

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Narrative Processes in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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Abstract

Narrative processes within the African context as encapsulated in Achebe's Things Fall Apart (henceforth TFA) are considered as processes through which meanings are conveyed in a discourse. This study sets out to investigate aspects of narrative processes through a linguistic network in TFA by contending that those processes can be worked out within the semantic, referential, ideational, and contextual concepts. Shades of meanings, especially from the perspectives of African narrations, are addressed and situated in TFA. This is because narrative processes play significant roles in clarifying, exemplifying, underscoring and influencing communication and thus are easily situated within the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA), which focuses on power and ideological projections. It is relevant in its socio-political concern to reveal inequalities of power, while its standard approach to textual analysis is interested in the details of texts such as the socio-political and cultural functions of discourse capable of determining other layers of meaning. CDA therefore is a veritable linguistic tool for studying texts such as Achebe's TFA, to reveal the inequalities expressed in the narrative processes as deployed in the novel. Through the application of the Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach to the study of CDA (DHA-CDA), the study reveals that the stories imbedded in TFA assist in retelling the African story from a historical cum linguistic view point. The study also substantiates our initial assumption that narrative processes within the African context as found in Achebe's TFA are considered as processes through which meanings are conveyed in a discourse. The study also investigates aspects of narrative processes through a linguistic network and contends that shades of meanings, especially from the perspectives of African narrations, are addressed and situated in literary texts by using Achebe, TFA as a paradigm.

Key Words: CDA, Narrative Processes, Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart

Introduction

The debate on the choice of language to be adopted by literary writers of African descent has dominated discourse over the years. Most of those writers who belong to the school of thought which says that African literary writers should write in their mother tongue argue that writing in their native language is imperative because cultural subtleties and meanings are lost in translation. For these writers, a "foreign" language can never fully describe their culture. For Chinua Achebe, there is no need for writing in the mother tongue and there is no need either for writing in a language that prescribes rules for an African literary scholar because: by using English, Achebe presents "a new voice coming out of Africa, speaking of African experience in a world-wide language" (*Morning Yet on Creation Day*). Achebe is of the view that for African writers to achieve their aim of passing across their messages of colonialism, political enslavement, neo-colonialism and imperialism, they must "use English in a way that brings out their messages best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. According to him, the writer should aim at fashioning out English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience. In a bid to live up to his postulations of "using the English language to his advantage, Achebe creatively makes use of narrative strategies in form of story-telling, coinages, *Nigerianisms*, Igbo language, proverbs, metaphoric expressions, speech rhythms, and ideas in his novels.

To substantiate the above point, Achebe opines that: in using the English language in their literary composition, African writers should create works with one mission in mind-to re-establish their own national culture in the postcolonial era because according to him, African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans. . . their societies were not mindless, but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, they had poetry, and above all, they had dignity. It is this dignity that African people all but lost during the colonial period, and it is this that they must now regain. In *TFA*, Achebe makes use of the storytelling technique a concept we adopt in this paper to mean a narrative strategy to most times put across his message in a manner that it will be relevant and meaningful to the audience. These narrative strategies are oftentimes related to things that took place in the past to demonstrate how the event at hand project into the future. This study therefore adopts the discourse historical approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (DHA-CDA) and narratology to explicate the narrative strategies adopted by Chinua Achebe.

Achebe and the Literary experience

Chinua Achebe is regarded as the most dominant figure in modern [African literature](#). His first novel and [magnum opus](#), [Things Fall Apart](#) (1958), occupies a pivotal place in African literature and remains the most widely studied, taught and read African novel. Achebe sought to escape the colonial perspective that

predominated African literature, and drew from the traditions of the Igbo people, Christian influences, and the clash of Western and African values to create a uniquely African voice. His style relies heavily on the Igbo [oral tradition](#), and combines straightforward narration with representations of folk stories, proverbs, and oratory. Achebe's work has been widely analyzed, and a massive body of scholarly work discussing it has arisen. Some of the themes he touched are politics, history, [culture and colonialism](#) as well as [masculinity and femininity](#). To date, his total influence remains unmatched in African literature.

