

# Situating Achebe's *Arrow of God* in Modern Democracy

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## Abstract

The thrust of this paper is to give fresh insight into Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* and to justify its relevance in modern democracy. Despite the fact that *Arrow of God* is a historical novel depicting culture contact and conflict, yet, its socio-political structure has intrinsic elements of democracy enshrined or anchored on egalitarianism, power, and on conflict and resolution strategies. The text's attempts to critique western attack against African social stratification or patriarchal system in order to portray modernism in the guise of (modern) democracy remains the objective focus of the paper. The research deploys historical, psychological and sociological approaches to espouse and to analyze various contentious issues or perspectives fundamental in the novel which apply to modern democracy to the reader. The findings justify the text as one of Africa's classic epics tailored to anticipate modern democracy and this may continue to attract concerns to suit the anomalous problematic trends of modern democracy in a contemporary society.

## Keywords

Situating, Achebe's *Arrow of God*, Modern & Democracy

## 1. Introduction

Without much ado, 'democracy' is a derivation of the Greek word "demo kratio". This term appeared in the 5th century BC to denote the political system that existed in the Greek city states notably Athens which was translated to mean "rule of the people". American scientist Larry Diamond classified democracy into four namely, political system for choosing and placing the government through free and fair election; the active participation of people in politics and civic life; protection of the human rights of all citizens, a rule of law where supremacy of the law, equality of every citizen and the fundamental human rights prevail (Onuoha, 2018). The issue of democracy is also linked to the Athens and Greece at about 500 BC (Ogbonnaya, 1998). Abraham Lincoln in summary defines democracy as "government of the people by the people and for the people". This is sequel to the fact that the people (citizens) elect representatives from among themselves. Thus, participatory democracy sprang up in many countries especially in Spain which spurred George Orwell to write his famous book *Homage to Catalonia* which inspired equality against unjust use of power.

*Arrow of God* by Chinua Achebe is a historical and sociological document that has survived decade of critical thoughts and has now become a classic in modern African literature. The novel espouses the Igbo cultural, political system or structure and traditional cosmology before the advent of colonialism. Thus, "for a people without culture and tradition are a people with no roots, no history, no way of life and there are no parameters with which to define and (to) programme their future" (Anumihe, 2017). Achebe uses Umuaro as a mouth-piece of Nigeria to give a solution to the opposing cultures and political problems in Africa. It also unravels the concept of egalitarianism, power,

administration and conflict with regards to culture contact in a socio-cultural polity. In *Arrow of God*, Achebe uses the African Chief Priest Ezeulu who sent his son Oduche to British type of education (life to help his brother pioneer attack against Igbo culture and her people. *No Longer at Ease* saw descendant of Okonkwo, educated Obi Okonkwo (product of two worlds—African and American) who succumbed to corruption in African soil. In *Things Fall Apart*, Umuofia is linked to ancient Greek civilization influenced by Africa. The democratic system in African society predated that of Greece. Achebe seems to honour ways of the Athens which might be influenced by Plato's *The Republic*. That is why *Arrow of God* has been seen or approached as modern democracy while *Things Fall Apart* is described as African epic in classic.

Art is not created in vacuum; it is the work not simply of a person, but of an author fixed in time and space, answering to a community of which he is an important integral or because of his articulate part. "The sociological critic, therefore, is interested in outlining or understanding the social milieu and the extent to which and manner ... the artist responds to it" (Wilbur, 1962) and implicit judgment.

Thus, Achebe has written nearly 300 books about himself and his writing. The publication of *Things Fall Apart* has paved way for numerous other African writers. Novelists who published after express similar historical, social and cultural situations of modern Africa (Nnaji, 2017).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The novel under consideration attempts to interpret hidden issues or unexploited literary facts in the Nigerian cultural polity to ensure proper application of the text. Among the various theories or approaches, the sociological, historical and psychological approaches are best suited for explanation of the topic under discussion. This is because the novel is best studied using the ideas and principles of these approaches ipso facto aesthetics and meaning of the topic—imbued to impact significantly in the Igbo structured system which legitimizes the way that society functions. That is to say, the structure of the Nigerian society before and after the coming or advent of Europeans describe as republican or egalitarian.

