationality. The art of storytelling or oral tradition in ancient Africa carries along with it the aura and conscience of animism and panpsychism, ancestorship and the ever presence of God.

During funeral in traditional Igbo society, guns were fired or shot. In one occasion Okonkwo's gun exploded and killed a young lad. It was during the funeral of Ezeudu, a titled man of Umuofia (Achebe). Gunfiring is animistic - it must be heard by the living and the dead. Besides, it is a means of communalistic and communicative action.

The village had a forest called evil forest. The evil forest was inhabited by the evil spirits. It was also inhabited by lepers, small-pox victims, evil medicine-men, and outcasts (Achebe) etc. Python was also venerated and not killed in Umuofia. In the animistic cosmology and ontology, forests are abode of departed spirits in form of pythons or familiar spirits - forms into which human spirits transmigrate.

Education was introduced by the missionaries in Umuofia. It was not initially valued (Achebe). The people of Umuofia sent their children to school as a punishment. It was only the slaves, the weaklings and the children of foreign wives that were sent to school. Hence, most of the educated and liberated in the postcolonial Africa were the early Christians.

Okonkwo committed an abomination by committing suicide. Suicide was greatly abhorred in the primitive Igbo society. So, Okonkwo despite his fame and position was not properly buried because of this abomination he committed (Achebe). Suicide, even in the animistic panpsychic culture is illegal, unjust and antihuman.

Providential view of History in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Philosophy of history, especially the providential and cyclical views of history are extant and immanent in *Things Fall Apart*. The providential view of history holds that history is the working out of divine purpose. This view was held by the Jews, the early Christian, St. Augustine and the medieval church. In his *city of God* Augustine says that

history is the revelation of God's purpose. It explains the drama of salvation from the creation through the fall and the redemptive process to the end of the world and eternal reward and punishment. There are two cities existing side by side in the world. They are *City of God* and *City of Man*. The *city of God* includes all the souls predestined to be saved, that is those saintly men of old as well as the faithful of today who live closer to God. The "*City of Man*" on the other hand refers to the earthly cities of Satan. It includes those devoted purely to worldly pursuit and who are impious and corrupt. History is then the scene of conflict, between these two cities, these two moralities, two orders of life which are dramatically opposed. When the Lord appears the blessed will receive their reward and the wicked their punishment (St. Augustine, 1881). For the African every blessing is a sign of God's kindness. History whether good or bad, is providential.

There is also evidence of providential view of African Philosophy of history. In *Things Fall Apart* it is remembered that for many African people God's active part in human history is seen in terms of his supplying them with rain, good harvest, children, cattle (animals), health, etc. God makes his presence felt through natural objects and phenomena in theistic Panpsychic and animistic sense. Another aspect of this view is that God intervenes in the affairs of men. He intervenes to bring changes in the society. Ikenga Metuh noted, "Man remains bound to God by ties of creation and by God's divine providence over the world of which man is part" (Metuh, 1985). Hence, people constantly turn to God in various acts of worship which in effect constitutes man's response to God's interest and active part in human history. According to J.S Mbiti, "God is not divorced from this concept of history because it is His universe. He is active in it and apparent silence may be a feature of his divine activity. The perceived silence of God is the epitome of his infinitude, awesomeness and power.

The philosophical interpretation -of history in things in *Things fall Apart* is significant in the sense it was a necessary requirement in any solution of the general metaphysical problem of evil. The issue in *Things Fall Apart* is an obvious metaphysical evil because, a clan that once acted as one, shared things together, spoke as one was later turn to shred by the coming of the white men. The whole chaotic state and evils in the land of Umuofia could be traceable to the speculative view of history. Moreover, the whole story and events, in the *Things fall apart* is a speculative treatment of detailed historical facts and as such partly belong to metaphysics and theory of knowledge.

