

## Rhetorical Discourse and Worldviews in Arrow of God

**Augustine Uka Nwanyanwu, Ph.D**

University of Port Harcourt, Choba,

Rivers State, Nigeria

Email: tinostin@yahoo.com

### **Abstract**

*While Achebe's Arrow of God has been acknowledged as an example of anti-colonial discourse, very little has been said about the nature of linguistic devices inherent in this form of discourse. It is important to note from the outset that every human discourse is preceded by the choice between ambivalent alternative values. Achebe's fiction provides the context through which choices are made between alternative values. His novels demonstrate the struggle to appropriate and influence the values of others using the devices of language. Achebe's major characters make use of language in accordance with their systems of beliefs so as to have others share with such values. The argument in this paper is that Arrow of God hinges on ideological conflicts, while also prefiguring varying forms of discourse styles and strategies that embody conflicting consciousnesses—consciousnesses that are permutated within the discourse of dialogism. It is through this that Achebe articulates the complex relationships between individuals in the world of Arrow of God. The rhetorical strategies of Ezeulu and Nwaka during the land dispute with Okperi brings out the contrasting worldviews on many issues. I analyze their speeches on the land dispute to show how their discourses represent alternative viewpoints.*

**Keywords:** Rhetorical discourse, Arrow of God, conflicting consciousness, alternative viewpoints, dialogic system, Ezeulu, Nwaka.

### **Introduction**

The novel provides the context through which one can appreciate, appropriate and influence the values of others and language is the site of clash of ideologies. In *Arrow of God* Ezeulu and Nwaka through their differing discourse styles embody conflicting As Bakhtin has observed, every novel resonates with “echoes of dialogic interaction.” For him “every novel is a dialogized system made up of the images of „languages,“ styles and consciousnesses that are concrete and inseparable from language” (49). According to Nwanyanwu, the Bakhtian concept sees discourse as inseparable from the speakers’ ideological positions and language is a social exchange. For him, “The dialogic principle looks at the relationship between cultural and ideological systems” (Nwanyanwu 117). This paper therefore examines the appropriation of rhetorical discourse in the articulation of ideology in *Arrow of God*. Within the framework of the dialogic principle, it attempts an explanation of the role of language in the articulation of worldviews, and how this is apprehended in the socio-political implications of colonialism, cultural and social conflicts in pre-colonial society of Umuaro. In fact, the paper is concerned with the questions: How does Achebe’s use of rhetorical discourse interact with beliefs in *Arrow of God*? And how does this form of discourse imbue the text with meaning?

In the light of the apparent ideological structure of *Arrow of God*, it will be interesting to see how Achebe uses the discourses of Ezeulu and Nwaka to capture the differing positions and attitudes in the novel. The primary epigraph is that the ideological standpoint is reinforced in the linguistic devices of rhetorical discourse. It is therefore crucial that one

identifies how Achebe's creative use of the rhetorical style immediately projects the various ideological positions taking by various characters in the novel.

Within the context of dialogism, *Arrow of God* can be viewed as a form of social exchange that configures the conflicting values of individuals in a polarized society. This type of inter-locking attitudes is analyzed extensively in Bakhtin's discourse. Dialectical consciousness determines the very basis of ideological interactions in Achebe's fiction (Osei-Nyame 148).

In a way, Achebe's fiction narrates the stories of his Igbo communities by drawing upon their oral traditions while at the same time bearing in mind that oral narratives are simply not "the reflection of culture," and "the cognitive arena for sorting out the logic of cultural codes" (Bauman 2). Bauman further articulates that oral narratives must be used "contextually and ethnographically, in order to discover the individual, social and cultural factors that give it shape and meaning" (2). Achebe's narratives serve as vehicle for displacing the narratives of colonial writers like Joyce Cary and Conrad. In his work, the "ethnographic mode" (such as proverbial language) functions as a code that proves that Africans were not the "Primitive Tribes" as Winterbottom's discourse and that of his fellow Europeans suggest.

James Clifford, following Bakhtin, argues that since culture is not "a unified corpus of symbols and meaning that can be definitely interpreted," the ethnographic discourse must then incorporate a narratological dialogism that reveals the culture's "contested, temporal and emergent" nature (19). Because *Arrow of God* hinges so much on rhetorical discourse, it seems a logical starting point for a rhetorical appreciation of Achebe's language.