Historical approach unravels various historical land marks, epochs or events evident in the text for understanding and communicating its meaning or significance to the society imbued to impact meaning. For instance, the history of Nigeria and the coming of White man in Nigerian socio-cultural polity are various contentious issues the novelist espouses. Thus, *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are described as the peak of colonialism in Nigerian contexts which gave rise to culture contact and conflict in the society. *Arrow of God* may be ascribed as macrocosm of the whole of the African society visited by these colonial masters. The erosion of African values or culture, killing of the White man Stewart and whipping of Abame constitute historical facts in the novel.

On the other hand, the sociological approach is all about literature, society and social ideas hoisted on the synergy of works, the social milieu, the extent and the manner of the artists' response to certain factors which make the text a modern democracy. This criticism is believed to have led to the emergence of Marxist criticism derived from Karl Marx's dialectical materialism. The sociological approach here gives context and background information that is vital in order to unravel how these literary works bear the ideas, attitudes, time and social challenges which confront the people. The sociological approach is preferred to the other approaches because it demands the social and moral criticisms that are essential for analyzing and for advancing the literary work in a greater dimension.

Besides, it is pertinent to outline some of the features of the sociological approach in order to appreciate the worth of these plays. First, it describes art (people's culture), commitment and canons of behavior that are relevant to social contexts as bases for investigation and explication of these literary works.

Second, the dynamic of the social milieu that produced the work is reviewed. In fact, the importance of these works in relationship to art and society is meant to bear on the sociology of the fiction which in turn demands social, political, moral and economic judgments.

Third, it also explains the relevance of the works to social reality. Since the sociological approach describes literature and social ideas, basically the expression of art and the ways of behavior bear relevance to these works and their social contexts. For instance, the controversies besieging the features of modern democracy are burning issues this study is confined with. The dynamics of culture and reform are also highlighted through this approach. This affords the moral opportunity to reassess salient features of culture and politics in the text which seem democratic in the light of modern governance or experiences. This framework unravels the story behind the study especially the origin and growth of democracy and social processes, the analysis to the dynamism of social milieu, the context of the novel and literary perceptions on the society vice versa.

Moreover, the study looks at Afro centric style and technique Achebe adopted for achieving the relevance of his novel to social reality. These comprise the conventional diction for social change which also ‘bends’ the English language and carries everybody along. It is a sociological approach that pursues relevant ideas and ideals of a progressive and revolutionary thought of a democratic society. These approaches as pursued in the study help to dissect and to present these democratic traits and possibly dramatize the struggle to break through the narrow confines of these features and practices to promote a modern democratic polity. It also bears relevance to the morality, myths and metaphysical assumptions of the Igbo traditional institution as republican and highlights it to modern society.

Psychological approach enables the research to go outside the text to interpret the mind of the writer using psycho-analysis or analytic method. Psychological approach gains prominence in the 19th and 20th centuries from the works of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Engel. The interpretation of Achebe’s novel leans on Carl Jung’s *Man and his Symbols* through collective unconsciousness where these symbols are chosen “according to certain pattern of awareness and consciousness impinged ... by the artist’s sensitivity to society and reality” (Irobi, 1999). For instance, Winterbottom comments to Mr. Clarke, “that’s a very interesting collection of fire arms” (1974) refers to Nigeria using those ‘guns as having interesting history’ or evidence. The word “Oti-egbe means Breaker of Guns ... that all children born in that year belong to a new age-grade of the Breaking of the Guns”, which means a sobriquet. This depicts historical facts about the war between Umuaro and Okperi (two brothers) which ushered the coming of White man in Nigerian political scene due to conflict. According to Achebe, “when two brothers fight, a stranger reaps the harvest” (1974). The framework uses probing techniques, demonstrations and library method to foreground intent as reviewed in the novel of socio-cultural and political revolution.

In summary, the sociological approach adopts for this study analyzes those cultural practices that impact significantly to democracy in a dynamic society. For it is clear that every literary work is a product of its time and world. An understanding of the sociology of any given society in terms of its background and intellectual currents over time helps to illuminate literary masterpieces for critics and generations of readers. The sociological approach is thus applied to achieve greater analytical thoughts while dissecting the work. This shall be articulated in the preceding lines of the essay.

