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Narrative Structures in Chinua Achebe's Novels

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Almighty God and to His human creatures.

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ABSTRACT

Structuralists consider critique a super-literature. As such it cannot work out of creative materials from which it draws the essence of its existence. At the same time, creative materials are artistic works in different genres. All of these have to do with language. The present dissertation is an example of literary theory application to fiction. It is an attempt to discuss Genette's theory as applied to Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu,* and then apply it to Achebe's novels. The essential of the dissertation is to analyse the temporal relationships between the story and the discourse that accounts for it and also the relationships between the narrator, the story and the protagonists of that story. It is through order, duration, frequency, mood and voice that the analysis will be carried out in each of Achebe's novels. I will then come up to the conclusion that the different analytical categories distinguished by Genette are identifiable in Achebe's narratives with specificities created by Achebe as to the use of narrative proverbs, and that no theory can predict the exact format of a creative work.

RESUME

Selon les structuralistes, la critique est une super-littérature. Elle ne peut donc fonctionner en dehors des œuvres de création desquelles elle tire sa raison d'être. Au même moment, les œuvres de création sont des produits artistiques quels que soient leurs genres. Toutes ces réalités sont du domaine de la langue. La présente thèse est un exemple d'application de théorie littéraire. Elle vise à rappeler, sous forme de l'état de la question, l'application qu'a faite Genette de sa théorie sur *A la recherche du temps perdu* de Proust et puis l'appliquer sur les romans de Chinua Achebe. L'essentiel de cette thèse est d'analyser les relations temporelles entre la narration et l'histoire qu'elle raconte, et aussi les relations entre le narrateur, l'histoire qu'il raconte et les protagonistes de cette histoire. Ce sera à travers l'ordre, la durée, la fréquence, le mode et la voix que l'analyse sera menée, roman par roman. Puis je parviendrai à la conclusion selon laquelle les différentes catégories analytiques proposées par Genette sont identifiables dans les récits de Chinua Achebe avec bien sûr des spécificités qui expriment la liberté de l'auteur dans ses choix organisationnels, comme l'utilisation des récits proverbiaux, et qu'aucune théorie ne peut prédire avec exactitude le format d'une œuvre de fiction.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, every society has its ways of expressing its daily life, culture and civilisation. Each people has its songs, customs and traditions. Anyway, there are difficulties in reconstituting the past realities of a people without formal materialisation of these past realities. The different contacts between Europe and Africa had set the debate.

The original relationship between Europe and Africa as a consequence of Columbus's voyage and those of European explorer-adventurers has undergone many transformations in the past centuries. The last of these was decolonisation, the formal ending of imposed European rule and the resultant transfer of power to Africans. Colonisation is the process of domination that followed the end of slavery. Slavery had helped to develop what was known as the triangular commerce. It had put Africa in the forced services of the new discovered continent via the European traders. The colonisers finally acknowledged the inevitability of that process in the years following World War II, when they began the belated work of preparing suitable Africans to assume power on the departure of their European rulers. The relevant event here in this transformation process is the coming into evidence of African literatures.

So, it is clear that, at a point of its history, Africa's mission has been to intensify its decolonisation and pursue it into liberation. And this has been done through different ways with a particular stress on its literary culture. The cultural task has been to end all foreign domination of African culture, to destroy all encrustations of colonial mentality and set foot on new foundations for a liberated African modernity. Of course, this has been a process that had taken place in all spheres of African life. But the literary aspects are almost the only concerned in this dissertation.

Literature, as one of these fields of the African modernity process has a relationship with society which has long been recognised, but it has not always been sufficiently appreciated how far a particular society influences both the themes and subject matter of its representative literary types and also profoundly affects their formal development. Instead, examining the criticism of African writing, one discovers two categories of critics: the Afro-centrists such as Cheickh Anta Diop and the Euro-centrists, Joseph Conrad being the one that Achebe evoked in his works.

Afro-centrists view African literature under African realities and the Euro-centrists view it through European eyes and ought to be Afro-centric. For the Afro-centrists, African literature is an autonomous and distinctive entity separate and apart from all other literatures. It has its own traditions, models and norms. Its constituency is separate and radically different from that of the European or other literatures. And its historical and cultural imperatives impose upon it concerns and constraints quite different, sometimes altogether antithetical to the European, though using European languages to construct their literary materials. The use of European languages depends on the user's colonial linguistic background.

Most of these Afro-centrists have been concerned with establishing a "positive" African identity. This attempt has been characterised by the use of a series of contrasts between African and Western cultures, which are, by now, very familiar to the reader of modern African fiction and non-fiction, of Western discussion of African literature itself and finally, of African commentary, both on African literature itself and on Western criticism of it.

Beyond all these considerations, where one hardly avoids taking position, are other linguistic ones which posit the problem in terms of science in which theories are elaborated and that are to be applied with the idea to verify and possibly find out their limitations and

eventually elaborate new theories. Thus, theories are supposed to follow scientific norms and not the origin of the material they are applied to. Though subjective in one way or in the other, they are universal technical devices and methods to shed light on literary works and make them, by the way, step stone for others. Jonathan Culler[1] seems to say so about narrative theory when he wrote:

> *Gerard Genette's Narrative Discourse is invaluable because it fills this need for a systematic theory of narrative. As the most thorough attempt we have to identify, name, and illustrate the basic constituents and techniques of narrative, it will prove indispensable to students of fiction, who not only will find in it terms to describe what they have perceived in novels but will also be alerted to the existence of fictional devices which they had previously failed to notice and whose implications they had never been able to consider. Every reader of Genette will find that he becomes a more acute and perceptive analyst of fiction than before.*

Theories can thus be considered as sharpening tools for learners. Theories help readers to cope with texts that writers serve them and by the way clear the way to new writers. However things are not so easy.

Of course, it is easy to see that we are living in a time of rapid and radical social change. But it is much less easy to grasp the fact that such change will inevitably affect the nature of those disciplines that both reflect our society and help to shape it. Yet this is nowhere more apparent than in literary studies. Here, for us learners of all levels, the erosion of the assumptions and presuppositions that support the literary disciplines in their conventional form has proved fundamental and seem to be helpful to clear-cut answers.

However, in the 20th century, literary criticism increased and even tended to equal the works that it analyses. Many critics, such as Roland Barthes (1977) from France and Terry Eagleton (1983) from England, are at the same time writers of fiction. This situation can be explained by the fact that the work of art has become plural and changed its status. In its evolution, critique broke out and lost its sacred character, its unity of signification. Critique,

[1] Foreword to *Narrative Discourse : An Essay in Method*, Gérard Genette, 1980, p.7.

now, needs specialists to convey form and meaning. This is what Jean Yves Tadié (1987, P.9) seems to say when he wrote:"l'interprêtation fait partie du texte" (Interpretation is part of the text, my own translation). The direct implication of Tadié's statement is that the notion of author is ignored to the advantage of the critics who are specialists that will help the reader to decode the writer's message. But all the existing critics do not work through a single and common method. Thus a confrontation of methods appears through a kind of indirect dialogue between schools.

Among some of these schools, I can cite the Russian formalist school with two publications by Victor Erlich (1955, 1965) and Jakobson (1963), the German critique with Frederic Gundolf (1881-1931), Erich Auerbach (1892-1957) and Leo Spitzer (1887-1960) the main precursors, and the School of Geneva with Marcel Raymond (1897-1984), Albert Béguin(1901-1957).... I would not like to recall here the different histories of these schools since the importance of evoking them is related to their contribution to literary criticism. However, I would like to specify that formalism is considered as presenting a reaction against subjectivism and symbolism. The latter is supposed to be opposed to the realistic criticism of the 19th century. Likewise, the Russian formalists and the German critique, concerned with form, seemed to ignore the author. Hence, in a kind of reaction to that, the school of Geneva came into being. It is characterised by a focus on the author's conscience. From this confrontation of methods rises a question: is there a single way of describing the form and meaning of a literary work? The answer would be more interesting if the job were done in African local languages. So, this means that the notion of critique is empowered by the linguistic capacity of the critic himself. There is a double situation, a risk to some extent, for an African critic: he/she and the novelist use a language different from their mother-tongue.

In fact, all the African writers took the linguistic risk through their works. I consider here the use of the foreign languages a risk because their past that they 'recreate' has nothing to do with these languages and the possible subsequent reaction to the reception of these works here and there. This past is beyond the colonial past which is less ambiguous and being at the same time the platform of the language choice in these works. They then had to join the two periods of African past to the present one full of colonial experiences and behaviour in a context of independence.

Anyway, Achebe, like other African writers, has drawn his inspiration and sustaining substance from different and various sources and has found himself "recreating the past"[2] or voicing the protest and conflict of his place and time. He feels he has a commitment with Africa to become what Ezekiel Mphalele calls in his African Image the sensitive point of his community[3].

For many writers, the theme of a novel is the driving force of the book during its creation. Even if the author does not consciously identify an intended theme, the creative process is directed by at least one controlling idea, a concept or principle or belief or purpose significant to the author. The theme (often several themes) guides the author by controlling where the story goes, what the characters do, what mood is portrayed, what style evolves, and what emotional effects the story will create in the reader. From Achebe's own statements, readers know that one of his themes, mainly in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, is the complexity of Igbo society before the arrival of the Europeans. To support this theme, he includes detailed descriptions of the justice codes and the trial process, the social and family

2 "*The role of the writer in a new nation*" by Achebe cited by G. D. Killam in *The Novels of Chinua Achebe*, HEB, 1969, p. 8.
3 "*The Novelist as Teacher*" by Achebe cited by G. D. Killam in *The Novels of Chinua Achebe*, HEB, 1969, p. 8.

rituals, the marriage customs, food production and preparation processes, the process of shared leadership for the community, religious beliefs and practices, and the opportunities for virtually every man to climb the clan's ladder of success through his own efforts. Against Achebe's theme of Igbo cultural complexity is his theme of the clash of cultures. This collision of cultures occurs at the individual and societal levels, and the cultural misunderstanding cuts both ways.

Achebe is not the only writer concerned with the conflict of cultures. Indeed, the theme of cultural conflict in postcolonial Africa has widely spread among West African writers such as Cyprian Ekwensi, Wole Soyinka, Kofi Awoonor, to name only a few from English speaking countries. However, Achebe is the first of them to have come in almost the same way in the evocation of traditional nineteenth and earlier twentieth-century village life. This evocation of traditional nineteenth and earlier twentieth-century village life is manifested, as evoked above, through two of his novels: *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* which, in my opinion, form a trilogy with *No Longer at Ease* in which the hero experiences something that I can call here the consequences of the cultural encounter. Achebe is not the only African writer who has formed a trilogy. Ngugi has formed the same kind of trilogy through *Weep Not Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965) and *A Grain of Wheat* (1967). In this trilogy in which Ngugi deals with the consequences of the white men's invasion of the Gikuyu society, *The River Between* (1965) sounds like the first part though the novel was published in the second position. The same thing goes with *Arrow of God* as the second part of Achebe's trilogy though the novel is the third by the author. Achebe added *A Man of the People* to the first three novels to complete his history.

Some critical readers of his fiction have already dealt with the themes evoked above, mainly with the cultural conflict and some similarities between the heroes. G. D. Killam wrote about *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* in the following terms:

> *Arrow Of God, Achebe's third novel, is the most ample of his books, the one in which he explores the two themes which dominate Things Fall Apart- the nature and quality of Ibo life as a consideration in their own right, and the effects of colonialism on that life-at greater breadth and depth than in the first novel. As in the first book the forces of colonialism-church, government and trade-precipitate the crisis and tragic resolution in the novel which alters the quality of tribal life and destroys the hero of the book, a man who epitomizes that life. (p. 59)*

Emmanuel Obiechina[4], dealing with the 'domestication of the novel in West Africa', put the stress on the importance of the decorative arts in the lives of female characters in the two novels:

> *Among the Igbo, for example, the bride is painted with uli and other decorative colours, has a special coiffure and sometimes has her teeth curved. In those of Achebe's novels set in Igboland, the young brides are elaborately made up, as is Obika's wife Okuata in Arrow of God …. The bride in Things Fall Apart is even more elaborately beautified. (p. 66)*

In sum, most of Achebe's critical readers put emphasis on his works in terms of imperial domination and exploitation of Africa via the Igbo that frame two of his novels and the lack of good governance that they show after the decolonisation. In the present work, I would like to move away from that understandable emphasis and draw attention to their structural organisation in a way that may lead to a fuller understanding of the novels in terms of their literariness. This requires that I pay particular attention to how Achebe balances those narratives with temporal distortions in alternative discourses that seem linear.

These aspects of comparison are, of course, narrative criteria-based in that they help qualify a work as narrative or non narrative. But they are part of a whole set in the field of narrative theory. My concern here is to try to answer the above question from a precise and

[4] *Culture, Tradition and Society in the West African Novel*, 1975.

main position: narratology. To be able to work out all the different aspects of this central question, the topic of my dissertation is expressed as follows: ***Narrative structures in Chinua Achebe's novels.***

The choice of Achebe's work for my doctoral dissertation is an attempt to deal with an artist whose work I am familiar with and which is considered as an answer to the erroneous characterisations of Africa and Africans. This is an attempt to see if the supposed reactions are technically sustainable. In fact, he studied the works of European novelists, as well as a number of "African" books such as *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. While he enjoyed these works early in high school, by the time he graduated, Achebe realized that he was forsaking his African roots by identifying with the white man, not the African, who was portrayed in such literature as a savage. Achebe was thus inspired to destroy such false pronouncements on Africa and Africans by writing his own fiction. So, for a learner who would like to dispassionate the debate, it will be necessary for him to go through his works in a technical context by using literary and linguistic tools.

I must admit here my own difficulty in isolating one theorist from the multitude of contemporary critics, such as Genette, Chatman, Rimmon-Kenan, Barthes... that I have read. Their works have become the essential of my theoretical knowledge in construction. In my mind, theories are interwoven. However, my theoretical concern will focus mainly on Genette who pushes structuralism to reach meaning beyond form (1980), with possible shifts to other theorists such as Chatman who distinguishes in the story of a narrative events and existents (1978), Fowler (1977 and 1981), Rimmon-Kenan (1983), Wellek and Warren (1962), Barthes (1977) and Forster with the famous distinction between story and plot in a narrative (1927).

Anyway, my general concern here is the application of Genette's theory to Achebe's novels. This theory, in its entirety, deals with five main categories (order, duration, frequency, mood and voice) under which he carried his application on *A la recherche du temps perdu* by Marcel Proust. Each category contains further specifications that readers cope with. The broadness of such a theory does not militate in favour of its application in that entirety. And as there is a very recent application, Amoussou (2010), that took two aspects from these five categories concerned in that theory, notably focalisation and characterisation, I carried my study on these categories without taking into account the aspect he dealt with. The different categories concerned for the development of the present dissertation must be sorted out from each of the novels concerned and give their similarities and differences and then give the reason why they are this way and not another. Moreover, the structural organisations of these novels may be of less value than when one considers them otherwise.

Above all, any hint of comparison must help to show the unity or the wholeness of the material. Beyond all, uncovering the author's literary choices through this dissertation is an attempt to answer another haunting question about the relationships between creation and theory/criticism of narratives. In short, is theory the basis of fiction? Or, is fiction the material that brings forth theory?

My objective is to present the situation about and around my topic, work out this situation on the basis of Genette's theory through Achebe's novels. This may help me to show chronological aspects of the novels and in each of them. For instance, the long flashback that characterises *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease* dominates the narration of the story,

with the effect of rendering the narrative linear. It will help to show illusion-effects produced on the reader through anachronies, summaries, pauses, scenes and other narrative techniques.

To achieve these goals, I organised the present dissertation in six chapters. Chapter one deals with critical literature review in which the stress in put on what Genette did as application of his theory on *A la recherche du temps perdu* by Marcel Proust. The second chapter is concerned with the theoretical framework and my methodological approach. Chapters three, four, five and six are concerned with the application of the narratology theory with emphasis on the analytical categories mentioned above on the five novels by Chinua Achebe.

CHAPTER ONE:CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

The classic role of literature review in a scientific research work can be helped by a conceptual clarification that helps mark the land of the work. Here, I would like to give some hints of my understanding of the terms narrative, structure and narrative structure before I can carry on with the devoted contents of the chapter.

A narrative is a story that is created in a constructive format (as a work of writing, speech, poetry, prose, pictures, song, motion pictures, video games, theatre or dance) that describes a sequence of fictional or non-fictional events. It derives from the Latin verb narrare, which means "to recount" and is related to the adjective gnarus, meaning "knowing" or "skilled".[5] (Ultimately derived from the Proto-Indo-European root gnō-, "to know")[6], but can also be used to refer to the sequence of events described in a narrative. A narrative can also be told by a character within a larger narrative. An important part of narration is the narrative mode, the set of methods used to communicate the narrative through a process called narration. Along with exposition, argumentation and description, narration, broadly defined, is one of four rhetorical modes of discourse. More narrowly defined, it is the fiction-writing mode whereby the narrator communicates directly to the reader.

For general purposes in semiotics and literary theory, a "narrative" is a story or part of a story. It may be spoken, written or imagined, and it will have one or more points of view representing some or all of the participants or observers. In stories told orally, there is a person telling the story, a narrator whom the audience can see and/or hear, and who adds layers of meaning to the text non-verbally. The narrator also has the opportunity to monitor the audience's response to the story and modify the manner of the telling to clarify content or

[5] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, "narrate, v.". Oxford University Press, 2007
[6] *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, fourth edition, 2000.

enhance listener interest. This is distinguishable from the written form in which the author must gauge the readers' likely reactions when they are decoding the text and make a final choice of words in the hope of achieving the desired response. This last aspect is what I am concerned with in the present work.

Whatever the form, the content may concern real-world people and events. This is termed "personal experience narrative". When the content is fictional, different conventions apply. The text projects a narrative voice, but the narrator belongs to an invented or imaginary world, not the real one. The narrator may be one of the characters in the story. Roland Barthes (1977) describes such characters as "paper beings", and fiction comprises their narratives of personal experience as created by the author.

In written forms, the reader hears the narrator's voice both through the choice of content and the style, and through clues that reveal the narrator's beliefs, values, and ideological stances, as well as the author's attitude towards people, events and things. It is customary to distinguish a first-person from a third-person narrative. Gerard Genette uses the terms "homodiegetic" and "heterodiegetic" narrative respectively. A homodiegetic narrator describes his personal and subjective experiences as a character in the story. Such a narrator cannot know anything more about what goes on in the minds of any of the other characters than is revealed through their actions, whereas a heterodiegetic narrator describes the experiences of the characters who appear in the story and, if the story's events are seen through the eyes of a third-person internal focaliser, this is termed a figural narrative. In some stories, the narrator may be overtly omniscient, and both employ multiple points of view and comment directly on events as they occur.

Tzvetan Todorov (1969) coined the term "narratology" for the structuralist analysis of any given narrative into its constituent parts to determine their function(s) and relationships.

For these purposes, the story is what is narrated as usually a chronological sequence of themes, motives and plot lines; hence, the plot represents the logical and causal structure of a story, explaining why its events occur. The term discourse is used to describe the stylistic choices that determine how the narrative text or performance finally appears to the audience. One of the stylistic decisions may be to present events in non-chronological order, using flashbacks, for example, to reveal motivations at a dramatic moment. Dealing with such aspects of narrative through a real fiction work is called structural analysis.

The notion of literary structure has a double origin. In social sciences the concept structure opposes the concept genesis. In the early twentieth century, the study of social phenomena as functional units was valued. These units are meaningful according to their relative position, as the set of units is meaningful according to the relationships among these units. Structure is then the connections of the relationships between those functional and dynamic units.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1983) wrote that language is a system whose units are solidly connected and the meaning of one unit is related to its connection with others. The concept of literary structure then originates from linguistics as the basis of the modern structural thought. Two principles which govern today the literary analysis have been drawn from Ferdinand de Saussure's thought. Any artistic work is, like 'parole', the manifestation of rules present in a higher system, 'langue', and reference to that system defines its meaning. The second principle is the conviction that those rules are double, the artistic conventions superpose the linguistic rules, and with the literary work functioning not only as any other linguistic act, but it is itself a specific linguistic act. It is from these principles that structuralism consider criticism as literature of literature. This short conceptual guidance may help determine the frame of the present study. I can now turn to the literature review.

My objective in the present chapter is to present the state of the question, that is, to present critically some of the existing applications on some novels. Within the framework of this dissertation I put a stress on Gerard Genette's application of his own theory on Marcel Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (1954). Genette is developing his theory by at the same time applying it to Proust's book. This necessitates that I quote practical examples as mentioned by Genette and keep my own examples from Achebe's novels for the application chapters. This has the interest of not applying the theory on two authors. I would like to refer the examples to Genette's book as he has quoted them. This will avoid an implicit pretention of having read the 1140 pages of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, according to the Pléiade edition (1954). A very recent example of application will be evoked in the critical appreciation part of the chapter to show possible new aspects of structuralism in literary criticism. All this will lead to a partial conclusion that may help to justify my present application to Achebe's novels.

1.1 Order

Narrative is temporally double sequenced. There is the time of the thing told and the time of the narrative. Genette spoke of the time of the signified and the time of the signifier. The implication of this temporal duality not only offers a multitude of temporal distortions, but also 'invites us to consider that one of the functions of narrative is to invent one time scheme in terms of another time scheme.'[7]

This temporal duality is a typical characteristic not only of cinematic narrative but also of oral narrative, at all its levels of aesthetic elaboration, including epic or dramatic narration. The status of written literary narrative context is difficult to establish. Back tracking is

[7] Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, cited by Genette (1980), P. 33

possible for a film, but one cannot read, as Genette (1980) put it, 'letter by letter, or even word by word, or even sentence by sentence, without its ceasing to be a text' (P.34). A possible consumption need may lead to the actualisation of the narrative, and this is nothing but the reading time.

The temporality of written narrative is to some extent conditional or instrumental, produced in time, like everything else, 'written narrative exists in space and as space, and the time needed for "consuming" it is the time needed for crossing or traversing it, like a road or a field.' And for Genette to conclude: 'The narrative text, like every other text, has no other temporality than what it borrows, metonymically, from its own reading' (p.34). Dealing with the relations between the time of the story and the time of the narrative, Genette felt the need of moving from 'anachrony' to 'achrony'.

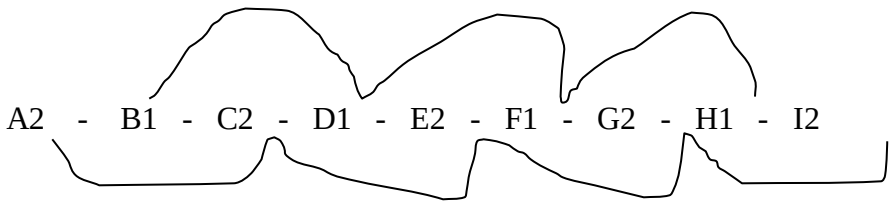
1.1.1 Anachronies

According to Genette (1980) 'to study the temporal order of a narrative is to compare the order in which events or temporal sections are arranged in the narrative discourse with the order of succession these same events or temporal segments have in the story, to the extent that story order is explicitly indicated by the narrative itself or inferable from one or another indirect clue' (p. 35). An example has been drawn from *Jean Santeuil.*

The situation in *Jean Santeuil* is one that will appear in various forms in the *Recherche*: the future has become present but does not resemble the idea of it that one had in the past. Jean, after several years, again finds the hotel where Marie Kossichef, whom he once loved, lives, and compares the impressions he has today with those that he once thought he would be experiencing today:

> *Sometimes passing in front of the hotel he remembered the rainy days when he used to bring his nursemaid that far, on a pilgrimage. But he remembered them without the melancholy that he then thought he would surely some day savor on feeling that he no longer loved her. For his melancholy, projected in anticipation prior to the indifference that lay ahead, came from his love. And this love existed no more*[8]

The temporal analysis of such a text consists first in giving numbers to the sections according to their change of position in story time. Genette discovered nine sections divided between two temporal positions that he designated by 2 for "now" and 1 for "once", setting aside their iterative nature carried by the adverb "sometimes" in 'sometimes passing in front of the hotel he remembered'. Numbering these sections A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I and combining them with their respective temporal position, one gets A in position 2 (Sometimes passing in the front of the hotel he remembered), B in position 1 (the rainy days when he used to bring his nursemaid that far, on a pilgrimage), C in position 2 (But he remembered them without), D in 1 (the melancholy that he then thought, E in 2 (he would surely some day savor on feeling that he no longer loved her), F in 1 (for this melancholy, projected in anticipation), G in 2 (prior to the indifference that lay ahead), H in 1(came from his love), I in 2 (And this love existed no more). The passage gives the following picture:



This sequence is a perfect zigzag that accounts for the difficulty of this text. Genette argued that Proust, in a systematic way, eliminates the most elementary temporal indicators (once, now), so that the reader must supply them by himself/herself in order to know where he/she is. But a simple picking out of the positions does not exhaust temporal analysis which

[8] Literal translation by Jane Lewin, the translator of Narrative Discourse, P. 38.

should help to determine the status of the anachronies. Only, at this stage, the definition of the relationships connects sections to each other.

Genette considered *Sodome and Gomorrhe* by Proust, a much more complex text illustrates a temporal omnipresence characteristic of Proustian narrative. The event is a soirée given by the Prince de Guermantes. Swann has just told Marcel of the Prince's conversion to Dreyfusism which, with a naive partiality, he sees as proof of intelligence. Here is how Proust's narrative makes connections:

> *Swann now found equally intelligent anybody who was of his opinion, his old friend the Prince de Guermantes and my schoolfellow Bloch, whom previously he had avoided and whom he now invited to Luncheon. Swan interested Bloch greatly by telling him that the Prince de Guermantes was a Dreyfusard.*
> *"We must ask him to sign our appeal for Picquart; a name like his would have a tremendous effect". But Swann, blending with his ardent conviction as an Israelite the diplomatic moderation of a man of the world, whose habits he has too thoroughly acquired to be able to shed them at his late hour, refused to allow Bloch to send the Prince a circular to sign, even on his own initiative. "He cannot do such a thing, we must not expect the impossible," Swann repeated. "There you have a charming man who has travelled thousands of miles to come over to our side. He can be very useful to us. Ife he were to sign your list, he would simply be compromising himself with his own people, would be made to suffer on our account, must even repent of his confidences and not confide in us again." Nor was this all, Swann refused his own signature. He felt that his name was too Hebraic not to create a bad effect. Besides, even if he approved of all the attempts to secure a fresh trial, he did not wish to be mixed up in any way in the antimilitarist campaign. He wore, a thing he had never done previously, the decoration he had won as a young militiaman, in 70, and added a codicil to his will asking that, contrary to his previous dispositions, he might be buried with the military honours due to his rank as Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. A request which assembled round the church of Combray a whole squadron of those troopers over whose fate Françoise used to weep in days gone by, when she envisaged the prospect of a war. In short, Swann refused to sign Bloch's circular, the result that, if he passed in the eyes of many people as a fanatical Dreyfusard, my friend found him lukewarm, infected with Nationalism, and a militarist.*
> *Swann left me without shaking hands so as not to be forced into a general leave-taking.*[9]

This passage contains fifteen narrative sections, distributed among nine temporal positions. These positions are the following, in chronological order: (1) the war of 1870; (2)

[9] Jane Lewin's translation, PP. 41-42

Marcel's childhood in Combray; (3) a time before the Guermantes soirée; (4) the Guermantes soirée, in 1898; (5) the invitation to Bloch, later than this soirée from which Bloch is absent; (6) the Swann-Bloch luncheon; (7) the addition of the codicil; (8) Swann's funeral; (9) the war whose prospect Françoise envisaged and which occupies no definite position, since it is purely hypothetical. The *Recherche du Temps Perdu* is launched with a vast movement of coming-and-going from one key, strategically dominant position, obviously the position about the "Insomnias" and its variant the "Madeleine" with the idea being that after the Madeleine, the "total" Combray will be integrated into the insomniac's memories, positions of the "intermediary subject". Genette identifies two types of anachronies.

1.1.1.1 Analepses

Every anachrony constitutes, with respect to the narrative into which it is inserted, onto which it is grafted, a narrative that is temporally second, subordinate to the first in a sort of narrative syntax as shown above. An anachrony can embed another anachrony. Therefore the first anachony can play the role of first narrative for the second anachrony. Any anachrony that reaches into the past, either more or less far from the "present" moment, that is, from the moment in the story when the narrative was interrupted to make room for the anchrony, is called analepsis, and its temporal distance is known as the anachrony's "reach". The anachrony itself can also cover a duration of story that is more or less long. Genette calls this the anachrony's "extent."

Genette further distinguished external and internal analepses. For him, an external analepsis is an analepsis whose entire extent remains external to the extent of the first narrative. As for the internal analepsis, it is the one whose extent is part of the extent of the first narrative. Genette gave examples through different authors. The narrative of Ulysses'

wound with an episode that is quite obviously earlier than the temporal point of departure of the "first narrative" of *The Odissey* to include the retrospective tale Ulysses tells the Phaeacians, which goes back as far as the fall of Troy. This analepsis is an example of external analepsis. As for the internal analepsis, the example is given through the sixth chapter of *Madame Bovary*, dealing with Emma's years in the convent, years which are obviously later than Charles's entrance at school, which is the novel's starting point.