Rhetoric is the persuasive use of language and deals with the forms and techniques of argument. Akpan casts the meaning of rhetoric in an historical perspective. According to him;

The early Greeks and Romans relied on rhetoric as the art by which the orator could get the business of the world done and at the same time carve out handsome and lucrative positions... in the state. They saw in rhetoric the power to move men to action.... They placed high premium on the speaker's prior reputation upon his listeners. (251)

This means that rhetorical discourse is goal-oriented. Its ultimate target is to have the listeners share with the speaker's perspective on the issue at hand.

Rhetoric, is the method of discovering all the available means of persuasion. It is geared towards changing attitudes, positions and views previously held by the listener; it also embodies the perspective of the speaker towards the topic of discourse. In this sense, rhetoric exerts a persuasive action. Rhetoric embodies a certain approach in the use of language. Akpan also observes that "The purpose of rhetoric is to structure or restructure the perceptions and attitudes of an audience... to get people to do something immediately or ultimately" (Ogu,254). In an interesting article, "Logic versus Rhetoric," Ogu captures the dilemma facing the modern rhetorician. The problem mainly is that "the speaker and his audience no longer share the same world, the same cultural values and the same field of specialization" (148). This is one of the main issues confronting the hero of *Arrow of God*. Because of these differences in values, the modern rhetorician depends largely on his skills to cleverly drive home his values and in the process emit his personal bias.

Elimimian agrees, and adds that rhetoric is "discourse geared towards securing audience rapport or achieving reasonable ends" (168). He points out seven constitutive elements of rhetorical discourse. These are: (1) the *exordium* (or the introduction, which is the beginning of the discourse, that sets out the nature of the argument, in such a way that it prepares the speaker to be favourably received by the audience); (2) the *narratio* (or narration, aimed at unravelling the major premises of the argument. It sometimes explains the

background issues relevant to the topic); (3) the *partitio* (or the clarification of the relevant parts of the argument); (4) the *confirmatio* (that is, the central part of the discourse that sets forth the „pros“ and „cons“); (5) the *reprehensio* (or the refutation of negative argument); (6) the *peroratio* (or recapitulation of the essential points of the discourse); and (7) *digressio* (or digression, which strays from the basic issues at stake) (168-9). However, any of these parts can be modified in line with the objective of discourse. A careful analysis of the language in the confrontation between Ezeulu and Nwaka, before and after the Umuaro-Okperi crisis will reveal the structuring of discourse in line with the traditional structure. What is also interesting is the way the rhetorical devices signal conflicting ideological standpoints.

However, there is scepticism in the use of rhetoric. Plato, for instance fears the dangers of rhetoric being put to dubious use. This explains the reason he banned poets from *The Republic* (Ogu, „Logic versus Rhetoric“ 147). This is to prevent the possibility of it being manipulated to make false ideas or beliefs attractive. Even today, in spite of its long history, rhetoric is often used in the pejorative sense. For instance, Makay observes the two senses in which the concept is used: the first as hollow bombast, artificial eloquence, style or form of speaking without content; the other as dishonesty or deceit in communication (10).

The possibility of duplicity in articulating ideas is one of the basic issues raised in *Arrow of God* – first in the land dispute between Umuaro and Okperi, in the discourses of Ezeulu and Nwaka; the other being mainly in the discourses of the Europeans (Winterbottom, in particular) in their interpersonal relations with Africans. What is of interest in rhetoric is the way it implicates commitment to differing worldviews.

The conflict between Umuaro and Okperi brings out the diversity in values. The different positions in attitude that mark the relationship between Ezeulu and his kinsmen leads to the internal conflict that drives the novel to the eventual tragedy of the closing pages. This is clearly preceded by the rhetorical structure of Ezeulu’s discourse:

1. On the day, five years ago, when the leaders of Umuaro decided to send an emissary to Okperi with white clay for peace or new palm frond for war, Ezeulu spoke in vain.
2. He told the men of Umuaro that Ulu would not fight an unjust war.
3. „I know,“ he told them, „my father said this to me that when our village first came here to live the land belonged to Okperi.
4. It was Okperi who gave us a piece of their land to live in.
5. They also gave us their deities – their Udo and Ogwugwu.
6. But they said to our ancestors – mark my words – the people of Okperi said to our fathers: we give you our Udo and our Ogwugwu; but you must call the deity we give you not Udo but the son of Udo, and not Ogwugwu but the son of Ogwugwu.
7. This is the story as I heard it from my father.
8. If you choose to fight a man for a piece of farmland that belongs to him I shall have no hand in it.“ (15; ch. 2)

This passage derives effect through the rhetorical devices of discourse. Sentence 3 belongs to the domain of cognitive assertiveness („I know“). It can be called the *narratio* of Ezeulu’s argument. Sentences 4 and 5 are the *partitio*, which provides a further clarification of the fact, while sentence 6 serves as the *confirmatio*. Sentence 7 is the *peroratio*, just as sentence 8 is the *reprehensio* of Ezeulu’s discourse.

In this passage, Ezeulu adopts the rhetoric of time and place. His official designation as chief priest influences his response (“He told the men of Umuaro that Ulu would not fight an unjust war”) to this particular situation; this in addition, imbues his discourse with specific values (“If you choose to fight a man for a piece of farmland that belongs to him I shall have no hand in it”) which he wants his fellow Umuarians to assimilate. As Ogu also argues, Ezeulu’s aim as a logician is to tell “the truth as he got it from his father. His father is by

tradition a recognized authority and quoting him is a valid process in argument” (“Logic versus Rhetoric” 150). It is the failure to assimilate that value that triggers off the internal conflict in the novel. In an argument, the use of proof should constitute one of the courses of action of persuasion. This can either be invented for the particular occasion or already existent. Ezeulu adopts the latter in his speech. In sentences 3 and 5 (“my father said this to me...,” and “they also gave us their deities”) he provides the strongest evidence to the authenticity of his assertion that the piece of farmland indeed belongs to Okperi. Two issues are very relevant here: the first being that Ezeulu’s father was also a chief priest, and in traditional context, was the custodian of truth and repositories of culture; ancillary to this is the fact that a father’s word to his son is accepted as proof on oath, arising from the fact “that a father does not speak falsely to his son” (16; ch.2). In addition, Ezeulu provides verifiable proof in sentences 5 and 6 because, deities, in this case, Udo and Ogwugwu are existent and cannot be invented.

Three devices are operable in proof: *ethos* (ethical proof), *logos* (logical proof), and *pathos* (pathetic proof). Ethical proof depends on the plausibility of the speaker’s propositions, while pathetic proof is designed to sway the audience’s emotions. Nwaka’s discourse is dependent on pathos, whereas *ethos* and *logos* (sentences 3- 7) form the bedrock of Ezeulu’s discourse. In particular, the tone of Ezeulu’s discourse follows the mode of *ethos* outlined by Quintilian. According to him:

The ethos of which we form a conception, and which we desire to find speakers, is recommended, above all, by goodness, being not only mild and placid, but for the most part pleasing and polite and amicable and attractive to the hearers, the greatest merit in the expression of it, is, that it should seem to flow from nature of things or persons with which we are concerned, so that the moral character of the speaker may clearly appear, and recognized as it were in his discourse. (qtd. in Elimimian 170)

Ezeulu’s discourse is animated with the rhetorical devices of proof. One main property of the sentences in his discourse is what we call deixis. Fowler defines it as “the orientation of the content of a sentence in relation to time, place and personal participants” (*Linguistic Criticism* 57). Ezeulu’s ideas emerge from the semantic structure of the words. A key part of this structure is the combination of the pronoun class with nouns, and the pronoun and the verb: Pro + V+NP (“He told the men of Umuro...,” “He told them”) – and Pro+V (“I know”). The pronouns “He” and “them” establish that it is the speaker and the audience who are the subject of discourse.

The discourse of Ezeulu centres on the issue of ownership of the disputed piece of land. He dispenses this through a number of propositions and assertions. The deictic part locates the propositions within a real world and communicates the essential fact of the argument that the land belongs to Okperi:

- A. It was Okperi *who gave us a piece of their land.*
- B. They also *gave us their deities...*
- C. The *people of Okperi* said to our fathers...
- D. We *give you our Udo...*

The words in Italics belong to *ethos* and *logos* – modal structures that go a long way to reveal the moral character of Ezeulu and the degree of his commitment to those values that he communicates to his kinsmen. The verb “gives” and its cognate “gave” is repeated four times to give stress to the validity and certainty of Ezeulu’s discourse.