The nature of African Literature and the debate on the choice of language

Different scholars have tried to define what they feel should be worthy of being called “African literature”. African literature could be taken to mean a body of traditional oral and written literatures in Afro-Asiatic and African languages together with works written by Africans in European languages. Traditional written literature, which is limited to a smaller geographic area than is [oral literature](#), is most characteristic of those sub-Saharan [cultures](#) that have participated in the cultures of the Mediterranean. In particular, there are written literatures in both Hausa and Arabic, created by the scholars of what is now northern [Nigeria](#), and the Somali people have produced a traditional written literature. There are also works written in Ge’ez (Ethiopic) and Amharic, two of the languages of [Ethiopia](#), which is the one part of Africa where Christianity has been practiced long enough to be considered traditional. Works written in European languages date primarily from the 20th century onward. The literature of [South Africa](#) in English and Afrikaans is also covered in a separate article, [South African literature](#).

The relationship between oral and written traditions and in particular between oral and modern written literatures is one of great complexity and not a matter of simple evolution. Modern African literatures were born in the educational systems imposed by colonialism, with models drawn from Europe rather than existing African traditions. But the African oral traditions exerted their own influence on these literatures.

In the 1960s, much diatribe was exchanged by African literary artists within their caucus, and outside with different scholars interested in African literature. Wali demonstrates this disagreement. He comments, “... until these writers and their western midwives accept the fact that true African literature must be written in African languages, they would be merely pursuing a dead end, which can only lead to sterility, uncertainty, and frustration.” According to him:

Literature after all, (sic) is the exploitation of the possibilities of language. It is the African languages that are in crying need of this kind of development [of being used in composing African literature], not the overworked French

or English. There is, for instance, a good deal of scholarly work being done in the linguistic structure of several African languages, but there is practically no use being made of these in creative writing, simply because we are all busy fighting over the commonplaces of European literature. If linguistic science devotes so much energy to and attention to African languages in spite of their tribal and limited scope, why should imaginative literature which in fact has more chances of enriching the people's culture, (sic) consider it impossible to adventure in this direction?

In reply to Wali, Achebe expresses, "...you cannot cram African literature in a small, neat definition. I do not see African literature as one unit but as associated units – in fact, the sum total of all the national and ethnic literatures of Africa". The disagreement is no longer conspicuous. However, the question that demands an answer is, "Have African languages become productive in African literature?" Achebe further states:

So my answer to the question: *Can an African ever learn English well enough to be able to use it effectively in creative writing?* is certainly yes. If on the other hand you ask: *Can he ever learn to use it as a native speaker?* I should say, I hope not. It is neither necessary nor desirable for him to do so. The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use. The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost.

From the above position, Achebe has lived up to his position on the choice of language for African literature. Since the English language predominates in the Africa, literary writers of African extraction should use the language to their own advantage and not to adhere to the necessary rules and become pedantic to the language. It is therefore interesting that Achebe adopts the story telling technique which is the African narrative style in oral renditions as part of his literature composition. Achebe concludes by saying that "I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be *a new English*, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.

As for Ngugi:

For colonialism, [domination] involved two aspects of the same process: the destruction or deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religion, history, geography, education, orature, and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the coloniser. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to

the domination of the mental universe of the colonized. (1986:16)

George Joseph on the other hand posits that “whereas European views of literature often stressed a separation of art and content, African awareness is inclusive and "literature" can also simply mean an artistic use of words for the sake of art alone. Traditionally, Africans do not radically separate art from teaching. Rather than write or sing for beauty in itself, African writers, taking their cue from oral literature, use beauty to help communicate important truths and information to society. An object is considered beautiful because of the truths it reveals and the communities it helps to build”.