### 3. Literature Review

Igbo society is believed to be stratified. Walter Rodney posits that “social stratification was the basis for the rise of classes and for social antagonisms.” He maintains that “African cultures have values that cannot be eclipsed by European culture” (1972). In the exploration of this paper, attempts shall be made in to explain how Achebe’s *Arrow of God* is situated in modern democracy.

First, the coming of the white man in Umuaro in *Arrow of God* coincides with the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914. The two cultural polities described as agrarian economies linked also British interests and the exploitations of African continents. Lord Lugard who colonized Nigeria and Uganda under colonial policy of ‘indirect rule’ says:

The partition of Africa was, as well all recognize, due primarily to the economic necessity of increasing the supplies of raw materials and food to meet needs of the industrialized nations of Europe. (Lugard, 1923; Chinweizu, 1978)

That is, adherents of colonialism in democratic rule.

Second is the use of ‘ogene’ (Achebe, 1974) or ekwe - drum language (ikoro) as a means of communication which has not been totally phased-out due to advent of the media or modern technology. In Igbo land, drum language is still relevant as a means of disseminating information, gathering or summoning people together. The drum language in *The Fronded Circle* by Esiaba Irobi is also a means of communicating the living about someone who is dead; a call for assembly (1999). The use of ogene, or drum language, that produced the sound ‘gome gome gome’, has not been completely faded-out in terms of public address system or announcement via air transmission on radio, television etc in local settlements. The beating of ‘ikolo’ or ‘ikoro’ forestalls emergency or something strange that happens (1974) even in modern society. Anumihe (2017) in *A Handful of Dust* reports that “... giant ikoro ... sounded, signifying that a grave issue needed urgent attention of the Council of Elders.” Now, Council of Elders meeting is chaired by the Local Government Chairman whereas that of States is spearheaded by the President of the Federation who is also the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.

Third, the use of a (Achebe, 1974) “twelve sacred yams” also represents the twelve calendar months, an annual yam festival marking the end of the year. Cole (1975) definition of (African festival is awesome):

A festival is a relatively rare climatic event in the life of any community. It is bounded by a definite beginning and end, and is unified thereby, as well as in being a set apart from above daily life. Its structure is built up on a core armature of ritual. The festival brings about a suspension of ordinary time, a transformation of ordinary space, a formalization of ordinary behavior. It is as if a community becomes a stage set and its people actors with a battery of seldom seen props and costumes. Meals become feasts, and greetings, normally simple, become ceremonies. Although dependent upon life-sustaining rituals, the festival is elaborated and stylized phenomenon which far surpasses ritual necessity. It often becomes the social, and political apotheosis of a community life in a year. At festival time one is level of reality—the common and everyday—gives way to another, to more intense, symbolic, and expressive level of reality.

In Arochukwu, the festival ceremony is called ‘igo afor’ (Obi, 2012). In Igbo land, yam is said as Chinua Achebe rightly observes to be the king of crops. Yam originated from ‘Nri’ myths observed as ikeji festival at Arochukwu, despite Christianity. In the Igbo society, three days searching in the sky also marks the beginning of harvesting season by the Chief Priest of Ulu, the custodian of the land (Achebe, 1974). In *Arrow of God* are remarkable festivals namely Festival of Pumpkin Leaves and New Yam Festival with various significances. The first is celebrated at ‘Nkwo’ day with the town-crier’s ‘ogene’ sounding ‘gome’ x 4. The festival is meant ‘for cleansing which is likened to ‘iruani sacrifice’ where forgiveness was sought from the gods” (Obi, 2012), now, replaced with holy communion to suit modernization in this Christian democratic dispensation or era. Thus, the amazing Church magazine in Umuaro depicts modern democracy (Achebe, 1974) as a reference to the novel and the society today.