Another interesting feature of this passage is the role of pronoun. In sentences 5 and 6 the third person plural “They” refers back to Okperi earlier mentioned in sentence 4, “it was Okperi.” This is anaphorically linked to the possessive + Noun – “their land.”

It was Okperi who gave us a piece of their land.

First Mention

Second Mention

In (A) and (B), “they” and “their” refers to Okperi while “our”/”us” designates Umuaro. “We” is repeated twice in sentence 6 (“We give you”). The interaction of the “We” and “you” is remarkable. Whereas “We” is exclusively used to mention Okperi, “you” is inclusive of Ezeulu and his fathers. More specifically, “you” is used in two senses here: the first is used by Okperi to refer to Ezeulu’s fathers while the other “you” in sentence 8 is used by Ezeulu to warn his fellow Umuarians of the consequences of war with Okperi. These pronouns have also references to situations and Ezeulu utilizes them as concrete proof. The narrator therefore assigns Ezeulu both the first person pronoun „I” (“I know”) and the second person “He” (“He told them”) to prefigure the substance of his authority and the content of his discourse. In addition, the possessive form plus noun – possessive + Noun: “my father” (S: 1 and 7), “our ancestors,” “our fathers” is meant to validate his proof. In the same vein, he uses the same structure-- possessive + Noun – to substantiate and adumbrate the validity of Okperi’s claim.

This proposition of Okperi’s ownership of the disputed land is initiated by the time + when adverb in sentence 3: “... when our village first came here.” The movement verb “came” announces a past time in relation to the present conflict and the deictic adverb “here” links that past directly to the core of the crisis. By means of these deictic devices, Ezeulu deftly veers to the platform of *ethos* and *logos*. Sentence 7 functions as the *peroratio* of the argument: this is signalled by the *verba sentiendi*: “as I heard it from my father.” This recapitulation of the fact is followed by the *confutatio* (or *reprehension*) – “if you choose to fight a man for a piece of farmland that belongs to him...” This conditional if + structure communicate a direct threat of the consequences of disobedience and at the same time implicate the moral and ethical standpoint of Ezeulu, which ironically heightens the conflicts in the novel.

In effect, Ezeulu uses these discourse strategies to distant his god, Ulu and himself from an unjust war and at the same time challenge background assumptions. His conclusion is warranted by the lexical and syntactic propositions. In sentence 6, “... but *you must* call ...” implicates a command which was heeded in the past, and this rotates in the form of dialogue:

“My father said...”

“But they said...”

“If you fight a man...”

In sentence 3 the highly assertive structure: “... the land belonged to Okperi...” communicates a decided position. The verb “belonged” locates the action in the past, before the present. This is modified in the present tense in sentence 8 (“... a piece of farmland that belongs to him...”). The tense form of the verb “belongs” is revealing: it implicates and communicates Ezeulu’s stance that the original right of ownership of the land is not inviolable by time and space.

It is a claim that is fiercely contested by Nwaka whose rhetorical style is largely dependent on *pathos*. It is through this strategy that he dismantles Ezeulu’s discourse and wins the support for war:

1. But Nwaka had carried the day. 2. He was one of the three people in the six villages who had taken the highest title in the land, Eru, which was called after the lord of wealth himself. 3. Nwaka came from a long line of prosperous men and from a village which called itself first in Umuaro. 4. They said that when

the six villages first came together they offered the priesthood of Ulu to the weakest among them to ensure that none in the alliance became too powerful.

5. „Umuaro Kwenu!“ Nwaka roared.

6. „Hem!“ replied the men of Umuaro.