This distinction between internal and external analepses is useful in that these analepses function for purposes of narrative analysis. External analepses that Genette calls "heterodiegetic", by the very fact that they are external, never at any moment risk interfering with the first narrative, for their only function is to fill out the first narrative by enlightening the reader on one or another "antecedent." An example is with *Un amour de Swann* in the *Recherche du temps perdu*. These functions of analepses are the most traditional, and obviously the temporal coinciding here does not entail real narrative interference. Genette commented it as:

> *So, it is, for instance, when, at the Prince de Faffenheim's entrance into the Villeparisis drawing room, a retrospective digression of several pages informs us [Genette] of the reasons for this appearance , that is, the vicissitudes of the Prince's candidacy for the academy of Moral Sciences; or when, reencountering Gilberte Swann who has become Mlle . de Forcheville, Marcel has the reasons for this change in name explained to him. Swann's marriage, the marriages of Saint-Loup and "the Cambremer boy," the death of Bergotte thus overtake the main line of the story - which is Marcel's autobiography – after the event, without in any way disturbing the prerogative of the first narrative (p.50).*

Very differently is the situation of internal analepses that Genette calls homodiegetic. They deal with the same line as the first narrative. Here the risk of interference is obvious. Genette distinguished two categories of internal homodiegetic analepses. The first that he

called completing analepses, or "returns", comprises the retrospective sections that fill in, after the event, an earlier gap in the narrative. The narrative is thus organised by temporary omissions and more or less belated reparations, according to a narrative logic that is partially independent of the passing of time. These omissions, Genette wrote, "can be ellipses pure and simple, that is, breaks in the temporal continuity" (p. 50).

Examples go as: Marcel's stay in Paris in 1914 is recounted on the occasion of another Parisian stay, this one in 1916, partially filling in the ellipsis of several "long years" the hero spends in a clinic, the meeting in Uncle Adolphe's apartment with the Lady in pink opens, in the middle of the combray narrative, a door onto the Parisian side of Marcel's childhood, a side totally concealed, except for this, until the third part of Swann. It is obviously in temporal gaps of this kind that Genette, in his comments, hypothetically placed certain events in Marcel's life shown only by brief retrospective allusions: 'a trip to Germany with his grandmother earlier than the first trip to Balbec, a stay in the Alps earlier than the episode of Doncières, a trip to Holland earlier than the Guermantes dinner, or again, appreciably more difficult to locate, given the length of military service during that period, the years in the military parenthetically evoked during the final stroll with Charlus.

But there is another type of gap, of a less strictly temporal kind, created not by the elision of a diachronic section but by the omission of one of the constituent elements of a situation in a period that the narrative does generally cover. An example: the fact of recounting his childhood while systematically concealing the existence of one of the members of his family. Here the narrative does not skip over a moment of time, as in an ellipsis, but it sidesteps a given element. Genette called this a "paralipsis" (p.52). Further example is given

with Swann's death's effect on Marcel which is not recounted in its place, but rather with the narrative of the Charlus-Verdurin concert.

The second type of internal homodiegetic analopses that Genette called " repeating analepses" or "recalls" is concerned with redundancy, for in these analepses the narrative openly retraces its own path, with the narrative's allusions to its own past. Their importance lies in narrative economy. Their narrative scope is limited. An example is given with the three reminiscences owed to involuntary memory during the Guermantes matinee, all of which refer to an earlier time in the narrative: the stay in Venice, the train's stop in front of a row of trees, the first morning by the sea at Balbec.

1.1.1.2 Prolepses

Prolepses are anachronies which anticipate a future event. Genette called them anticipation or temporal prolepses. They are much less frequent. They are frequent at least in first-person narrative, by the very fact of its avowedly retrospective character, which authorises the narrator to allude to the future and in particular to his present situation, for these to some extent form part of his role. Here again, Genette distinguished internal and external prolepses. The limit of the temporal field of the first narrative is clearly marked by the last nonproleptic scene. An example, in the *Recherche du temps perdu*, is the Guermantes matinee episode, if the anachrony which begins on the Champs-Elysées and never ends is drawn from the first narrative. A certain number of episodes in the *Recherche du temps perdu* take place at a point later in the story than this matinee, most of which are told in digressions during this same scene. They constitute example of external prolepses. They function, according to Genette, most often as epilogues that help to continue one or another line of

action on to its logical conclusion, even if that conclusion takes place later than that day on which Marcel the hero decides to leave the world and withdraw into his work. Some of these epilogues are Charlus's death, the marriage of Mlle. De Saint-Loup and the final appearance of Odette (p.69).

Internal prolepses present the same kind of problem that analepses of the same type do. It is the problem of interference between the first narrative and the narrative taken on by the proleptic section. Genette also distinguished "completing prolepses" and "repeating prolepses." Examples of completing prolepses are the quick evocation, in Combray, of Marcel's future years in school; the last scene between his father and Legrandin; the anticipatory descriptions of the changing scene of the sea at Balbec; the advance notice, in the middle of the first dinner at the Guermantes (p.71).

Repeating prolepses, like the analepses of the same type scarcely occur. When they come to occur, they do it in form of brief allusions. They refer in advance to an event that will be told in full in its place. An example is the episode of the sacrilege at Montjouvain: 'We shall see, in due course, that for quite another reason, the memory of this impression was to play an important part in my life' (P.73). This example is a case of allusion to the jealousy that the revelation of relations between Albertine and Mlle. Vinteuil will provoke in Marcel. The role these advance notices play in the organisation and what Barthes (1975) calls the "weaving" of the narrative is fairly obvious, through the expectation that they create in the reader's mind, an expectation that can be fulfilled immediately, in the case of those advance notices with a very short reach or a nearby resolution, most of the time, at the end of a chapter

in announcement of the coming one. An example is given in the opening sentence of the last scene of the *Temps retrouvé*:

> *But it is sometimes just at the moment when we think that everything is lost that the intimation arrives which may save us; one knocks at all the doors which lead nowhere, and then one stumbles without knowing it on the only door through which one can enter – which one might have sought in vain for a hundred years – and it opens of its own accord.*[10]

But most often the advance notice has a considerably longer reach. Genette says that he knows that Proust prized the cohesiveness and the architecture of the *Recherche*, and that Proust suffered at seeing so many effects of distant symmetry and "telescopic" correspondences misunderstood. The separated publication of the various volumes could not but aggravate the misunderstanding, and it is certain that long-distance advance notices, as for the scene at Montjouvain, were supposed to serve to reduce misunderstanding by giving a provisional justification to episodes whose presence could otherwise seem adventitious and gratuitous.

There must not be confusion between these advance notices. Genette says that they are by definition explicit, with what he calls mere advance mentions, simple markers without anticipation, even an allusive anticipation, which will acquire their significance only later on and which belong to the classic art of preparation. Examples are the first mention of Charlus and Gilberte at Tansonville, of Odette as the lady in pink, or the first mention of Mme. De Villeparisis on 'the fifteen page of the *Swann*', or again, more obviously functional, the description of the bank at Montjouvain, "on a level with [the] drawing-room, upstairs, and only a few feet away from its window," which prepares for Marcel's situation during the profanation scene; or, more ironically, 'the idea Marcel rejects of mentioning before M. De Crécy what he believes to be Odette's former "code name", which prepares for the subsequent

[10] As cited by Genette (1980), p. 75.

revelation (by Charlus) of the authenticity of this name and of the real relationship between the two characters' (pp.75-76).

The difference between advance notice and advance mention is clearly discernible in the way in which Proust prepares, in several stages, for Albertine's entrance. The first reference, in the course of a conversation at the Swanns': Albertine is named as niece of the Bontemps, and deemed "the quaintest spectacle" by Gilberte – simple advance mention. The second reference – another advance mention – by Mme. Bontemps herself, who describes her niece as having "impudence", as being a "little wretch,... as cunning as a monkey": she has publicly reminded a minister's wife that the latter's father was a scullion. This description will be explicitly recalled very much later, after Albertine's death, and held up as the "insignificant seed [which] would develop and would one day overshadow the whole of my life" The third notice goes as:

> *There was a scene at home because I did not accompany my father to an official dinner at which the Bontemps were to be present with their niece Albertine, a young girl still hardly more than a child. So it is that the different periods of our life overlap one another. We scornfully decline, because of one whom we love and who will some day be of so little account, to see another who is of no account today, with whom we shall be in love tomorrow, with whom we might, perhaps, had we consented to see her now, have fallen in love a little earlier and who would thus have put a term to our present sufferings, bringing others, it is true, in their place.*[11]

Unlike the advance notice, the advance mention is thus in general, at its place in the text. But Genette draws our attention on 'the possible or rather the variable narrative competence of the reader, arising from practice, which enables him both to decipher more and more quickly the narrative code in general or the code appropriate to particular genre or a particular work' (p.77).

[11] As cited by Genette, P.76

The importance of "anachronic" narrative in the *Recherche du temps perdu* is obviously connected to the retrospectively synthetic character of Proustian narrative, which is totally present in the narrator's mind at every moment. Gerard Genette argues that the temporal management of the *Rcherche,* though dealt with consciousness, still leaves the "simple" reader and even analyst sometimes with no way out. He then tried to deal with the ambiguous structures through the term "achrony".

1.1.2 Achrony

Achronies are simply defined as a complex anachrony containing at the same time analepses and prolepses. It is a kind of mixture of anachronies. Genette distinguishes "proleptic analepses" and "analeptic prolepses". Proleptic analepses are anachronies that are narrated with more stress on the analepsis, whereas the analeptic prolepses are just the contrary. An analeptic prolepsis is a prolepsis in the narration of which an analepsis is evoked. These proleptic analepses and analeptic prolepses are so complex that they somehow disturb the reader in his effort of decoding ideas about retrospection and anticipation. Genette argues that this complexity has taken in the *Recherche* in the two characters born by fission from the original hero. An example is the return to swann's marriage, in the *Jeunes Filles*. This return includes a retrospective evocation of the plans of worldly ambition for his daughter and his future wife:

> *But when Swann in his daydreams saw Odette as already his wife he invariably formed a picture of the moment in which he would take her – her, and above all her daughter – to call upon the Princesse des Laumes (who was shortly... to become Duchesse de Guermantes). ... His heart would soften as he invented – uttering their actual words to himself – all the things that the Duchesse would say of him to Odette, and Odette to the Duchesse. ... He enacted to himself the scene of this introduction with the same precision in each of its imaginary details that people shew when they consider how they would spend, supposing they were to win it, a lottery prize the amount of which they have arbitrarily determined (Genette, 1980, pp.79-80)*

This "waking dream" is proleptic insofar as Swann has entertained it before his marriage, analeptic insofar as Marcel recalls it after that marriage, and the two movements come together to cancel each other out, in this way perfectly superimposing the fantasy on its cruel refutation by the facts, since here is Swann married for several years to an Odette still unwelcome in the Guermantes salon. It is true that he married Odette when he no longer loved her, and that "the creature that, in him, had so longed to live, had so despaired of living all its life in company with Odette, ... that creature was extinct." So here now face to face in ironic contradiction are the earlier resolutions and the present realities: resolution to elucidate some day the mysterious relations between Odette and Forcheville, replaced by a total lack of curiosity:

> *Formerly, while his sufferings where still keen, he had vowed that, as soon as he should have ceased to love Odette, and so to be afraid either of vexing her or of making her believed that he loved her more than he did, he would afford himself the satisfaction of elucidating with her, simply from his love of truth and as a historical point, whether or not she had had Forcheville in her room that day when he had rung her bell and rapped on her window without being let in, and she had written to Forcheville that it was an uncle of hers who had called. But this so interesting problem, of which he was waiting to attempt the solution only until his jealousy should have subsided, had precisely lost all interest in Swann's eyes when he had ceased to be jealous. (Genette, 1980, p.80)*

This is a resolution to express someday the indifference that lay ahead, replaced by the circumspection of real indifference:

> *But whereas at that other time he had made a vow that if ever he ceased to love her whom he did not then imagine to be his future wife, he would implacably exhibit to her an indifference that would at length be sincere, so as to avenge his pride that had so long been trampled upon by her – of those reprisals which he might now enforce without risk..., of those reprisals he took no more thought; with his love had vanished the desire to shew that he was in love no longer. (Genette, 1980, pp.80-81)*

The contrast through the past between anticipated present and real present, in Marcel is that when he is finally "cured" of his passion for Gilberte: "I had no desire now to see her, not even that desire to shew her that I did not wish to see her which, every when, I was in love with her, I vowed to myself that I would flaunt before her, when I should be in love with her no longer" (Genette, 1980, p. 81). The use of "now" expresses the real present; "I would flaunt before her" and "I should be in love with her no longer" express anticipated future; and the other particles deal with analepses. This combination is an example of analeptic prolepsis. As for the proleptic analepsis, there is the example of the telling of a scene between M. and Mme. Verdurin. The narrator specifies that information about the scene will be reported to him by Cottard "a few years later."

Another effect of double structure, according to Genette, is that a first anachrony may invert the relationship between a second anachrony and the order of arrangement of the events in the text. For him, the analeptic status of *Un amour de Swann* has the effect that an anticipation, in the time of the story, is able to refer to an event already covered by the narrative. For example, when the narrator compares the vesper anguish of Swann deprived of Odette to the anguish he himself will suffer "some years later" on the nights when this same Swann will come to dine at Combray, there is a diegetic advance notice which is at the same time a narrative recall for the reader, since he has already read the narrative of that scene, as Genette mentions it, about two hundred pages "earlier". Inversely, the reference to Swann's earlier anguish, in the narrative of Combray, is the reader an advance notice of the forthcoming narrative of *Un amour de Swann* (Genette, 1980, pp. 82-83).

This recalling of these many examples by Genette from his application of the notion of order is nothing but the starting point of his long process of presenting his reading of *A la*

recherche du temps perdu by Proust. This single aspect, though important in the understanding of the chronological organisation of the material, still needs the help of other aspects among which is the notion of duration.

1.2 Duration

The notion of duration in the study of a narrative structure has to do with the narrative speed. Some reading effects may be obtained by varying the narrative speed. Genette uses theatrical performances as his basis, in which the event-story ideally has the same duration as the staged narration. However, in literary texts, the narrator can speed or slow down the narration with respect to the events being told. It is possible for authors to summarise someone's entire life in a single sentence, or they can take a thousand pages to recount events occurring over a 24 hour period.

Genette (1980, p. 94) distinguishes four narrative movements: summary, pause, scene and ellipsis. A pause is a kind of interruption of the story. The event-story is interrupted to make room exclusively for narratorial discourse. Static description falls into this category. Here, the story time is zero. A scene is an opportunity offered to the reader to have access to the words supposed uttered by characters. The protagonists appear on the scene simultaneously with the narration. Thus the narrative time corresponds to the story's time. Dialogue is a good example of this. Summary is just the opposite of scene in that in contains only a brief report by the narrator of event without allowing the reader to have access to the words uttered during the performing of actions. Some part of the event-story is summarised in the narrative, creating acceleration. Summaries can be of variable length. Here, the story time is longer than the narrative time. Finally, an ellipsis has to do with the abstraction made by the narrator about some parts of the story. The narrative says absolutely nothing about

some part of the event-story. The reader is left in a guessing situation. Here, the narrative time is zero, and then inferior to the story time.

For some examples of application of these narrative movements, Genette has clearly mentioned the "absence of summary, absence of descriptive pause – on the roster of Proustian narrative ..." (Genette, 1980, P.106). Only ellipsis and scene exist in *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Before coming to example given by Genette, I would like to mention that he made further distinctions about ellipsis. He distinguished four types of ellipsis: definite and indefinite ellipses, and explicit and implicit ellipses.

Genette calls definite ellipsis an ellipsis whose duration is indicated. An example comes with the narration between the end of *Gilberte* and the beginning of *Balbec*: "I had arrived at a state almost of complete indifference to Gilberte when, two years later, I went with my grandmother to Balbec" (Genette, 1980, P.106). An indefinite ellipsis is just the opposite of a definite one, no time mentioned. Two stays of Marcel the narrator in a clinic are evoked. The first lasts "long years" and the second "many years". I notice that mention of time here is different from arithmetical time precision or definition. So, these stays are examples of indefinite ellipses (Genette, 1980, p 106).

Further distinction of ellipsis is the one between implicit and explicit ellipses. Explicit ellipses, according to Genette, are ellipses textually mentioned with or without time definition. In this case the above mentioned examples are explicit ellipses. As for implicit ellipses, they are those whose presence is not textually announced but rather left to guessing. The reader, in his/her inference, as Genette mentioned, should use some "chronological

lacuna or gaps in narrative continuity" (Genette, 1980, p. 108). This is the case of the indefinite time elapsing between the end of *the Jeunes Filles en fleurs* and the beguining of *Guermantes*. Marcel's return to Paris is known, with a description of his "own room" whose ceiling is low. Then his presence is signalled in a new apartment attached to the Guermantes townhouse. This presence there presumes the elision of at least a few days.

To signal the quasi permanent presence of scenes in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, Genette mentioned:

> *If we consider the fact that ellipses, whatever their number and power of elision may be, represent a practically nonexistent portion of text, we must surely come to the conclusion that the whole of Proust's narrative text can be defined as scene, taking that term in the temporal sense in which we are defining it here and setting aside ... the iterative nature of some of scenes (Genette, 1980, p. 108).*

I would like now to come with examples about frequency according to Genette's application of it to the same book.

1.3 Frequency

About this notion, Genette carried a development that led to some details among which I can mention only the most mentioned in *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Genette defines frequency as the relations of repetition between the narrative and the diegesis, that is, between the organisation of the product that we read and the story with which it is concerned. Then he identified singulative, repeating and iterative narrations. Singulative narration is narrating once what happened once, or narrating n times what happened n times. Repeating narrative is recounting more than once what happened once. Iterative narrative is relating once what happened several times. Through these definitions, it is clear that repeating and iterative are opposite. The examples of the repeating anachronies dealt with in the section about order are relevant here.

In some cases, there can be the presence of iterative passages within singulative scenes. In such cases, the temporal field covered by the iterative section obviously extends beyond the temporal field of the scene the iterative section is inserted into. An example is given with the scene at the beginning of the dinner at the Duchess's. The parenthesis devoted to the wit of the Guermantes is a case of iteration that Genette calls external iteration because of the external extension of the temporal field. For Genette, another type of iteration is the one that does not extend the temporal field but rather covers the period of time of the scene itself. The following example is drawn from the last part of the book. It is from the final scene of the *Temps retrouvé*, which is treated almost continuously in the iterative mode:

> *In some of the guests I recognized after a while [...]. And yet, in complete contrast with these. I had the surprise of talking to men and women who had [...] Some men walked with a limp [...] Certain faces [...] seemed to muttering a last prayer [...] the white hair of these women [...] profoundly disquieted me [...] Some of the old men [...] There were men in the room whom I knew to be related [...] the [women] who were either too beautiful or too ugly. Others too, both men and women [...] Even in the case of the men [...] More than one of the men and women [...] Sometimes [...] But with other people [...] (Genette, 1980, p. 119).*

The notion of iteration is to some extent confusedly used by Proust so that Genette said that "these confusions [...] reflect in Proust a sort of intoxication with the iterative" (Genette, 1980, p. 123).

Genette carries other specifications in his theory about frequency. He named them determination, specification and extension. For Genette, 'every iterative narrative is a synthetic narrating of the events that occur and reoccur in the course of an iterative series that is composed of a certain number of singular units'. Genette calls determination the diachronic limits of a unit. That unit is composed of its constituent units which have a rhythm of recurrence. It is this rhythm of recurrence that Genette calls specification. As for extension, it is the diachronic extent of each of the constituent units, and consequently of the constituted synthetic unit.

Determination can be implicit and then indefinite. It becomes definite with the evocation of absolute date. Proust writes: "After a certain years we never saw [Mlle. Vinteuil] alone" (Genette, 1980, p. 128). The phrase "After a certain years" does not give precision in terms of the diachronic limits. The determination here is indefinite. In the contrary, the use of the word "spring" in "When spring drew round, [...] I used often to see [Mme. Swann] entertaining her guests in her furs" renders the determination definite.

Specification can also be definite or indefinite. When a specification is indicated by an adverb of the type of sometimes, often, certain days ... the specification is called indefinite. With particle such as every day, every week ... Genette calls all these specifications "simple specifications" and distinguishes others that are complex:

> *There also exist complex specifications, where two (or several) laws of recurrence are superimposed, which is always possible when iterative units can be embedded in each other: for example, the simple specification every month of May and the simple specification every Saturday, ... combine in the complex specification every Saturday in the month of May. And we know that all the iterative specifications of Combray (every day, every Saturday, every Sunday, every day of good or bad weather) are themselves governed by the overarching specification every year between Easter and October – and also by the determination during my years of childhood (Genette, 1980, p. 129)*

All these temporal structures give the text its "skeleton and its foundation". All thing that is necessary in an analysis "to illuminate the conditions of existence – of production – of the text ... by revealing the hidden complexities that are the secret of the simplicity". It is in this way that the reader may understand Proust in his iterative descriptions as the one at the sea at Balbec and particularly the one in the *Jeunes filles en fleurs*:

> *Regularly, as the season advanced, the picture that I found there in my window changed. At first it was broad daylight...*
> *Presently the days grew shorter ... A few weeks later, when I went upstairs, the sun had already set. Like the one that I used to see at Combray, behind the Calvary, when I was coming home from a walk and looking forward to going down to the kitchen before dinner, a band of red sky over the sea [....]*

That is a case of what Genette calls "variations by determination" followed some lines after with "variations by specification":

> *I was on all sides surrounded by pictures of the sea.*
> *But as often as not they were, indeed, only pictures. [...] At one time it was an exhibition of Japanese colour-prints. [...] I had more pleasure on evenings when a ship [...] Sometimes the ocean [...] Another day the sea [...] And sometimes [...]*

All those three global aspects (order, duration and frequency) dealt with by Genette about both his theory and its application on Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, with all the possible "interpolations, distortions, condensations" are concerned with time. All the lights shed by them should be completed by other aspects that have to do with the organisation of individuals altogether with their psychology as it is designed by the writer. I would like to carry on with mood aspect.

1.4 Mood

The notion of mood apparently is relevant to narrative discourse, since the function of narrative is to tell a story and reports fictive or real facts. And, as such, in telling story, the indicative mood seems to be the only one that strictly has to do with telling story. However, Genette, stretching the linguistic metaphor in his use of the word 'mood' justified the connection between mood and discourse via the grammatical meaning of mood. He wrote:

> *Without denying the metaphoric extension (and therefore the distortion), we can meet the objection by saying that there are not only differences between affirming, commanding, wishing, etc... but there are also differences between degrees of affirmation; and that these differences are ordinarily expressed by modal variations, be they infinitive and subjunctive of indirect discourse in Latin, or, in French, the conditional that indicates information not confirmed. This obviously is the function the Littré dictionary is referring to when it defines the grammatical meaning of mood: "name given to the different forms of the verb that are used to affirm more or less the thing in question, and to express... the different point of view from which the life or the action is looked at," and this definition on good authority is very valuable to us here. Indeed, one can tell more or tell less what one tells, and can tell it according to one point of view or another; and this capacity, and the modalities of its use, are precisely what our category of narrative mood aims at... (Genette, 1980, pp. 161-162)*

In sum, Genette came to the conclusion that the chief modalities of the regulation of narrative information are 'distance' and 'perspective'.

The notion of distance is related to the choice of the narrator in terms of whether he "himself is the speaker and does not even attempt to suggest to us that anyone but himself is speaking... or whether, on the other hand he delivers a speech as if he were someone else. In sum, the narrator, through some specific procedures may seem to be whether close to the story he tells or distant from it. According to Genette, "The narrator is present as a source, guarantor, and organizer of the narrative, as analyst and commentator, as stylist... and particularly... as a producer of metaphors." It is the handling of these metaphors that helps to show difference between authors. An illustration is the scene of the bedtime in Combray:

> *Many years passed since that night. The wall of the staircase, up which I had watched the light of his candle gradually climb, was long ago demolished. And in myself, too, many things have perished which, I imagined, would last for ever, and new structures have arisen, giving birth to new sorrows and new joys which in those days I could not have foreseen, just as now the old are difficult of comprehension. It is a long time, since, too, my father has been able to tell Mamma to "go with the child." Never again will such hours be possible for me. But of late I have been increasingly able to catch, if I listen attentively, the sounds of the sobs which I had the strength to control in my father's presence, and which broke out only when I found myself alone with Mamma. Actually, their echo has never ceased: it is only because life is now growing more and more quiet round about me that I hear them afresh, like those convent bells which are so effectively drowned during the day by the noises of the streets that one should suppose them to have been stopped for ever, until they sound out again through the silent evening air....*
> *[...] an immense figure in his white nightshirt, crowned with the pink and violet scarf of Idian cashmere in which...he used to tie up his head, candle in hand, with his fantastic reflection on the wall of the staircase, and the child's sobs, so long suppressed, bursting out when he is alone once more with his mother. [...] (Genette, 1980, pp. 70, 167)*

In this illustration, the narrator tells the story in a way that effaces him before it. This forces the idea of reading about the reminiscences of the story. Taking into account the role of the narrator, source of the story, the reader finds himself/herself between mimesis and

diegesis: mimesis related here to the remoteness of the story the narrator tells and diegesis through the fact that it is still a story. Genette came to the conclusion that:

> *The Recherche du temps perdu, a narration doubly, sometimes triply, retrospective, does not… avoid that distance; very much to the contrary, it maintains and cultivates it. But the marvel of Proustian narrative … is that this temporal distance between the story and the narrating instance involves no modal distance between the story and the narrative: no loss, no weakening of the mimetic illusion. Extreme mediation, and at the same time utmost immediacy. That too is perhaps symbolized by the rapture of reminiscence. (pp. 168-169)*

This way of telling the story is summed up in terms of 'narrative of words' in which imitation becomes obvious. An illustration is on the last page of Sodome et Gomorrhe when Marcel declares to his mother, "It is absolutely necessary that I marry Albertine". There seems to be no difference between the statement in the text and the utterance by Marcel other than what derives from the transcription of oral language to written language. As it is a convention, the novelistic manipulation puts together thoughts feelings and speech. In his role, the narrator condenses them into events to be narrated according to the degree of distance that fits the narrative. Genette distinguished three main ways of expressing narrative distance: narratized speech, transposed speech with two aspects (indirect style and free indirect style) and the reported speech. An example of narratized speech is given in *Un amour de Swann*, in a passage where Marcel first describes in his own terms the feelings of Swann admitted to Odette's and confronting the agonies customary to him in his present situation: 'And then...all the terrible and disturbing ideas which he had formed of Odette melted away and vanished in charming creature who stood there before his eyes'. Here, the narrator comes with the following thoughts by the character in indirect style:

> *[...] that this hour spent in Odette's house, in the lamp was, perhaps, after all, not an artificial hour...; that, he himself had not been there, she would have pulled forward the same armchair for Forcheville ...; that the world inhabited by Odette was that other world, fearful and supernatural, in which he spent his*

> *time in placing her-and which existed, perhaps, only in his imagination, but the real universe [...] (Genette, 1980, p. 175)*

Then, he lends his voice, in free indirect style to Swann's own inner speech:

> *Ah! had fate but allowed him to share a single dwelling with Odette, so that in her house he should be in his own; if, when asking his servant what there would e for luncheon, it had been Odette's bill of fare that he had learned from the reply; if, when Odette wished to go for a walk, in the morning, along the Avenue du Bois-de-Boulogne, his duty as a good husband had obliged him, though he had no desire to go out, to accompany her [...] ; then how completely would all the trivial details of Swann's life, which seemed to him now so gloomy, simply because they would, at the same time, have formed part of the life of Odette, have taken on [...] a sort of superabundant sweetness and a mysterious solidity [...]*

Then, just after this, the narration returns to indirect style: 'And yet he was inclined to suspect that the state for which he so much longed was a calm, a peace, which would not have created an atmosphere favourable to his love ... He told himself that, when he was cured of it, what Odette might or might not do would be indifferent to him... (Genette,1980, p. 176). In concomitance with the notion of mood is the voice as a narrative instance dealt with by Genette in his theory.

1.5 Voice

The possible and foreseeable unfolding of stories that narrators tell and the reactions of listeners or here readers occur at two levels one of which has to do with the drama's excitement point that Genette calls voice. The notion of voice has to do mainly and firstly with the person who carries out or submits to the action and the person who reports it. All the participants to the narrating activity, then, can be considered whatever their partition is in the narrating activity.