Theoretical Framework and Literature: CDA & Narratology Critical Discourse Analysis & Narrative Network

This study adopts Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach to CDA which bases its model on linguistic analysis. This approach attempts to integrate available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text' (Wodak, 15); an approach that is said to be the most linguistically orientated in CDA. Wodak (15) posits that this approach is designed to enable the analysis of indirect prejudiced utterances, and indeed to identify and expose the codes and allusions contained in prejudiced discourse. She perceives discourse as a form of social practice; and distinguishes between the notion of 'discourse' and the notion of 'text' and argues that:

discourse could be understood as 'a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts, which manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens, very often as “texts”, that belong to specific semiotic types, i.e. genres' (2001: 66).

Wodak claims that discourses are open and hybrid systems; new sub-topics can be created, and intertextuality and interdiscursivity allowed for new fields of action. Wodak (2001: 66) defines 'texts' as 'materially durable products of linguistic actions' whereas a 'genre' is understood as 'conventionalized more or less schematically fixed use of language associated with a particular activity'; *'Fields of action' could be seen as 'segments of the respective societal 'reality', which contribute to constituting and shaping the 'frame' of discourse.* This school of thought sees the concept of 'context' as crucial for CDA analysts and particularly considers some aspects of this concept:

The immediate, language or text internal co-text; the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses; the extra-linguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation' (middle-range theories) and the broader socio-political and historical

contexts, which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to ('grand theories') (Wodak, 2001:67).

Reisigl and Wodak 2001 and Wodak 2001 establish the specific contents of topics of a discourse and investigate the discursive strategies by examining the linguistic means (as types) and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realizations (as tokens) of the discriminatory stereotypes Wodak, 72. Wodak's Discourse-Historical approach also views the discursive polarization of '**US**' versus '**THEM**' as the basic fundament of discourses of discrimination. She raises questions which could detect discriminatory discursive elements:

How are persons named and referred to linguistically? What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them? By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimize the exclusion, discrimination, suppression and exploitation of others? From what perspective or point of view are these labels, attributions and arguments expressed? Are the respective utterances articulated overtly? Are they intensified or are they mitigated? (Wodak, 2001:72-73).

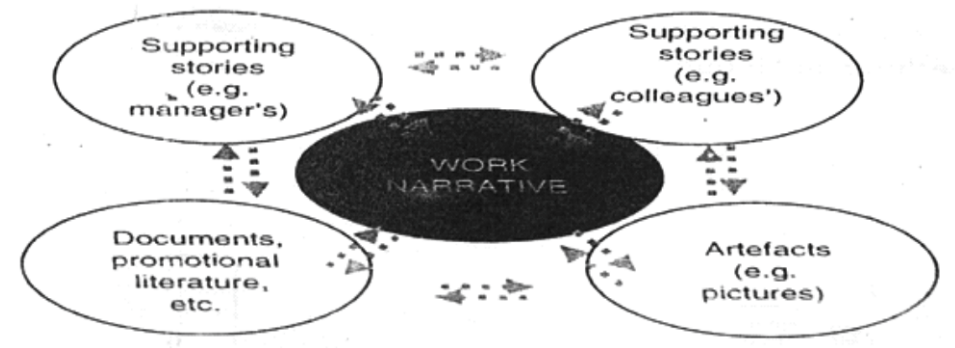
Wodak argues that the different forms of polarization and discrimination can be discussed by means of argumentation strategies which are 'parts of argumentation that belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises. They are content-related warrants or "conclusion rules" which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim' (Wodak, 2001: 73-74). Narrative strategies according to Richardson exist "everywhere", and seem to be a kind of vortex around which other discourses orbit in ever closer proximity". Narrative strategies have therefore been incorporated into writings scholars not only from the field of literature but from other fields of study: psychologists are not only developing their own methodology to deal with narrative interviews, Riessman, 19 but have recently also proposed a dedicated 'psycho-narratology' Bortolussi/Dixon, 203; artificial intelligence research has a strong interest in storytelling Bringsjord/Ferrucci 20; there is a branch of business studies which deals with stories as means of branding and marketing Zaltman, 98; anthropologists explore every day storytelling Ochs/Capps, 78; theologians seek to 'reclaim narrative' Doak, 62, and in performance studies there is talk of a "storytelling revival" Wilson 92, on British, Irish and, especially, American stages. The observation that many scholars in different disciplines are interested in the processes, results and functions of storytelling is frequently interpreted and welcomed by narrative theorists as a move towards interdisciplinarity. If one defines interdisciplinarity as a mutually enriching exchange of findings and ideas, based on shared research interests and concepts, however, there is little evidence of such a transcending, let alone erosion, of

disciplinary boundaries.