There is the view that in the cause of history that there are periods of progress and decline, period of ascension and dissension. History according to this theory moves in a cycle like but over long period of time, there is a series of changes leading back to a starting point or the original process repeats it's self. In *Things Fall Apart*, History is also cyclical in the sense that the whole event marked progress and decline. The Umuofia clan was graphically moving from one development to another till the traditional ways of behavior paved way for European way or Christianity. Finally this type of history marked a turning point in the following line, *Things Fall Apart; the center cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world* (Achebe). However, this is also a providential view of history as the working out of a divine purpose, i.e., the cause of events and all that happens is out of divine essence and purpose. In *Things Fall Apart*, the epic tragedy of Okonkwo could be ascribed to the providential view of history in the sense

that all that happened to him could be as his "*Chi*" made it to be, thus: "A man could not rise beyond his destiny... (Achebe) but if a man said yes, his *chi* also affirmed (Achebe). Here was a man whose *chi* said no despite his own affirmation.

Theistic panpsychic analytical framework of *Things all Apart*

Literary criticism will help bring out some ideological elements in *Things Fall Apart* African literature can be described as the one that is peculiar to the modern African which comprises of their belief, attitudes, origins, their nature, structure of organizations and interaction in the world. As well as their conception of the physical and metaphysical world. This literature or philosophy of the African is derogatively called an Ethno Philosophy, folk philosophy in the sense that it has to do with dogmatism. It has low level of respectability.

African literatures as seen in *Things Fall Apart* are basically traditional, in the sense that it is limited by nature. It is not something arguably revealed to the African such as Islam or Christianity. This is why the Umoufia clan vehemently refused the coming of the white. This African literature is largely seen in the people's myths, proverb, riddles, in their songs and their liturgies. Furthermore, African literature is primarily mythical. This is quietly understandable because the people have no other way of preserving their insight and view about reality. Also the African (Igbo) man has myth regarding the origin of the world, myth about the origin of the time, existence of God and his attributes. When we say that the African world view is mythical, we mean that myths are means through which such a world view is transmitted. But it is properly theistic panpsychic.

African literature is anthropocentric in the sense that it is centered on man and theistic Panpsychic because God is at the apex of being. Man is important and indeed central in African world view but he is by all means a measure of all things or created things. Man is likely to claim a central and strategic position in the hierarchy of beings in the interaction and inter-communicative actions between the visible created order and the invisible world of gods, *chi* and spirit of ancestors. It is right to hold that African literature is centered on man because the spirit of the dead ancestor is in contact with the living and to continue living on earth. As we can see in the book *Things Fall Apart*, the whole literature is dangling between the Umuofia people and their *chi* or gods. Man is at the center of the created order, the focal point of the universe, the ontological mean between the visible and the invisible.

Indeed myth is mythical but it contains wisdom. The story in *Things Fall Apart* contains wisdom which serves as eternal legacy for the African. Professor Nwoga argues vividly that myths contain some truths. According to him, "mythology of a community contains those stories which represent the underlying truth behind the life of the people and which will be a good source from which to establish the people's concept of causality, their belief system as they relate to deity and the relationship between man and other beings" (Nwogu, 1981). It mirrors the reality and the metaphysical beliefs of the people. Metaphysics can be defined as that branch of philosophy that studies reality. It is the science that tries to determine the real nature of things. Here metaphysics subject matter are God, freedom and immortality. It could be recalled that the whole episodes in *Things Fall Apart* or the epic story of Okonkwo and the

destinies of Umuofia clan is highly metaphysical in concept. It could be recalled that the episode that reflected on the death of Okonkwo is immersed in a spiritual theistic animistic world. The war against the coming of the missionary is related to the protection of their animistic ideology and philosophy for the protection of their land which they claim is the domain of their ancestors. Like the Bantu people, Igbo soul hankers after life and force. It is all about deity as it relates to ontology, wisdom and ethics (Nwogu, 1996). It is precisely a theistic panpsychic cosmologic

In *Things Fall Apart* is discussion about the existence of man and god and consequently death. Cosmology here is to be understood as a philosophical science which studies the material world as regards its origins, its characteristics and ultimate end. It is distinguished from the metaphysical that is concerned with immaterial reality, belief in the existence of the physical and spiritual worlds. In *Things fall apart*, there is the belief in this world of phenomena and the spirit world of immaterial things which can be described as Theistic Panpsychic animistic phenomenism.