However, in the realisation of these aspects, some difficulties rise, having to do with the 'subjectivity in language', from a linguistic perspective and as Benveniste (1966) called it. That subjectivity occurs in passing from analysis of statements to analysis of relations between these statements and their generating instance that Genette calls 'enunciating', and that he calls narrating in the context of narrative discourse. To solve the difficulty related to whether that instance is autonomous or not, critics restrict questions of narrating enunciating to questions of 'point of view', and on the other hand they identify the narrating instance to with the instance of 'writing', what Genette characterised as confusion that one can accept only at historical or autobiographical levels.

For Genette, dealing with a narrative of fiction, such confusion cannot rise since the role of the narrator is itself fictive, even if assumed directly by the author, and where the supposed narrating situation can be very different from the act of writing which refers to it. Genette then brought his solution according to which some elements of definition must be attached to the categories of time of narrating, narrative level, and person. To put it in a nutshell, in the analysis, focus must be on the relations between the narrator, the narratee and the story he tells.

1.5.1 Time of narrating

The category of time of narrating signals the necessity or the impossibility of not locating the story the narrator tells in time with respect to his narrating act, since he must necessarily tell the story in a given tense. Genette distinguishes four types of narrating: subsequent narrating, prior narrating, simultaneous narrating and interpolated narrating.

Proust's narrative is dominated by subsequent narrating that is manifested through a mixture of presents as Genette mentioned it:

> *The present of Proustian narrating- from 1909 to 1922- corresponds to many "presents" of writing, and we know that almost a third of the book- including, as it happens, the final pages- was written by 1913. The fictive moment of narrating has thus in fact shifted in the course of the real writing; today it is no longer what it was in 1913, at the moment when Proust thought his work concluded for the Grasset edition. Therefore, the temporal intervals he had in mind- and wanted to signify- when he wrote, for example apropos of the bedtime scene, "Many years have passed since that night," or apropos of the resurrection of Combray by the Madeleine, "I can measure the resistance, I can hear the Echo of great spaces traversed"... (Genette, 1980, p. 224)*

Between this single narrating instant and the different moments of the story, the interval is necessarily variable. If "many years" have elapsed since the bedtime scene in Combray, it is only "of late" that the narrator has again begun to hear his childhood sobs, and the interval separating the narrating instant from the Guermantes matinée is obviously smaller than the interval separating narrating instant and Marcel's first arrival in Balbec. The narrative discourse enjoys a texture that the uniform use of past tense does not allow to shrink gradually. However, Proust succeeded in making, with the help of modifications in the temporal pacing of the narrative through gradual disappearance of the iterative, lengthening of the singulative scenes, etc, the narrative felt shrunk. All this tends to show the story time dilating and making itself more and more conspicuous, while drawing near its end.

1.5.2 Narrative levels

The notion of narrative level is not easy to seize. According to Genette, it is a definition of difference in level of events that can help to understand that notion: 'any event a narrative recounts is at a diegetic level immediately higher than the level at which the narrating act producing this narrative is placed. This means that the first level at which a narrating act is carried out is extradiegetic in Genette's word and that any other narrating act

contained inside the first narrative is intradiegetic. The events told in the intradiegetic constitute a narrative of second degree. Genette calls this metadiegetic. In sum, these terminologies are related to narrative functions. Some examples are mixed in the *A la Recherche du temps perdu*, related to its complex nature. Swann's love for Odette is an example metadiegetic narrative. In fact, this love has no direct impact on Marcel's fate, however, it gets influence on the knowledge Marcel has of that love, so considerable that the narrator, Marcel himself, testifies in the following passage from *Sodome et Gomorrhe*:

> *I thought then of all that I had been told about Swann's love for Odette, of the way in which Swann had been tricked all his life. Indeed, when I come to think of it, the hypothesis that made me gradually build up the whole of Albertine's character and give a painful interpretation to very moment of a life that I could not control in its entirety, was the memory, the rooted idea of Mme Swann's character, as it had been described to me. These accounts helped my imagination, in after years, to take the line of supposing that Albertine might, instead of being a good girl, have had the same immorality, the same faculty of deception as a reformed prostitute, and I thought of all the sufferings that would in that case have been in store for me had I ever really been her lov. (Genette, 1980, p. 243).*

It is because of the narrative of Swann in love that marcel will one day be able actually to imagine an Albertine like Odette, unfaithful, given to vice, unattainable, and consequently to fall in love with her. 'These accounts helped' [Marcel's] imagination' [...] The functional variability of Marcel as the narrator or as a character in the narrative is another level where analysis raises polemic around the terminology of narrator that Genette puts in the category of "person".

The notion of person in such a context is not new. But Genette seems to be at variance with the traditional terminologies about the reality of the story teller:

> *[...] We have used the terms "first-person – or third-person – narrative" only when paired with quotation marks of protest. Indeed, these common locutions seem to me inadequate, in that they stress variation in the element of the narrative situation that is in fact invariant – to wit, the presence (explicit or implicit) of the person of the narrator. This presence is invariant because the narrator can be in his narrative (like every subject of enunciating in his enunciated statement) only in the "first*

> *person"...The novelist's choice, unlike the narrator's, is not between two grammatical forms, but between two narrative postures ...: to have the story told by one of its "characters", or to have it told by a narrator outside of the story... (Genette, 1980, pp. 243-244)*

Genette then thinks more suitable to call 'heterodiegetic', a narrator who is outside the story he tells and 'homodiegetic', the one that is character in the story he tells. Genette thinks that the narrator's relationship to the story is in principle invariable. So the apparent variability is an attempt to bring the reader to be unfailingly taking the transition from one status to the other. It is the set of the main functions of the narrator identified by Genette can also help in the analysis of the narrative beyond the focalization category which I would not like to deal with in my dissertation.

The flexibility in which Genette dealt with his theory on *A la recherche du temps perdu* implicitly shows the degree of caution that such a work demands when one knows that the author, his period and his book concerned in Genette's criticism constitute a complex phenomenon. This complexity renders Genette's work invaluable in understanding not only Proust's book, but also Genette's concern with some general considerations about narrative theory independent of the *Recherche*:

> *[...] Readers may already have observed that neither the title nor the subtitle of this book mentions what I have just designated as its specific subject. The reason is neither coyness nor deliberate inflation of the subject. The fact is that quite often, and in a way that may exasperate some readers, Proustian narrative will seem neglected in favor of more general considerations; or, as they say nowadays, criticism will seem pushed aside by "literary theory", and more precisely by the theory of narrative or narratology... (Genette, 1980, p. 22*)

As such, this deliberate choice opens the window of applicability of Genette's theory to contemporary books. This openness brought me to choose a contemporary writer whose books, though evoking in part a relatively remote period, almost common to Proust, deal with realities about a society that had been treated with contempt. It is quite normal to apply the

same literary devices to the newer materials and see their (the devices) force and limitations through time and space.

Nevertheless, I will signal here a newer application of almost Genette's theory by Amoussou (2011) who stressed two aspects of the structuralist's theory in his dissertation entitled: *Characterisation, Focalisation and Discourse in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Novels: A Functional Structuralist Approach*. Amoussou has the merit of showing the psychological part of the structuralist theory about narrative structure. He dealt with Ngugi's various modes of characterisation and focalisation in his novels, with a sense of arithmetic enumeration that brought the researcher to conclude that Ngugi's "use of characterisation really hits home, that it is a highly realistic one as such a reaction is nothing but a validation of the saying: 'who the cap fits, let them wear it'" (Amoussou, 2011, p. 146).

Moreover, Amoussou (2011) pushed his application to a point that he considers *A Grain of Wheat* as a religious novel. He wrote at the end of his forth chapter:

> *At the end of this chapter is [sic] could be contented that AGOW [A Grain of Wheat] is a highly religious novel; its Christianity derives not only from the major characters' identification with Bible characters but also from their uses of Biblical idioms. This trend has been noticed in the early two novels analysed but it has gained more spread here (Amoussou, 2011, p. 285)*

Globally stating things, Amoussou's work helps to shed light on narrative analysis notably on characterisation and focalisation which are aspects related to the psychological organisation of narrative. His work says nothing about the temporal organisation into which the psychological is inserted. He is not to be blamed for that since structuralism is a broad area of investigation. It is rather a scientific spirit that demands space for further investigation.

That is the reason why my theoretical framework focuses on the temporal dimensions of Genette's theory.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The analysis of narrative discourse is essentially a study of the relationships between narrative and story, between narrative and narrating and between story and narrating. Todorov (1966) was the first to deal with narratology with a demarcation in which any structural study may see it. This demarcation concerns three categories into which the narrative study can be put. There is, first, the category of "tense in which the relationship between the time of the story and the time of the discourse is expressed". Then, the way in which the story is perceived by the narrator" is called aspect. Finally, the category of mood is "the type of discourse used by the narrator". Genette adopted his own demarcation which I need to recall here and that constitutes my theoretical framework in the course of the present doctoral dissertation (Genette, 1980, P. 29). I will then end the chapter with the approach through which the study is carried out.

2.1 Genette and the temporal distortions in a narrative

Since any narrative is a linguistic production undertaken to tell of one or several events, it is not easy, in a study of narrative, to deal with an aspect without falling into others. However, for research ground delimitation sake, I would like to deal with temporal distortions and some aspects of the psychological considerations from Genette's theory. Focalisation and characterisation are not to be taken into account in my analysis. However, the work being structural, I may in times slip into them.

Genette emphasises a temporal duality in the organisation of a narrative be it oral or cinematic. He identifies, in his study of relations between the time of the story and the time of

the narrative, three essential determinations. First of all, there are connections between the temporal order of succession of the events in the story and the pseudo-temporal order of their arrangement in the narrative which is concerned with in section 2.1.1. There are other connections between the variable duration of the events evoked and the pseudo-duration of their telling in the narrative which is the subject of section 2.1.2. Connections of frequency as relations between the repetitive capacities of the story and those of the narrative are the concern of section 2.1.3. As for section 2.1.4, it deals with the notion of mood, and finally, section 2.1.5 is concerned with Genette's theory of voice.

2.1.1 Genette's theory of order

Genette started with a definition that marks the land for a temporal study of narrative. He writes:

> *To study the temporal order of a narrative is to compare the order in which events or temporal sections are arranged in the narrative discourse with the order of succession these same events or temporal segments have in the story, to the extent that story order is explicitly indicated by the narrative itself or inferable from one or another indirect clue (1980, p. 35)*

In the temporal organisation of a narrative, authors use temporal indications such as "Three months earlier ..." to show the temporal movement of the narrative and the position of the event in the story. Through the meaning of such temporal expressions, the reader must guess whether a scene comes after in the narrative, consequently before in the story, or something else. This movement is what Genette calls anachronies. In their measuring, the reader should find out a kind of zero degree that would be, as Genette said, the point of temporal correspondence between narrative and story.

The practical study of anachronies goes first into the identification of analepses and prolepses, and then the measuring of their reach and extent. An anachrony can reach into the past or the future. An anachrony that reaches into the past is called analepsis. The one that reaches into the future is known as prolepsis. Anachronies come with interruption of the narrative. The moment in the story when the narrative is interrupted to give way to the anachrony to the moment when the anachrony leaves room to the narrative covers a given distance. This distance is what Genette calls the "anachrony's reach". In the same context, the anachrony itself covers a duration of story. That duration is known as the anachrony's extent. So, in a temporal study, one should be able not only to find out anachronies but also to determine their reach and extent. Every anachrony constitutes a narrative that is temporally second to the narrative into which it is inserted.

Dealing with analepses, Genette distinguishes two types of analepses. An external analepsis is an analepsis whose entire extent remains external to the extent of the first narrative, as Genette wrote: "analepses dealing with a story line ... different from the content of the first narrative." Such analepses deal with characters recently introduced on whom the reader needs antecedents. This type is also called heterodiegetic. As for internal analepses, they deal with the same line of action as the first narrative. This type of analepsis carries a risk of interference that the reader should try to avoid.

Genette further distinguishes completing analepses and repeating analepses. In the course of a narrative, some gaps can be left and be caught up later. An analepsis concerned with the filling in of earlier gap is what Genette calls completing analepsis. In an analysis, two different realities may be concerned with temporal omission. A gap can be created by a pure ellipsis in terms of breaks in temporal continuity. Another type of gap is the one that is

created by the omission of a constituent element of a situation concerned in a period that the narrative covers. These are the contexts in which completing analepses or "returns"occur.

As for the repeating analepses which Genette calls homodiegetic analepses or simply "recalls" are concerned with the past of the narrative itself. Their importance is in the narrative economy. They allow a recall in a short textual dimension a kind of reminiscence in the narrative. In sum, it is the determination of reach that governs the difference between external and internal analepses. The key notice in that determination is first and foremost the determination of the temporal field of the first narrative.

Distinctions are still made in the depth of the notion of analepsis in relation to the temporal field of the first narrative. It is possible for an analepsis to intervene in the course of the first narrative and to end on an ellipsis without joining the first narrative. This type of analepsis is called partial analepsis. It falls in the category of external analepses. A complete internal analepsis is the one in which extent and reach have the same duration. This happens when the analepsis rejoins the first narrative at the point when the first is interrupted to give up its place to the second narrative. The general effect of these temporal distortions is that "sometimes the resumption is so elliptical that on a first reading one experiences some difficulty discovering just where the temporal leap takes place". This leads to a play between the time of the story and the time of the narrating. These analeptic distortions have their counterpart in prolepses. Altogether they produce almost the same effect as I will show it in the application part of this dissertation. If the notion of order may hide the idea of time, there is no doubt with the temporal content of the notion of duration.

2.1.2 Genette's theory of duration

The notion of duration in structural analysis is not easy to be seized. Genette argued that the difficulty related to the notion of duration because the data concerning duration are not transposable without problem "from temporal plane of the story to the spatial plane of the text", as is the case for order and frequency. This means that "no one can measure the duration of a narrative". It is then the reading time which is considered with the notice that it "varies according to particular circumstances, and that, unlike what happens in movies, or even in music, nothing here allows us to determine a "normal" speed of execution". Genette, after a long acrobatic demonstration of the difficulties related to the notion of duration came to identify four narrative movements through which the notion of duration can be studied in a narrative:

> *[...] These four basic forms of narrative movement, that we will hereafter call the four narrative movements, are the two extremes that I have just mentioned (ellipsis and descriptive pause) and two intermediaries: scene, most often in dialogue, which... realizes conventionally the equality of time between narrative and story; and what English-language critics call summary... (Genette, 1980, p. 94)*

For each narrative movement, a comparison is set between narrative time (NT) and story time (ST). In a pause, the event-story is interrupted to make room exclusively for narratorial discourse. Static description falls into this category, narrative time is infinitely superior to story time. In a scene, the protagonists appear on the scene simultaneously with the narration, there is equality between NT and ST. In a summary, some part of the event-story is summarised in the narrative, creating acceleration. Summaries can be of variable length with narrative time inferior to story time. And finally, in an ellipsis, the narrative says absolutely nothing about some part of the event-story. Narrative time is infinitely inferior to story time. In fact, in a pause, the story time is zero, since the narration keeps on a description

that does not show any move of the story. The opposite is noticed with an ellipsis in which the narrative time is zero.

These four kinds of narrative speed can be used to varying degree. They can also be combined: a dialogue scene can contain a summary within it, for example. Variations in speed within a narrative can show the relative importance assigned to different events in the story. If an author passes quickly over a particular fact, lingers over it, or omits it entirely, there is certainly reason to ask why he made these textual choices. The last but not the least concept related to narrative time is frequency of events.

2.1.3 Genette's theory of frequency

Frequency is the relation of repetition between the narrative and the story it tells. It is the relation between the number of times an event occurs in the story and the number of times it is mentioned in the narrative. Genette identified four types of relations of frequency. Genette considers this relation as systemic:

> *A system of relationships is established between these capacities for 'repetition' on the part of both the narrated events (of the story) and the narrative statements (of the text) - a system of relationships that we can a priori reduce to four virtual types, simply from the multiplication of the two possibilities given on both sides: the event repeated or not, the statement repeated or not. (1980, p. 114)*

Two types of this relation are connected to form what Genette calls "singulative narrative". In this type, what happened once is narrated once or narrating n times what happened n times. The third type is about narrating n times what happened once. This type of repetition intervenes with variations in point of view as examples will be given in *Things Fall Apart* and in *No Longer at Ease* with respectively Okonkwo's mission to Mbaino and the Ikemefuna episode that follows it, and Obi's community scholarship that allows him to study

abroad. As for the fourth type of relation between narration and story, what happens n times is narrated once.

In some further detail of the iterative narrative, Genette identified three distinguishing characteristics of the iterative narrative in terms of singular units' organisation: determination, specification and extension. Determination is the diachronic limits of an event. These limits can be left implicit and indefinite. Specification is the rhythm of recurrence of the constituent units of that event. And extension is the expression of the diachronic extent of each of the constituent units of the event. The combination of these characteristics is a means of diversification in the narration. The notion of mood then intervenes in combination with voice to deal with the personal and then psychological concerns of the narrative.

2.1.4 Genette's theory of Mood

The question of mood is closely related to verb usage. According to Genette, the grammatical category of mood is a priori irrelevant in narrative issues. He wrote:

> *Since the function of narrative is not to give an order, express a wish, state a condition, etc., but simply to tell a story and therefore to "report" facts (real or fictive), its one mood, or at least its characteristic mood, strictly speaking can be only the indicative-and at that point we have said everything there is to say on this subject, unless we stretch the linguistic metaphor a little more than is fitting.*
> *Without denying the metaphoric extension (and therefore the distortion), we can meet the objection by saying that there are not only differences between affirming, commanding, wishing, etc., but there are also differences between degrees of affirmation; and that these differences are ordinarily expressed by modal variations, be they the infinitive and subjunctive of indirect discourse in Latin, or, in French, the conditional that indicates information not confirmed. This obviously is the function the Littré dictionary is referring to when it defines the grammatical meaning of mood: "name given to the different forms of the verb that are used to affirm more or less the thing in question, and to express... the different points of view from which the life or the action is looked*

> *at," and this definition on good authority is very valuable to us here. (1980, p.161)*

Genette is right when he takes that definition as such. Indeed, one can tell more or less what one tells, and can tell it according to one point of view or another; and this capacity, and the modalities of its use, are precisely what Genette's category of narrative mood aims at.

When a text is written, technical choice must be made in view of producing a particular result in the story's verbal representation. In this way, the narrative employs distancing and other effects to create a particular narrative mood that governs "the regulation of narrative information" provided by the reader (1980, p.41). According to Genette, all narrative is necessarily "diegesis", that is, telling, in that it can attain no more than an illusion of "mimesis", that is, showing by making the story real and alive. Thus, every narrative implies a narrator.

For Genette, then, a narrative cannot in fact imitate reality, no matter how realistic it is intended to be a fictional act of language arising from a narrative instance. "Narrative does not represent a real or fictive story, it recounts it, that is, it signifies it by means of language.... There is no place for imitation in narrative" (1988, p.43). Thus, in place of the two main traditional narrative moods, diegesis and mimesis, Genette contends that there are simply varying degrees of diegesis, with the narrator either involved or less involved in the narration and leaving less room or more room for the narrative act. Anyway, Genette insists that in no case is the narrator completely absent.

Any study of narrative mood requires that the readers assess the distance between the narrator and the story. Distance helps learners to determine the degree of precision in a

narrative and the accuracy of the information conveyed. Whether the text is a narrative of events, telling what the character is doing, or a narrative of words, telling what the character is saying or thinking, there are four types of discourse, each demonstrating progressively greater distance taken by the narrator with respect to the text (1980):

Narratized speech: Here, the character's words and actions are integrated into the narration and are treated like any other event. This can be considered as minus distant.

Transposed speech, indirect speech: The character's words or actions are reported by the narrator who presents them with his interpretation. This is considered as minus plus distant.

Transposed speech, free indirect speech: The character's words or actions are reported by the narrator, but without using a subordinating conjunction (that). This is taken as plus minus distant.

Reported speech: The character's words are cited directly by the narrator; this verbatim citation renders it plus distant.

The diegetic narrative mood, then, is expressed to varying degrees, depending on the degree to which the narrator is effaced from or represented in his narrative. This distancing between the narration and the story helps the reader to evaluate the narrative information being presented, "as the view I have of a picture depends for precision on the distance separating me from it..." In the mood category is the interesting aspect that Genette calls focalization which is not part of my contention here in this dissertation.

2.1.5 Genette's theory of voice

Genette organises this notion about narrative instance around three main questions: Who is speaking? When does the telling occur? Through whom do we perceive? The

narrative instance is said to be the conjunction between the realities underlying the answers of these questions that Genette poses. The first question (who is speaking?) is related to the narrative voice; the second (when does the telling occur?) is related to the story. It has to do with the time of narration. The third question (through whom do we perceive?) concerns the narrative perspective. The narrative mood, as it has already been said, helps gain understanding in the connections achieved in the narrative. As with it, by examining the narrative instance, the reader can gain a better understanding of the relations between the narrator and the story in a given narrative. I would like to turn to each of them so as to show the lecture that I have of their content in Genette's theory.

Even though the reader cannot actually see or hear the narrator, the text contains a number of elements that project the narrator's voice. Clearly, it is not very hard to read out a passage and give it an appropriate intonation. A reader can hear a textual voice with his "mind's ear", just as he will be able to see the story's action with his "mind's eye". We will say that all novels project a narrative voice, some more distinct, some less, some to a greater, some to a lesser degree. Because a text can project a narrative voice, one can also refer to the text as a narrative discourse.

Thus, the organisation of a narrative is around the narrator. If the narrator lets signs of his presence appear in the narrative, he is recounting, he may acquire a particular status, depending on the way the story is rendered. "We will therefore distinguish two types of narrative: one with the narrator absent from the story he tells [...], the other with the narrator present as a character in the story he tells [...]. I call the first type, for obvious reason heterodiegetic, and the second type homodiegetic" (1980, pp. 244-245). According to Genette, the "homodiegetic narrator can be the hero of the story. If he is the hero, he is called

"autogiegetic". Using the notion of narrative distance as a starting point, Genette presents the functions of the narrator as such.

2.1.5.1 The functions of the narrator

Transposing the functions of the narrator on the basis of the different types of speech or, using Genette's words, the notion of distance, one may expect to distinguish, at most, four functions. But Genette distinguished five functions that also reveal the degree to which the narrator intervenes in his narrative, based on the desired degree of detachment or involvement.

The narrative function: The evidence of that function plays against it; that is why I was saying that one might expect four functions of the narrator. This function is fundamental. Any time we have a narrative, this role is assumed by the narrator, whether present in the text or not. The fact that we are in the domain of language plays in favour of this assumption, the notion of author being avoided.

The directing function: A narrator performs a directing function when he interprets the story to comment the organisation or articulation of his text. This is a sign of involvement.

The communicative function: The narrator, in this case, addresses directly the narratee, the potential reader of the text, in order to establish or maintain contact with him. It is also a case of involvement.

The testimonial function (function of attestation): The narrator affirms the truth of his story, the degree of precision in his narration, his certainty regarding the events, his sources of information and the like. This function also comes into play when the narrator expresses his emotions about the story, that is, the affective relation that he has with it. It is also a case of involvement.

The ideological function: Here, the narrator brings the reader to a kind of instructional lieu. The narrator interrupts his story to introduce instructive comments or general wisdom concerning his narrative (involvement).

In application, one may have to do with several of these functions in combination in a material. Genette warned:

> *These five functions are certainly not to be put into watertight compartments; none of the categories is completely an unadulterated and free of complicity with others, none except the first is completely indispensable, and at the same time none, however carefully an author tries, can be completely avoided. It is rather a question of emphasis and relative weight: everyone knows that Balzac "intervenes" in his narrative more than Flaubert, that Fielding addresses the reader more often than Mme de la Fayette does, that the "directing indications" are more indiscreet in James Fenimore Cooper or Thomas Mann than in Hemingway, etc., but we will not claim to derive some cumbersome typology from that (1980, p. 257).*

This should be a source of interpretation in terms of the variation of the effects produced on the reader and also the relations between the narrator and the characters, all things that hence put forth the connections that make the story progress.

2.1.5.2 Time of the narrating

In a narrative, the narrator is always in a specific temporal position related to the story he is telling. Genette describes four kinds of narration:

Subsequent narration: This is the most common temporal position. The narrator tells what happened. The narrator tells events happened before the narration in some past time.

Prior narration: The narrator tells what is going to happen at some future time. This kind of narration often takes the form of a dream or prophecy.

Simultaneous narration: The narrator tells his story at the very moment it occurs. When we consider the subsequent narration as means of telling what happened in some past

time, we realise that it can be carried out through a whole narrative. But it will be uneasy to have simultaneous narration for an entire narrative. Hence, that kind of narration comes in combination with the others to form an interpolation.

Interpolated narration: This type is a complex one. It combines prior and simultaneous narrations. This type intervenes in narrative where the narrator combines fact narration with comment of them, that is, the narrator tells what he/she experienced during the day and also includes his current impressions about these events.

A distinction should be made between narrative voice and narrative perspective. The latter is the point of view adopted by the narrator. Genette, in his theory calls it "focalisation". Genette operated a lexical choice to render a traditional consideration. "So by focalisation, I certainly mean a restriction of "field"-actually, that is, a selection of narrative information with respect to what was traditionally called omniscience" (1988, P.74). These considerations are matters of perception: the one who perceives is not necessarily the one who tells and vice-versa. I am not going to deal with these aspects in my application.

By examining the characteristics of a narrative instance and the particulars of the narrative mood, Genette clarified the mechanisms used in the narrative act, and identified exactly what methodological choices the author made in order to render his story. The use of different narratological processes creates different effects on the reader; For example, one could have a hero-narrator that Genette calls autodiegetic narrator, who uses simultaneous narration and internal focalisation and whose speech is often in reported form. This would undoubtedly produce a strong illusion of realism and credibility. The change in level adds effects on readers.

2.1.5.3 Narrative levels

Various reading effects result from shifts in narrative levels traditionally known as embedding. Within the plot, the author can insert other short embedded narratives, told by other narrators from other narrative perspectives. This is a rather common technique that adds diversity to the narrative act and increases the complexity of the narrative.

Narration of the main narrative occurs at the "extradiegetic level". The event-story being narrated on this first level fills a second level position, known as "intradiegetic". If a character found in the story takes the floor and tells some other narrative, his narrative act will also be in the same intradiegetic level. However, the events being told through the second-level narration are "metadiegetic". Embedded narratives form a "gygogne" structure with the main narrative. I would like to create an example to better summarise the narrative levels as considered by Gerard Genette:

Example: Today I saw a young man come up with a group of young boys at discussion. After a few minutes, he spoke: 'Listen, young boys, I'm going to tell you an amazing story of courage that happened a hundred years ago. This is the story of Bio Guerra the warrior...'

Summary of the narrative levels identified by Genette

Objects	**Levels**	**Narrative content**
Main plot	Extradiegetic, homodiegetic narration	"I"
Event-story	Intradiegetic	Story about the young man and the young boys
Second level narrative act	Intradiegetic	The man speaks
Embedded narrative	Metadiegetic	Story of Bio Guerra

Such a mixture in narration is deliberately made for artistic reason and the reader is the one who pays for it in terms of illusion. Genette calls it metalepsis.

Metalepsis is a process in which the boundary between two narrative levels is breached so as to deliberately blur the line between reality and fiction. The story of Bio Guerra is a reality. But inserted in a fiction, the reality pays a price. Metalepsis is a way of playing with the variation in narrative level in order to create an effect of displacement or illusion. This would be a case in which a character or narrator from one level appears on the scene at a higher level, whereas plausibility completely excludes this possibility. And for Genette to conclude:

> *All these games, by the intensity of their effects, demonstrate the importance of the boundaries they [the authors] tax their ingenuity to overstep, in defiance of verisimilitude-a boundary that is precisely the narrating (or the performance) itself: a shifting but saved frontier between two worlds, the world in which one tells, the world of which one tells (1980, p 236)*

Coming back to the previous example, if the homodiegetic narrator from the main story line intervenes in the metadiegetic story of Bio Guerra, this would be a case of metalepsis. Bio Guerra is a nineteenth century hero-warrior who fought the white man in the Baruwu State, in the north of Dahomey, present Republic of Benin. He was beheaded in 1916 in the area of present district of Bembereke. So, it would be impossible for a contemporary narrator to appear on the scene camping out in Benin in this embedded story. Thus, the metalepsis is not to be currently found in narratives. This is nevertheless a source of interest for theory application. In structural investigations, effects result as much from level shifting as from narrative time.

The analysis of all these aspects of the narrative structures is done through a discourse approach.

2.2 Methodological approach of the study

As my subject in this dissertation is narrative or narrative text, my approach cannot but be a discourse analysis. The narrative discourse is the one directly concerned with textual analysis which is the instrument of close examination in the field of literary narrative with emphasis on fictional narrative. The particularity of this approach is that the analysis is carried out through the text and only through it. As such, the study consists in uncovering the temporal connections between the events and inside events. This will lead me to find out the different articulations that govern the chronological order of each of the stories concerned in the novels at study.