According to Julio Gumenez in “*Narrative Analysis in Linguistic Research*” Narrative Networks as a linguistic concept was first used by Bearman and his colleagues Bearman et al., 99; Bearman and Stovel, 90 to describe how the structural elements in a narrative create an internal network of meanings which supports the holistic interpretation of a story. In this section, a different taking on the word 'network' is offered. A narrative network is defined as a group of stories, texts and artifacts collected around the emerging issues in a core narrative. The network shows not only what the stories, the texts, the artifacts and the core narrative have in common, but also how they differ, thus broadening the analytical perspective and helping tensions and contradictions emerge during analysis, Gimenez, 102; Solis, 104. Narrative networks can then help highlight the links between the local and social functions that narratives represent. The meanings and functions of personal narratives enacted in their local contexts normally reflect a more macro set of social meanings and patterns, which are best captured when local narratives are networked with other narratives, texts and artifacts produced in both local and global contexts. Narrative Networks can be placed within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). As Chouliaraki and Fairclough observe, (6), CDA establishes a dialogic connection between 'critical social science and linguistics' in a single theoretical and analytical framework. Wodak (2) posits that CDA is concerned with "analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language'. Thus, CDA takes a particular interest in the relationship between language and power and moves beyond the linguistic boundaries of the written or spoken texts it analyses to examine the multiplicity of historical, political and institutional forces (including values, interests and beliefs) operating in a single given text. CDA creates immense interest in fields such as media communication (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1992), business and economy (Fairclough, 1995:56), education (Baxter, 1989), and language and gender (Lazar, 2005). Narrative networks provide a framework for the critical analysis of narratives that attempts to accommodate some of the criticism presented above. The framework is based on the following four theoretical principles: **Representation:** The narrative chosen for analysis should represent the problem rather than how the analyst theorizes and interprets it. It should also represent the values, norms and behaviour of all those involved in the social problem. Misrepresentation can be avoided by creating a network of representative texts, documents and artifacts around the core narrative. **Falsifiability:** To prevent argumentative circularity, the analysis of all narrative should consider counter-evidence, avoiding at the same time selective partiality of evidence. Contradictions, tensions and resistance should be observed. **Derivation:** Interpretation of the narrative should highlight the relationship between the narrative and its immediate context of production and consumption, as well as the network of actors and artifacts that surrounds it. This principle should be observed before the explanation of the significance of the social

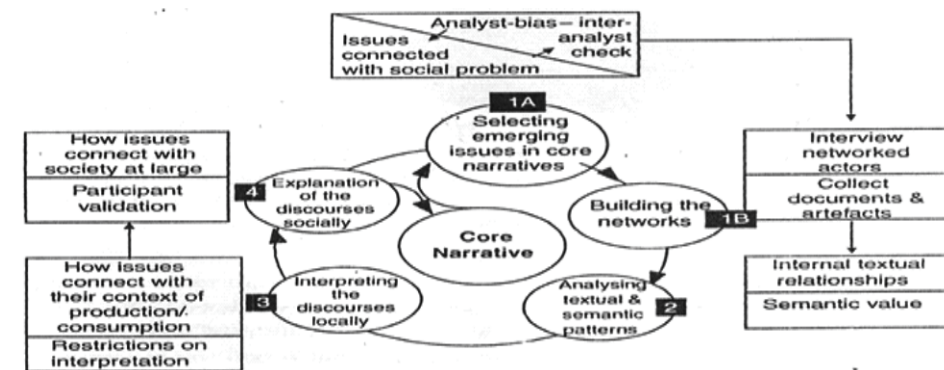
problem being analyzed is attempted. **Validation:** Explanations of the significance of the core narrative in relation to the problem it represents should be endorsed by those involved in producing and consuming all the texts analyzed. The use of participant validation and 'thick' ethnographic observations can facilitate this process.