In the epic story of Okonkwo there is the belief that man lives in a genuinely spiritual/ and temporal condition which is directed towards what really still to come. The Igbo man believes that he continues to live after this world of phenomena. Consequently, he has a strong belief in life after death i.e. doctrine of re-incarnation and immortality of the soul. For Igbo people death is a transition, it is a gate valve; a means of joining the ancestors in the world.

One of the requirements of "civilization" is that a nation must have a history. But Unuofia seems to lack one. From European point view. Gikandi suggests that the beginning of *Things Fall Apart* is an "imaginary response to the problems of genealogy and cultural identity that have haunted Igbo culture..." (Gikandi, 1991). This according to him, is the story of Okonkwo, prominent man in a small village of the Igbo area in Nigeria. The story takes place in a time not quite decipherable, but just at the period of White Christian missionaries, British Government and law. Okonkwo is the son of a lazy father named Unoka. Given his boyhood experience, Okonkwo rises from his status as a poor kid to becoming one of the most honored in his village; Achebe portrayed a total paragon of virtue in him in order to build a one-sided case. While Okonkwo has many fairly universally recognized virtues of honesty, handwork, loyalty to the group, courage and so on, he is also very quick to anger, a relatively brutal husband and father, a man who carefully shut up any emotions of love and care lest he show some weakness to his concept of virility Therefore for Gikandi *Things Fall Apart* is the story of uncivilized people, which, however, is false.

The tribe's myth of origin sets the keynote of its entire mode of self-apprehension and structure of knowledge which Gikandi has called "the Igbo epistemology" (Gikandi). The myth of origin also ensures that time is experienced not as a static category but lived continuously and intensely in the mode of duration. This consciousness of time permeates the collective life, so that the worldview involves a ceaseless procession of life, in an interpenetration of time and space that is ensured by the eternal presence of the ancestors. The land of the living was not removed from the domain of the ancestors as there is a panpsychic animistic continuum. There was coming and going between them especially when an old man died, because an old man was very close to his ancestors. A man's life (birth to

death) was a series of transitional rites, which brought him nearer to his ancestors (Achebe, Op.cit). The culture of Umuofia and the system of belief derived from it as experienced at every level of rationality serves as the measure of social control, as demonstrated by the role of the *Egwuwu* (animistic symbol) incantations of the ancestors, in the administration of justice, a role that endows the laws and customs of the land with a sacred sanction. As a culture of theistic humanistic Panpsychic communicative rationality dialogue such as the one engaged with throughout the novel points to the processes by which the principles governing the world concept and value system of the tribe are constantly debated, remained and in this way, retrospectively rationalized commonly.

Between Theistic pansychic animism and literally criticism

It has been argued that *Things Fall Apart* can be summed up as largely the narrative of the process of self-fashioning by which Okonkwo is transformed into the somber inversion of his father. But the mental condition into which he falls as a result is not really explanatory, to make a statement about inner working of his mind as a fully realized individual. Even at his moment of greatest mental turmoil (in the immediate aftermath of his killing of Ikemefuna), we are provided with hardly any insight into the happenings within his troubled soul. The point here is that, despite the occasional glimpse, the narrative affords us into the states of mind that are also occasions for introspection on the part of the character, it narrows our gaze, to focus upon what is presented as essential to his make up: "Okonkwo was a man of action not of thought" (Pierre, 1989). The ambivalence by which the novel is governed inheres in the portrayal of Okonkwo. We must go further to observe that the largely negative thrust of this portrayal comes close to undermining the polemic intent of the novel. The ironic devaluation of the character and the ethos he embodies suggest a profound sense of unease on the part of his creator regarding many issues of moral import raised by the habits of mind and social practices that define the traditional of life and expression, there is then a sense in which the Achebe's novel begins to tend towards a subversion of its ideological premises. It is as if Achebe's intellect, sensibility and his sense of artistic integrity had entered into contention with his primary affections for his cultural identity. What he is indeed doing is a panpsychic animistic analysis of his culture.