Each of the novels concerned is specific in some aspect. This specificity is decomposable to some analysable features. Subtly, each analysable feature lends itself to some connection with others, putting itself into perspective and ready to comparison. The method, concluded Genette, 'is to go not from the general to the particular, but indeed from the particular to the general... But... for methodological giddiness... the real relationship between "theoretical" dryness and critical meticulousness is one of refreshing rotation and mutual entertainment' (Genette, 1980, P. 23). Genette means that the critic can stand upon a single aspect and pretends to analyse the narrative which is an act of concatenation, a combination of related events realised in some circumstances that serve people to fall into specific environments. It is obvious that the rotation Genette evokes is between elements of the story concerned in the narrative. And the critical meticulousness has to do with the relationship between the author's way of presenting things and the critic's reception of that. So, concretely stating things, my analysis will take into account the events, through them characters, and the changes or transformations in the universe of these characters. The analysis cannot stop on phenomenological aspects only, that is why Genette speaks of

'entertainment'. It must gradually move to abstract levels of inquiry that help to conceptualise characters from the choice of temporal distortions in the narrating. It is these temporal manoeuvrings that govern the following application.

CHAPTER THREE: ORDER, DURATION, FREQUENCY, MOOD AND VOICE IN *THINGS FALL APART* AND *ARROW OF GOD*

3.1- Order, Duration, Frequency, Mood and Voice in *Things Fall Apart*

This first section of the chapter comes with the analytical categories which constitute the essential of the application of Genette's theory to Achebe's first novel. Their analysis will be synthesised through a partial conclusion.

3.1.1- Order

The study of order demands that the reader first determines where the main story begins and ends in order to identify the possible anachronies. In the present case, the main story of the novel is organised in a series of analepses with some hints of prolepses that are hardly perceptible. The evocation of the honour brought by Okonkwo to his village, the mentioning of his father's failure and shameful death, the Ikemefuna episode, his banishment to Mbanta, and so on and so forth, are some analepses. No room is left to prolepses in the novel. However, parts in the narration can be considered as prolepses. In the evocation of Unoka's situation of 'loafer', details are given about Okoye's will to take back his money from Unoka. In the narration of this event, a projection is made by the debtor: "I shall pay you, but not today". And he adds how to proceed: "Our elders say that the sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel down under them. I shall pay my big debts first"(*Things Fall Apart*, p. 6). The same type of prolepsis is shown when Okonkwo goes to borrow 'yam seeds' from Nwakibie who promises to double the loan on behalf of the

trust that Okonkwo deserves: "If you give me some yam seeds I shall not fail you" (p. 16). All those prolepses resemble the following one by Jean de La Fontaine (1668):

Notre laitière ainsi troussée
Comptait déjà dans sa pensée
Tout le prix de son lait, en employait l'argent,
Achetait un cent d'oeufs, faisait triple couvée ;
La chose allait à bien par son soin diligent.
Il m'est, disait-elle, facile,
D'élever des poulets autour de ma maison :
Le Renard sera bien habile,
S'il ne m'en laisse assez pour avoir un cochon.
Le porc à s'engraisser coûtera peu de son ;
Il était quand je l'eus de grosseur raisonnable :
J'aurai le revendant de l'argent bel et bon.
Et qui m'empêchera de mettre en notre étable,
Vu le prix dont il est, une vache et son veau,
Que je verrai sauter au milieu du troupeau ?[12]

It is clear that in that fable, there will not be any of what the dairy woman is dreaming about on her way to the market since the milk that is supposed to provide the money necessary for the project 'spilled'. In a similar way, the narration makes no mention of

[12] Jean de La Fontaine, La Laitière et le Pot au Lait, Les Fables, 1668, translated by N. Spencer and cited by Lucie Guillemette and Cynthia Levesque (2006) as follows :

Our dairy woman, thus turned out,
Was already thinking hard about
The profit from her milk and how she'd use the money:
Buy a hundred eggs, triple the laying, just no doubt.
With her diligent care, prospects were most sunny.
"It's easy for me," said she,
"To raise chickens 'round my house, I find.
Clever indeed the fox will be
If I'm not left enough to buy the best pig of its kind.
To fatten the hog won't take much bran to my mind:
It'll already be, when I get it, of more than decent size.
When I sell it again, with cash my purse will be lined.
And what's to stop my putting in our stable, a prize
In view of the current cost, a cow, along with her calf?
I can see it frisking in the herd; it makes me laugh!"
(The Dairy Woman and the Crock of Milk)

Unoka's paying back and even Okonkwo's since one only reads just after about Unoka's death and the worst agricultural year:

> *The year that Okonkwo took eight hundred seed-yams from Nwakibie was the worst year in the living memory. Nothing happened at its proper time; it was either too early or too late. It seemed as if the world had gone mad. The first rains were late, and, when they came, lasted only a brief moment. The blazing sun returned, more fierce than it had ever been known, and scorched all the green that had appeared with the rains. The earth burned like hot coals and roasted all the yams that had been sown. [...] (pp. 16-17)*

Of course, Okonkwo still has four hundred yam seeds, but the nature of the drought cannot bring the reader to expect any pay back of yams. In such contexts, the reach and the extent of these prolepses are not clear cut. If Okoye now knows that he will be paid after the big creditors, nothing says when they will all be paid back. In conclusion, the reach and extent are undetermined in the narrative. Anyway, the narrator uses these strategies to which I'll come back just to leave a room to the reader to complete the story. The reader of the above fable may also complete it though the objective of Jean de La Fontaine is to set the problem rather than to settle it.

In sum, *Things Fall Apart* is linearly organised. From the outset the reader discovers Okonkwo as a young man getting into full manhood with already a title of hero through admiration and respect that he wins from his prowess against Amalinze 'the Cat'. Steadily the reader finds himself in a mixture of events from which one can draw the Ikemefuna episode characterised by his appearance and disappearance in conditions that Achebe has left to the reader's care, and the exposition of the Ibo tradition and laws. This mixture as a strategy of recreating the writer's past is for the narrator a way of exposing our realities in all their facets. Achebe writes:

> *Needless to say, we do have our own sins and blasphemies recorded against our name. If I were God I would regard as the very worst our acceptance – for whatever reason – of racial inferiority. It is too late in the day to get worked up about it or to blame others, much as they may deserve such blame and condemnation. What we need*

> *to do is to look back and try and find out where we went wrong, where the rain began to beat us.* (*Hopes and Impediments*, P. 43)

But, it is clear in the quotation, Achebe took the same opportunity to glance at the erroneous ideas of westerns that Africa was a dark continent and the people therein had no laws and societal organisation.

The story continues with the expository of customs through which an incident is created and sends the hero of Umuofia to his mother's village to purge the abomination. There is the climax of the story. The banishment creates 'vacuity' in Umuofia and the new comer seizes the opportunity to settle in Umuofia. The missionaries find 'nothing good' there and decide to change things: there comes the clash of two ways of conceiving the world. Okonkwo's return has been a catalyser that helps show how the social local order and even faith have fallen apart. The new views settle and stretch showing what will be the leit motiv of the Umuofians under the new administration.

Structurally speaking, the Ikemefuna episode is of great significance since it allows the narrating to maintain the analepsis of the opening of the narrative. All the previous exploits by Okonkwo are important. But the mission to Mbaino, which, of course, is the expression of those exploits, contains some twists and turns that allow me to specify it. As soon as Okonkwo comes back from the successful mission, he is designated to keep Ikemefuna in his household. Ikemefuna's presence there creates a familial relation with Okonkwo so that the boy calls him father. And the fact of calling Okonkwo his father is a signal to the new development of the same episode. Okonkwo remains as one discovers him through the introductory descriptions and kills the boy in spite of the warning by Ezeudu not to do so. What happens next is foreseeable in Achebe's choice of showing Okonkwo hopeless. This allows the author to make the narrative revolve statically around Okonkwo

until his return from the banishment. An evidence of this static revolving of the narrative is the choice of the circumstances of the crime that leads to Okonkwo's banishment. In fact, Ezeudu has been warning Okonkwo not to have any hand in the killing of Ikemefuna. Okonkwo ignores the old man's warning. That is not effectual as such, nor is the old man's death. The effectual, in fact, is his burial circumstances that have occasioned the crime by Okonkwo. So, it is clear that the choice of transformations of the character calls upon the circumstances.

In sum, *Things Fall Apart* starts as a flashback on Okonkwo's exploits and ends as such with its last chapter where narration and the story end together without the meeting of the narration-now and the story-now. Rather, the narrative ends with an proleptic analepsis:

> *The commissioner went away, taking three or four of the soldiers with him. In the many years in which he had toiled to bring civilization to different parts of Africa he had learnt a number of things. One of them was that a District Commissioner must never attend to such undignified details as cutting down a hanged man from the tree. Such attention would give the natives a poor opinion of him. In the book which he planned to write he would stress that point. As he walked back to the court he thought about that book. Every day brought him some new material. The story of this man who had killed a messenger and hanged himself would make interesting reading. One could almost write a whole chapter on him. Perhaps not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph, at any rate. There was no much else to include, and one must be firm in cutting out details. He had already chosen the title of the book, after much thought: The pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*. (p. 148)

Ironically, Achebe presented the District Commissioner stumbling on more material for his book. It is the evoking of this book and the new material that render the event prolepto-analepsic. The particularity of this combination is that the analepsis here is internal with the reach and extent falling together with the Commissioner's departure from the place where Okonkwo hangs himself. As for the prolepsic part of the same event, it can be justified by the fact that the idea of the book is something for future and external to the present narrative though the connection at the level of the subject matter of that book. If it were not the end of the narrative, the analepsis would be treated as partial since it would interrupts itself on an

ellipsis, and then give way to Okonwko's story as the first narrative. This choice by Achebe to end the novel there is deliberately made to signal still the will of leaving space and room to the reader to continue the story and imagine today some possible copies of that supposed book and their echo.

The dissecting of the narrative singles out the different events of the communal traditions and taboos, recorded through wrestling, marriage, funeral ceremonies, farming lore, new yam festivals, drinking sprees, altogether with the arrival of the white man, his settlement through his school and religion. All this presents the novel in a two-dimension narrative order: the story presents not only what holds all the traditional things together but also shows what breaks them apart. In sum, Achebe presented *Things Fall Apart* in a backward linear order which gives the narrative an appearance of equal duration between the narrative and the narrating.

3.1.2 Duration

Like any prose work, *Things Fall Apart* is a combination of summaries and scenes. Achebe avoids the use of real pause in the novel simply because he exposed things for the reader to appreciate. He simply uses static descriptions to manifest pauses. So, in the novel, three narrative movements should be considered.

Firstly, the story of Umuofia is a summary. The narrator summarises it in three unequal parts. All the events in the novel are summarised. The opening pages on Onkonkwo and his father are a summary. About Okonkwo's victory on Amalinze, the narration goes as follows:

> *The drums beat and the flutes sang and the spectators held their breath. Amalinze was a wily craftsman, but Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish in water. Every nerve and every muscle stood out on their arms, on their backs*

> *and their thighs, and one almost heard them stretching to breaking point. In the end Okonkwo threw the Cat. (P. 3)*

The prepositional phrase 'In the end' shows clearly that it is a summary there. Throughout the novel, summaries contain scenes, showing that even these scenes are summarised. Okoye's visit to Unoka for taking back his debt is a perfect example of this. The greeting part is hidden and the narrator presents the scene of the moment of kola and then narrates the further greeting stage, hardly resumes with the dialogue by displaying Okoye's words here and Unoka's there and then. Though summarised, the scenes are of unequal length; their moment of appearance is not predictable. The narrator decides on the basis of the nature of inner life that he wants to mention. This way of narrating gives thirst for reading. Examples are the scenes presented during the feast of new yam: the scene about the supposed killed banana tree that leads to an incident; the scene displaying Ekwefi and Ezimma and so on and so forth. These scenes bring the reader in the inner facts and actions of the characters.

The banana tree episode is a scene reduced to Okonkwo's utterances. This allows the narrator to come with transformations on the characters as the story moves: 'Who killed this banana tree?' he asked. The character that the narrator portrays of Okonkwo does not allow the narrator to leave any of the wives to answer. It is through a summary with ellipsis that one can read:

> *As a matter of fact the tree was very much alive. Okonkwo's second wife had merely cut a few leaves off it to wrap some food, and she said so. Without further argument Okonkwo gave her a sound beating and left her and her only daughter weeping. Neither of the either wives dared to interfere beyond an occasional and tentative, 'it is enough, Okonkwo' pleaded from a reasonable distance. (p. 27)*

Finally, the narrator makes use of ellipses in the many summaries that he has made. These ellipses offer at least two advantages. The boring length is avoided by extrapolating the parts of the story that the reader can easily guess. It is also a way of shifting details that may

impede possible connections in the material. The seed yam episode is presented from Okonkwo's arrival in Nwakibie's house to the decision of lending him eight hundred seed yams. The next step in the narration comes with the nature of the agricultural year and no mention is made about the giving of the seeds: 'The year that Okonkwo took eight hundred seed-yams from Nwakibie was the worst year in living-memory. Nothing happened at its proper time; it was either too early or too late. It seemed as the world had gone mad...' All that long period of agricultural disaster is summarised in two paragraphs counting together 23 lines.

Another example of ellipsis is the sending of money for building two huts: 'As soon as he entered the last year in exile Okonkwo sent money to Obierika to build him two huts in his old compound where he and his family would live until he built more huts and the outside wall of the compound'. A sentence after, one reads: 'As the last heavy rains of the year began to fall, Obierika sent word that the two huts had been built and Okonkwo began to prepare for his return, after the rains' (p.115). This succession of events comes without any narrative delay that could show details about them, at least, about the building of the two huts. The ellipsis leaves these details to the reader's mind. These ellipses sound like parts of the summaries. This mixture of summaries and ellipses leads to an effect of equal duration between the narrative and its narrating.

This equality is a mere appearance created by Achebe's technical choice. In fact, these narrative movements are within a single narrative rhythm, since the major discourse rhythms are in the same historical period. The temporal setting of the novel is end of the nineteenth century and the very beginning of the twentieth century. The famous wrestle, Okonkwo versus Amalinze, has been when Okonkwo was eighteen years old and, at the discourse time, 'That was many years ago, twenty years or more...' Okonkwo was forty or more.

The duration illusion comes, and this from the opening of the narrative, from the fact that Achebe has chosen to use what Genette calls descriptive pause to considerably reduce the discourse duration. At the opening of the novel, the narrator, in recalling Okonkwo's exploits uses a descriptive pause to recall the circumstances of the combat:

> *The drums beat and the flutes sang and the spectators held their breath. Amalinze was a wily craftsman, but Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish in water. Every nerve and every muscle stood out on their arms, on their backs and their thighs, and one almost heard them stretching to breaking point. In the end Okonkwo threw the Cat.*

According to Genette, writers use descriptive pauses to present their commentarial excursuses (lengthy digression from the main topic) in terms of author's intrusions or interventions. As Achebe avoids ideological narration, he uses descriptive pause as effective summaries to create oral and perfect illusion of the reader. Here, the particularity of this descriptive-summary is that it can be understood as a descriptive pause since Achebe seizes that opportunity to show what he takes as the characteristics of a true traditional wrestle. This combinative descriptive summary shows the importance of description in a narrative. Description is the carrier of discourse. Descriptions, according to Genette, are diegetic and help to distinguish the technical choices in terms of frequency of the events.

3.1.3 Frequency of events

It is useless to mention that the narration in *Things Fall Apart* is a mixture of 'singulative and iterative moods', with repetition here and there. The singulative mood is the narration that tells once what happens once whereas the iterative mood is when the narrator tells once something that may possibly have occurred many times, in many circumstances, and with various protagonists.

In *Things Fall Apart*, repetition is clearly used, notably on the Ikemefuna event and Okonkwo's banishment. Concerning Ikemefuna's arrival in Umuofia, the narration comes on it several times before his killing. At the end of chapter one, the narrator introduces the event by saying how Okonkwo comes to look after the boy. In Chapter two then, the narrator gives details about the same event. The same event comes in chapter four: 'Ikemefuna came to umuofia at the end of the carefree season between harvest and planting' (p. 20). As for the repetition about Okonkwo's banishment, the event intervenes in chapter thirteen in Umuofia. The narrator comes on it in chapter fourteen in Mbanta: '... As soon as Uchendu saw him with his sad and weary company he guessed what had happened, and asked no questions. It was not until the following day that Okonkwo told him the full story' (p. 91). From this point, the narrator comes back on it successively in chapters fifteen, sixteen through the visits that Obierika pays Okonkwo, and chapter nineteen with the preparation for return. These two repetitions, as each of them is concerned, draw the reader's attention on them. And as such, the repetition shows the importance of an event in the organisation of the plot of a narrative. These events are said to be plot-events. When one removes these two events, the narrative can no more hold.

The iterative mood is throughout the narrative. At the very beginning is the wrestle between Okonkwo and Amalinze. Though the very wrestle between them sounds unique, it is clear that such battles are cyclic in Umuofia. Moreover, a scene displays Unoka and Okoye about debt. It is also clear in the narration that this is an iterative one. Okoye is not the unique creditor, nor the single to ask for his money. Once more, chapter six is about an entire wrestle with all the stages, from junior to senior with musical and dancing breaks. 'The wrestlers were not there yet and the drummers held the field'. 'The contest began with boys of fifteen or sixteen'. 'The last match was between the leaders of the teams. They were among the best

wrestlers in all the nine villages' (pp. 33, 34, 35). All this shows the habitual process of the wrestle. Even among the spectators, scenes are narrated in singulative mood with iterative value:

> *'I did not know that it was you,' Ekwefi said to the woman who had stood shoulder to shoulder with her since the beginning of the matches.*
> *'I do not blame you,' said the woman. 'I have never seen such a large crowd of people. It is true that Okonkwo nearly killed you with his gun?'*
> *'It is true indeed, my dear friend. I cannot yet find a mouth with which to tell the story.'*
> *'Your chi is very much awake, my friend. And how is my daughter, Ezimma?'*
> *'She has been very well for some time now. Perhaps she has come to stay.'*
> *'I think she has. How old is she now?'*
> *'She is about ten years old.'[...]*

This scene between Ekwefi and Chielo is narrated in singulative mood just for the dialogue between them. But, in its context, the scene is iterative since many other people spoke on such occasions before them. Conversing during a meeting of the kind cannot be unique as such. With iterative mood, the choice falls on a case that stands for the others.

Achebe intertwined structural elements in the organisation of his narrative. Taking it backwards, I can assume that in the event frequency he predominantly used iterative mood to which he sometimes tied repetitions to consolidate elements that play for the progression of the narrative such as the two most important events around Ikemefuna and Okonkwo himself. This helps justify the complex manner in which the narrative speed is formatted. It is for the same reason that the narrative time has been managed to present hidden prolepses with undetermined reach and extent. Such an intertwinement cannot but be organised by a heterodiegetic narrator through a clear subsequent narration with a multiple perspective or simply omniscient.

3.1.4- Narrative mood and Narrative voice in *Things Fall Apart*

By opening *Things Fall Apart* on Okonkwo in a way that shows him "as a young man of eighteen, whose "fame rested on personal achievements", and who "had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the cat", the reader is in his right to guess that the narrator is announcing the sense of the story. Through a direct characterization, the narration goes up presenting Okonkwo with some characters that fit a man who does not want shame, may be in account of the self-centred view that characterises his community. Every qualifying word suits him as well as it exposes him. In the narrator's presentation of Okonkwo, the reader uncovers that he is a man of fear and anger. The junction between fear and anger is very simple but sustainable, for somebody who fears something must pretend to face things or events that are otherwise likeable to bring him to what he fears. Through this way of narrating, the narrative gives the reader more details with a sense of less distance from what it tells. This gives a kind of authority to the narrator who, according to Genette, "is present as source, guarantor, and organizer of the narrative…" (p.167).The focus on Okonkwo is a perspective that dominates the progression of the discourse in *Things Fall Apart*. This perspective is so pronounced that even the evocation of his father is done on account of what he knows about his father:

> *Okoye was also a musician. He played on the ogene. But he was not a failure like Unoka. He had a large barn full of yams and he had three wives. And now he was going to take the Idemili title, the third highest in the land. It was a very expensive ceremony and he was gathering all his resources together. That was in fact the reason why he had come to see Unoka. (p.5)*

The narrator is narrating but, in fact, it is in this way that Okonkwo experiences this situation from the very beginning of the narration. From this beginning, the narrator superposes Okonkwo to Umuofia in terms of his characters of a man of action. During the

first meeting about the ultimatum against Mbaino the behaviour of the leader of that meeting has been warlike, and brings the reader to presuppose who is going to lead the mission to Mbaino:

> *'Umuofia kwenu', he bellowed a fifth time, and the crowd yelled in answer. And then suddenly like one possessed he shot out his left hand and pointed in the direction of Mbaino, and said through gleaming white teeth firmly clenched: 'Those sons of wild animals have dared to murder a daughter of Umuofia.' He threw his head down and gnashed his teeth, and allowed a murmur of suppressed anger to sweep the crowd. When he began again, the anger on his face was gone and in its place a sort of smile hovered, more terrible and more sinister than the anger… (p.8)*

These are words, manners, gestures that sustain Okonkwo's attitude through the novel. It is a kind of ambivalence which is expressed through this internal shift of Okonkwo from his own case to the community. This ambivalence has to do with the sense of community dear to the traditional society in which he evolves and, as said before, the personal achievements. So, in his vision, Okonkwo knows that he is a member of a community in which "every matchet has its sheath", though the individual must not wait for that community to break his "palm kernels".

However, the discourse seems to express in a way the narrator's vision of things in the novel. In fact, the multiple flashbacks coupled with the discourse 'now' shows that that time is remote and that, now, things are changing. Anyway, all this is made in a technical choice that allows the narrator to state Okonkwo's speeches as he wants, combining direct utterances and inner speeches, expressing as such the narrative distance.

Things Fall Apart's narration is a real mixture of the four types of narration identified by Genette with the dominance of narratised and reported speeches. This choice is made by Achebe to still justify to different positions. The narratised speech dominates all the others throughout the novel. But this dominance is in fact a misleading appearance since, apart from

the environmental descriptive summaries, the narratised speeches are mixed with transposed ones. An example can be given at the very beginning of the novel:

> *Unoka, for that was his father's name, had died ten years ago. In his day he was lazy and improvident and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow. If any money came his way, and it seldom did, he immediately bought gourds of palm-wine, called round his neighbours and made merry. He always said that whenever he saw a dead man's mouth he saw the folly of not eating what one had in one's lifetime. Unoka was, of course, a debtor, and he owed every neighbour some money, from a few cowries to quite substantial amounts. (p.3)*

In this narratised speech comes a transposed one in indirect style: 'he always said that whenever he saw...' This way of carrying the narration expresses Achebe's manifest will of showing a narrator displayed and hidden at the same time, rendering the story as telling itself. Another mixture of narrating types comes at the end of a long summary about the week of peace, about the rainy season and about Ikemefuna's sojourn in Okonkwo's family. This long summary ends with a transposed narration in a free indirect speech: 'Nworye always wondered who Nnadi was and why he should live all by himself, cooking and eating. In the end he decided that Nnadi must live in that land of Ikemefuna's favourite story where the ant holds his court in splendour and the sands dance for ever' (p. 25). Whenever the narrator wants to show his distance vis-à-vis of the story he tells, he transits from an inner narratised speech to a dialogue that allows him to report things:

> *'Too much of his grandfather,' Obierika thought, but he did not say it. The same thought also came to Okonkwo's mind. But he had long learnt how to lay that ghost. Whenever the thought of his father's weakness and failure troubled him he expelled it by thinking about his own strength and success. And so did now. His mind went to his latest show of manliness.*
> *'I cannot understand why you refused to come with us to kill that boy,' he asked Obierika.*
> Because I did not want to,' Obierika replied sharply. 'I had something better to do.'
> *'You sound as if you question the authority and the decision of the Oracle, who said he should die.'*
> *'I do not, why should I? But the Oracle did not ask me to carry out its decision.'*
> *'But someone had to do it. If we were all afraid of blood, it would not be done. And what would you think the Oracle would do then?'*
> *'You know very well, Okonkwo, that I am not afraid of blood; and if anyone tells you that I am, he is telling a lie. And let me tell you one thing, my friend. If I were you I*

would have stayed at home. What you have done will not please the Earth. It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families.'
'The Earth cannot punish me for obeying her messenger,' Okonkwo said. 'A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm.'
'That is true,' Obierika agreed.' But if the Oracle said that my son should be killed I would neither dispute it nor be the one to do it.' (PP. 46-47)

The narrator starts from an inner speech by Obierika and Okonkwo before he carries with the reporting speech. This choice of displaying that scene, hence presenting a reported narration is the expression of the will of the narrator to be distant from Okonkwo's inflexibility vis-à-vis of taken decisions, leaving then the reader to discover things as they are for him/her to appreciate. The same will is manifested through the information about the double death in Ogbuefi's family:

They would have gone on arguing had Ofoedu not come in just then. It was clear from his twinkling eyes that he had important news. But it would be impolite to rush him. Obierika offered him a lobe of the kola nut he had broken with Okonkwo. Ofoedu ate slowly and talked about the locusts. When he finished his kola nut he said:
'The things that happen these days are very strange.'
'What has happened?' asked Okonkwo.
'Do you know Ogbuefi Ndulue?' Ofoedu asked.
'Ogbuefi Ndulue of Ire village,' Okonkwo and Obierika said together.
'He died this morning,' said Ofoedu. That is not strange. He was the oldest man of Ire,' said Obierika.
'You are right.' Ofoedu agreed. 'But you ought to ask why the drum has not been beaten to tell Umuofia of his death.'
'Why?' asked Obierika end Okonkwo together.
'That is the strange part of it. You know his first wife who walks with a stick?'
'Yes. She is called Ozoemana.'
'That is so,' said Ofoedu... (p.47)

Looking the repetition of such a mixture of types of narration, one can come to realise that the clearly identified narration forms are not as clearly separated in practice. So, this mixture is not proper to Achebe. Genette signalled this reality in the application of his theory on A la recherché du temps perdu: 'Needless to say, unless one is deliberately trying to prove a point, ... the different forms we have just distinguished in theory will not be so clearly separated in the practice of texts'... (p. 175). What can be taken as proper to a writer is the

level of the story at which he/she decides to mix those forms. In Achebe's case, in *Things Fall Apart*, this mixture betrays his deliberately mixture of point of view in that the narrator who tells the story or, to use Genette's work, who speaks is at the same time the one who sees by indicating the characters through whom he can see. Another particularity of Achebe is that when the narrator speaks about the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective, he brings an outside observation of events that Genette considers as part where the 'author tells story as observer' to justify the demarcation of point of view from voice (Genette, 1980, p. 186).

Dealing with the narrative levels of *Things Fall Apart*, I came to realise a specificity by which Achebe deals with the metadiegetic narratives. Their organisation governs the sense of the main narrative. It is this organisational role that brought some African critics such as Emmanuel Obiechina (1993) to put them in what they call 'Narrative proverbs'. I will come back on them in the next section. In helping the organisation of the main story, they also help the narrator to assume his narrative function from which he assumes the others. In the case of Things Fall Apart, apart from the narrative function which the narrator cannot turn away, Achebe made use of no testimonial and ideological functions as such. This is still in his will of not showing his intervention in the discourse. Now, I would like to turn to the powerful contribution that the embedded stories bring to the general organisation of the narrative. Achebe used almost these stories in all his novels. But I would like to evoke the case of *Things Fall Apart* for a couple of reasons. First, *Things Fall Apart* is Achebe's first novel which can be considered as his first reaction against the erroneous view on Africa and Africans. Secondly, the novel contains a greater number of narrative proverbs.

3.1.5 Embedded local tales as narrative proverbs in *Things Fall Apart*

Narrative proverbs are autonomous stories that appear in different genres and narrative registers within different structural linguistic plans and are embedded inside larger, more inclusive narratives. They function as images, metaphors, and symbols and advance the meanings and formal qualities of the narratives in which they occur. They are extensively used in the works of African novelists. Because narrative proverbs in African novels is general, it is legitimate to assume that their use is an essential feature of the poetics of the African novel, a feature that derives from the interplay of creative principles of oral and literary traditions.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is the best example of the use of narrative proverbs to express the distinctive quality of African fiction. Many African novelists employ the technique of narrative embedding, but in *Things Fall Apart* one can witness the most elaborate and the most successful use of the strategy for diverse formal, thematic, and aesthetic purposes. In this novel there are nine embedded narratives, of which seven are folktales and mythic stories, one a pseudo-history, and one an anecdote. Each embedded story brings something to the total meaning of the novel, some insight to clarify the action, to sharpen characterization, to elaborate themes and enrich the setting and environment of action. Most importantly, the narrative proverbs help to define the epistemological order within the novel.

The reader is made aware that the world of *Things Fall Apart* is traditional, that within it knowledge is attained through analogy, allusion, and metaphoric extension, with each embedded narrative representing one or another aspect of the many-sided action of the novel and used to define life and communally shared values.