One fundamental consideration that underpins these principles is the importance of the network. Concentrating on a single, isolated text or narrative may produce a 'narrow' analytical perspective that could easily lead to argumentative circularity and explanations based on analyst's assumptions. This therefore means that a network of texts that brings together the core narrative other associated texts offers the possibility of broadening the analytical perspective by considering tensions and contradictions. In considering a work narrative (PIX.A) depicting the narration of a conflict of power. We may also want to consider other stories by the narrator's co-workers and managers as well as other related documents and artifacts produced by his/her community of practice (e.g. documents about the allocation of work, flyers advertising or promoting their activity, or pictures that reveal the history of their profession).



(Curled from: A network for work narratives (Gimenez, 2007:86)

In PIX. A above, demonstrates how the different elements that constitute a network interrelate with one another despite their different nature. Whereas work narratives are central to the network, stories are supporting elements in the network which prove or disprove the issues that emerge from the analysis of the work narrative. Work narratives are collected using loosely structured prompts; supporting stories are more narrowly elicited. The four stages of constructing a narrative network are graphically illustrated below:



The above PIX AB depicts a four-stage process to analysing narratives in a linguistic study. For instance: stages 1A and 1B involve a process of data collection, stage 2 involves analysis of data, stage 3 involves interpretation of data, while stage 4 involves explanation of data. In the procedures below, each stage starts with a brief theoretical comment before introducing the actual analytical step(s). After each stage, and before the analyst moves on to the next, the procedures include a check that reminds him/her of important considerations at the specific step.

This review of relevant theoretical framework and literature has helped to expand our understanding of the reception process by pointing out that acts of reading are framed by narrative schemata which are part of our mental disposition, and that such frames or schemata are triggered through textual cues. This particular study therefore sets out to explore whether such principles may apply to the creative process of literary composition by looking for solution to such questions as: To what extent can narrative composition, i.e. the process of writing narrative fiction, be modelled and described in analogy to narrative comprehension, the act of reading a fictional narrative? Are there parallels between these processes which, according to well-established communication models of narrative fiction, constitute the core of extra textual literary communication? These rhetorical tropes transcend the boundaries of structuralist narratology. The on-going turn in literary narratology and the emergence of interdisciplinary narrative research, however, enable us to see narrative composition and narrative comprehension as two distinct, but structurally related, sense-making activities.

This study contends that story:

Recipients, whether readers, viewers, or listeners, work to interpret narratives by reconstructing the mental representations that have in turn guided their production because all normally developing humans capable of understanding stories are capable of telling stories, and vice versa. In other words, telling a story requires and

engages the same cognitive software as listening to a story (Herman et al 2019: 180).

This will be made possible by developing an understanding of what happens in the process of storytelling. There is the belief that storytelling and narrative design belong to the realm of creative writing but the aims and methodological standards of narratological approaches to storytelling, however, differ considerably from those of creative writing. Narrative strategies provide systematic descriptions of the elements of narrative and their functional relationships and of the cognitive processes involved in their reception within an overall framework of a general theory of narrative. Apart from the cognitive turn in narratology, two narratological approaches have transcended the structuralist focus on narrative poetics in favour of a more holistic view of the interaction of author, text and reader: these are, firstly, the communication model of narrative fiction and, secondly, rhetorical approaches to narrative based on linguistic approach. "From a communicative perspective, narrative fiction is regarded as an interaction between an author and the readers through the medium of a text."