7. „Kwenu!...“

8. He began to speak almost softly in the silence he had created with his salutation.

9. Wisdom is like a goatskin bag; everyman carries his own. 10. Knowledge of the land is also like that. 11. Ezeulu has told us what his father told him about the olden days. 12. We know that a father does not speak falsely to his son. 13. But we also know that the lore of the land is beyond the knowledge of many fathers. 14. If Ezeulu had spoken about the great deity of Umuaro which he carries and which his father carried before him I would have paid attention to his voice. 15. But he speaks about events which are older than Umuaro itself. 16. I shall not be afraid to say that neither Ezeulu nor any other in this village can tell us about these events“. 17. There were murmurs of approval and of disapproval but more of approval from the assembly of elders and men of title. 18. Nwaka walked forward and back as he spoke; the eagle feather in his red cap and bronze band on his ankle marked him out as one of the lords of the land – a man favoured by Eru, the god of riches.

19. „My father told me a different story. 20. He told me that Okperi people were wanderers. 21. He told me three or four different places where they sojourned for a while and moved on again. 22. They were driven away by Umuofia, then by Abame and Aninta. 23. Would they go today and claim all those sites? 24. Elders and Ndichie of Umuaro, let everyone return to his house if we have no heart in the fight. 26. We shall not be the first people who abandoned their farmland or even their homestead to avoid war. 27. But let us not tell ourselves or our children that we did it because the land belonged to other people. 28. Let us rather tell them that their fathers did not choose to fight. 29. Let us tell them also that we marry the daughters of Okperi and their men marry our daughters and that where there is this mingling men often lose the heart to fight. 30. Umuaro Kwenu!“

31. „Hem!“....

32. „I salute you all“ (15-17; ch. 2).

The passage derives effect through the rhetorical devices of *benevolum*, *attentum* and *docilem*. These are used mainly to put the audience in favourable disposition towards the speaker and most significantly to persuade it to share with the speaker’s values. That is the purpose of sentences 5, 7, and 8. Sentences 6 “Hem!” shows that the audience, in shared communal values – comprising mainly of “the men of Umuaro,” has granted Nwaka the right of speech. Nwaka’s use of the oratorical skills is significant here.

There are three categories of oratory, according to classical rhetoricians. These are: the *epideictic*, the *deliberative*, and the *forensic*. The first is ceremonial oratory, concerned chiefly with the present issues of fact and deals with praise or censure. In sentences 11 – 17, for example, Nwaka attacks Ezeulu for insinuating that the land in dispute belongs to Okperi, and again for dissuading the clan from war. *Deliberative* discourse is advisory and centres on the present and the future in terms of their expediency or in expediency; while *forensic* discourse has as its target to use history to defend one’s actions and to repudiate or condemn other people’s views.

Nwaka's speech adopts features of the three devices. The entire discourse centres on the facts at hand (epideictic) – to decide on whether or not to go to war over the land dispute with Okperi. Sentences 3-4 belong to forensic discourse which also situates Nwaka favourably in the mind of the audience. Nwaka opens his argument by re-establishing the bond between him and the community ("Umuaro Kwenu!"). In sentences 9-10 and 26-28, Nwaka veers toward *deliberative* discourse. He then adopts *forensic* rhetoric in sentences 13-16 and 19-24 to defend his own position while at the same time attacking Ezeulu's perspective.

In effect, Nwaka's line of argument can be called *enthymeme* in rhetoric. This is a form of *logos* or logical proof, but its end is to produce an emotional effect. Golden, Berquist and Coleman point out the significance of the enthymematic device when they assert that,

[...] the audience will be delighted in hearing an expression of an oft repeated generalization which corresponds to their own beliefs. Thus, an audience comprised exclusively of men, would react favourably to the assertion that women drivers are poor drivers. While the form of argument is enthymematic the degree of pathos is strong. (31)

An enthymeme often has three parts: major premise, minor premise and a conclusion. Most often, the hearer rushes to the same conclusion that the speaker had in mind (sentence 17; "There were murmurs of approval..."). Nwaka's conclusion becomes obvious from the people's reaction in (S:17). Nwaka's other premise in this discourse can be described as a "sign." A sign is a proposition setting forth the reason for the existence of a fact. That sign is encoded in sentence 29 – the reference to Ezeulu's mother being a daughter of Okperi. It is Nwaka's line of argument through which he wins support against Ezeulu's point of view.