The resistance against British imperialism and Christian missionary incursion into his society has been led by Okonkwo whose character weaknesses and the overwhelming force of the enemy, in the end, combine to defeat him and the cause for which he struggled.

The use of narrative proverbs in the structuring of the action of the novel is a major constructive strategy in the expression of the oral traditional impulse in the lives of the characters and in defining their global sensibility. Orality is in this novel more than an intrusion of an exterior style; it is a means of achieving the poetics of verisimilitude and a life-like portrayal of the experience. I would like to recall here some of these embedded narratives with their proverbial role in the organisation of the whole narrative.

3.1.5.1 Quarrel between Earth and Sky

The first embedded narrative is the cosmic myth of the quarrel between Earth and Sky. It is embedded in the context of the crisis of confidence between Okonkwo and his son Nwoye, a sensitive teenager who is afraid of his father. His father wants to bring him up in the warrior tradition by telling him "masculine stories of violence and bloodshed," while Nwoye prefers "the stories that his mother used to tell," which include the cosmic myth of the primeval quarrel of 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. Whenever Nwoye's mother sang this song he felt carried away to the distant scene in the sky where Vulture, Earth's emissary, sang for mercy. At last Sky was moved to pity, and he gave to Vulture rain wrapped in leaves of coco-yam. 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. (P.38)*

The myth is narrated, not performed as would be the case in a true oral context. The paralinguistic features are absent, though by way of enhancing our response to it, the narrator informs readers that whenever Nwoye's mother sang the song with which Vulture softened the heart of Sky, Nwoye "felt carried away to the distant scene in the sky." The song text itself is not included, nor is the singing of the song. However, the main narrative sequences of the myth are present:

Quarrel of Earth and Sky - a struggle for supremacy
Sky asserts supremacy by withholding rain
Suffering comes to Earth: crops wither; the dead cannot be buried
Vulture is sent as emissary to sue for peace
Vulture's song softens the heart of Sky
Sky relents, gives rain wrapped in coco-yam leaves
Vulture's talon pierces leaves and water escapes as rain
Vulture is drenched, flies to a distant land where he espies fire
Vulture warms himself in sacrificial fire; eats the entrails

The narrative sequences are complete except for the missing etiological tail. Conventionally, the myth should end with the explanation of why whenever sacrifices are being offered vultures are to be seen hovering in the sky and often descend to eat the substance of the sacrifice.

As a metaphor, the myth serves a number of structural, thematic, and ideological purposes in the novel. First, it brings into sharp focus the unequal relationship between Okonkwo and Nwoye. Okonkwo, who is pictured as an archetypal masculine figure, rules his household with a heavy hand and keeps his wives and children down and in mortal terror of him. Nwoye is crushed by his father's violence. On the microcosmic level of action, the myth throws light on the internal situation of Okonkwo's life and his immediate concerns, revealing the alienating relationship that exists between him and his oldest son and that builds up systematically until total rupture, when son abandons father and the traditional world to join the Christians and the new forces of triumphant imperialism. The conflict between father and

son, analogous to the quarrel between Sky and Earth, is built on their being so different in character: Okonkwo condemns stories and storytelling (unless they be heroic), which he regards as a symptom of effeminacy and degeneracy, while Nwoye relishes stories other than those of war and bloodshed. Paradoxically, the myth endorses the triumph of imagination over power in that the cosmic quarrel is resolved not through overt demonstration of masculinity and power but through conciliation and affectivity and the agency of song. By extension, therefore, the myth underwrites the feminine principle of creativity over sheer masculinity.

Nwoye's espousal of the feminine principle and Okonkwo's dedication to the masculine create an unbridgeable impasse that ends in total alienation. The story thus sharpens the focus on characterization. The myth provides another level of analogy. Both Okonkwo and Vulture are flawed messengers. Earlier in *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo is dispatched as an emissary to Mbaino to present an ultimatum and exert redress on behalf of Umuofia clan for the Umuofia woman murdered there.

Okonkwo brings back Ikemefuna, a young sacrificial hostage. Unlike Vulture who accomplishes his mission with song, Okonkwo appears at Mbaino "as the proud and imperious emissary of war". But Okonkwo's mission does not end with bringing back Ikemefuna, just as Vulture's does not end with bringing rain; he is yet to deliver his message. Okonkwo is given custody of Ikemefuna until he is demanded by the elders. His extended mission does not end until he has transacted this final mandate. Like Vulture, however, he fails to round off his mission. Contrary to the counsel of his oldest kinsman, he follows the train of the sacrificial crew and quite unnaturally cuts down the boy who calls him "father."

This myth also functions as a macrocosmic paradigm in that it broadly represents the historical confrontation of Europe and Africa, the main stem of nineteenth-century imperialism with its totalizing cultural, political, ideological, ethico-philosophical, and

institutional oppositions, and as an analogy to the conflicts. It foreshadows the triumph of imperialism and the defeat so poetically evoked in the title of the novel.

Imperialism is symbolized by Sky and Umuofia clan by Earth. In the unequal conflict between them, imperialism, like Sky, predictably wins. In the same chapter seven of the novel in which the myth of the cosmic quarrel between Earth and Sky appears (P.38), there are two other embedded pieces, the Locust Myth and Ikemefuna's Song. In the third year of Ikemefuna's arrival into Okonkwo's household and on the eve of his tragic death, a locust swarm descends on Umuofia. The event triggers the telling of the locust myth:

> *In this way the moons and the seasons passed. And then the locusts came. It had not had not happened for many a long year. The elders said locusts came once in a generation, reappeared every year for seven years and then disappeared for another lifetime. They went back to their caves in a distant land, where they were guarded by a race of stunted men. And then after another lifetime these men opened the caves again and the locusts came to Umuofia.(p.38)*

This myth provides a handle on a phenomenon that is outside the immediate focus of everyday experience. The locusts, according to the myth, appear once in a lifetime and stop over for seven years in a row before disappearing for another lifetime. Ancestral wisdom provides an insight into a distanced, inaccessible, but not inconsequential experience. Even though locusts are eaten with gusto by Umuofia people, their coming is no mean ecological disaster and so attains a place in the epistemological framework in the manner of a myth. The mythopoeic reality is in the novel balanced with empirical reality, the evidence of the senses: "'Locusts are descending,' was joyfully chanted and men, women and children left their work or their play and ran into the open to see the unfamiliar sight" (p.39).

The full impact of the myth and of the realistic reporting of the coming of the locusts is only partially felt at this stage. Within the microcosmic scope of the action, it is an event filled with portent and omen as the full strength of the invasion is felt:

> *At first, a fairly small swarm came. They were harbingers sent to survey the land. And then a slowly-moving mass like a boundless sheet of black cloud drifting towards Umuofia appeared on the horizon. Soon it covered half the sky, and the solid mass was now broken by tiny eyes of light like shining star-dust. It was a tremendous sight, full of power and beauty. (p.39)*

As Okonkwo, his son Nwoye and Ikemefuna sit "crunching happily" and "drinking palm-wine copiously," Ezeudu, "the oldest man in this quarter of Umuofia," pays Okonkwo a visit, takes him outside earshot of the children, and tells him two things: "That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death" and informs him further: "Yes, Umuofia has decided to kill him. The Oracle of the Hills and the Caves has pronounced it".

The juxtaposition of the coming of the locusts and this major moral upheaval is important. The locust myth prepares the ground for this radicalization of events in the narrative. It is as if by opening the mythic "caves" from which the locusts emerge, the "stunted men," the Igbo equivalent of the fates of the Greek mythology, also open up a pestilential phase of events that would consume the hero and quicken the tempo of the fall of the old dispensation. On the macrocosmic plane, the locust myth prepares readers imaginatively, epistemologically, to deal with the phase of European imperialism in this part of Africa. History is elucidated through mythology as locust invasion prefigures imperialist invasion.

3.1.5.2 Ikemefuna's Song

The song may be part of a full tale in which Eze, a chief or king, is involved. That king seems to be in trouble related to a bad deed. So, the song is an attempt by the people to dissuade such kings from an action that would bring shame in their clan:

Eze elina, elina!
Sala
Eze ilikwa ya
Ikwaba akwa oligholi
Ebe Danda nechi eze

Ebe Uzuzu nete egwu
Sala (p.42)

The song is based on the oral practice of call and response. In traditional considerations, the left side is identified with the bad and the right one with the good. People use it in several circumstances related to a sort of dice casting. In the novel, the singer of this ditty is Ikemefuna, the child hostage ostensibly on his way back to his original home but in reality on his way to being sacrificed by the Umuofia people for the murder of their kinswoman by Ikemefuna's people. The embedded song brings complex ironic twists into the narrative at this stage. Ikemefuna is singing the song in his mind and walking to its rhythm to divine whether his mother whom he last saw three years before is still alive. The first irony is that it is he, Ikemefuna, who is at risk and not his mother. He will be cut down a few moments after humming the ditty. Then, the full import of both the tale and the song apply more structurally to Okonkwo, who had been his guardian in Umuofia and whom the old man had warned not to take a hand in Ikemefuna's murder. Okonkwo does not heed the advice and it is actually his hand that cuts Ikemefuna down in the fatal bush. The reversal in Okonkwo's fortunes seems to begin with this brutal assault on the traditional moral order. The abbreviated folktale here functions as a moral gauge that determines how low the hero has fallen on the moral scale. He has made mistakes before, and some of these have been quite serious, but none up to this point has been as serious as the murder of a child who called him "father." His best friend Obierika, who is also a major centre of consciousness in the novel, reproaches him roundly for this moral failure: "If I were you I would have stayed home. What you have done will not please the Earth. It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families". (p.46)

The web of irony becomes even more tangled when it is remembered that Okonkwo's descent into the abyss of defeat begins with the unintentional murder of Ezeudu's son, which necessitates his mandatory exile for seven years and which, in turn, leads to his loss of his place in the clan, an event that hurts him psychologically. Ezeudu is the old man who had warned Okonkwo to take no hand in Ikemefuna's death because the boy called him "father." It is as if the gods have decided to use the old man's son to punish the errant hero. Ikemefuna's song is a means of tying up a strong emotional point from the different strands of ironies and ironic intersections in the narrative. The "king" has been warned, and since he has heedlessly broken taboo, the song foreshadows his fall down.

3.1.5.3 The Mosquito Myth

This myth is narrated soon after Ikemefuna's death. Okonkwo's conscience is beginning to recover its serenity after three days of great internal turmoil. On the third night, he falls deeply asleep but is tormented by mosquitoes. His mind recalls the mosquito story told him by his mother when he was a child:

> *Mosquito, she had said, 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. (P.53)*

An etiological myth, this story answers Okonkwo's question, "Why do they [mosquitoes] always go for one's ears?" The myth is important for many reasons. First, the story reveals that Okonkwo has had the same exposure to the humanizing mother's story sessions as any other normal child. Up to this point, the reader has not had any real evidence that the hero has had the advantage of normal maternal care. Because his father is such a colossal failure and cannot provide him with those opportunities fathers normally give their

sons under the traditional system, Okonkwo comes to hate everything his father loves; including the life of the imagination, for his father is a poet and musician in addition to being improvident and a laggard. But if his father let him down, the context of this myth shows that his mother did not. The effect of the revelation is to transfer to Okonkwo greater responsibility for his actions, especially those acts of brutality that seem to arise from his gender imbalance. Mother's stories, which Okonkwo despises as "silly," are actually the means to sensitizing young people to the values and social attitudes that prepare them to participate constructively in the life of the community. By cutting himself off from wholesome feminine influences in favour of overcompensating masculinity, the hero sets the stage for a life that is to be filled with crises and pain, in spite of its great potentialities and achievements. The myth serves to stress the strength of conscience. After killing Ikemefuna, Okonkwo is trying very hard to smother his conscience, to relieve himself of the responsibility of his fall. But conscience is a hardy thing; it is not easily killed. The mosquito myth is the authorial metaphor that underlines that fact. Like all metaphors and images, the mosquito myth is open to many interpretations. On the macrocosmic plane on which the novel also moves, the myth could be seen as a paradigm of anti-colonial struggle in which all who make their gesture of defiance to the foreign conqueror will be keeping alive the everlasting and indomitable spirit of freedom. In that broadened parameter of dialectal oppositions between worlds and systems, between colonialist Europe and colonized Africa, Okonkwo and the people of Umuofia become part of a historical movement of resistance against imperialism, disturbing its self-assurance and its will to dominate. In that context also, *Things Fall Apart* can be regarded as an anti-colonial discourse.

Any attempt in dealing with these aspects of African existence should be but part of the possible answers to Emmanuel Obiechina's theoretical question about that concern: 'What happens to the development of literature when a relatively new cultural system based on the written word is superimposed upon an ancient oral traditional culture?'(1993)

A return to the roots movement in African literature as a means of giving maximum authenticity to the writing made the writers look to their indigenous poetics to create works that will endure by drawing upon their living oral tradition to enrich forms, techniques, and styles received through western literate education. One major-aspect of this interplay of the oral and literary traditions in the African novel is the phenomenon of the story-within-the-story or the narrative proverb. The novelists reflecting a habit of orality in life and literature introduce oral stories - myths, folktales, fairy tales, animal fables, anecdotes, ballads, song-tales, etc. - within the narrative matrices of their works, in the development of their plots and themes and the formulation of their artistic and formal principles. These embedded stories are referred to as narrative proverbs, because they perform organic and structural functions of proverbs in oral speech and in creative literature.

The first discovery is that the oral culture does not immediately disappear by the mere fact of its being in contact with writing, nor does the literature of the oral society disappear because of the introduction of written literature. Rather, a synthesis takes place in which characteristics of the oral culture survive and are absorbed, assimilated, extended, and even reorganized within a new cultural experience. Also, vital aspects of the oral literature are absorbed into an emerging written literature of greatly invigorated forms infused with vernacular energy through metaphors, images and symbols, more complex plots, and diversified structures of meaning. Such a happy synthesis is possible insofar as certain conditions are present at the meeting point of the oral and written traditions, including the

extent to which the synthesizing artist, that is the storyteller or poet, is well rooted in the oral rhetorical forms or narrative traditions, the extent of the familiarity the artist assumes the audience to have with the oral rhetorical or narrative conventions, the extent to which the artist expects the audience to be composed of readers or listeners, and the extent of the artist's skill in controlling the literary form, in the sense of being capable of assimilating into it an experience produced in a non-literate tradition or a formal style that originally belonged to the oral traditional society. The situation in modern Africa amply illustrates the point about the merging of the worlds of orality and literacy. And this can be taken as the positive result drawn from what I called in my introduction a linguistic risk.With some slight differences, the same elements of structural appreciation are contained in *Arrow of God*.

3.2 Order, Duration, Frequency, Mood and Voice in *Arrow of God*

Here again I would like to carry out the same analysis as in *Things Fall Apart* so as to come with what can stand as particularities of each of these two novels.

3.2.1 The Notion of Order in *Arrow of God*

The study of order as I said it demands that the reader first determines where the main story begins and ends in order to identify the possible anachronies. In the case of *Arrow of God*, as is the case in *Things Fall Apart*, the main story of the novel is organised in a series of analepses with some hints of prolepses that are hardly perceptible. The novel begins with a routine about the ritual of new moon sacrifice by the hero, Ezeulu:

> *Ulu, I thank you for making me see another new moon. May I see it again. This household may it be healthy and prosperous. As this is the moon of planting may the six villages plant with profit. May we escape danger in the farm- the bite of a snake and a sting of the scorpion, the mighty one of the scrubland. May we not cut our shinbone with the matchet or the hoe. And let our wives bear male children. May we*

> *increase in numbers at the next counting of the villages so that we shall sacrifice to you a cow, not a chicken as we did after the last New Yam feast. May children put their fathers into the earth and not fathers their children. May good meet the face of every man and every woman. Let it come to the land of the riverain folk and to the land of the forest peoples (p. 6).*

Just after this traditional and ritual prayer, an indication is brought to the temporal orientation of the narrative related to the arrival of the white man in the village.

> *He put the ofo back among the ikenga and the okposi, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and returned to his place. Every time he prayed for Umuaro bitterness rose into his mouth, a great smouldering anger for the division which had come to the six villages and which his enemies sought to lay on his head. And for what reason? Because he had spoken the truth before the white man...*

The evocation of the division of the villages related to the arrival of the white man is temporally an analepsis that contains another analepsis. But instead of bringing the reader into the inner sight of what happens, the narrator brings another analepsis but this time in the course of Ezeulu's household affairs: 'One day soon he will see Eru again,' said Nwafo, referring to the apparition Obika had once seen at night. The story had been told so often that Nwafo imagined he was there. The details of the apparition are then narrated, delaying the first analepses. The delay continues with descriptions about Obika, descriptions that bring another action by Obika:

> *Not very long ago Obika had come very close indeed to committing murder. His half-sister, Akueke, often came home to say that her husband had beaten her. One early morning she came again with her face all swollen. Without waiting to here the rest of the story Obika set out for Umuogwugwu, the village of his brother-in-law. On the way he stopped to call his friend, Ofoedu, who was never absent from the scene of a fight. As they approached Umuogwugwu Obika explained to Ofoedu that he must not help in beating Akueke's husband... (p.11).*

The story goes as Obika has tied his in-law and carried him to their house with the help of Ofoedu. This important event continues with the settling of the problem. The narrating of this gives way to weekly meeting that Ezeulu and his family hold in order to hear about

what to do on Afo day. It is in the course of a such meeting that a kind of proleptic introduction is made about the sending of Oduche to learn the white man's ways. It is then that the narration comes back to the war between Umuaro and Opkeri, the witness of which brought division between the Chief Priest and the people of Umuaro:

> *The long uproar that followed was largely of approbation. Nwaka had totally destroyed Ezeulu's speech. The last glancing blow which killed it was the hint that the Chief Priest's mother had been a daughter of Okperi. The assembly broke up into numerous little groups of people talking to those who sat nearest to them. One man said that Ezeulu had forgotten whether it was his father or his mother who told him about the farmland. Speaker after speaker rose and spoke to the assembly until it was clear that all the six villages stood behind Nwaka... (P.17)*

The division militates in favour of the war by sending Akukalia to ask the solution Okperi chooses to settle the problem of land and to Ezeulu to say: "The reed we were blowing is now crushed."

This set of events around Ezeulu and his people turns around by signalling the presence of the white man in their area who intervenes to stop the war and even breaking the guns of Umuaro and giving the disputed land to Okperi. It is the first reference to the white man's rule which allows the discourse to carry on with the rivalry now between Nwaka and Ezeulu, rivalry in which Oduche's episode comes as a signal that can have here a proleptic value. The colonial administration, after some episodic signal of they rule, decides to appoint local chiefs. The choice of Ezeulu for Umuaro increases the rivalry on account of which the discourse evokes the meeting during which Ezeulu informs his people about his invitation by the white man to Okperi. The story stays around Ezeulu's sojourn in Okperi with the discourse looking like not moving. This renders the temporal analysis of the narrative into two sections in a big analepsis in which the building of the road from Okperi to Umuaro, the invitation of Ezeulu to Okperi, his sojourn there, his return to Umuaro and his decision not to call for the yam harvest, are in a cause end effect relation, leaving the narrative looks like cut

up. This can be explained technically by the fact that all the anachronies are ranged in one side. No connection between them shows limits in terms of reach and extent of the anachronies. In Genette's terms, they are called partial internal analepses.

In the narration, connections have been made with *Things Fall Apart* notably with the proleptic writing of a book whose title is given at the end of the novel and the destruction of Abame as a signal of the white man's power. These retrospective connections recall the iterative ellipses of the first novel. So, the two novels share some events and temporal connections. This can help to start the justification of the notion of trilogy that I evoked in my introduction of the present dissertation.

3.2.2 Duration in *Arrow of God*

Like *Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God* is a combination of summaries and scenes. But contrarily to the first novel, Achebe made use of 'false' pauses in the novel to signal the encrustation of the white man and the meaning that he gives to his policy. It is in fact passages where the narrator gives the floor to the white administration. Here is the reading of the last chapter of that proleptic book from Things Fall Apart, that Winterbottom has lent to Tony Clarke:

> *'For those seeking but a comfortable living and a quiet occupation Nigeria is closed and will be closed until the earth has lost some of its deadly fertility and until the people live under something like sanitary conditions. But for those in search of a strenuous life, for those who can deal with men as others deal with material, who can grasp great situations, coax events, shape destinies and ride on the crest of the wave of the time when Nigeria is holding out her hands. For the men who in India have made the Briton the law-maker, the organizer, the engineer of the world this new, old land has great rewards and honourable work... (p.33)*

Such false pauses bring Achebe to disturb the reader in the evaluation of the duration of the many summaries that the narrator uses with an effect of reducing the story time.

Dealing with these summaries which dominate the whole novel, I can say that they render story without any starting point in the book. The beginning of the discourse here is very clear on it: 'This was the third nightfall since he began to look for signs of the new moon. He new it would come today but he always began his watch three days early because he must not take a risk.' This opening sentence of the discourse is a summary of the process of looking for the new moon. This yam ritual is here the main articulation paired with the co-existence of the colonial administration in its colonial rule. The war between Umuaro and Okperi is an event through which the discourse mentions that co-existence. Still, the duration of the event cannot clearly be established. However, taking into account the some temporal markers here and there in the narration can help to identify the temporally marked units. The mission to Okperi led by Akukalia is on Eke day (market day of Okperi) and the incident happens that day. The following morning, they hold a meeting to decide. Nwaka hold another meeting in his village for revenge since no consensus is found in morning meeting. The war breaks:

> *The war was waged from one Afo to the next. On the day it began Umuaro killed two men of Okperi. The next day was Nkwo, and so there was no fighting. On the two following days, Eke and Oye, the fighting grew fierce. Umuaro killed four men and Okperi replied with three, one of the three being Akukalia's brother, Okoye. The next day, Afo, saw the war brought to a sudden close... (p.28).*

From this passage, the war lasts five days with one day break and its account is made in one paragraph. This confirms the impossibility of coincidence between the narrative physical divisions and the temporal breaks of the story. The discourse is carried through some sort of descriptive pauses rendering the chronology of *Arrow of God* unclear in its details. The subsequent result is the use of ellipses in support of these descriptive pauses.

The notion of ellipsis is closely related to the story time that is elided with the possibility of mentioning the duration or not. In *Arrow of God*, the narrator makes use of a shifting ellipsis which cannot stand the formal ellipsis in which events come to interrupt the normal course of the story-event, after of course another clear event. Here, the ellipsis is a kind of suspension followed with distortions that recall Barthes (1977) for whom narration brings forth an interruption of the main story to give way to distortions that lead to what he calls surprise with the possibility of the surprise being another suspense. Taking the example of the roasting yam, the process is narrated till the Chief priest put the yam on his log fire and then one can read: 'As he waited for it to roast he planned the coming event in his mind...' The narration continues with these distortions with a quick glance at the yam: 'Ezeulu attended the yam very closely, rolling it over with the stick again and again. His eldest son, Edogo, came in from his own hut...' The ellipsis then continues with that new distortion with a scene between Ezeulu and Edogo before one can read: '... Ezeulu rolled the yam out of the fire with the stick and quickly felt it between his thumb and first finger, and was satisfied...' Then the narration carries out with the eating and the big prayer moments. A summary about the closing of the prayer is used to introduce another event in a futile way that prevents the reader from connecting the division of the village and the subsequent war between Umuaro and Okperi to what has been narrated before. It is in this way that the narrative is organised.

It is obvious that this narrative contains, as in *Things Fall Apart*, some common narrative movements. Summaries and scenes have been conducted in the same way as in *Things Fall Apart*. For example, a summary is used at the very beginning of the novel where Ezeulu is displayed at priest-duty. The narrator tells that Ezeulu has seen the new moon, and then he beats his ogene to signal the event, and then the narrator distorts the narration into a small flashback about Ezeulu before coming back to the scene created by the announcement.

The narrator then signals the taking of a piece of yam from the barn. But, suddenly, the narration comes with 'His log fire was smouldering'. The making of the fire part is left to the reader to complete. In the Ibo context, every old person has normally a log fire, burning all the time. So this omission brings the reader to consider that part of the narrative as non-significant or fully based on presupposition. Since, the fire that smoulders now has forcibly been made before. What is important to retain in summaries is that they constitute contexts in which the narration deliberately omits details that are consequent to omissions. Somebody who reads about roasting yam does not need to read about the process of making fire, unless it adds information in the story.

An important particularity of *Arrow of God* at the narrative speed level is that it contains two strategic pauses that intervene in trompe-l'oeil way. A pause is a narrative movement in which the narrator stops telling the story and comes with comments. Pauses are occasions of ideological or instructive comments that show personal point of view. As said earlier, Achebe does not want to show his personal comments through the ones that he uses in these narratives. As such, he uses the strategy of inserting a normal pause in a narratised speech. This narratised speech is about Tony Clarke who has been lent a book by Winterbottom. Summarising his reading, the narration goes as follows:

> *[...] One of the ways in which the tropics were affecting him was the speed of his reading, although in its own right the book was also pretty dull; much too smug for his taste. But he was now finding the last few paragraphs quite stirring. The chapter was headed THE CALL.*
> *'For those seeking but a comfortable living and a quite occupation Nigeria is closed and will be closed until the earth has lost some of its deadly fertility and until the people live under something like sanitary conditions. But for those in search of strenuous life, for those who can deal with men as others deal with material, who can grasp great situations, coax events, shape destinies and ride on the crest of the wave of time Nigeria is holding out her hands. For the men who in India have made the Briton the law-maker, the organizer, the engineer of the world this new, old land has great rewards and honourable work. I know we can find the men, our mothers do not draw us with nervous grip back to the fireside of boyhood, back into the home circle, back to the purposeless sports of middle life; it is our greatest pride that they do- albeit tearfully- send us fearless and erect to lead the backward races into line.*

> *"Surely we are the people!" Shall it be the little Englander for whom the Norman fought the Saxon on his field? Was him for it the archers bled at Crecy and Poitiers, or Cromwell drilled his men? Is it only for the desk our youngsters read of Drake and Frobisher, of Nelson, Clive and men like Mungo Park? Is it for the counting-house they learn of Carthage, Greece and Rome? No, no; a thousand times no! The British race will take its place, the British blood will tell. Son after son will live the Mersey, strong in the will of his parents today, stronger in the deed of his fathers in the past, braving the climate, taking the risks, playing his best in the game of life. (PP. 32-33)*

This strong pause, though ironic, stays prophetic for Africans. However, victory is not through passivity. In the same line, that pause seems to show signs of an extension of the historical perspective contained in *Things Fall Apart*. Here the author tries to go beyond the familiar world in which Ezeulu evolves. For this purpose, Achebe created a world with an environment of which threat is recorded by the European. The narrator brings the reader to realise how convincingly normal is this African world created by the author. The traditional rituals reflect harmoniously the movement of the seasons as the individual and the environment function together. At the very beginning of the novel, the reader discovers the priest in his monthly duty: 'Ulu, I thank you for making me see another new moon. May I see it again and again. This household may it be healthy and prosperous. As this is the moon of planting maize the six villages plant with profit...' This prayer shows not only a traditional ritual but also a change of season. Details are given about the season and the climate in chapter three through the introduction of Winterbottom.

> *Captain T. K. Winterbottom stood at the veranda of his bungalow on Government Hill to watch the riot of the year's first rain. ...*
> *Captain Winterbottom had not known real sleep since the dry, cool harmattan wind stopped abruptly in December; and it was now mid-February. ...*
> *Fifteen years ago Winterbottom might have been so depressed by the climate and the food as to have doubts about services in Nigeria. ... (PP. 29-30)*

The introduction of the District Officer is done through a narration that shows the change of season with some effect on him.

Another pause-like narration intervenes on pages 25-26 with the 'Ogbazulobodo' during the ike-agwu-ani ritual. Achebe considered the content of the pause as 'potent words' uttered behind by the carrier of the ritual accoutrements.

> *The fly that struts around on a mound of excrement wastes his time; the mound will always be greater than the fly. The thing that beats the drum for ngwessi is inside the ground. Darkness is so great it gives horns to a dog. He who builds a homestead before another can boast more broken pots...When death wants to take a little dog it prevents it from smelling even excrement. ...*

These intertwining 'potent words' that come out of the possessed man's mouth express a double death for which 'Ezeulu would have been more than a match to his grief. He would have been equal to any pain not compounded with humiliation'. But the astonishment of the old priest brings him to ask 'himself again and again, why had Ulu chosen to deal thus with him, to strike him down and then cover him with mud? What was his offence? '(P. 229).

Hence, I can say that these characterising summaries, descriptive pauses and ellipses are the essential parts of the resources that govern the narration of *Arrow of God* in which the frequency is also made of a mixture.