Choice of Data

The data for this analysis were extracted from Chinua Achebe's *TFA*. The choice of *TFA* is based on the fact that Achebe in his style of writing weaves together stories and adopts the story telling technique to drive home his message. This style of writing, captures the traditional African literary corpus---the manner of literary composition that focuses on the oral form of transmitting from one generation to the other. All together five stories imbedded in the novel were chosen as data for the analysis. This study made use of the purposive method of data collection. Data gathering was based on the knowledge of the narrative strategies adopted by the novelist and the data so chosen ensured that the texts fit the specific purpose of narratology. The choice of these data is also purposive it ensures that a broad opinion of all the respondents, actively involved in the aspect of study, are obtained and analysed.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

This analytical process is anchored on the assumption that Chinua Achebe's *TFA* interpolates Western linguistic forms and literary traditions with Igbo words and phrases, proverbs, fables, tales, and other elements of African oral and communal storytelling traditions in order to record and preserve African oral traditions. Based on this assumption, this analysis sets out to identify the text's linguistic and literary techniques and analyse the relationship of oral elements to the meanings and messages of the novel. Achebe's narrative styles in *TFA* bear traits of his society while narrating his experiences he relates to the customary practices of his people, the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria. The immediate exigencies of intelligibility and realistic representation therefore determine the language he adopts. In reflecting on the

squabbles that exist between humans and in a metaphoric depiction of the coloniser and the colonised Achebe demonstrates the struggle for power and supremacy in this story telling format:

Quarrel between Earth and Sky

He remembered the story she often told of *the quarrel between Earth and Sky* long ago, and how Sky withheld rain for seven years, until crops withered and the dead could not be buried because the hoes broke on the stony Earth. At last Vulture was sent to plead with Sky, and to soften his heart with a song of the suffering of the sons of men. At last Sky was moved to pity, and he gave to Vulture rain wrapped in leaves of cocoyam. But as he flew home his long talon pierced the leaves and the rain fell as it had never fallen before. And so heavily did it rain on Vulture that he did not return to deliver his message but flew to a distant land, from where he had espied a fire. And when he got there he found it was a man making a sacrifice. He warmed himself in the fire and ate the entrails (TFA: 1958:43).

In the above narrative we see a struggle between the coloniser and the colonised metaphorically represented in the images of the sky and the earth. The sky is far above the earth and is capable of causing all sorts of harm to the lesser earth which lies below. Achebe achieves this act of depiction and thematization through the use of multilingual context which often demands the integration of languages or dialects. Through the use of historical narrative strategy, the novelist demonstrates how “long ago” the “*Sky withheld rain for seven years, until crops withered and the dead could not be buried because the hoes broke on the stony Earth. At last Vulture was sent to plead with Sky and to soften his heart with a song of the suffering of the sons of men*”. Achebe uses his Igbo mother tongue through characters to paint picture of deprivation as suffered by Africans in the texts, especially when such traditional practices as story-telling are used as texts. To soften the heart of the superior being, the “vulture” becomes a metaphor for the currency of negotiation for the betterment of the life style of the downtrodden. The image of the vulture in this narrative is scavenging and carnivorous but that same image epitomises a negotiator for the lesser mortals thus substantiating the belief that African socio-political landscape was left in the hands of scavengers who could decide the fate of the populace.

As the vulture succeeds in negotiating the peace process, the water given to it to give to the people was not properly packaged as we are told the water was “*wrapped in leaves of cocoyam*” thus epitomising a fragile accord that did not even get to the expected end. And to show how deceitful the vulture was, the rain poured off and the vulture found solace in another land where a better environment is put in place. The

scenario here is that of political scavengers who swoop on the people, steal, launder resources and fly away to foreign lands to enjoy with their family members at the expense of the Africans. In another narrative strategy to show the restlessness and the quest for comfort by a subjugated and deprived individual, Achebe uses the image of the mosquito and the human to tell the story of a comfortable individual who finds it difficult to live in his environment as his traducer persists in ensuring that both of them do not have peace because one is not comfortable. The story of the mosquito and the ear in incompatible relationship brings out the issue of inequality, liberty and fraternity in a world created by the same god that professes equality:

The Mosquito had said, she had asked Ear to marry him, whereupon Ear fell on the floor in uncontrollable laughter. "How much longer do you think you will live?" she asked. "You are already a skeleton." Mosquito went away humiliated, and any time he passed her way he told Ear that he was still alive (TFA: 1958:60).