In sentence 9, Nwaka resorts to the traditional form of discourse to invert Ezeulu's ideology. In effect, Nwaka operates within the flexible codes of the culture and its definition of forms that order reality. His reinterpretation and reconstruction of truth and logic (sentences 19 – 24) finds a way to re-invent a conceptual world which enables him to emerge momentarily within Umuaro society as a figure of authority in matters of *logos* (sentences 1-4). In his reaction to the role of proverbs in Achebe's fiction, Richard Priebe perceptibly remarks in reference to the tradition of Umufians in *Things Fall Apart* that "proverbs encompass strategies for individual equity that are antithetical to the closed system of prenatal destiny..." (51).

A similar rhetorical style also operates in Umuaro society. Obiechina affirms the linguistic contribution of proverbs in the projection of ideology when he asserts:

Every significant affirmation can be strengthened with a proverb; every customary value, belief, attitude or outlook can be supported with proverbs; social problems and personal difficulties can be settled by an appeal to the sanctioning proverb. Even contradictory news can be sustained by an appeal to different proverb.... (156-7)

So, proverbs in *Arrow of God* are used to support a many-sided reality. Again, Ezeulu's discourse (pp.18 and 26) are steeped in proverbs. Thus, the characters' consciousness is conditioned by an oral tradition through which they project their contradictory values. The respective discourses of both Ezeulu and Nwaka are immersed in proverbial language through which they articulate different constituted ideology.

The fact that Umuaro is not a unified entity at this period enables Nwaka to redefine and renegotiate the forms of perception of that reality. Therefore, his discourse reveals complex forms of worldviews. It again therefore means that within the same culture one can

still see signs of the crisis of worldview and of different forms that are vigorously asserted. As Bennett reveals:

Characterizing the ideological crisis within the traditional society uncovers the ambivalences of ideology in narrative and re-orientates the meaning and import of the relationships between Achebe's "texts" and their reproduction of historical narrative. (qtd. in Osei-Nyame 155)

In Umuaro's world, for instance, the rhetorical arguments of Ezeulu and Nwaka would therefore be signifying a crisis of values and worldviews. It is a world in which the closed systems of meaning are both contestable and transformable.

Hite argues that "alternative versions of *ideology* [...] might give the same sequence of events an entirely different set of emphasis and values" (4, emphasis mine). In *Arrow of God*, we visualize a world of complex "arena" for ideological confrontation. It is a world similar to Barthes' "social utopia" where the text provides "not the space in which no one language has a hold over any other, in which all languages circulate freely" ("From Work," 80).

Nwaka's discourse among other features contains a large variety of speech acts. In (9) – (16), he mockingly attacks the values encoded in Ezeulu's speech. The words of supreme assertion "We know" is used to establish an exact knowledge which contradicts Ezeulu's. And so Ezeulu's father is not an authority on issues which pre-date the Ulu that confers him knowledge. In effect, Nwaka broadens the argument by touching on the issues of secular society. The verbal techniques which facilitate his argument include *verba sentiendi*: "we know," "beyond the knowledge of many fathers," "neither Ezeulu nor any other in this village can tell us," "my father told me," "let everyone return," et cetera. These words encode attitudes. There are certain intrinsic beliefs present in the structure of Nwaka's thought, but we also know that his discourse contains fallacious assumptions (sentences 20 – 24).

In sentence 12, "we know," embodies a theory of shared knowledge. It is a cognitive perception that rejects that attributed to Ezeulu and his father. Besides, Nwaka uses sentences 20-24 to connect logical relationships. And because of these, Umuaro's claim is superior. He also uses these logical connections to crystallize and stabilize his ideas. In S: 23-24 Nwaka asks, rhetorically: "Would they go today and claim all those sites?" "Would they have laid claim on our farmland in the days before the white man turned us upside down?" Through these he moulds his audience's values into his own established systems of beliefs.

Particularly influential in having the people tilt towards Nwaka's position is the meaning encoded in S: 18. His social standing induces appropriate responses. Rather than rely on *ethos* and *logos*, Nwaka relies heavily on *pathos* to sway the people behind him. He largely succeeds (S: 17) in having the crucial support of people of like values, "the assembly of elders and men of title," who like himself influence the direction of ideas. The syntax of "the assembly of elders and men of title" could mean the "Ndichie of Umuaro" or people who decide what things are done. Their support of Nwaka tends to undermine the *ethos* and *logos* of Ezeulu's discourse. Then Nwaka resorts to repetitive structure (sentences 25-29) to remain in touch with his audience:

"But let us not tell ourselves..."