According to Simon Gikandi, “the yams represent three things: manhood, prosperity, and control in society. Whenever they are mentioned, or used, they are always as one of these three signs” (*edu/dialogue*). The New Yam Festival marks census and growth. *The Bible* (Luke) records first census in Roman democratic society. In Nigeria, the first census was conducted in 1922 and was meant to be carried out every ten years to determine growth or population of the people. In *Arrow of God*, “it was from these heaps (yams) that the elders knew the number of men in each village” (Achebe, 1974). In Lorji Aboh Mbaise, there is ‘riforo Lorji’ held on every Eke Ukwu after 25th December within the festive week or period. The four market days as at then referred to the four villages namely, Umugama (First son of Lorji), Umuosike, (Osike, the second son), Eziala Ukwu and Eziala Nta respectively. Now, additional two villages namely Amaokpu and Ndiok(w)u was added making it six villages to accommodate the trends of modern democratic government. The use of market days—“Eke Oye (Orie), Afor, Nkwo, four (Igbo) market days of the week” (Achebe, 1974) is ‘the the prevalent calendar of the pre-colonial era’ (Ogene, 2010). This is still relevant in contemporary society as seen in *Arrow of God* despite the use of modern calendar. Thus, the two festivals mentioned also “brought gods and men in one umbrella” (Achebe, 1974). The yam festival is important because “if he (Ezeulu) should refuse to name the day there would be no festival - no planting and no reaping” (1974). There is the use of drum language ‘ogene’ and the sound of (Achebe, 1974) “Gome Gome Gome .... Onwa atuo! .... Onwa atuo! Onwa atuo! ...., meant to usher in the new moon. Matifi had this to say about the moon, “may your face meeting mine bring good fortune?” In modern society, ceremonies like hunting festival, kola nut festival (‘Oji Mbaise’) held every first January and the New Yam Festival in August 15th are still relevant or institutionalized in modern Igbo democratic society. Nigeria is an agrarian economy depicted in the symbol of green, white and green in the National Flag together with the Igbo society.

Again, there is the (African) Igbo world view of life after death or reincarnation. This belief is also what Soyinka and Clark captured in *Abiku* respectively. Esiaba Irobi (1999) in *The Foned Circle* deliberates on the issue of ‘Njoku’—Yam Title Holder and burial of his head in earthen ware pot in his barn. Example, Onwutuebe “buries his head as a protective charm against death and swaps his age life with the lives of other men especially...his kith and kin....” Achebe (1974) in *Things Fall Apart* uses Okagbue to strike out Ezinma’s ‘iyi-uwa’—evil spirit while Prophetess Chielo buried it or performed the rituals at the oracle of Hills and Cave. Chinwe Achebe reviewed the spiritual cosmos in *The World of Ogbanje* (evil spirit). Thus, Chinua Achebe also uses ‘second burial’ of Amalu’s ‘ogbazuruobodo’—cross country race in *Arrow of God*, now, ‘modernized as memorial service’ in democratic society. Despite the advent of Christianity, some people are still consulting juju priests for second burial as a way of placating or appeasing their dead ancestors. For instance, Aneto the eldest son of Amalu went to ‘igba afa’—a diviner or seer before asking Obika to perform the dead father’s rites of passage or ‘ogbazuruobodo’. That is, ‘iju ase n’ aka Chukwu’ (art of divination) where Ezeani of Agbaja is ‘implored’ to plead and to direct the people by “going to Chukwu, the highest deity in Igbo land located at Arochukwu” or Igwekala of Umunoha to plead a cause to Ibunukpabia (a powerful one of the powerful gods in Arochukwu) to get answer to mysterious circumstance” (Obi, 2012).

Both tribes right from the time of inception do not marry each other. In *Things Fall Apart*, Unoka, a weakling and a debtor believes that if he dies, his flute shall accompany him to the spirit world to keep or make him happy. In Igbo or modern society, some mushroom diviners converted and modernized to spiritual or prayer houses to suit the trends of democratic modern society or globalization.

On the other hand, education is the key of civilization in the novel were the Igbo people are industrious as seen in modern society today. *The Bible* (Hosea) asserts that “my people perish for lack of knowledge”. Those who refuse to heed the advice of acquiring the white man’s knowledge—education will cry, “had we known tomorrow” (Achebe, 1974). Ezeulu sent Oduche to school to be his ‘eye and ear’. That is, to “learn the ways of his deity/the new ritual” or strange ways of the white man and report back to him. Unfortunately, Oduche disappointed Ezeulu, the proud and arrogant father Chief Priest Ulu. Thus, the imprisonment and consequent killing (death) of the royal python by Oduche signifies termination of totem worship or old culture yielding to the modern or new. The era of ignorance ends; “Ezeulu was afraid of whatever power his son had imprisoned in the box” Thus, ‘the world is changing’ in terms of civilization and acquisition of modern education as seen in the novel. Such power Oduche acquired can only be imagined but seen in contemporary modern or democratic society. On the contrary, Michael Echeruo’s *Victorian Lagos* attempts to portray Africans trying to reach into that state of advancement education equips or allows people to fit into modernism. That is, civilization or westernization of the Africans per se. Thus, “... knowledge acquired through education is the bedrock of power in western education” (Njamanze 2017) buttressed in African democracy.