Here the humiliation suffered by the mosquito becomes a recurrent decimal that lives to torment the ear that underrated and relegated her overtures for marital conjugation. This brings us to the issue of compatibility not only in marriage but also in association in real life. African political configuration leaves much to be desired even as critics persistently opine that most of the amalgamating processes done by the colonial masters were carried out without adequate consultations, hence the continuous crises arising from inconsistency in religion, cultural affiliations and attitudinal approach to issues in life. The same ear that undermined the mosquito has had to live up to the realisation that the power to determine one's destiny is not in the hands of humans, but God. That same "skeleton" becomes a metaphor for torment and crises for the "better and much superior" neighbour. Using the concept of corruption, licentiousness and moral bankruptcy to paint a picture of a society that is enamoured by man-made disaster, Achebe uses the image of the tortoise in the midst of birds to drive home his point:

Once upon a time," she began, "all the birds were invited to a feast in the sky. They were very happy and began to prepare themselves for the great day. They painted their bodies with red cam wood and drew beautiful patterns on them with uli. "Tortoise saw all these preparations and soon discovered what it all meant. Nothing that happened in the world of the animals ever escaped his notice; he was full of cunning. As soon as he heard of the great feast in the sky his throat began to itch at the very thought. There was a famine in those days and Tortoise had not eaten a good meal for two moons. His body rattled like a piece of dry stick in his empty shell. So he began to plan how he would go to the sky." 'We know you too well,' said the birds when they had heard him. 'You are full of cunning and you are ungrateful. If we allow you to come with us you will soon begin your

mischief.' "You do not know me,' said Tortoise. 'I am a changed man. I have learnt that a man who makes trouble for others is also making it for himself.' "Tortoise had a sweet tongue, and within a short time all the birds agreed that he was a changed man, and they each gave him a feather, with which he made two wings. "At last the great day came and Tortoise was the first to arrive at the meeting-place. When all the birds had gathered together, they set off in a body. Tortoise was very happy and voluble as he flew among the birds, and he was soon chosen as the man to speak for the party because he was a great orator... (TFA: 76-78).

The tortoise as portrayed in this story is supposed to be a voice and a defender of the people. But due to its covetous attitude decides to trample on the peoples' rights. The tortoise epitomises the morally decadent political players who switch allegiance and loyalty from the electorate to the bourgeoisie class as soon as they get into offices. The tortoise becomes greedy with the spoils of office and gets amnesiac to the point of forgetting its identity---not knowing it is a wingless creature living on borrowed times. The tortoise that claims to be an intermediary between the people and their guests in heaven betrays the confidence reposed in it.

The tortoise becomes well equipped to the point that it had to demonstrate a spirit of superiority over the other creatures and at the end lost its position. The metaphor here is very vivid and it really makes it clear the point Achebe is trying to explain. The point is that a person who goes from having nothing to having everything is going to be more reluctant to go back to having nothing compared to someone that has had everything the whole time, thus making him grandeur to gain power and more defensive against giving up this power. Despite the tortoise's sermon of being a changed man, that change did not reflect in his character even as it was given a chance to proof itself. But the other animals were not oblivious of the character of the tortoise as we are told: *'We know you too well,' said the birds when they had heard him. 'You are full of cunning and you are ungrateful. If we allow you to come with us you will soon begin your mischief.'* "You do not know me,' said Tortoise. 'I am a changed man. I have learnt that a man who makes trouble for others is also making it for himself.' But that innate character in the creature could not change as promised as the manifestation led to a catastrophic end for the perpetrator of deceit. At the end of the story we are told of the broken pieces of the shell that have lived to this day.