Achebe's novel is not the expression of a repudiation of the tribal ethos, or a form of recoil from the tribal universe, but to consider the text in light of its ambivalence is to recognize it for what it is: an uncompromising reappraisal of the tribal world. We are made aware of the inadequacy of the ethos, by which the past was regulated, its limitations as embodied in historical forms, and of those questions arising precisely from their mode of insertion in the world. Moreover, as Pierre Nora has pointed out, the phenomenon of memory exceeds the purview of history (Valdez, 1995). In this particular context perhaps more than in any other, the dynamics of cultural memory involves much more than the reaching into a past; they also engage the present, insofar as the traditional culture upon which they are focused remains a vibrant contemporary reality. While it continues to exert its force upon minds, the question remains how far the past can be invoked to legitimize the present, how far it is capable of functioning as a practical reference in the contemporary circumstances of African endeavor. These, then, are some of issues raised by Achebe work. The point is that the novel genre serves Achebe as a mode of reflection upon the nature and significance of the African past, and its relevance to the African present. In *Things Fall Apart*, this reflective tone is made evident in the

conversations and dialogues he attributed to the elders of the tribe, who are thereby presented through the course of the narrative as minds engaged in a sustained, rational deliberative and communicative process. The novel takes on a discursive character as it stages a running debate on customs and practices, on institutions and values, on systems of belief: a debate that is in reality conducted as an interrogation of the human possibilities offered by the material world and mental landscape that together compose the tribal culture and stamp it with a distinctive quality.

The contradiction generated by the fundamental ambivalence of the novel's propositional content can be grasped at the level where the process of self-reflection manifested in the novel is traversed by what one might call a deep cultural anxiety. The need to validate the tribal culture in some emotionally satisfactory way runs up against the question of value, a question that is central to the order of meaning proposed by the novel. It is in this light that Obierika, who stands as the manifest antithesis of Okonkwo, can be said to function as the moral center of the novel. He comes closest among the novel's characters to a representation of what Valdez Moses has called a "modern sensibility" (Jeyifo, 1993). It is perhaps, not far-fetched to suggest that we have in Obierika not merely the one character with which, as Jeyifo points out, but rather a subtle projection of the critical consciousness that Achebe himself brings to the imaginative conception of the novel (Jeyifo). The evidence of the novel lends such weight to this view as to make it a matter of more than mere speculation.

Whatever the case, the debate enacted within the novel gives the work an analytical bent to which its initial ideological inspiration is ultimately subordinated. *Things Fall Apart* testifies to a clear recognition of a decisive break in the African experience of history occasioned by the colonial fact. It hardly needs to be stressed that this recognition is far from committing Achebe to acquiescence in the methods of subjugation employed by colonial agents and the humiliation described in the latter pages of the novel, in which the historical grievance of Africa is vividly represented, dramatized in the martyrdom of Okonkwo and the Umuofia elders. The pathos of their situation resonates through the entire society, takes on wider meanings including the suspension of the entire energy, systems, poetic rational and aesthetic life in Umuofia. All these portends the stifling of the tribe's spirit by a collective trauma: "Umuofia was like a startled animal with ears erect, sniffing the silent, ominous air, and not knowing which way to run" (Achebe). The dearth of a society is a signification which beckons a call for a restitution

The anti-colonial thrust of the novel is evident but this is not all there is to the story of Okonkwo and Umuofia, as recounted by Chinua Achebe. The novel ended with the hero's suicide. This marks the end of the struggle and the beginning of a new and unpredictable future for the Umuofians and for the continent of which they form an integral and indeed representative part. The import of the novel arises from this intimation of which *Things Fall Apart* registers ultimately as an acute consciousness of historical and cultural discontinuity occasioned by the colonial encounter in Africa, and of its ontological implications; the necessity for a new mode of being, of relating to the world.