*Arrow of God* can be justified as a political text or stance. There are several comporting issues that entail elements of socialism like the egalitarian system or social welfare of the Igbo society reincarnated in fiction. As adherents of Athenian or Greek democracy, Achebe borrows Spartan constitution which makes the text classic in political philosophy, history, politics, or seminar political work in terms of ethics having moral and religious undertones. Achebe espouses inequalities of modern day capitalism using Ezeulu, Nwaka, title holders, non-title holders and other members of the Igbo society which Plato’s *The Republic* (Sach, 2009) argued in unjust city where justice and injustices become the order of the day. The novel exposes a typical capitalist democratic system or society where individual acquires a lot of personal wealth for prestige and self recognition.

On the other hand, *Arrow of God* can be viewed as institution of ideal governance or administration in modern democracy. Conversely, it is a tool of disrupting the train of Umuaro and thus ushering in principles of democracy in that traditional setting. The use of Government Hill (Government House) and sharing of portfolios for ministers and commissioners (cabinet members) are depicted in the text. This is an adherent of colonialism evidence in modern society or governance, an ‘indirect rule’ in action. ‘Government Hill’ per se represents a replica of the seat of power in institutionalized modern democracy and theocracy (fusion of religious and political authority) manifesting in democratic society today either Government House or Aso(koro) Rock. There is reception galore, use of steward – Boniface/John Nwodika, now, ‘Personal Assistance’ in modern society. The division of labour and specialization in the novel are also basic elements of modern democracy enshrined in the constitution. The hierarchy of ladder is represented in the seat of power as reflected below:

Winterbottom	- District Officer
Tony Clark	- Assistant District Officer,
Robert	- Public Relation Officer (Achebe 175-177),
Mr. Wright	- in Charge of Roads and
Warde	- in Charge of prison, and
Dr Savage	- in Charge of Mission Hospital at Nkisa (Achebe, 1974)

Warrant Chiefs system or ‘paramount chiefs’ introduced regionalism, tribalism, favoritism and nepotism in the Nigerian democratic politics or polity. The use of tyrant chief like James (Obi) Ikedi of Okperi, quota system and the first elective principles for taxation are ideal mirror bequeathed to all Nigerians including Africans. The problem of taxation, administration and service, saw corrupt administrator like Chief James Ikedi of Okperi (57) who manipulated his way as recurrent phenomenon of modern democrats in society today. In *Arrow of God*, people render community services. For instance, Otakagu age grade and ‘Omumuawa’ assisted Mr. Wright in road construction. In modern society, different age grades and people also perform this role for nation-building. There was inbuilt democracy in the novel with system of checks and balances. There was also inherent stratified social class and traditional institution of democracy of ‘Ohaneze’ or ‘Ohakwursi’ with ‘Igbo kwenu! or kwezuonuoo!’ formulaic structure of opening and closing of yaa or eze!. The egwurugwu and omumuawa masquerades were parts of the

checks and balances.

Furthermore, ceremonies occupy the greater percentage of human life in *Arrow of God* which is also not an exemption if compared to modern society or democracy. There are two types of ceremonies namely traditional and Christian marriages. In traditional marriage, there are lots of ceremonies. One is the receiving of new bridegroom Okuata and the sacrifice of “covertures before a bride whose mother is dead finally settles in marriage” (Achebe, 1974) despite Christianity or influence of the Church. The use of attire such as *jigida* is also rampant in Nigerian democratic society.

Sacrifice of covertures may be linked to the “Igbo notion of and attitude towards divinity. Igbo sacrifice is the offering made to the gods and the ancestor to buy peace “(Diala, 2014) with ‘aja’ (sacrifice) of goat, hen or human in dire circumstances. That is, “obligatory human gesture of recognition of and homage to the gods, the tariff par excellence for human existence” (Diala, 2014; Echeruo, 2003). That is, there is a say, *ana-achu aja ikpe na-ama ndi mmuo*” (Diala, 2014). Achebe has done what Irobi, Soyinka, have re-enacted in iconoclastic recuperation of Igbo, Yoruba myth and rituals which parallels political project in contemporary post colonial society as ostentatious expression of both African art and religion (Diala, 2014).