3.2.3 Frequency of events

As in *Things Fall Apart,* the narration of *Arrow of God* is a mixture of 'singulative and iterative moods', with repetition here and there. The repetition is quite normal in that the many distortions suspend the main story and recalls are made as the narration the discourse continues. The episode of yam and moon is recurrent with Twelve times in a year. So, it could be expected to have an account of how it happens each time. But, rather, the narrator simply chooses the iterative form to account for the ritual through only the forth occasion. At this level, the story is reduced temporally by the help of what Genette calls 'identical events' or

'recurrence of the same event'. These repetitions, though they may sound redundant in their recurrence, when they come, they have forcibly some connections with point of view. So, repetitions help to show variations in point of view. Evoking here the example of the war between Umuaro and Okperi, the narration comes on it a certain number of times. At the end of the monthly yam ritual, one can read: '... Every time he prayed for Umuaro bitterness rose into his mouth, a great smouldering anger for the division which had come to the six villages and which his enemies sought to lay on his head. And for what reason? Because he had spoken the truth before the white man...' This is the first time the war has been mentioned in the discourse. This is what Genette calls 'advance notice'. An advance notice is a mentioning of a given event which, though an anachrony, is signalled before some further evocations that may add further aspects, at least, in terms of point of view. These further evocations are called 'recalls'.

The second time the war is evoked is about the explanation of how the war has arrived: 'This is the story as I heard it from my father. If you choose to fight a man for a piece of farmland that belongs to him I shall have no hand in it.' This is a formal meeting held by the villagers to decide what to do; the word 'war' comes several times in that meeting. Another meeting is held after the incident: 'The meeting ended in confusion. Umuaro was divided into two. Nwaka's group carries the war, the narration of which is done in a paragraph as I mentioned it. Now, taking these repetitions as they are mentioned, there are differences according to who is speaking. For example, in Ezeulu's evocation of the war, it is unjust to carry it, whereas for Nwaka, it is just the contrary with a double feeling. If they refuse to go on war against Okperi, this means that there are no more titled and powerful men in Umuaro and mainly this will sound as a victory by Ezeulu who is not a king to decide what to do in such matters. All these recalls of the event of war intervene in the discourse this way just to

signal, as I said, difference in point of view. A further example can even be given about the evocation of the war:

> *I don't, why should I? My compound is full of its own troubles, so why should I carry yours home; where would i find space to put them? But I must repeat what I said before and if you don't want to listen you can stop your years. When you spoke against the war against Okperi you were not alone. I too was against it and so were many others... (p.134)*

Akuebue's evocation of the war here is a real recall with a role of warning argument. In fact, he doesn't want Ezeulu to send one of his sons to the invitation of the white man. Hence, this is at the same time an advance notice about that invitation of Ezeulu by the white man at Okperi. The iteration about the visit of a messenger begins with a meeting summoned by the Chief Priest:

> *'I was thanking you for what you have done. Our people say that if you thank a man for what he has done he will have strength to do more. There is one great omission here for which I beg forgiveness. A man does not summon Umuaro and not set before them even a pot of palm wine. But I was taken by surprise and as you know the unexpected beats even the man of valour...' Then he told them the story of the Court Messenger's visit to him... (p.142)*

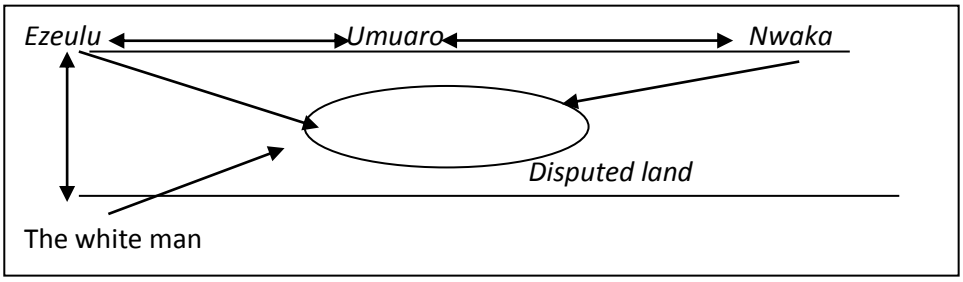
The narrator comes in iteration through this meeting to the division of the villagers about the war and mainly the antagonism between the Chief Priest and Nwaka by narrating Nwaka's intervention during that evening meeting:

> *'What I said is this,' continued Nwaka, ' a man who brings ant-ridden fagots into this hut should expect the visit of lizards. But if Ezeulu is now telling us that he is tired of the white man's friendship our advice to him should be: you tied the knot, you should also know how to undo it. You pass the shit that is smelling; you should carry it away. Fortunately the evil charm brought in at the end of a pole is not too difficult to take outside again.*
> *'I have heard one or two voices murmuring that it is against custom for the priest of Ulu to travel far from his hut. I want to ask such people: Is this the first time Ezeulu would be going to Okperi? Who was the white man's witness that year we fought for our land – and lost? (P.144)*

So, the narrative here is a synthetic narrating of the events that occur and reoccur in the course on an iterative series that is composed of a certain number of singular units as

shown through the example given above. But the particularity here is that most of these units have no clear diachronic limits. The reader only knows that the war takes place in four days related to the period determined by the one between an Afo and the next. This period called determination is not mentioned for the other series. The only aspect that is shown through the narration is the rhythm of recurrence of the constituents of a series. This rhythm is called specification. Determination and specification in the case of *Arrow of God* are completely implicit. The adverbial phrases that help qualify them indefinite are not mentioned as such. The reader is supposed to determine the duration: 'Soon after the ikolo began to speak to the six villages; the meeting began as fowls went to roost'. These aspects are means used by writers to show variation in discourse. This variation entertains readers by carrying them through some such of intertwinements of events in a narrative. The case of *Arrow of God* is a means and a way of showing not only the encrustation of the white man but also the social tension that has favoured it.

Compared to *Things Fall Apart*, one can notice that the two narratives are complementary through the connections of their stories. If *Things Fall Apart* helps to show the almost organised state of the Igbo community at the arrival of the white man, *Arrow of God* continues the same thing with specification of antagonism, but still with the personal affirmation, that the first novel does not mention in its discourse. This is what can be said from the technical management of the narrative in terms of narrative frequency. Evoking one aspect of the story, shift is made to another in which Ezeulu is still involved. This can be shown through the following diagram:



The discourse about that crisis turns around Ezeulu as the diagram shows it. The double headed arrows symbolise the discussions and those who are single headed indicate the objects of the discussions. Ezeulu, as one can see in the diagram, is the connecting angle between his people and the white man. The arrow from the white man towards the disputed land does not touch the circle. This symbolises the lack of clear information as expressed by the narrator. In fact, the diagram best expresses the concern of the narrator to tell things as they were experienced at the time of their occurrence and now to tell them as they are recalled after their occurrence. And as such, the anachronism of the narrative is now in the discourse that has to do with existence through memory exercise which, as Genette said, "obeys other laws than those of time". This iteration is in fact here a handling of what Genette calls "interpolations and distortions". Mood and voice aspect can help to deepen the understanding of the book.

3.2.4 Narrative mood and Narrative voice in *Arrow of God*

In *Things Fall Apart*, through the discourse, it has been noticed in a lined up way the narrator's vision of things in the novel with the camera on Okonkwo. In fact, the multiple flashbacks coupled with the discourse 'now' shows that that time is remote and that, now, things are changing. It is this vision of change that characterises *Arrow of God*, without however remove from its main character the personal embodiment of the whole community. Ezeulu, in *Arrow of God* understands the change at least and declares:

> *'The world is changing', he had told him. 'I do not like it. But I am like the bird Eneke-nti-oba. When his friends asked him why he was always on the wing he replied: "Men of today have learnt to shoot without missing and so I have learnt to fly without perching." I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eye there. If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something there you will bring my share. The world is like a Mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying had we known tomorrow.' (pp. 45-46)*

Just after these words by Ezeulu, his wife Ugoye, Oduche's mother, expresses her view about the situation. Ezeulu shows that he possessed his senses by saying what he has just said. He then reaffirms:

> *'How does it concern you what I do with my sons? You say you do not want Oduche to follow strange ways. Do you not know that in a great man's household there must be people who follow all kinds of strange ways? There must be good people and bad people, honest workers and thieves, peace-makers and destroyers; that is the mark of a great obi. In such a place, whatever music you beat on your drum there is somebody who can dance it.' (p.46)*

The reader sees how these words express Ezeulu's view on the question. Ezeulu wants his people to accept tolerance and recognize the neighbour as he is. But the organisation of the novel is in a way that presents several perspectives.

The antagonism developed between Ezeulu and Nwaka, brings the latter to have a view which treats Ezeulu as somebody who wants to take profit from them; somebody who takes a risk but does not want to undergo it alone:

> *'But there is one thing which is not clear to me in this summons. Perhaps it is clear to others; if so someone should explain it to me. Ezeulu has told us that the white ruler has asked him to go to Okperi. Now it is not clear to me whether it is wrong for a man to ask his friend to visit him. When we have a feast do we not send for our friends in other clans to come and share it with us, and do they not also ask us to their own celebrations? The white man is Ezeulu's friend and has sent for him. What is so strange about that? He did not send for me. He did not send for Udeozo; he did not send for the priest of Idemili; he did not send for the priest of Eru; he did not send for the priest of Udo nor did he ask the priest of Ogwugwu to come and see him. He has asked Ezeulu. Why? Because they are friends. Or does Ezeulu think that their friendship should stop short of entering each other's houses? Does he want the white man to be his friend only by word of mouth? Did not our elders tell us that as soon as*

> *we shake hands with a leper he will want an embrace? It seems to me that Ezeulu has shaken hands with a man of white body'. (p.143)*

This way of expressing oneself shows that Nwaka embodies the pride side of the Igbo community. He starts this from the event about the land dispute with Okperi.

Moreover, the narration gives the perspective of the Christians of Umuaro as opposed to what Ezeulu thinks. At least, one can guess this through their interpretations of the content of the Bible. Mr Goodcountry preaches:

> *'If we are Christians, we must be ready to die for the faith,' he said. 'You must be ready to kill the python as the people of the rivers killed the iguana. You address the python as father. It is nothing, but a snake, a snake that deceived our first mother, Eve. If you are afraid to kill it do not count yourself a Christian.' (p. 47)*

Killing the python means that they do not accept the existence of other gods, though the new one has found it there. This perspective of the Christians of Umuofia does not accept difference. But the discourse develops the perspective of tolerance and difference through some of these Christians like Unachukwu:

> *Mr Goodcountry's teaching about the sacred python gave Moses the first opportunity to challenge him openly. To do this he used not only the Bible but, strangely enough for a convert, the myths of Umuaro. He spoke with great power for, coming as he did from the village which carried the priesthood of Idemili, he knew perhaps more than others what the python was. On the other side, his great knowledge of the Bible and his sojourn in Onitsha which was the source of the new religion gave him confidence. He told the new teacher bluntly that neither the Bible nor the catechism asked converts to kill the python, a beast full of ill omen. (pp. 47-48)*

A perspective not very different from the Christians' about the acceptance of the neighbour with his difference is the perspective of Winterbottom. To his mind, the white administration, mainly Winterbottom, has understood the philosophy of the traditional Igbo society. Winterbottom speaks about the war as he pleases. But the narrator shows his "voidance" as he speaks about the Okperi-Umuaro war. His ignorance of the traditional

society brings him to appoint Ezeulu on behalf of his witness against his people. But he fails to understand why Ezeulu refuses. He considers this refusal as a sign of not recognising the white man's already established power. The discourse puts in contrast his will of showing the white administration's effort of doing well for the natives in their new ruling system with its steps towards corruption. James Ikedi seems to be an illustration of this through the narrating:

> *There was at that time a big programme of road and drainage construction following a smallpox epidemic. Chief James Ikedi teamed up with a notorious and drunken road overseer who had earned the title of Destroyer of Compounds from the natives. The plans for the roads and drains had long been completed and approved by Captain Winterbottom himself and as far as possible did not interfere with people's homesteads. But this overseer went around intimidating the villagers and telling them that unless they gave him money the new road would pass through the middle of their compound. When some of them reported the matter to their chief he told them there was nothing he could do; that the overseer was carrying out the orders of the white man and anyone who had no money to give should borrow from his neighbour or sells his goats or yams. (p. 57)*

The mood and the voice of the novel are organised in a sort of "selective-omniscient narrating"[13]. The selective-omniscient narrating is a narration with "restricted point of view". The main difference is that in *Things Fall Apart*, one has to do with a single restricted point of view whereas *Arrow of God* has to do with multiple points of view. This can be explained semiotically as the expression of the effect of the invaders' incrustation in the African society.

Technical support of this analysis is the distance expression in the narrative. The narrator mixed what Genette calls "imitated discourse" and "narratized discourse". He mixes words by characters and gestures by them. This mixture governs the narration in *Arrow of God*. An example of gestures can be given from the very beginning of the novel. The seeing of the moon, the beating of the ogene, the roasting of the yam, the prayer... At the end of the prayer about the new moon the narrator carries out as follows: 'He put the ofo back among the ikenga and the okposi, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and returned to his place.'

[13] Norman Friedman, cited by Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p.187.

This narratized speech is mixed with the transposed one with here and there the reported speech. The reader comes across several narrative instances that present the story as entangled with the narrating in such a way that the narrating influences the course of the story. This effect on the story comes from the fact that the narrator presents extreme closeness of story to narrating in order to hide the temporal displacement that he organises and his subtle and simultaneous report of feelings and thoughts.

3.3 Partial conclusion

Genette's work on *A la recherche du temps perdu* has been the window through which I glance at the structural organisation of Achebe's first and third novels. Though the units are not physically transferable from Proust's work to Achebe's, mainly at the narrating level, simply because of the difference of type of the narrator, I can nevertheless state structural unit correspondences that help to receive the two narratives in the sphere of novels. The fact that anachronies are distinguished in these books as theorised by Genette, combined with the narrator's different functions exposed in my analysis, I can say that these novels respond to many of the criteria-features developed by structuralists in general and by Genette in particular. However, orality finds its place in Achebe's work and fortifies it. There is the point where critics address a rigid distinction that sticks literacy only to novel and orality to story in terms of tale or the like.

Obviously, with the way these novels have been organised by Achebe, that sort of rigid distinction that some critics aspire to establish between the story as a product of orality and the novel as a product of literacy breaks down when applied to the African novel. It breaks down because it does not accommodate the poetics of narrative synthesis in which oral and literate narrative forms and styles inter-fuse. For example, the sort of formal distance that Walter Benjamin (1969) assumes when he claims that "what differentiates the novel from

other forms of prose literature - the fairy tale, the legend, even the novella - is that it neither comes from oral tradition nor goes into it" would be of little validity when applied to the African novel. In Benjamin's view, "the storyteller takes what he tells from experience - his own or that reported by others . . . the novelist has isolated himself". In the African novel, the embedding of the story produces a totally different narrative and epistemological situation. Achebe, as a novelist is a conscious individual artist in the sense of Walter, but he is mediated by communal consciousness and impulses arising from group sensibility through the many stories he used mainly in *Things Fall Apart*. These stories as used as proverbs by Achebe are drawing upon group habits of speech and narration as a means of giving shape to experience, drawing upon what could be called the populist impulse in art and life in Obiechina's terms. Like the use of proverbs proper, the embedding of stories in the novels is based upon two main principles of the African oral tradition - authority and association - through which an idea is given validity by being placed side by side with another idea that bears the stamp of communal approval and by its being linked to the storehouse of collective wisdom (1993).

This central position given to the story in African context by Achebe in the shaping of his literary world and works further justifies its being made to loom so large in the context of "oral-written" interactions as they are presented in these novels. Each story, as shown in the example of *Things Fall Apart*, is a complete unit, self-contained and adequate within its genre but functioning, in an attributive context, as an extension of some essential aspect of the plot of the main narrative into which some insight is being fed and cumulatively the complication of the plot added.

In Genette's own application of his theory, he came across technical distraction made by Proust. In the study of these two novels, there is no technical distraction in these novels. In Things Fall Apart, the narrator presents the society with an outside change that distorts the

order and its possible natural change. Structurally stating things, the narrator finds himself following the principles related to Igbo ontological evidence. This light is shed from what the discourse says about and around Okonkwo in a kind of obstinacy. A less clear obstinacy governs the narration of *Arrow of God* in which the narrator brings the reader in a shifting way connected events about the coexistence of the Igbo community and the white administration. In sum, Achebe creates in these novels a coherent picture of harmony being lost as the consequences of colonialism. And in the presentation of the units that support this comment, the author maintains a tone of the golden middle: no striving and no rising of the voice.

CHAPTER FOUR: ORDER, DURATION, FREQUENCY, MOOD, AND VOICE IN *NO LONGER AT EASE*

I have said in the previous chapter that there are some connections between *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. Still they both have connections with *No Longer at Ease*. In the present chapter, the analysis shows an anachonic value that nearly outcast the main character. It is here that a real temporal distortion appears rendering the signified interrupted by the signifier without reaching its end. The temporal function of the narrative is perfectly assumed in *No Longer at Ease*.

4.1 Order in *No Longer at Ease*

The study of temporal order of a narrative is to compare the order in which events are arranged in the narrative discourse with the order of succession these same events have in the story. This helps reconstruct the story in a way that uncovers the blurring of its meanings. On this account, *No Longer at Ease* is almost in its entirety an anachrony.

The narrative opens with a court case about Obi Okonkwo: 'Every available space in the court-room was taken up. There were almost as many people standing as sitting. The case had been the talk of Lagos for a number of weeks and on this last day anyone who could possibly leave his job was there to hear the judgement.' Just after this introduction about the judgement, the narration comes with the precision that the trial is not at its very beginning: 'In fact, some weeks ago when the trial began, Mr Green, his [Obi's] boss, who was one of the Crown witnesses, had also said something about a young man of great promise.' Soon after comes the narration about an emergency meeting held by the Umuofia Progressive Union (UPU) about the case of Obi over which 'In recent weeks the Union had met several times...'.

'But this morning the case was lost. That was why another emergency meeting had been convened. In the narration of that last meeting is inserted the event of the preparation of Obi's departure for England: 'Obi's going to England caused a big stir in Umuofia. A few days before his departure to Lagos his parents called a prayer meeting at their home.'

All these events of the first chapter of the book are anachronies of different temporal dimensions. In their discourse is inserted the beginning of the story in a blurred way: '... Umuofia is an Ibo village in Eastern Nigeria and the home-town of Obi Okonkwo. It is not a particularly big village but its inhabitants call it a town. They are very proud of its past when it was the terror of their neighbours... This beginning of the story is inserted in a series of meeting that are temporally non-contiguous but juxtaposed by the narration.

Then, a series of events starts in the narration as they occur in the story, with an interpolation of some that the narrator leaves to the care of the reader. After this mixing opening, the narrative carries out with Obi's sojourn in England in a false start, since other analeptic events are inserted: ' But the Nigeria he returned to was in many ways different from the picture that he had carried in his mind during those four years. There were many things he could no longer recognize, and others – like the slums of Lagos – which he was seeing for the first time.' With the evocation of the name Lagos, the narration returns to details about it with the help of an old soldier whose name brings the narration to have a detour to the different wars suffered. A brief detour is also made to Obi's sojourn in Lagos when he is travelling to England.

So, the stories in their distorting role make the discourse progress, as such 'Some years, later as Obi, newly returned from England, stood beside his car at night in one of the less formidable of Lagos slum areas waiting for Clara to take yards of material to her seamstress, his mind went over his earlier impressions of the city.' This completing analepsis

that Genette calls 'return' fills in, after the occurrence of the event, an earlier gap in the narrative. Such gaps are ranged in the category of ellipses. I will come back on this aspect later.

Carrying on with the collection of events, it is now that Obi's meeting with Clara is evoked: 'The affair between Obi and Clara could not strictly be called love at first sight. They met at a dance organized by the London branch of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons at the St Pancras Town Hall. Clara had come with a student who was fairly well known to Obi and who introduced them. Obi was immediately struck by her beauty and followed her with his eyes round the wall.' But I must make it clear that the narration is here about the voyage back from England: 'They did not meet again until almost eighteen months later at the Harrington Dock in Liverpool. For it happened that they were returning to Nigeria the same date on the same boat' (p.19). And the details of the voyage start:

> *'The boat left the docks at 11 a.m. For the rest of the day Obi kept to himself, watching the sea or reading in his cabin. It was his first sea voyage, and he had already decided that it was infinitely better than flying'... He woke up the following morning.... When the gong sounded for breakfast his appetite was as keen as the morning air... At first the Bay of Biscay was very calm and collected. The boat was now heading towards a horizon where the sky was light... Obi returned to his cabin and was going straight to bed when someone tapped at his door. He opened and it was Clara.... The Madeiras were now quite close...' It is in these gradual details that the voyage back is narrated till the organisation of the reception in honour of Obi.*

After his arrival, obi pays a visit to Umiofia while waiting for the result of his recruitment interview. Another lining up of events starts with sorrow: 'Obi's homecoming was not in the end the happy event he had dreamt of. The reason was his mother... He had heard of her long periods of illness... His father too was all bones...' From these events, the narration jumps to Obi's civil service: 'Obi's first day in the Civil Service was memorable, almost as memorable as his first day at the bush mission school in Umuofia nearly twenty years before...' and continues with an ordinary UPU meeting. That meeting adds Obi's

sorrow: '... You may ask why I am saying all this. I have heard that you are moving around with a girl of doubtful ancestry and even thinking of marrying her...' Obi leapt to his feet with rage... ' (p.75).

Up to now I have examined the retrospective localisation of analepses as if they always involved a unique event to be placed at one single point in past history. In fact, most of the retrospective events listed above, though dealing with individual events, some of them refer to iterative ellipses, that is, ellipses dealing with a single portion of elapsed time but with several portions taken as if they were alike and to some extent repetitive. Thus, the dance organised by the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons at St Pancras Town Hall refers to any day during their sojourn in England when the encounter between Obi and Clara happens. But for the reader, its localisation is on the order of the species of events that are recounted by the analepsis in iterative nature:

> *They did not meet again until almost eighteen months later at the Harrington Dock in Liverpool. For it happened that they were returning to Nigeria the same day on the same boat... Obi returned to his cabin and was going straight to bed when someone tapped at the door. He opened and it was Clara.*
> *'I noticed you were not looking very well', she said in Ibo. So, I brought you some tablets of Avomine.' She gave him an envelope with half a dozen of white tablets in it. 'Take two before you go to bed.*
> *'Thank you very much. It is so kind of you.' Obi was completely overwhelmed and all the coldness and indifference he had rehearsed deserted him. 'But,' he stammered, 'am I not depriving you of er...' (P.21)*

In the story, this event is in its order of occurrence. But some pages before, in the narration, one can read:

> *Some years later as Obi, newly returned from England, stood beside his car at night in one of the less formidable of Lagos slum areas waiting for Clara to take yards of material to her seamstress, his mind went over his earlier impressions of the city. He had not thought places like this stood side by side with the cars, electric lights and brightly dressed girls (P.13).*

This event which comes in the discourse before the many about the encounter between Obi and Clara contains reminiscence that allows the subtle double lining up with analepses related to their love affairs and they return from England. That reminiscence is itself about the filthiness of Lagos at that time. The narrating then comes with the UPU December meeting which is the first Obi actually attends and which occasions another sorrow for Obi who has already started office. Things are now taken in the discourse as they occur in the story in Lagos with quick detours to Umuofia where the central matter is Obi's love affairs with Clara coupled with the sickness of his mother. This sort of parallel narration brings the reader alternately to Obi's service, his mother's sickness and his situation with Clara until her departure for an unrevealed place and his mother's death.

The period of sorrow is felt as one of guilt that he manages by the help of his remembrance of the story of King David. 'When the period of guilt was over Obi felt like metal that has passed through fire. Or, as he himself put it in of his spasmodic entries in his diary: 'I wonder why I am feeling like a brand-new snake just emerged from its slough...' All this is an illusion. 'And that is not the only illusion we have...' A season of scholarships brings reality: 'Then one day someone brought twenty pounds. As the man left, Obi realized he could stand no more. People say that one gets used to these things, but he had not found it like that at all... Meanwhile the other man used the telephone outside Obis door to call a police van.'

This has been a series of analepses that come together with the main narrative. Here, the particularity in *No Longer at Ease,* in the management of Genette's terminologies about first narrative and second narrative, is that the narrative that stands as the first is so intertwined with the one that stands the second and together they are analepses. The first narrative is organised around the UPU for which Obi is the focussing element to whom is

attached the love affair with its imbricate connection with that first narrative. The imbrications are in fact favoured by the temporal simultaneity of the two narratives so that the reader cannot dissociate them without altering the main narrative. The story of Clara, in Barthes's terms, is a satellite that is not removable. The disappearance of Clara is the temporal end of the analepsis whereas the one that is considered as the first narrative is still open at the end of the narrative, the discourse having mentioned it at its very beginning. These aspects are what entail cohesiveness to the narrative. But this structure of close connection between those units can render the analysis of duration difficult.

4.2 Duration in *No Longer at Ease*

As I have just mentioned it at the end of the previous section, the idea of duration of the narrative carries difficulties. For the account of these difficulties Genette wrote:

> *It is obviously apropos of duration that these difficulties are so strongly felt... comparing the duration of a narrative that of the story it tells is a trickier operation, for the simple reason no one can measure the duration of a narrative. What we spontaneously call such can be nothing more ... than the time needed for reading; but it is too obvious that reading time varies according to particular circumstances, and that, unlike what happens in movies, or even in music, nothing here allows us to determine a normal speed of execution Genette (1980, p.86).*

So, the notion of duration is not measuring variations in it with respect an inaccessible equality of duration between narrative and story. It should rather be a dimensional relationship that Genette calls speed:

> *By "speed" we mean the relationship between a temporal dimension and a spatial dimension... the speed of a narrative will be defined by the relationship between a duration (that of the story, measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days, months and years) and a length (that of the text, measured in lines and in pages). The isochronous narrative, our hypothetical reference zero, would thus be here a narrative with unchanging speed, without accelerations or slowdowns, where the relationship duration-of-story/length-of-narrative would remain always steady. (Genette, 1980, pp.87-88)*

As far as *No Longer at Ease* is concerned, its narrative articulations do not coincide with the physical organisation of the material. The discourse started with the judgement event whose duration is about four weeks with a physical coverage of about four pages when one ignores the digressive details about Umuofia and the Lagos section of Umuofian Progressive Union which holds a meeting on the same case. The narrator embroidered the narration at the level of that meeting by coming with a summary about the justification of the phrase 'an only palm-fruit' used to designate Obi. Through this justification, he mentions what can be considered as the beginning of the story:

> *The old man who broke the kola nuts in Lagos and called Obi Okonkwo an only palm-fruit was not, however, thinking of Okonkwo's family. He was thinking of the ancient and war-like village of Umuofia. Six or seven years ago Umuofians abroad had formed their Union with the aim of collecting money to send some of their brighter young men to study in England. They taxed themselves mercilessly. The first scholarship under this scheme was awarded to Obi Okonkwo five years ago, almost to the day... (P.6)*

This event is the beginning of the story coupled with another analepsis of the same period, notably the prayer meeting organised in Umuofia just before Obi's departure for England. These close events go back to five years with a physical coverage of five pages.

Then the discourse continues not with his trip to England nor his sojourn there. But rather the duration of his sojourn followed by a shifting narration between his reminiscence about Lagos as he has heard it from a soldier 'As a boy in the village of Umuofia' and Obi's short sojourn in Lagos before his departure for England. And just after some digressive details of this short sojourn, the narrating carries on with an analepsis drawn from the return:

> *Some years later as Obi, newly returned from England, stood beside his car at night in one of the less formidable of Lagos slum areas waiting for Clara to take yards of material to her seamstress, his mind went over his earlier impressions of the city. He had not thought places like this stood side by side with the cars, electric lights and brightly dressed girls.*
> *His car was parked close to a wide-open storm drain from which came a very strong smell of rotting flesh. It was the remains of a dog which had no doubt been run over by a taxi... (pp.13-14)*

This reminiscence about the slum areas of Lagos is narrated with some details about traffic away to Ikoyi, about the Civil Service. The discourse then comes back to the first encounters between Obi and Clara with some details about the voyage back to Nigeria:

> *The boat left the docks at 11 a.m. ... At first the Bay of Biscay was very calm and collected. The boat was now heading towards a horizon where sky was light, seeming to hold out a vague promise of sunshine. The sea's circumference was no longer merged with the sky, but stood out in deep clear contrast like a giant tarmac from which God's aeroplane might take off... (p.21)*

The narration of the voyage back covers eight pages. But there is no mention of the duration. Nevertheless, I can come with suppositions to give the duration. First, mention is made about the occasion at which Obi and Clara has met for the first; their second encounter is eighteen months later at Harrington Dock. If I suppose that the dance party is in December between Christmas and New Year Day, then their second meeting at the dock is in July, eighteen months later. They arrive in Nigeria in October, three months later. So, the voyage would have lasted three months. Four of those eight pages contain some scenes, the reading of which seems to take longer if not much longer than the story time that such scenes are supposed to be covering. An attempt to slow down these scenes comes with some descriptive pauses that do not succeed in slowing down the scenes; they rather delay the end of these scenes. This is what renders the reading longer than the story.