It is one of the novel's peculiar traits that the historical realism that directs the narrative progression or providentially historical progression harmonizes readily with the panpsychic animistic mood that serves as its ground base, or

communalistic animistic ideology which is registered in one of the most remarkable passages in the novel;

That night the mother of the spirits walked the length and breadth of the clan, weeping for her murdered son. Not even the eldest, Umuofia had ever heard such a strange and fearful sound, and it was never to be heard again. It seemed as if the very soul of the tribe wept for a great evil that was coming - its own death (Achebe).

The epochal significance of the passage is intensified, assumes cosmic resonance, in the lament that pours out of one of the characters, Okika, at the final meeting of the clan: "All our gods are weeping. *Idemili* is weeping. *Ogwugwu* is weeping. And all the others....." (Irele, 1994). Okika's lament directs us to the heart of Achebe's novel: It is as an allergy that incorporates a tragic vision of history that *Things Fall Apart* elicits the strongest and deepest response. *Things Fall Apart* is an imaginative delineation of those significant moments in the African colonial experience. The novel is therefore a work on African philosophy, African colonial history and cultural experience. It is a significant work of philosophy that acutely address the metaphysical and ontological world view of Igbo people and the Africans generally, and the one that represents Immanuel Kant synthesis, on idealism and realism in the didactic reference to the roles objective and subjective life plays in the philosophical and economic history of Igbo people. This stylistic evolution of the novel may be interpreted as the scriptural and historical sign of a corresponding readjustment of the writer's vision, reflecting his sense, as it begins to develop, of the pressure of history as it begins to exert himself upon the community. This seems to accord with a Hegelian conception of history as the unfolding spirit of modernity, with the modern novel as its imaginative equivalent. Modernity is a historical phenomenon arising primarily from the Western experience and as the paradigm that informed the writing of scientific history, and, the emergence of the novel, the literary genre that is thought to be most closely associated with modern culture. In this view, the novel as a specific modern genre affords a new medium for the construction in aesthetic and moral terms of a vision of a totality no longer immediately available to consciousness in the fragmented, reified world of modern civilization (Heyden, 1987). Yet the objective truth is that *Thing Fall Apart* is an unconscious elevation of theistic panpsychic animistic vision of Igbo society.

On the conception of history that underwrites the status of the novel, the society depicted in Achebe's novel, along with the culture it sustains, appears as prehistoric, subsisting, as far as the record of its existence is concerned, on mythical narrative orally transmitted. *Things Fall Apart* challenges this conception, for the whole purpose of Achebe's novel is to bring the existence of this culture into view as a historical reality, one that bears witness to the human world realized within it. The narrative mode, in both its epic aspect and at the novelistic level of articulation, affords Achebe the means of restating the grounded historicity of the African experience, in a creative reconstruction of stages of the collective being. The sequence of events narrated, and the society and culture represented are products of an individual imagination, detached from any function of pure predication; the narrative unfolding of events conducted along a definite plot line is thus sustained by an aesthetic faculty. *Things Fall Apart* is a work on philosophy of African history propounding a theory of objectivity and subjectivity of history in its dealing with real events in the past, featuring real historical personalities as characters. Hence, the need for a more inclusive conception, such as the one propounded by Hayden White, which posits a fundamental relationship between fiction

and history as modalities of the significance of narrative as a universal phenomenon:

The collapsing or unification affiliation of narrative historiography with literature and myth should provide no reason for embarrassment because the systems of meaning production in *Things Fall Apart* is a distillate of the historical experience of a people, a group, a culture (Heyden). This suggests that the assimilation of fiction to history is authorized not merely in formal terms but also in content, insofar as in both cases, the real world of concrete experience features as referent of the narrative. In the novel there is a special notion of fiction, deriving from its enhanced value as symbolic representation of experience. "Thus envisaged, the narrative figurate the body of events that serves as its primary referent and transforms these events into intimations of patterns of meaning that any literal representation of them as facts could never produce" (Irele, Op.cit). Achebe's work registers on the other hand a recognition of the compulsions upon the human estate of the historical process itself (what he has called 'the power of events) a compulsion that admits of only narrow margins for the play of human agency. This is what Ahiola Irele calls the "humane pessimism" which he believes Achebe shares with Joseph Conrad (Irele). However, this pessimism is not by any means a disabling one, for it does not imply a resignation born out of a passive suffering of events. According to him, it calls rather for a purposive adjustment to those great shifts in the structure of the world that destabilize established constellations of thought, initiating a new historical process and enforcing therefore a new adventure of mind.

It is most likely that what cultural history delivers in Achebe's first novel is not so much of a revealed past, recollected in a spirit of untroubled celebration, but ultimately opening out of the African consciousness to the possibility of its transcendence, to the historic chance of a new collective and existential being. The sense of the tragic clings nonetheless to this consciousness, for Achebe is aware that this historic chance, if real, is at best limited and fragile. His vision is probably best expressed by the voice of the "Oracle" in his poem *Dereliction* in the volume *Beware Soul Brother*, inviting his worshippers to a form of action, perhaps a collective affirmation, in the precarious space constituted by the, strip of dry land between sea and shore at the ebbing of the tide; *Let them try the land where the sea retreats, Let them try the land, where the sea retreats* (Achebe). Achebe's tragic vision of history is presented in these lines in tension with his utopianism. But to invoke the tragic dimension of Achebe's first novel is not merely to seek to uncover the full scope of its statement of the colonial encounter in Africa, but also to reach for its contemplative character of the general human condition. For Ahiola Irele, it is this sense that is conveyed by Roland Barthes's summation of the *tragedies of Racine* as the aesthetics of defeat (Barthes, 1997). There is this aesthetics of defeat in the social and cultural condition of Umuofia and as is portrayed in the rest of Africa then. The description applies equally to all the great tragedies of world literature, among which *Things Fall Apart* must now be seen to occupy a distinctive place. Beyond its reference to the personal dilemmas of *Racine's* characters, Barthes's phrase points to the apprehension of the tragic imagination of the essential fragility of our human condition. The deep insight that tragedy provides into this condition may well shake our being with fear and trembling, but it is the illumination and psychic release it generates that enable humanity to keep going. As a necessary component of its exploration of the African experience, *Things Fall Apart* embodies this fundamental truth of the imaginative vision.

Nationalist Literature and Liberatist Paradigm

Things Fall apart, by Chinua Achebe, is to use his Igbo concept 'Town Crier', a communicative or literacy instrument, to call on all Africans, laymen, statesmen and nationalists to come out and see what the white has done to the culture, philosophy and history of the Africans, and a call for national re-awakening, restoration of their values that have been trampled upon, and if need be a revolt against colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism. The response to this incipient degradation of African dignity and the dignity of man is what entailed in the essence of nationalists struggles championed by Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Leopold Senghor among others whose mission was not only political freedom but the preservation of African personality. *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe is, therefore, an agenda setting novel for the nationalists and the progressives in black Africa. In order to achieve liberation of African countries from neo-colonial slavery, African leaders attempted to restore traditional values, communal, social practices, and above all, the traditional African socialist/communalist values. These values and social practices of traditional African include communal spirit, hospitality, handwork, generosity, acceptance and practice of egalitarianism, communal ownership of land, and equality of opportunity for all and so on. The concept of brotherhood is expressed in Zik's communalism, Senghor's *negritude*, Nkrumah's *consciencism* and Nyerere's *Ujamaa* (socialism), African literatures and so on. Nnamdi Azikiwe widely held to be a prophet of African and Nigerian nationalism did not really say much on brotherhood, but this could be inferred from some of his teachings. He speaks of African communalism in the general sense of kinship relationship. This corresponds with J. Nyerere's concept of African brotherhood. Azikiwe argues that the renascent African must be reckoned with as a factor in the peace of the world. He described the Africans as those that believe in the universal fatherhood of God and those interested in the affairs of other (Azikiwe, 1970). Their mission to the world appeals for collection security, respect for others and international brotherhood.