The second is cultural celebrations namely masquerade, ‘ekpe’ and cultural dances like ‘abiigbo’ ‘omurunwa’, ‘uko’, ‘eshe’ (ase) and ‘ebengu’ of Akpokwu in Akpodim (Ezinihitte Mbaise L.G.A.) which surfaces once in seven years with the amazement of ‘odighi onye ma ihe Akpokwu ji abia ebengu’ (nobody knows what Akpokwu will display for ‘ebengu’. Ekpe and Ase are displayed in contemporarily society as seen in the works of Esiabe Irobi namely, *Nwokedi* and *The Fronded Circle*. The history of Ekpe is traced to (Diala 2014) “Aro, people of Arochukwu...”, then, Abiriba in the north and Bende in the south. Amankulor likens Ekpe, male secret society to Okonko in parts of Igbo land among the Efik and Annang (where Ekpe was popular) (Diala, 2010) and coincides with Cuban Abakua society reincarnation of his thesis on Ekpe secret cult survival patterns adaptation in African institutions and art forms in Diaspora. That is, Irobi’s revolutionary age-grade of a historical secret cult organization of agile men of the West Niger or Ika Igbo that led armed resistance struggle against British imperialism in Igbo land. Ekpe in pre-colonial Africa acts as checks and balances on the three arms of governments; punishing offenders, enforcing customs and influencing public opinion through coercion (Nwaka 1978).

The third is naming ceremonies, visitations with gifts as signs of goodwill. Of note, there is offer of a piece of kola nut as sign of piece, hospitality, life and continuity in the novel. In all these celebrations, Rodney posits that (Achebe, 1974) “for example, music and dance ‘had key roles in ‘uncontaminated’ African society; they were ever present at birth, initiation, marriage, death, etc as well as appearing at the times of creation.”

The fourth is marital conflicts and resolution. Akueke living or occupies same hut of her mother Okuata “who died many years ago” (Achebe, 1974) parallels modern women who return to their fathers’ house because of death of their husbands or maltreatment of brothers’ kinsmen. This also parallels marital conflicts and resolution in African culture where kinsmen, orators and in-laws are invited or engaged in arts of verbal rhetoric in terms of language proficiency in idioms and proverbs even in marriage ceremonies.

*Arrow of God* deals with preparation of a crown prince or next in succession to the throne. Ezeulu preference of Nwafor implies to inherit, ‘Ulu’ as Chief Priest which becomes hereditary. In modern society, there is a rotary kingship which prevents communal clashes experienced in some African societies. Achebe promotes title holding or chieftaincy title which is relevant in modern society. For instance, Nwaka has *eru*—‘lord of wealth himself’ (Achebe, 1974) and other titles like *Ogbuefi*, *Ezeidemili* etc. In modern Igbo democratic society, such titles like ‘*Aku na-esi obi ike* (wealth is the pillar of the heart), *o zopuru ini ego* (one who opens the grave of money) and *Ogbuefi* (lion killer/slaughter), ‘*Nze*’, Chief (traditional titles) etc are attributes of democratic society.

In modern society, *Arrow of God* portrays that art is functional. As Galbraith (1984) stressed; it was same beauty in art that compels Italian architects to erect attractive structure of good shapes and designs. In modern society, there is erection of Mbari cultural museum to promote or to showcase various crafts, arts and cultures of the people. Achebe presents wood carving as essential art in the eye of globalization in modern or democratic Igbo society. Ezeulu love for art enables him to train or to raise Edego in carpentry or wood works, now, cabinet and offertory. ‘Carving’ in arts and modern society go *parri passu* (that is, go together or hand in hand). Edego impressed the father and his society carving ‘mask or deity’ (Achebe, 1974) “carved door in the red, earth walls.”