Achebe uses narrative strategies as part of his storytelling techniques to showcase the cultural conflict in Africa. Through the use of this style of composition, combined with the use of language he creates a narrative style that mirrors a folktale or parable. Because the Igbo heritage recurs prominently in the story, this traditional tone helps to reinforce the importance of culture to the protagonist. The story of his

rise and downfall as epitomised in the fable of the tortoise becomes reinforced in the character of Okonkwo. The novel is largely about the disintegration of African tribal tradition at the hands of European colonists. Achebe's narration makes a subtle commentary on this theme through blending western and non-western languages and allusions. The book intersperses the Igbo culture, language, proverbs, family histories and rituals throughout the story. By combining the two cultural heritages, Achebe demonstrates the battle between tradition and change that drives Okonkwo's story. In a tragedy, characters experience disastrous reversals of fortune brought about by their own flaws and wrongful choices. The narrative of "Things Fall Apart" makes use of this concept on two levels. Okonkwo himself is a tragic hero; although his greatest desire is to be greater than his father, his anger, bitterness and unwavering loyalty to the Igbo tribe all lead to his suicide. The story's other great tragedy, though, is the metaphorical death of the Igbo culture.

In Okonkwo's absence, the village submits to British domination, erasing their society's tradition and heritage. The following excerpt from Achebe's TFA shows the use of anecdote as a means of didacticism and emancipation, Okonkwo's best friend Obierika tells the story of a dumb stranger whom the villagers of Abame have killed and another of Okonkwo's friends Uchendu draws a deduction from the story and illustrates it with an anecdote thus:

'Never kill a man who says nothing. Those men of Abame were fools. What did they know about that man?' He ground his teeth again and told a story to illustrate his point. 'Mother Kite once that her daughter to bring food. She went, and brought back a duckling. "You have done very well", said mother Kite to her daughter "but tell me, what did the mother of this duckling say when you swooped and carried its child away"? "It said nothing" replied the young Kite. "It just walked away". "You must return the duckling" said mother Kite. "There is something amonious about the silence". And so daughter Kite returned the duckling and took a chick instead. "What did the mother of this chick do"? Asked the old Kite? "It cried and raved and cursed me" said the young Kite. "Then we can eat the chick" said her mother. "There is nothing to fear from someone who shouts". Those men of Abame were fools' (112).

Here Achebe creatively uses language surrounded by the African scenario to capture the anti-imperialist activities and the reactions that attended their activities. He advises the ex-colonialists as well as the corrupt leaders and their colonial protégés not to misconstrue the silence of Africans and the masses for cowardice.

Achebe uses extended metaphor of the kite's raid on the ducklings and chicks to

make a socio-political statement by demonstrating how the people are torn apart between accepting the new ways or falling back on their old ways and persistently fighting it out with the colonial master. The stiff resistance against the dominance of the western culture keeps Okonkwo far from his people. Having been in exile for about seven years, the protagonist of the novel begins to wonder why the natives failed to drive the whites from their land. Achebe captures this in vivid terms in a linguistic term wrapped in a concept of linguistic hybridity. He achieved this through a rhetorical device: "What is it that happened to our people? Why did they not fight back?" (TFA: 140). The rhetorical questions above are embedded in linguistic parallelism by demonstrating how Okonkwo's attitude toward the colonial master/missionaries and his lack of understanding towards his fellow tribesmen helps to energize and empower the colonial master. Achebe shows how Okonkwo becomes lonely and confused as he persists in his opposition to white dominance.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have tried to explicate the story telling technique which we label narrative strategies in Achebe's *TFA* by applying the theories of CDA and Narratology. The study reveals that the stories imbedded in *TFA* assist in retelling the Africa story from a historical cum linguistic view point through the application of the Ruth Wodak Discourse Historical Approach to the study of CDA (DHA-CDA). The study also substantiates our initial assumption that narrative processes within the African context as found in Achebe's *TFA* are considered as processes through which meanings are conveyed in a discourse. The study also investigates aspects of narrative processes through a linguistic network and contends that shades of meanings, especially from the perspectives of African narrations, are addressed and situated in *TFA*.

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