"Let us rather tell them..."

"Let us tell them also..."

These are powerful and insidious ways of projecting his values for general acceptance. He uses this device to cast aspersions and doubt on the *logos* of Ezeulu's speech. In this way, he elaborates the range of speech acts (sentences 23 and 24) of his discourse. The main speech acts of the discourse are stating (sentences 9-13), questioning (14-16) and commanding (18-



29). Through them Nwaka communicates his attitudes and the desirability of Umuaro's claim over the said piece of land.

Modalities are also present. In sentences 19-21 ("my father told me...", "He told me that Okperi...", "He told me three or four different places...") the modalities characterize Nwaka's speech and give him a high level of authority to assert his worldview. In addition, the pronoun class is used for cohesion. In sentence 27, "Our children (possessive + Noun) designates the future generation of Umuarians. In 28 and 29 "our children" is designated as "them" and this immediately creates intensity and the necessity to reject the kind of position already canvassed by Ezeulu.

Sentence 1 starts with an adversative "But" to show contrastive relationship with Ezeulu's discourse. This is again repeated in sentences 13, 15 and 27. At each instance, "But" expresses a contrast in belief. In those sentences, there is an un-stated "no" in the relationship in belief between Nwaka and Ezeulu. Nwaka then appropriates verbs of active dimension – "walked," and "marked." He veers towards the vocabulary of extremes of sensation and emotion (or words of estrangement): "the weakest among them," "I shall not be afraid," "as one of the lords of the land." The repetition of structure in sentences 27-29 produces high emotion in the psyche of his listeners. Consequent upon this, it was natural for his fellow Umuarians to forget *logos* and side with *pathos*.

In 18, the discourse becomes more dramatic: "Nwaka walked forward and back as he spoke..." So rather than matching his rhetoric with evidence, he makes a series of assertions, all of them about his own feelings and judgments:

- A. My father told me a different story...
- B. He told me that Okperi people were wanderers.
- C. He told me three or four different places....
- D. They were driven away by Umuofia...

The vocal gestures dramatize the speaker and the scene. His facts come under what is called *non sequitor*. Because the discourse is mainly on his motives and decisions, he cares little about proof. He sidetracks the issue in 19-24. Thus, there are very little deictic of time and place unlike in Ezeulu's discourse to justify his claim that the disputed land belongs to Umuaro. Instead, he goes on psychological and historical offensive: "Would they have laid claim... in the days before the white man turned us upside down?" Sentences 26-29 are also psychological, meant primarily to inspire Umuaro to an alternative view point different from Ezeulu's. He therefore broadens the attack on Ezeulu by implying and underpinning his discourse on a "general proposition" (Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism* 113). Nwaka appeals to the general proposition that acknowledges a rejection of Western ideology and uses that to align him with public sentiment.

In 23 and 24, Nwaka uses questions to maintain his control of the discourse. His general assertions and judgements serve the purpose of demanding attention. Indeed, there is consistent overgeneralization which gives the impression of Nwaka's tendency to evasiveness. One example that comes to hand is his repeated resort to *argumentum ad hominum* (sentences 20 – 24) and the structural parallelism of sentences 27-29 – and also to name calling, especially the reference to Ezeulu's mother being a daughter of Okperi.

Other features of language that contribute to worldview are the prevalence of negation. Nwaka's discourse is full of explicitly negative structures and words: "almost softly," "beyond the knowledge of many fathers," "Okperi people were wanderers," "they were driven away by Umuofia" – and the implied negativity in the two rhetorical questions: "would they go...;" "Would they have laid claim...." What Nwaka is doing is making his language construct a worldview which is antithetical to Ezeulu's and this systematically transforms the consciousness of many Umuarians to a rejection of Ezeulu's proposition.