Still on art, ‘*Ofo and Ikenga*’ (Achebe, 1974) become symbol of truth and strength in Igbo which are also carved and modernized in democratic society. Destroying Ebo’s *ikenga* (split into two) led to Akukalia’s death because it amounts to challenging Ebo’s ‘*Chi*’. Thus, (Achebe, 1974) “if a man says yes his *chi* also says yes.” ‘*Ikenga*’ is

(Achebe, 1974) “the most powerful in the Ibo man’s arsenal”. It represents the ancestors also a lesson in Igbo cultural modernization or globalization of the century. Diala affirms that (Diala, 2014) “the Igbo cult of personal accomplishments through human endeavor, through ikenga, is the affirmation of human will: human striving is ordinarily believed to be endowed with the capacity to accomplished required goals”. He affirms this “noting that a good chi brings prosperity and that a bad chi is a source of tragedy, Michael Echeruo observes nonetheless that “a bad chi is neither necessarily a consequence of sin”. He makes clear that “prayer is thus an exhortation of chi to action, just as sacrifice aims to appease the spirit forces that interfere with fulfillment” (Diala, 2014; Ahamfulu, 1979). Thus, “Echeruo identifies two separate worlds in Igbo religious thought: the world of the spirits and that of the humans”.

On the other hand, Achebe deploys his creative acumen to inform, to educate, to critique and to entertain the audience for defense of truth and (African) society. Onyeka Anuforo (2017) maintains that “for Tolstoy, art is not for art sake; it is for defense of truth, propagation of brotherly love and to point out defect in both our individual lives and corporate existence”. Leo Tolstoy uses art as civil ‘defense’ to protect the weak or the poor folk. Mbanefo Ogene (2010) also maintains that “art is not created in vacuum; it is a work not simply of a person, but as an author fixed in time and space answering to community of which he is an important member”.

As an important member of Nigerian democratic society, Achebe deploys art in *Arrow of God* to critique violence done to African (Nigerian) socio-cultural polity and elsewhere during colonial period. He uses art as an instrument to preach or to seek reform for reform. According to Anuforo (2017) leaning on Charles Kaplan, “the purpose of art is to promote the universal brotherhood of man, good art promotes unity, and bad art serves to divide men from one another.” Tolstoy’s popular work namely “What is Art?” says:

Art like speech is a means of communication and therefore of progress, that is, of the movement of humanity forward towards perfection ... art renders accessible to men of the latest generations all the feelings experienced by their predecessors and also those felt by their best and foremost contemporaries.

He stressed that “it is by the standard of this religious perception that the feelings transmitted by art have always been appraised.” Thus, “art as instrument of societal progress” is highlighted by Achebe and Tolstoy as so important that it is only (Anuforo, 2017) “the need of that true religious art which should be present in life to improve it”.

*Arrow of God* in actual sense consistently attempts to convey realistically the Nigerian democratic society in which Achebe lived. Tolstoy says that (Anuforo, 2017) “what he does too serve to justify all the hopes and aspirations invested in literature”. It may be right to point out that like Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, *Arrow of God* by Achebe is not only a work of art alone but also a piece of life too and what Achebe does to justifies his hopes and aspirations exclusively invested in literature.

In addition, *Arrow of God* attempts to treat issues of war, conflict, resolution and management which are basic tenets of modern democracy. War is aberration on mankind. The war between Umuaro and Okperi coincides with the coming of the white man which parallels the Nigerian-Biafran war and consequent surrender or no retreat of “no victor no vanquished” (Achebe, 1974) of Yakubu Gowon during the pogrom of 1967-1970 over Aburi Accord disagreement of con-federal system of government. *Arrow of God* advocates for peace in modern society. Achebe uses Umuaro and Okperi to pursue peace in Nigerian democratic polity. Example, Aguleri and Umuleri conflicts could be linked to Umuaro and Okperi conflicts.

One important act that Achebe postulated in *Arrow of God* which has continued to dominate in modern democratic society is the art of conversation using idioms and proverbs. This act is extensively portrayed or promulgated in *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God* and *No Longer at Ease* where goat-skin bag knowledge or wisdom is exhibited or showcased in the trilogy of his novels. In fact, “among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten” (Aigboje & Okeke, 1958; Anumihe, 2015). Obviously, in this century or contemporary time, proverbs are relevant in the novel as contained in modern democracy which also has negative refutations or countering. This is also seen as the key to traditional conversations even in Nigerian prisons as J. O. J. Nwachukwu-Agbada highlighted. This art of oratory is valued in traditional society as it is in democratic society. William Bascom also observes that (1957) “proverbs have been characterized as the distilled wisdom of past generations, and are mistakably so regarded by many African people.” Achebe in *Arrow of God* extensively projects his view on the use of proverbs in the twenty-first century and beyond which indicts Bascom claims in the twentieth century. Thus, *Arrow of God* seems to validate Achebe’s environment—cultural, political and social contexts of people in this reputable modern democracy which confirms Wellek and Warren observation that (1953) “literature occurs only in social contexts as part of a culture in a milieu”. Undoubtedly, *Arrow of God* is situated as a modern democracy. This is because Achebe deliberates on the issue of power, conflict, politics, and sharing of ‘national cake’.