The same trend continues with less descriptive pauses in the narration of the meeting of the interviewing Commission for Obi's recruitment, in which narration mention is made about 'Obi's theory about the public service of Nigeria and Joseph's reaction about Obi's behaviour during the interview. This analepsis is dominated by scenes which leave place just after to summaries about the short visit that he pays to Umuofia while waiting for the result of his interview, with few line scenes that come here and there.

The end of the interview should be followed in a time or in another in the narration by the result of that interview. But, rather, the narration comes about Obi's first day in the Civil Service, some twenty pages after, for, maybe, a week. I suppose a week from the duration of Obi's short visit to Umuofia: 'You say you have only four days to stay with us?' 'Yes,' said Obi (P.54). And later on, it is mentioned that the short visit is in November. So, there is almost a month spent in the story between Obi's arrival and the December meeting of the UPU (Lagos Branch). The narration of this period of time of the story takes three chapters and about forty-five pages in the discourse. It is to signal that this number of pages contain ellipses, which, like the other ones throughout the narrative are implicit. They are implicit ellipses in that the reader feels them through gaps in the narration. An example has been given about the event of Obi's recruitment in the Civil Service. The narration, after mentioning the recruitment, goes into other events before coming back to the recruitment, not to signal, but to present the candidate in his first day at duty:

> *Obi had already met Mr Green that morning. As soon as he had arrived he had been taken in to be introduced to him. Without rising from his seat or offering his hand Mr Green muttered something to the effect that Obi would enjoy his work; one, if he wasn't bone-lazy, and two, if he was prepared to use his loaf. 'I'm assuming that you have one to use,' he concluded.*
> *A few hours later he appeared in Mr Omo's office where Obi had been posted for the day. Mr Omo was the Administrative Assistant. He had put nearly thirty years' service into thousand of files, and would retire, or so he said, when his son had completed his studies in England. Obi was spending his first day in Mr Omo's office to learn a few things about office administration (p.59)*

That event is elided and the narration follows with the evocation of Obi's getting his letter of appointment and a new car for service, and the narration carries on with the invitation the Honourable Sam Okoly addresses Obi and Clara, with a detail about Obi's first use of the car.

In such a narration, the attention of the reader must remain entire since the discourse carries a mixture of analepses that the reader should dispatch. And this dispatching is what the

critic needs to deal with the temporal relationship between the story and the discourse. For the present case, the narration reduces some full event to just a phrase or a sentence. In such cases, the narration seems longer than the real duration of the story: 'Obi brought a Morris Oxford a week after he received his letter of appointment. Mr Green gave him a letter to the dealers saying that he was a Senior Civil Servant entitled to a car advance. Nothing more was required. He walked into the shop and got a brand-new-car' (p.60). This example contains two close but different events. In fact, the letter of appointment is received a week before the receiving of the new car. But both events are mixed in a single paragraph. Though evoked, the duration of the story is blurred by the narration in this paragraph. This technical choice ties different units to form a whole that carries the meaning or I can say the message conveyed. Obi, the unit that plays a role of hyphen in the narrative, has been taken by the waves that he is aware of. In a common saying, we say that Obi has been drowned in a dry river. The role of hyphen I have just evoked is strengthened by the relation of frequency between the discourse and the story.

4.3- Frequency in *No Longer at Ease*

The relation of frequency is a relation of repetition between narration and story. The story, as an entity which contains units in a given temporality, is narrated in a way or another so as to deal with a given event in a number of times different from its normal occurrence. The four types of narrating identified by Genette (1980) are not in practice very clearly isolated in narratives, as I have already mentioned. In the case of *No Longer at Ease*, as have been almost the cases in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, the singulative narrating is the most used. Most of the events come through singulative narrating. Obi and Clara, for example, meet once in London during a dance party. The narrating evokes it once as their first meeting. They meet again eighteen months later as evoked once in the narrating and this is the

second meeting. However, something links the second encounter to the first. It is this link which renders the narrating repeating in some way.

In fact, at the first meeting 'Obi was immediately struck by her [Clara's] beauty and followed her with his eyes round the hall. In the end he succeeded in getting a dance with her... As soon as the dance ended she fled... (p.19). This first contact does not allow Obi to clearly express his intention; thus, the necessity of having another is obvious. In that sense, the evocation of encounter is the continuation of the first in order to progress in the formulation of his intention. So, if the narrating of the physical frame is singulative, the narrating is repetitive as to the rationale for the narrating because, for the reader, it is easy to guess Obi's intention. Such type of singulative narrating are legion is the narrative.

Another example of almost the same type is about the monthly meetings of the Umuofia Progressive Union and Obi's visit to Umuofia: 'The Umupfia Progressive Union, Lagos Branch, held its meetings on the first Saturday of every month...' Each meeting is a singular event that the narrating treats as such. Nevertheless, the evocation of the meeting of November is repetitive: 'Obi did not attend the November meeting because he was visiting Umuofia at the time...' There are two repetitions in the same sentence though the case of the November meeting is actually evoked for the first time in the narrating, the meeting itself being elided in the same narrating.

Some typical examples of repetition can be found in the narrative. The first one is a repetition of statement. At the beginning of the story, the narration mentions the way the Umuofia Progressive Union arrives to send Obi abroad for studies. The narrating goes as: '... Six or seven years ago Umuofians abroad had formed their Union with the aim of collecting money to send some of their brighter young men to study in England. They taxed themselves mercilessly. The first scholarship under this scheme was awarded to Obi Okonkwo five years

ago almost to the day...' From this narrating, the statement 'They taxed themselves mercilessly' is repeated in the narrating in a reported speech of on page 89: 'They had taxed themselves mercilessly to raise eight hundred pounds to send him to England'. Such repetitions, as I mentioned, come with comments on it in terms of showing varying of point of view. In the case of the evoked repetition here, the narrator is expressing his thought about it:

> *And if one thought objectively of the matter – as though it related to Mr B and not to one's self – could one blame those poor men for being critical of a senior service man who appeared reluctant to pay twenty pounds a month? They had taxed themselves mercilessly to raise eight hundred pounds to send him to England. Some of them earned no more than five pounds a month. He earned nearly fifty. They had wives and school-going children; he had none. After paying the twenty pounds he would have thirty left. And very soon he would have an increment which alone was as big as some people's salary... (P.89).*

It is these comments which come with some statements not in terms of iterative narrative which is a synthetic narrating of the events that occur and reoccur in the course of such a series with iterative units, but rather a simple recall that may foster logical connection with what the narrating now deals with. The units in combination share some diachronic boundaries even if the narration hardly mentions them in the present case of *No Longer at Ease* in which space is made to the reader to guess what Genette (1980) calls distinguishing characteristic or 'determination'.

In sum, there is no iterative narration in *No Longer at Ease* as such. The analogy supposed to be in the examples of events given above does not suffice to call them iterative. These events are evoked in another way as recalls to link them to further descriptions. This is the case of the connection between the UPU meetings of November and that of December. In fact, the meeting of November is an entire event that is not narrated and which comes in the narrating as a recall just to open the description of the meeting of December. Achebe has played with the system of relationships that is established between two notion clarified by Genette (1980) from Ferdinand de Saussure's notion of "problem of identities". The narrated event is an element of the story whereas the narrative statement is the text part of that narrated

event. The possibilities of repetition are the essential of what determines frequency of a narrative. And in the present case no clear narrated event is repeated. Only some narrative statements are repeated without previously being physical narrated event. Such event is elided without giving the impression of being so. This is what I call playing with the repetitive relationship. These considerations are abstractly condensed with narrative mood and voice to produce expected effect on the reader.

4.4 Mood in *No Longer at Ease*

It is no use mentioning that *No Longer at Ease* is written in third person narration. As such the notion of distance related to mood study would be in relation with the characteristic of that type of narration (Perspective is an aspect of mood that I would not evoke here). The notion of distance as mentioned earlier is related to the narrator's closeness to he tells. The four notions that express distance are most of the time mixed in a narrative as what has been said so far about *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*.

The narrative opens with an inner narratized speech about Obi Okonkwo: 'For three or four weeks Obi Okonkwo had been steeling himself against this moment. And when he walked into the dock that morning he thought he was fully prepared... This inner narratized speech as formulated by the narrator does show Obi but does not tell his point of view about the dock. Then the narrator continues not with a narratized speech, but rather a reported speech in which Mr Justice William Galloway is turned at derision by the narrator while he seems, according to me, to turn Mr Adeyemi:

> *'This court begins at nine o'clock. Why are you late?'*
> *Whenever Mr Justice William Galloway, Judge of the High Court of Lagos and the Southern Cameroons, looked at a victim he fixed him with his gaze as a collector fixes his insect with formalin. He lowered his head like a charging ram and looked over his gold-rimmed spectacles at the lawyer....*
> *The judge continued to look at him for a long time. Then he said very abruptly:*

'All right, Mr Adeyemi. I accept your excuse. But I must say I'm getting tired of these constant excuses about the problem of locomotion.'

The organisation of a court does not first allow the audience to see who is late and who is not late. This character of Mr Justice William Galloway is an expression of the narrator's point of view on the court and in advance how it functions.

In his narrative mood choices, the narrator once again mixes points of view without feigning to show his. Here is a narrative of words that the narrator presents in a narratized speech: 'In fact, some weeks ago when the trial first began, Mr Green, his [Obi's] boss, who was one of the Crown witnesses, had also said something about a young man of great promise'. The narrator, by insisting on the words 'education' and 'promise' expresses the point of view of Mr Green in terms of quality that should prevent such a young man from being concerned with the present trouble. And the narrator gives precision about the spirit in which Obi actually is: 'And Obi had remained completely unmoved. Mercifully he had recently lost his mother, and Clara had gone out of his life. The two events following closely on each other had dulled his sensibility and left him a different man, able to look words like 'education' and 'promise' squarely in the face.' This precision on Obi is in fact the narrator's point of view related to the fact that he knows everything about him.

In some cases, though the narrator may know all, he can decide to give the floor to a character or to characters to express their view so as to bring the reader to guess his. An example can be given with the astonishment of the British Council man with whom Mr Green plays tennis: 'I cannot understand why he did it,' said the British Council man thoughtfully. He was drawing lines of water with his finger on the back of his mist-covered glass of ice-cold beer.' The precision made by the narrator through the description of what the man is doing while speaking to Mr Green is indicative of his point of view. The narrator tries to show

that the case is a joke in the eyes of the British Council man not only for him but also for Mr Green, since he cannot draw with his finger by gazing at Mr Green. If he means business he must seek for attention from his interlocutor. And the reaction of Mr Green shows clearly that every body is aware of the reality: 'I can,' said Mr Green simply. 'What I can't understand is why people like you refuse to face facts.' For him the guilty is not to be sought farther. Apart from diseases and 'worst climate', Europeans have 'sapped mentally and physically' Obi, the African.

The narrator even goes to show, maybe his point of view about the treatment of the case by Europeans, but mainly at a linguistic level a point of view that shows the absence ceremoniousness that characterises the Europeans way of involving in the discussion about Obi's case:

> *'The fact that over countless centuries the African has been the victim of the worst climate in the world and of very imaginable disease. Hardly his fault. But he has been sapped mentally and physically. We had brought him Western education. But what use is it to him? He is...' he was interrupted by the arrival of another friend.*
> *'Hello, Peter. Hello, Bill.'*
> *'Hello'*
> *'Hello'*
> *'May I join you?'*
> *'Certainly.'*
> *'Most certainly. What are you drinking? Beer? Right. Steward. One beer for this master.'*
> *'What kind, sir?'*
> *'Heineken'*
> *'Yes, sir.'*

Through this scene in reported speech that the narrator has treated without declarative verbs, for the narrator, the absence of meeting ceremoniousness of this kind shows the casualness of relationships in colonial urban society and mainly its lack of the authentic sense of community out of which ceremony grows and allows to prepare the new comer before involving him in the discussion, according to its importance. At this same linguistic level, the narrator shows the club and the UPU as two parallel groups struggling to preserve their

identities. Though Obi can be assimilated to the members of the Club, The UPU members avoid speaking like them:

> *But this man had no following. The men of Umuofia were prepared to fight to the last. They had no illusions about Obi. He was, without doubt, a very foolish and self-willed young man. But this was not the time to go into that. The fox must be chased away first; after that the hen might be warned against wandering into the bush.*

The UPU members know that Obi is most likely to be member of the club on the basis of his language, but their view is that their identity does not allow them to outcast him at once even if he does so by himself:

> *'[...] You may ask why I am saying all this. I have heard that you are moving with a girl of doubtful ancestry, and even thinking of marrying her...'*
> *Obi leapt to his feet trembling with rage. At such times words always deserted him.*
> *'Please sit down, Mr Okonkwo' said the president calmly.*
> *'Sit down, my foot!' Obi shouted in English. 'This is preposterous! I could take you to court for that...for that...for that...'*
> *'You may take me to court when I have finished.'*
> *I am not going to listen to you anymore. I take back my request. I shall start paying you back at the end of this month. Now, this minute! But don't you dare interfere in my affairs again. And if this is what meet about,' he said in Ibo, 'you may cut off my two legs if you ever find them here again.' He made for the door. A number of people tried to intercept him. 'Please sit down.' 'Cool down.' 'There is no quarrel.' Everybody was talking at once. Obi pushed his way through and made blindly for his car with half a dozen people at his heels pleading that he return.*
> *'Drive off!' he screamed at the driver as soon as he got into the car. (P.75)*

The narrator put together words by the UPU members and words by Obi, drawing the reader's attention on the linguistic handling and the short patience of Obi to wait until the president finishes.

The narrator succeeds in presenting these two views without showing his. The reader is left embarrassed as for the contrast between Obi's attempt to dissuade the president by using the term 'preposterous' and by not waiting to tell his truth if he has any. A few pages after, the narrator brought his comments for which he thinks to be objective:

> *And if one thought objectively of the matter – as though it related to Mr B. and not to one's self – could one blame those poor men for being critical of a senior service man who appeared reluctant to pay twenty pounds a month? They had taxed themselves*

> *mercilessly to raise eight hundred pounds to send him to England. Some of them earned no more than five pounds a month. He earned nearly fifty. They had wives and school-going children; he had none... (p.89).*

If this clarification is made by the narrator to show the logic of thought of the Union, he at the same time narratized obi's admission of the Union's position while he is likely to sound like saying that obi belongs now to the European club:

> *Obi admitted that his people had a sizeable point. What they did not know was that, having laboured in sweat and tears to enrol their kinsman among the shining élite, they had to keep him there. Having made him a member of an exclusive club whose members greet one another with 'How's the car behaving?' did they expect him to turn round and answer: I'm sorry, but my car is off the road. You see I couldn't pay my insurance premium.'? That would be letting the side down in a way that was quite unthinkable. Almost as unthinkable as a masked spirit in the old Ibo society answering another's esoteric salutation: 'I'm sorry, my friend, but I don't understand your strange language. I'm but a human being wearing a mask.' No, these things could not be (P.90).*

Of course, these things cannot be, since Mr Green, in his justification of how the African comes to be 'corrupt through and through', seems to be wearing a mask: "The fact that over countless centuries the African has been the victim of the worst climate in the world and of very imaginable disease. Hardly his fault. But he has been sapped mentally and physically. We had brought him Western education. But what use is it to him?" That mask is related to the fact that his bluntness in the rethinking of what is said in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* about Africa in terms of primitive tribes that need pacification is not as clear as one can expect it. The statement quoted evokes education by putting into interrogation its use, for sure, in terms of capacity of development. This point of view governs the entirety of the organisation of *No Longer at ease*. This is the main reason why the narrative is in whole an anachrony. At a given stage a little comparison with the two other novels will be necessary in order to show some chronology. The notion of voice may help to carry that comparison.

4.5 Voice in *No Longer at Ease*

Voice as an analytical unit in structural study of narrative sounds abstract whenever one considers the relationship that it establishes between the narrator and the story and the characters involved. This brings the analyst to determine the nature of the narrator from his position vis-à-vis of the story he tells. In Genette's theory, he distinguished heterodiegetic narrator and homodiegetic narrator according to whether the narrator is absent from the story he tells or present in it as one of its protagonists.

The narrator in *No Longer at Ease*, as the narrators in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, is heterodiegetic. This nature demands omniscience from such narrators as narrating ability and state that together allow him to portray the relationship between him and the other elements of the narrative. It is in the attempt to reduce the abstraction that the relationship between the narrator and the characters vis-à-vis of the story that he tells is always organised, whoever the theorist, in a tripartite format so as to be able to speak about it concretely. I do not intend to stretch here that tripartite organisation; I simply want to signal that it is art that governs the different terminologies used. And Genette, in identifying the functions of the narrator, reduces the abstraction of the relationship concerned here.

As Genette (1980) said it, the narrative function is tightly connected to the status of narrator. Apart from this almost natural function which is built in any narrative, the novel manifests three important functions: the communication function, the testimonial function and the ideational function.

The communication function, testimonial function and ideational function manifest themselves together in *No Longer at Ease* at moments when the narrator wants to express that relationship between him and the characters. Dealing with Obi's intention to have an overdraft, the narrator ends his description about Charles's attitude in his letter to Obi in the

following terms: '... Charles's attitude was undoubtedly the healthiest in these circumstances. If one didn't laugh, one would have to cry. It seemed that was the way Nigeria was built.' Through this example the function is ideological whereas the following passage which has already been quoted in other circumstances portrays the testimonial function:

> *And if one thought objectively of the matter – as though it related to Mr B. and not to one's self – could one blame those poor men for being critical of a senior service man who appeared reluctant to pay twenty pounds a month? They had taxed themselves mercilessly to raise eight hundred pounds to send him to England. Some of them earned no more than five pounds a month. He earned nearly fifty. They had wives and school-going children; he had none. After paying the twenty pounds he would have thirty left. And very soon he would have an increment which alone was as big as some people's salary (P.89).*

A perfect example of the combination of these three functions is shown in the paragraph that follows the above one, which has also been quoted in other circumstances:

> *What they did not know was that, having laboured in sweat and tears to enrol their kinsman among the shining élite, they had to keep him there. Having made him a member of an exclusive club whose members greet one another with 'How's the car behaving?' did they expect him to turn round and answer: I'm sorry, but my car is off the road. You see I couldn't pay my insurance premium.'? That would be letting the side down in a way that was quite unthinkable. Almost as unthinkable as a masked spirit in the old Ibo society answering another's esoteric salutation: 'I'm sorry, my friend, but I don't understand your strange language. I'm but a human being wearing a mask.' No, these things could not be (P.90).*

This highly metaphoric passage combines the function of the narrator with a direct addressing of the narratee, certifying the attitude by Obi as being the one related to the new identity he embodies: 'Having made him a member of an exclusive club...' However, it is to be noticed that these functions are not expanded in the narrative. This indicates Achebe's will of taking his distant vis-à-vis of the material he creates.

As a heterodiegetic narrative, the narrator is not expected to be involved in the story he tells. However, he gives orientations in his descriptions so as to deserve his omniscience with a distance that seems to be annihilated by internal vision that the reader may have from the

narrator's presentations of the different events and their connections with the different protagonists. Obi's vision in the narrative is like the voice of an egwugwu at duty. It does not carry acoustically; it carries through the whip that he holds. People are invited to come and watch. But they must avoid daily contacts with the mask. Every egwugwu has its shrine where the mask originates from. In Obi's case, the writer leaves readers to identify his mask's shrine.

4.6 Partial conclusion

No Longer at Ease opens with a rather misleading tone mainly when the reader fails to grasp the limitation of the narrator: 'He wore a smart palm-beach suit and appeared unruffled and indifferent'. These two modifiers present two characters traits that almost recall Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*. Obi Okonkwo's case is however different at two levels: his home town people break in a great deal his palm kernels for him and this fact betrays his attitude of indifference. This renders the narration false-shifting. Whenever the narration concerns Obi it shifts to the Umuofia Progressive Union where the subject is still about Obi. The second level of difference comes from the first. The omniscience of the narrator in *Things Fall Apart* gives priority to the will of Okonkwo, focussing then on a kind of manliness that characterises the organisation of the book. In the case of *No Longer at Ease*, the narrative staff is directed to family consideration with brotherhood as the key orientation. The narrative voice stays overwhelmed by this kinship constructed around Obi. This way of doing softly landmarks the way to corruption that characterises the African countries that have freshly got their independence from the coloniser who leaves the ruling power in hands such as Chief Nanga's which I will come back on in *A Man of the People* in which Odili takes the situation to his

govern. But I would rather mention that Achebe is best concerned with the origin of that corruption which I was dealing with in terms of the shrine of the mask.

Though the narrative voice shows a relative distance vis-à-vis Mr Green as a character in the role which is his in the novel (the mitigate origin of that corruption), he is the one who has the answer to Achebe's question. Even the narrator seems to have been surprised by Mr Green's answer: 'The fact that over countless centuries the African has been the victim of the worst climate in the world and of every imaginable disease. Hardly his fault. But he has been sapped mentally and physically. We have brought him western education. But what use is it to him? He is ...'.This interruption is the expression of the narrator's surprise and at the same time the sense of the story for the reader. Robert M. Wren (1980) seems to have the same reading when he wrote:

> *He [Mr Green] does not finish, nor does he need to. His has been a charitable judgement. He is, after all, a liberal: 'I'm all for equality and all that. I for one would hate to live in South Africa'. He is a liberal with scientific detachment: 'Equality won't alter facts'. It may seem surprising to categorise Green's remarks as liberal and charitable. Yet they are the result of careful rethinking of an old colonial question about African 'primitivism' and 'capacity for development'*[14]

So, the narrator, in focussing Obi as the hero with his kinship relations, portrays Mr Green at the helm of his narration.

The novel contains only one narrative level. There is no embedded narrative. All the analepses form in the discourse a text of the same level. However, these analepses are intertwined in a way that hidden or let me say mix the end and the outset of the story, presenting thus a false linear discourse. Anyway, from my attempts of analysis, the event-story of *No Longer at ease* starts from Obi's sending to England by the UPU members. That event-story evolves in cause-effect series and ends with the attempts of the same UPU

[14] Achebe's World : the Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua Achebe, 1980, Longman Group Limited, p.38

members to solve his trial case. The role of the love affairs between Obi and Clara as an important event cannot be called embedded since it cannot be detached from the event-story. And the discourse presents it intertwined with the main event with its extent and reach contained in that same event-story.

Throughout the narrative, the narrator presents summaries sometimes intermixed with scenes. These scenes are occasions when the narrator reinforces the singulative mood of narration. The singulative narration is the one that dominates the narrative with episodic repetitions of not the narrated events but rather the narrated statements. The narration mentions few certifications of what is being told. But the nature of the descriptions is close to something that looks like testimony. The soft combination of all these techniques confers the work a kind of unity that depicts the decay of that country, decay that recalls the disorganisation of Umuofia and Umuaro respectively in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*.

Following the construction of Obi Okonkwo as the central character, one realises that, though he much expresses his romantic idealism to transform the Ibo society in terms of honesty in what one does and resistance to corruption, Obi finds a society already full of conflicting demands. The big ellipsis of the trip to England is expressive of the fact that there has been wholeness that accompanies him along the trip and even his sojourn about which nothing is said apart from the dance at St Pancras Hall. And this is an event that introduces a new departure before his return home where he loses his core with which he expects to resist corruption.

In what I call trilogy at the very beginning of the present dissertation, Achebe is concerned with showing the process through which Ibo society has lost its wholeness. His organisation of *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* helps to assert it. And that same concern

is in *No Longer at Ease,* with Obi OKonkwo supposed to be grandson of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* and Nwoye Obi's father, signalling Obi's failure to bring back any solution from his high western education. In this so-called trilogy, *Arrow of God* sounds the extension of *Things Fall Apart* as to the colonial rule which is only at its establishment in the novel and one can see the encrustation of the colonial ruling in Winterbottom's zeal at duty in *Arrow of God*.

Another comparative synthesis can be made through the notion of division in these novels to still show their logical connections. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo is shown struggling for the existing unit of his society, but, alone, he fails and disorganises himself on behalf of what he has supposed disgraceful. In *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu suffers a bit more the division between him and his community in the name of the deity he embodies. This last division looks like the one that puts Obi Okonkwo at variance with the UPU members and even his own parents. Generally stating things, I can say that Achebe dealt with a many-sided fragmentation which is a highly structured format in which subtlety reveals the artistic excellence. This excellence comes with other technical choices in *A Man of the People*.

CHAPTER FIVE: ORDER, DURATION, FREQUENCY, MOOD, AND VOICE IN *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE*

If the notion of corruption brings *A Man of the People* to be close to *No Longer at Ease*, Achebe's choice of the type of narrator renders *A Man of the People* a different type of narrative. Of course some character traits and thematic considerations coming from the two novels may match, but the structural analysis will reveal some characteristics that show the writer's talent in coming with aspects of novel as a creative work, an artistic design that not only allows Achebe to teach his people but also presents him as a rational product of western and African cultures.

In the structural appreciation of that narrative, I have the profit of its narrative similarity with the book source of Genette's theory, mainly about the type of narrator. Even if the two books do not share the same historical context, their texture will help me to better carry my investigation. The chapter is divided into six sections, the first five of which are concerned with my structural analysis of the novel and the sixth section a partial conclusion.

5.1- Order in *A Man of the People*

I would like to start from the identification of the events as they occur in the discourse with their temporal position and then the chronology of these events in the story. The novel opens with a certification that makes a zoom on Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga as the one concerned with the coming story: "No one can deny that Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga, M.P., was the most approachable politician in the country. Whether you asked in the city or in

his home village, Anata, they would tell you he was a man of the people. I have to admit this from the outset or else the story I'm going to tell will make no sense."

This paragraph not only introduces the narrative but also sets the stage for the reader to decode the novel from it, for it contains technical pieces of information necessary to the critique, the reader I would say. The testimonial assertive phrase 'no one can deny' informs about the particularity of the narrative mood of the novel. The peculiarity of the narrative instance is signalled by the use of 'I'. Even if nothing signals a possible embedded story, the narrative level sounds intradiegetic. And the phrase 'from the outset or else' is harbinger of order in the narrative time.

The discourse mentions some temporal positions about the story: 1948, M.A. Nanga is a teacher (Odili's teacher at standard three; soon afterwards in 1959, Nanga has gone to politics (Odili enters university), 1962-1963, Odili comes out of the university and starts teaching; and 1964, Nanga is minister, he pays a visit to Anata, Odili goes to Bori, elections...

After the directing opening of the narrative, the discourse carries on with the visit that Chief Nanga pays to his home village Anata where people are wainting for him to the measure of his social rank: 'Five or six dancing groups were performing at different points in the compound. The popular 'Ego Women's party' wore a new uniform of expensive accra cloth. In spite of the din you could still hear as clear as a bird the high-powered voice of their soloist, whom they admiringly nicknamed 'Grammar-phone...' This introduction of the welcoming stage dips the narrator to an internal analepsis about the moment when Nanga is a mere teacher and Odili one of his students.

That analepsis reaches Nanga's going into politics about 1959: 'Nanga must have gone to politics soon afterwards and then won a seat in parliament... At that time I had just entered the University and was very active in the Students' branch of the People's Organization Party.

'Then in 1960 something disgraceful happened in the party and I was completely disillusioned.' That something is another analepsis. The first analepsis lasts about two years and its reach is another analepsis at a time when Nanga "was an unknown back-bencher in the governing P.O.P." The event is about the slump of the international coffee market that leads to a financial crisis at the ewe of a general election. So it is good to use any plan coming from any political adversary, be them members of the government:

> *The minister of Finance at the time was a first-rate economist with a Ph.D. in public finance. He presented to the Cabinet a complete plan for dealing with the situation.*
> *The Prime minister said 'No' to the plan. He was not going to losing the election by cutting down the price paid to coffee planters at that critical moment; the National Bank should be instructed to print fifteen million pounds...*

As the minister's plan is refused, he has been treated as member of a miscreant gang and dismissed and the prime minister wins the election. In the petty, petty reminiscences, the narrator keeps the image of Dr Makinde the ex-Minister of Finance and even his speech of that disgraceful moment:

> *Then the discourse comes back to the visit with a justification of these analeptic detours: 'The reason I have gone into that shameful episode in such detail is to establish the fact that I had no reason to be enthusiastic about Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga who, seeing the empty ministerial seats, had yapped and snarled so shamelessly for the meaty prize.*
> *Then, the Minister arrives. The detail of his arrival occasions some incidents related to circumstantial nicknames one of which goes into an analepsic detail:*
> *The story had it that many years ago when Mr Nwege was a poor, hungry elementary school teacher – that is before he built his own grammar school and became rich but apparently still hungry – he had an old rickety bicycle of the kind the villagers gave the onomatopoeic name of anikilija. Needless to say the brakes were very faulty. One day as he was as he was cascading down a steep slope that led to a narrow bridge at the bottom of the hill he saw a lorry – an unusual phenomenon in those days – coming down the opposite slope. It looked like a head-on meeting on the bridge. In its extremity Mr Nwege had raised his voice and cried to passing pedestrians: 'In the name of God push me down!' apparently nobody did, and so he added an inducement: 'Push me down and my three pence is yours!' From that day 'Push me down and take my three pence' became a popular Anata joke.*

Still in the narration of the details of the arrival of Chief Nanga, the Minister has invited Odili to come to Bori, invitation about which he hesitates. But he finds a good

opportunity to feel free once in Bori. Chief Nanga is going to the United States for two months: 'They are going to give me doctorate degree,' he announced proudly. 'Doctor of Laws, LL.D.' This news fortifies Odili in his going to Bori: 'It was one thing to tease me for accepting the Minister's offer of accommodation, but I just didn't want anybody to think that Odili Samalu was capable of stooping to obtain a scholarship in any underhand way. In the words of my boy, Peter, it was 'next to impossibility'.