In sentence 9, the generic “everyone” is significant. After the questions in 23 and 24, Nwaka employs the vocative “Elders and Ndichie of Umuaro” to make a direct emotional appeal for support. The inclusive pronoun “We” designates him as one of their own. The objective pronouns “us” and “them” touches on the expediency of his call for war to defend their territory. Thus, he clearly establishes a contrast between his position and Ezeulu’s. For Ezeulu, it is “their farmland” whereas for Nwaka it is “our farmland.” Nwaka cunningly structures sentences 26 “we shall not be the first people who abandoned their farmland...” and the preceding 25 “...let everyone return to his house if we have no heart in the fight” to stir the people emotionally. The word “abandoned” and the phrase “no heart” are linguistic tricks that structure the discourse. The audience is syntactically manipulated into involvement with the formulation of Nwaka’s thoughts. The value scheme is obvious: nostalgia for a glorious past.

The bottom-line of Nwaka’s rhetoric is also very obvious. Whereas Ezeulu opts for the traditional form of relationship between man and god, Nwaka, on the other hand seeks to enthrone a secularist ideology: “my father did not tell me that before Umuaro went to war it took leave from the Priest of Ulu” and “The man who carries a deity is not a king.” He advocates for a world in which gods play no role in human affairs. And most significantly, Nwaka designates Ezeulu as “a man of ambition.”

The personal animosity between Ezeulu and Nwaka begins to widen as the plot unfolds. In the first place there is a deepening crisis between Ezeulu and his people, arising from the penetration of Western hegemonic attitude as embodied in the consciousness that repels hegemonic ideology. The crisis in *Arrow of God* has the white man’s presence as the background influence. This gives insight into the other issues in the novel such as;

- (1) The breaking of the guns by Captain Winterbottom, a symbolic event that signals the arrival of the new order;

## Conclusion

- (2) The conflict between Okperi and Umuaro provides the first occasion for the clash of perspectives in *Arrow of God*. In their discourses for and against war with Okperi Ezeulu and Nwaka manifest differing worldviews. Whereas Ezeulu opts for the traditional form of relationship between man and god, Nwaka, on the other hand seeks to enthrone a secularist ideology. Their discourses also reveal contrasting worldviews. This contradictory form of values therefore makes any particular form of truth elusive. We can therefore see *Arrow of God* as a novel where conflicting perspectives coexist.

## Works Cited

- Achebe, Chinua. *Arrow of God*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1964. Print.
- Akpan, E. “Rhetoric as a Means of Sharing Meaning.” *Topical Issues in Communication Arts*. Ed. Solomon Unoh. Uyo: Modern Business, 1987. 251-9. Print.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* Ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Hoquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. “From Work to Text.” *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. Ed. Harari, Josué V. London: Methuen, 1979. 73 – 81. Print.
- Bauman, Richard. *Story, Performance and Event: Contextual Studies of Oral Narratives*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986. Print.
- Clifford, James. “PaSrtial Truths.” *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Eds. James Clifford, and George Marcus. Berkeley: California UP, 1986. 1-26. Print.
- Elimimian, I.I. “Rhetoric and Style in Okigbo’s Havensgate.” *Topical Issues in Communication Arts*. Ed. Solomon O. Unoh. Uyo: Modern Business Press, 1987. 168 – 187. Print.

- Fowler, Roger. *Linguistic Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986. Print.
- Golden, J., Goodwin Berquist, and William Coleman. *The Rhetoric of Western Thought*. Dubuque: Kendall and Hunt, 1976. Print.
- Kress, Gunther, and Robert Hodge. *Language and Ideology*. London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1979. Print.
- Nwanyanwu, Augustine Uka. "Language, Racial Difference and Dialogic Consciousness in Sembene's *Gods's Bits of Wood*. *Ousmane Sembene and the Politics of Culture*. Eds. Lifongo Vetinde and Amadou T. Fofana .Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014. 117-130. Print.
- Obiechina, Emmanuel. *Culture, Tradition and Society in the West African Novel*. London: Cambridge UP, 1975. Print.
- Ogu, Julius N. "Logic Versus Rhetoric: A New Perspective on Achebe's *Arrow of God*." *CALEL: Currents in African Literature and the English Language* 1.1 (1997): 147-158. Print.
- Osei-Nyame, Kwadwo. "Chinua Achebe Writing Culture: Representations of Gender and Tradition in *Things Fall Apart*." *Research in African Literature* 30.2 (1999): 148 – 164. Print.
- Priebe, Richard. *Myth, Realism and the West African Writer*. Trenton: African World, 1988. Print.