He also apologizes in *Morning Yet on Creation Day* for the ‘earnestness of his work—a political commitment to create art which will help his society to regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement. James Ngugi remarks that (1982) “every creative writer is a writer in politics”. Thus, ‘In Conclusion (to) Political Criticism’, Eagleton (1983) also states that “literary theory is always political”. Mahfouz admits “that politics is the very axis of our thinking.” According to Esiaba Irobi, (1999) “every laurel, every prize, every award has its own politics of acceptance ....” That “every artist’s works is a reflection of the quality of ... minds” (Irobi, 1999). Whichever way *Arrow of God* is viewed, there is elements of democracy enshrined which makes it as a political text, philosophy or seminal work in politics, ethics or theology influenced by Plato’s *The Republic*. With reference to theology or religion, Enoch and Oduche killed also imprisoned the royal python to the bewilderments of the people.

Last but not the least is Christianity. The coming of Christian missionaries in *Arrow of God* ushers new lease of natural life controlled by God, the author of life and finisher of faith and the universe. Pagan and ritual worships or sacrifices are discouraged by Christians in modern mission or democracy under the protective eye of checks and balances. In *Arrow of God*, evil forest in primitive society and yam calendar are destroyed, killing of twins abolished as evidence in both primitive Umuaro and modern African societies which include Nigeria as replicated in *Things Fall Apart*. The imprisonment of Ezeulu could be linked to the conferment of the royal python which marked the era of coercion and obnoxious social mores or cultural practices. Thus, there is no trace of ritual sacrifices in planting and harvesting of yams again. Harvesting of yams was done in (Achebe, 1974) “the name of the Son”. That is, Christ the living Son of God. This may be described as the peak or genesis of evangelism in new Nigerian democratic society or dispensation. Thus, the sight of the word, (Achebe, 1974; Ogene, 2010) “Eke Nekwo Onye Uka” is believed to scare away the python

#### 4. Conclusion

It could be adduced from the essay that Achebe’s *Arrow of God* is situated in a modern democracy. From history to sociological document, the novel is seen as African epic also described as a classic. That is why generation of scholars will continue to find relevance of the work in contemporary society as kept in archive for future research in African literature. *Arrow of God* can re-awake the fading of history in subject curriculum in secondary schools if embraced with utmost good faith in this contemporary society. “Against the backdrop of Igbo language” (Nnaji, 2016), festivities such as kola nut and new yam festivals etc should be mutually re-activated or modernized in democratic society to showcase cultural heritages or values of the Igbo race or the people. Though Achebe is no longer alive but *Arrow of God* and *Things Fall Apart* etc will continue to draw attention of scholars or critics in contemporary democratic polity. That is why *Arrow of God* remains a classical novel of historical, moral, ethical, political, religious and expository documents of modern extraction in both Nigerian and African societies. From the on-going discussions, attempts have been made to situate properly the text in a modern democracy. Hopefully, Nigerians, Africans and the world are challenged to translate the novel in different languages like *Things Fall Apart* to suit the trends of in-coming generation.

#### 5. Recommendation

*Arrow of God* is no longer a historical or sociological document but one of the archival materials that should be kept for future generation as African epic. The great icon, father of African literature, ‘iroko’ and master storyteller, pacesetter of African Writers’ Series, ANA and Heinemann left behind us immortal and indelible marks in creative arts or fictive literary works. Achebe’s name should be immortalized in various academic literary departments or institutions in Nigerian universities as UNIZIK did. Ogidi his ancient town should also be immortalized as tourist centre for revenue like William Shakespeare’s England. The death of Martin Luther King Jr. made Americans to appreciate the merits of his racial struggle which Nigerians should continue to appreciate Achebe’s.

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