The African father's *gong* (Town - cry) or rather to speak in the popular political parlance, 'nationalism', is predicated on those literary and historical values diachronically and synchronically transcendent and immanent in the subjective values and objective symbols represented by theistic pansychic animism. Such necessary symbolic objective -subjective reality as God is the Referent of all objective beings. African poems and literatures advert generously to this superstructure. The Igbo people in Nigeria as encapsulated by Achebe would argue: "We make sacrifices to the little gods, but when they fail and there is no one else to turn to we go to *Chukwu*. We approach a great man through his servants. But when his servants fail to help us, then we go to the last source of hope. We appear to pay greater attention to the little gods but that is not so..." (Achebe). The Value in belief in gods, theistic polytheism or theistic pansychic animism) is in the democratic communalistic public sphere in African society, it is the philosophy of pluralism and democratic truths and individuals as enshrined in post modernism. Again, political concept such as common good, human dignity, togetherness or collectivism and kinship morality or communalism are legacies here and beyond, but generated and preserved by African literatures and history. The African in *Things fall Apart* speaks,

*A man who calls his kinsmen to feast does not do so to save them from starving.
They all have food in their houses. When we gather together in the moonlight*

village ground it is not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so ... But I fear for your young people because you do not understand how strong is the bond of kinship. You do not know to speak with one voice (Achebe).

As the progenitor and bedrock of the ideological manifestos of African nationalism, the above line from *Things fall Apart*, suggests freedom, rational free actions on the part of the kindred, common good in space and time and communalism and respect of one another in one voice. Not less exciting is the logic of equality in the purview of the moon from every man's compound.

In African tradition, there is the cognition of peace as not only an ethic or morality but also as a universal law, hence the sanction on Okonkwo who committed a sacrilegious act by beating his wife during the week of peace. The chief reminded Okonkwo that he has committed offence against the law of the land. "You know as well as I do that our forefathers ordained that before we plant any crops in the earth we should observe a week in which a man does not say a harsh word to his neighbor. We live in peace with our fellows to honour our goddess of the earth without whose blessings our crops will not grow" (Achebe). The week of peace is a week of festivity to celebrate life in African way. But Okonkwo turned it into a week of crises and wailing. The consequences are grave; "The evil you have done can ruin the whole clan. The earth goddess whom you have insulted may refuse to give us her increase, and we shall perish" (Achebe). These statements of natural law are logical reasoning's that respect the hypothetical syllogism and modus ponens argument in the following ways.

1

Breaking the Peace is evil,
The evil ruins the whole clan,
Therefore breaking the peace ruins the whole clan

$$\begin{array}{l} \mathbf{P} > \mathbf{q} \\ \mathbf{q} > \mathbf{r} \\ \hline \mathbf{p} > \mathbf{r} \end{array}$$

2

If the earth goddess refuses to give us increase we shall perish.
The earth goddess refuses to give us increase.
Therefore we shall perish

$$\begin{array}{l} P > q \\ P \\ \hline Q \end{array}$$

Conclusion

The value in African philosophy whose existence and inculcation has been the preoccupation of African literature and history is rock foundation in the subconscious subjectivity and objective reality of African mind. The inter

subjective objectivity of cognitive insight into the culture and tradition passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition is an epistemological matrix whose reference point is the transcendental unity of apperception. Unlike the objectivity of modernity that destroyed the soul of one humanity by the self-transcendence of reason and the Habermas subjective incursion into the vein and arteries of modernity to give it a human face, African philosophy is not simply a subjective capacity and an objective rational principle but a dimension presupposed by both which allows for their final reconciliation in Theistic panpsychic animism.

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