The main reason why Odili is going to Bori is not a total secret: 'Andrew knew of course that I had long been planning to go to the capital and he knew about Elsie.' The evocation of the name Elsie at this level of the discourse is an advance notice whose recall follows immediately after in a long analepsis narrated in less than four pages:

> *Elsie was, and for that matter still is, the only girl I met and slept with the same day – in fact within an hour. I know that faster records do exist and am not entering this one for that purpose, nor am I trying to prejudice anyone against Elsie. I only put it down because that was the way it happened. It was during my last term at the University... (P.24)*

The narration of that analepsis leads to the preparation of Odili's trip to the capital, preparation that brings him to his home village:

> *Before making the long journey to the capital, I thought I should first pay a short visit to my home village, Urua, about fifteen miles from Anata. I wanted to see my father about one or two matters but more especially I wanted to take my boy, Peter, to his parents for the holidays as I had promised to do before they let me have him (P.27).*

The narration of that event is an opportunity for the narrator to make a zoom on his who has been a District Interpreter. This function leads the narrator to remember an event about the hatred that the function deserves in those days:

> *But it was not until many years later that I caught one fleeting, terrifying glimpse of just how hated an Interpreter would be. I was in secondary school then and it was our half-term holiday. As my home village was too far away and I didn't want to spend the holiday in school I decided to go with one of my friends to his home which was four or five miles away. His parents were very happy to see us and his mother at once went to boil some yams for us.*

After we had eaten, the father who had gone out to buy himself some snuff came hurrying back. To my surprise he asked his son what he said my name was again.
'Odili Samalu.'
'Of what town?'
There was anxiety, an uneasy tension in his voice. I was afraid.
'Urua, sir,' I said.
'I see,' he said coldly. 'Who is your father?'
'Hezekiah Samalu,' I said and then added quickly, 'a retired District Interpreter.' It was better, I thought, to come out with it all at once and end the prolonged interrogation.
'Then you cannot stay in my house,' he said with that evenness of tone which our people expect a man of substance to use in moments of great crisis when lesser men and women would make loud, empty noises (P.29).

After this detour then arrives the Bori visit. One in Bori, Odili is led to Chief Koko's, Minister of Overseas Training, where there has been an incident:

Chief Koko explained that nothing warmed the belly like hot coffee and proceeded to take a loud and long sip followed by a satisfied Ahh! Then he practically dropped the cup and saucer on the drinks table by his chair and jumped up as though a scorpion had stung him.
'They had killed me,' he wailed, wringing his hands, breathing hard and loud and rolling his eyes. Chief Nanga and I sprang up in alarm and asked together what had happened. But out host kept crying that they had killed him and they could now go and celebrate. 'What is it, S.I.? asked Chief Nanga, putting an arm around the other's neck.
'They have poisoned my coffee,' he said, and broke down completely. Meanwhile the steward, hearing his master's cry, had rushed in.
'Who poisoned my coffee?' he asked.
'Not me-o'
'Call the cook! thundered the Minister. 'Call him here. I will kill him before I die. Go and bring him.... (p.33)

The details about this so-called poisoned coffee lead to the evocation of the OHMS gigantic campaign: 'There was an ironic twist to this incident which neither the ministers seemed to notice. OHMS – Our Home Made Stuff – was the popular name of the gigantic campaign which the government had mounted all over the country to promote the consumption of locally made products' (p.35).

The discourse goes into the details of the event and then carries on with an invitation to an informal dinner by a white American couple comes to pay a visit to Chief Nanga. The

invitation to which Chief Nanga does not attend has been an opportunity for Odili to be satisfied by Jean whose husband does not attend the dinner because of an emergency mission to Abaka.

Then the narrator comes back on his story about Elsie whom he pays a short visit to in the Hospital and takes an appointment for another visit which leads them to Chief Nanga's house where an incident happens that Odili cannot imagine and causes his precipitate leaving: 'When I brought out my suitcase Chief Nanga, who had not said another word since I insulted him, came forward and tried to put a hand on my shoulder in one last effort at reconciliation'... 'I took a taxi to my friend Maxwell's address...' (PP.72-73)

The discourse then comes with Odili's return to Anata where his will has been to mess up things for Chief Nanga by saying what happens to his Girlfriend Edna and even his wife in holidays in the village. In an attempt, he has an accident with the so-called Edna on the way to the Hospital where her mother is being cured. Then comes a sudden piece of information inviting the narrator to Bori for political affairs from where he has come back with a new car and the decision to contest Chief Nanga's seat: 'When I first announced that I was going to contest Chief Nanga's seat everybody laughed – everyone except the wicked outlawed trader, Josiah.'The political events go on with some details. Odili loses the election. Chief Nanga wins his seat and is appointed again Minister. Chief Koko plots the killing of Maxwell whose revenge has been taken by Eunice by killing Chief Koko.

Once the chronology of the events shown as they come in the discourse, I would like now to carry on with their position in the story. This activity consists in identifying the story-event and then the satellites. The story-event is Chief Nanga's ministerial visit to Anata. This event is in 1964. At this moment the narrator, Odili is teacher in Anata in the very grammar school where the Minister is welcomed. The event is mixed with many analepses that recall

the outset of the story. In the temporal division, I evoked the year 1948 when Chief Nanga is teaching in standard three with Odili one of his students. In these reminiscences, the narrator recalls not only Chief Nanga's way to where he is in the story now but also his own trajectory to his job of teacher. In a cause and effect narration, it is this job that allows the narration to progress since the two men's meeting has been favoured by the arrival of the Minister in the very school where Odili teaches. In fact, the Minister's invitation that apparently brings Odili to Bori is a key event in the story. A factual personal decision to go to Bori may have led the narrator to his friend Maxwell's house and the story would have been otherwise.

Thus, *A Man of the People* is organised with a vast movement of intertwinement from that strategically dominant position of the ministerial visit to Anata. The correlate visit of Odili to Bori under the invitation of Chief Nanga is the event that, though closely connected to the ministerial visit, controls the whole of the narrative. The dirty words used against Chief Nanga have their origin in what happens during Odili's sojourn at the ministerial residence in Bori. At the opening pages of the novel, the narrator does not understand why the villagers are so enthusiastic while waiting for the Minister:

> *As I stood in one corner of that vast tumult waiting for the arrival of the Minister I felt intense bitterness welling up in my mouth. Here were silly, ignorant villagers dancing themselves lame and waiting to blow off their gunpowder in honour of one of those who those who have started the country off down the slopes of inflation. I wish for a miracle, for a voice of thunder, to hush this ridiculous festival and tell the poor contemptible people one or two truths. But of course it would be quite useless. They were not only ignorant but cynical. Tell them that this man had used his position to enrich himself and they would ask you – as my father did – if you thought that a sensible man would spit out a juicy morsel that good fortune placed in his mouth.*

This contempt nevertheless leads the narrator to remember this time Mr Nanga the teacher with all his qualities. This goes back to 1948. The narrator connects this reminiscence with another related to Chief Nanga's coming to politics: 'Nanga must have gone into politics soon afterwards and then won a seat in parliament. (It was easy in those days – before we

knew its cash price.) I used to read about him in the papers some years later and even took something like pride in him...' All these sections are coordinated by the remembering activity which is in a way or another analeptic with the difference that while the other mentioned analepses are close, that one remains open until the end of the narrative. An example can be given on page 140:

> *I remember the first time I woke up in the hospital and felt my head turbaned like an Alhaji. Everything seemed unreal and larger than life and I was sure I was dreaming. In the dream I saw Edna and my father and Mama standing around my bed. I also saw, through a gap in the screen, two policemen. But the only thing that was immediate and in focus was that pressure trapped inside the head pounding away in a panic effort of escape...*

When analysing the different events concerned with in the narrative, I noticed a particularity of both the narration and the whole story itself. In fact, as a first person narrative, one may expect to have what Genette calls heterodiegetic analepses, may be, with diegetic contents, but rather there are some analepses that are, for many of them, heterodiegetic and homodiegetic with the same diegetic contents at the same time. That is, most of the analepses supposed to concerned Chief Nanga are in a way or another in connection with the narrator and vice-versa even if it is at the temporal level. For example, the analepsis that goes back to 1948 is related to the past of Chief Nanga as teacher, at the same time, it is the past of the narrator as student, with the direct teacher-learner content. The analepsis related to Nanga's entering into politics is at the same time Odili's entering to university, and the latter reads about the former in papers. This connective co-occurrence of the events is clearly shown in the narrative. In the very opening of the novel, the narrator precipitates his expression of his knowing Chief Nanga: 'No one can deny...' But he has been tactful in messing up the lines to the reader, forcing him to read the book in order to be able to discover not only how 'Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, M.P., was the most approachable politician in the country', but

also why he, Odili, comes 'to admit this from the outset or else the story [he is] going to tell will make no sense'.

It is this conviction of the narrator to have known Chief Nanga which governs the discourse in the choice of the events that must come now and then. The intertwinement of the analepses and the story-event is function of that feeling of knowing Chief Nanga. And this aspect has contributed to assemble those events in a way that has hidden temporal considerations.

5.2 Duration in *A Man of the People*

The temporal connections between events are difficult to analyse because of the notion of duration because of its meaning in relation with the reality that is narrative. The relationship between temporal dimension and spatial dimension tries to elucidate the way the analysis should be carried. Still, the problem of duration cannot be perfectly solved. For example, when one considers the ministerial visit to Anata announced at the opening of the novel, with a preliminary description of the welcoming ambiance, the narrator comes with a series of analepsic events whose narration takes about five pages before he carries on with the arrival of the Minister. In such a case, it is difficult to dispatch the temporal connections. As such, Genette (1980) identified four narrative movements which help determine the temporal relationship between the story and the narration. I dealt with these aspects in the chapter about theoretical framework.

Summaries and scenes make the essential of the discourse in *A Man of the People*. This is a sign of modern "expressivity" in spite of the contrast there is between a scene and a summary. The contrast is one of detail choice and detail manipulation. It is because of this role that most of the time summaries are transitions between scenes. In the case of *A Man of the people*, the narrative opens with a long summary that allows the narrator to describe the

scene of the villagers waiting for the Minister and even carries with some analepses. And the first narrative scene is the one that helps the narrator show their acquaintance with Chief Nanga. The narrator even shows his sincerity at the end of that long summary:

> *[...] No it was my turn. I held out my hand somewhat stiffly. I did not have the slightest fear that he might remember me and had no intention of reminding him.*
> *Our hands met. I looked him straight in the face. The smile slowly creased up into lines of thought. He waved his left hand impatiently to silence the loquacious proprietor who had begun the parrot formula he had repeated at least fifteen times so far: 'I have the honour, sir, to introduce...'*
> *'That's right,' said the Minister not to anyone in particular, but to some mechanism of memory inside his head. 'You are Odili.'*
> *'Yes, sir.' Before the words were out of my mouth he had thrown his arms round me smothering me in his voluminous damask. 'You have a wonderful memory,' I said. It is at least fifteen years...' He had now partly released me although his left hand was resting on my shoulder. He turned slightly to the Proprietor and announced proudly:*
> *'I taught him in...'*
> *'Standard three,' I said.*

A long dialogue followed with small summaries till the end of the first two chapters dealing with the arrival of the Minister. This has presented that part of the narrative as slowed down, the time of narration being equal to the story time in a scene, combined with summary where the time of narration is less than that of the story. As most of scenes in a narrative, the many scenes concerned in *A Man of the People* prevent the narrator from carrying a speculative narration. However, they foster psychological and social characterisation.

The preparation of Odili's trip to Bori leads him to pay a visit to Urua, his home village. The summary with which the narrator introduces the trip plunges the narration into some details about his family and mainly about his father. The details about the father touch his job. He is a retired District Interpreter. The evocation of the job recalls a scene lived by the narrator. A summary then follows that scene making a transition to the trip to Bori where a series of scenes dominates the narration till the end of chapter three with a long summary about minister's official residences and how the narrator spends his first night in Bori and in Chief Nanga's house: 'Needless to say I did not spend the entire night on these elevated

thoughts. Most of the time my mind way on Elsie, so much so in fact that I had had to wake up in the middle of the night to change my pyjama trousers' (P.37).

In this part of the narrative the scene in chief Koko's residence has been the longest. However, the short summaries which are inserted in it render the narration slowing down: 'The steward dashed out and soon returned to say the cook had gone out. The Minister slumped into his chair and began to groan and hold his stomach. Then his bodyguard whom we had seen dressed like a cowboy hurried in from the front gate, and hearing what had happened dashed out at full speed to try a catch the cook.' This summary is followed by a short dialogue among Odili, Chief Nanga and the so-called poisoned Minister and then the narrator inserts another summary and so on and so forth.

As for pauses in the narrative, the narrator almost uses any pause as was the case of the other novels dealt with in the present dissertation. The dominance of Summaries and scenes can be taken to justify this technical choice. In a pause there is narration without clear evocation of the story, that is, the discourse moves without the story. The narrator seems to show the truth of what he asserts without taking parts of the discourse to show ideology. It is because of this that the many summaries there are in the narrative take somehow the room that pauses may occupy. Nevertheless, in my reading of the narrative, I came to find one real pause and two descriptive pauses. The first intervene at the end of the third chapter of the novel:

> *A man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors all the time. The trouble of our new nation – as I saw it lying on my bed – was that none of us has been indoors long enough to be able to say 'To hell with it'. We had all been in the rain together until yesterday. Then a handful of us – the smart and the lucky and hardly ever the best – had scrambled for the one shelter our former rulers left, and had taken it over and barricaded themselves in. And from within they sought to persuade the rest through numerous loudspeakers, that the first phase of the struggle had been won and that the next phase – the extension of our house – was even more important and called for new and original tactics; it required that all argument should cease and the whole*

> *people speak with one voice and that any more dissent and argument outside the door of the shelter would subvert and bring down the whole house (p.37).*

This pause is peculiar in that it does not vehicle the narrator's ideology, but rather the ideology of the regime to which Chief Nanga belongs. Still, that pause is peculiar in that it puts together the story duration alone. Once more it is particular in that it is a proverbial pause, and this is the aspect that allows it to pack the duration of the story. Reading the pause, one has the entirety of the chronology of the story. A comment of this proverbial pause can be as follows: All Africans are in the rain (with no determination of the duration of that rain). The departure of the colonisers leads these Africans to seize the power left by those former rulers. Once in the shelter, the first to seize power prevented the rest to have access to it. They rather ask them to stay in the rain and help build the country.

The second example of pause is not an ideological pause. It is in fact a descriptive pause with hints of iterative as for the description of Mrs Nanga the first day Odili comes to Bori: '... A man of fifty or more with a son in secondary school and a wife whose dress gets caught between the buttocks thought I was too tired!' In fact, that pause is a reflection about what has happened the night before. It takes a kind of consistence that displays a film of possible decisions for avenge himself:

> *But on the present question of chief Nanga my subconscious (or something very much like it) seemed to have gone voluntarily into operation. I was just flapping about like a trapped bird when suddenly I saw the opening. I saw that Elsie did not matter in the least. What mattered was that a man had treated me as no man had a right to treat another – not even if he was master and the other slave; and my manhood required that I make him pay for his insult in full measure. In flesh and blood terms I realized that I must go back, seek out Nanga's parlour-wife and give her the works, good and proper. All this flashed through my mind in one brief moment of blinding-insight – just like that, without warnings! (P.76)*

That descriptive pause also flashes in the discourse and accelerates the story. The second descriptive pause comes almost in the same context as the first one that I have just

mentioned. This pause mentions the feeling of the narrator about how he may appear or how sorry the new host may be in learning what happens:

> *I must say that I was immediately taken with the idea of the Common People's Convention. Apart from everything else it would add a second string to my bow when I came to deal with his friends as the easily impressed type. I suppose I wanted to erase whatever impression was left of Max's unfortunate if unintentional presentation of me as a kind of pitiable jellyfish. So I made what I intended to be a little spirited sceptical speech... (p.78)*

These pauses increase the time of the narrating by leaving the story where it is before the pause. Though pauses do not increase the story time as said by Genette (1980) and this is obvious, I think that the increasing of the time of narration at least produces the effect of lengthening the story itself. The container does not add the quantity of the contained, but, at least, it influences the choice. This type of effect does not exist in ellipses.

Any narrative cannot be narrative without ellipses. A narrative can be poor if not too poor in summaries and descriptive pauses, but cannot exist without ellipses. In the study o*f A la recherche du temps perdu*, Genette noted the absence of pauses and even summaries. So, only two of the four movements are used by Marcel Proust, notably scenes and ellipses. This shows to what extent ellipses play an important role in the discourse of a narrative. Dealing with ellipses, I mentioned that Genette (1980) identified temporal ellipses and paralipses. According to him, a paralipsis is a lateral omission in the discourse. The narrator introduces an event and leaves it to some point and carries with other hints of the story and then comes back to the event to the point he has left it. At the opening of *A Man of the People*, the narrator introduces the arrival of Chief Nanga to Anata. After two pages of description of the physical ambiance of the waiting groups, the narrator comes with the moment when Chief Nanga is teacher and when he comes to politics, before the narrator comes back to the arrival of the Minister. This ellipsis is called paralipsis. As for temporal ellipsis, it is the conscious

omission of part of the story in the narration. This type of ellipsis has time influence in the analysis of duration in a narrative.

I must recall that in terms of time calculation, in the context of ellipsis, there is no narration as such, so, even if the time of the ellipsis is not shown, the story time is superior to the time of narration, as I said in my theoretical framework. At the beginning of the narrative, the narration of the different analepses evoked in the previous section contains some temporal ellipses. The first one is about the teaching period of Chief Nanga: "Sixteen years ago he had been my teacher in standard three and I something like his favourite pupil. ... That was in 1948." The discourse now is in 1964. Between 1948 and 1960, all the analepses there are simply evoked, actually they are ellipses. 'Nanga must have gone into politics soon afterwards and then won a seat in the parliament...' Here, there are two temporal ellipses: the teaching period before his entering into politics, a seat won in the parliament, till 1960 when 'something disgraceful happened in the party...' The teaching period and the entering into politics are temporally elided. There are approximately twelve years elided in the story time.

After this, the event of the slump in the international coffee market intervenes in 1960. Nothing is said about the manifestation of the crisis. The narration goes to the solution proposed by the Minister of Finance at the time and its rejection by the Prime Minister. The rejection has been object of narration. The ellipsis concerns only the intervening of the crisis without a precise time mentioned. It is to be taken here as a palalipsis since the rejection of the solution which is part of the event has been object of narration. Anyway, all these three ellipses are in the same interval of twelve years signalled in less than one page in the narration. And this re-establishes the story time overpowered by pauses.

In the distinction made by Genette (1980) concerning ellipses, explicit ellipses are those which enjoy an indication of the lapse of time they elide. Since I have this time

indication in the above mentioned ellipses, I can classify them in that category. As for implicit ellipses, they are the most used in a narrative. They are ellipses whose presence is not announced in the text and which the reader can infer only from some chronological gap or information lacuna in narrative continuity. This is the case for the indefinite time elapsing between the moment when Odili is in standard three and the moment when he enters the university: '... he had been my teacher in standard three and I something like his favourite pupil...' and a paragraph after, ' At that time I had just entered the University...' In the same case is the case of the time elapsed between Odili's entering the University and his last term in it approximately in 1962 in my own calculation from his teaching time indication and the postal strike that has prevented him and Elsie from sending letters to one the other.

Achebe has most used summaries, scenes and ellipses in the technical organisation of the novel. In time consideration, I found that ellipses have allowed Achebe to go with only the details that he wanted leaving those which can be inferred by the reader. The few pauses encountered have lengthened the discourse time which is shortened by summaries. The use of all those four narrative movements gives to *A Man of the People* a rhythm that assures it its novelistic nature. The narrative frequency is another category in the analysis of a narrative.

5.3 Frequency in *A Man of the People*

The notion of narrative frequency has to do with the relations of repetition between the narrative and the story. These relations are also temporal and the repetition is in fact a mental construction. The discourse comes with an event at a given level. Later in the same narration, that event is repeated in terms of statement. For the sake of the analysis of these relations, a system of relations is established between the capacities for repetition on the part

of both the narrated events of the story and the narrated statements of the text. So the repetition has to do with the discourse text. For the sake of structural analysis Genette (1980) identified four types of relations of frequency as mentioned in my theoretical framework. The first two are called singulative narration.

Singulative narration is when the narration evokes once what happens once or evokes several times what happens several times. In the organisation of his novels, Achebe uses most of the time mixed narrations. In *A Man of the People*, the narration of Odili's presence at the public gallery is a singular narration. The overwhelming vote that the Prime Minister receives may be iterative, but the presence of the narrator at the public gallery that day renders the event singular: 'I was in the public gallery the day the Prime Minister receives his overwhelming vote of confidence. And that was the day the truth finally came out; only no one was listening. I remember the grief-stricken figure of the dismissed Minister of Finance as he led his team into the chamber...' (P.4). The narrator confirms the singularity of the event a few lines after: 'That was my first – and last – visit to parliament...'

Another example of singulative narration is the narration about Odili's rejecting from one of his friends' family during a short holiday:

> *But it was not until many years later that I caught one fleeting, terrifying glimpse of just how hated an Interpreter would be. I was in secondary school then and it was our half-term holiday. As my home village was too far away and I didn't want to spend the holiday in school I decided to go with one of my friends to his home which was four or five miles away...*
> *After we had eaten, the father who had gone out to buy himself some snuff came hurrying back. To my surprise he asked his son what he said my name was again.*
> *'Odili Samalu.'*
> *Of what town?'*
> *There was anxiety, an uneasy tension in his voice. I was afraid.*
> *'Urua, sir,' I said.*
> *'I see,' he said coldly, 'who is your father?'*
> *'Hezekiah Samalu,' I said and then added quickly, 'a retired District Interpreter.' It was better, I thought, to come out with all at once and end the prolonged interrogation.*
> *'Then you cannot stay in my house.'.... (P.29)*

This event is singular in the story and its narration is singulative. It happens once and is narrated once. The strength of the power that a District Interpreter has is as singular as the hatred created by that job.

Some other events are also singulative in the narrative. Josiah's act of stealing the stick of the blind man is singulative. Even if many receptions are organised in Bori, the one that Odili attends is peculiar and singulative in the discourse. And this denotes a kind of surprise of what happens at the end of the dinner. Some repetitions are in a way or another in the discourse of *A Man of the People*.

What I can call repeating narration in the narrative under study is the few repetitions of narrated statements. An example can be given when the narrator and chief Nanga go to the hospital to see Elsie and her friend. Odili and Elsie have a conversation in which mention is made of the dinner party that Odili has with Jean, the American lady:

> *'By the way,' I said backing out and straightening up again, 'I met an American lady called Elsie at a party the other night... Whenever her name was called – my mind went to you.'*
> *'Who tell am say na Elsie be im name? When you see am again make you tell am say im own Elsie na counterfeit. But odili, you self na waa! How you no even reach Bori finish you done de begin meet another Elsie for party? Make you take am je-je-o. (P.57)*

The visit to the hospital is singulative but the evocation of the dinner party is repetitive in the narration. A similar example is with the evocation of the incident when Chief Nanga wrenches Elsie from Odili's hands. It is the narrator's thought after coup:

> *It was only after Max left for Court at around nine that I finally felt the full weight of the previous night's humiliation settling down on me. The heat and anger had now largely evaporated leaving the cold fact that another man wrenched my girl-friend from my hand and led her to bed under my very eyes, and I had done nothing about it... A man of fifty or more with a son in a secondary school and a wife whose dress gets caught between the buttocks thought I was too tired! (P.75)*

The narration of that event intervenes some four pages before. The narrator is now thinking about it by narrating it again with a repetition of a narrated statement about Mrs Nanga. When the narration takes once what happens several times, even with slight differences, this narration is called iterative.

The difference between repeating narrative and iterative narrative is at the level of the aspect that enjoys repetition. It is a relationship between the number of narration and the number of the same event. When a same event happens several times but narrated once, we say that there is iteration. As for the repetition, the event is unique but the narration comes on it several times. A first example of iterative narration can be given at the outset of the narrative. The ministerial visit to Anata is not a single event in the story. There may have several visits of Ministers and even of Chief Nanga, but the narrator has decided to tell about one.

Another type of iterative narration in the novel is through the ellipsis about the exchange of news and civilities between Odili and Elsie:

> *When I left the University she was heart-broken and so was I for that matter. We exchanged letters every week or two weeks at the most. I remember during the postal strike of 1963 when I didn't hear from her for over a month I nearly kicked the bucket, as my boy, Peter, would have said. (p.25)*

The phrase 'every week or two weeks' shows that there is repetition of the action, but it is narrated once. There is a terrible combination of technical aspects of narrative analysis in that event. First of all, it is an analepsis because dealing with the university period of time in the story whereas the discourse is now (1964). Secondly, it is an explicit ellipsis because the time is almost mentioned (1963 when Odili is teacher at Anata and Elsie nurse in Bori) without detailed narration of it. The postal strike is also an ellipsis. This combination shows

how Achebe condenses technical aspects. A few words are used to evoke two different events with several narrative techniques. This is a proof of his artistry in literary work.

The organisation of *A Man of the People* in terms of the temporal relationships between the story and the narration is made of a combination of singulative, repetitive and iterative narrations. The scenes have allowed having most of the sigulative narrations whereas the iterative ones are throughout the narrative with mixture of elided analeptic events signalling their contribution, each aspect in its part, to the whole.Order, duration and frequency of the narrative are structural aspects which sound more abstract than mood and voice which deal with psychological aspects of the narrative.

5.4 Mood in *A Man of the People*

In the scope of the narrative mood are a few analytical aspects that one can study in the structural analysis of a narrative. But in the present dissertation I am less concerned with some of them. My focus of narrative mood is on the notion of distance of the narrator vis-à-vis of the story he tells. The notion of distance, I must recall it here, has to do with the presence of the narrator or not in the story he tells.

There are mainly two degrees of narrative distance used in *A Man of the People*, making the narrator seem at times very involved in his narrative, and at times completely absent or only present as a character. These two variations create diversity in the act of narrating. And Genette combined the notion of distance to the treatment by the narrator of the characters' speeches to identify four different treatments of these speeches to express the notion of distance in the narrative as I mention it in my theoretical governance.

5.4.1 Narratised speech

The narrator tells the story with terms indicating that some characters are speaking and that he now comments their speeches. About an ex-Minister of Finance, the narration goes as:

> *I remember the figure of Dr Makinde the ex-Minister of Finance as he got up to speak- tall, calm, sorrowful and superior. I strained my ears to catch his words. The entire house, including the Prime Minister tried to shout him down. It was a most an edifying spectacle. The speaker broke his mallet ostensibly trying to maintain order, but you could see he was enjoying the commotion. The public gallery yelled down its abuses... (P. 6)*

This example shows how involved is the narrator in the story with a sort of omnipresence. 'I strained my ears to catch his words'. This sentence combines elements that indicate not only a speech by a character but also the very presence of the narrator who seems to take the public gallery as witness: 'The public gallery yelled down its abuses...' But in the present form, it is some reminiscences that are narrated about what happens. The narrator is now distant from it. Another example can be given many pages after.

It was only after Max left for Court at around nine that I finally felt the full weight of the previous night's humiliation settling down on me. The heat and anger had now largely evaporated leaving the cold fact that another man wrenched my girl-friend from my hand and led her to bed under my very eyes, and I had done nothing about it... A man of fifty or more with a son in a secondary school and a wife whose dress gets caught between the buttocks thought I was too tired! (p.75)

The narrator is no more in Chief Nanga's house, but rather where he finds shelter after the incident. The notion of distant appears tricky. The involvement is here in relation with the story now and not only the discourse not. The case of these examples is called narratized inner speech. The reported speech expressed the involvement of the narrator. Dealing with the

notion of imitation in novelistic narratives, Genette said that the reported speech is the most mimetic.

5.4.2 Reported speech

In the novel, there are two kinds of reported speech. There are scenes in which the narrator is actor, and then involved and other dialogues in which he is not actor. The latter case allows the narrator to disappear. An example comes with the dialogue between the Minister and the narrator, Odili and even with the proprietor of the school where the narrator teaches:

> *'I taught him in...'*
> *'Standard three,' I said*
> *'That's right,' he shouted...*
> *'He is one of the pillars of this school,' said the proprietor, catching the infection and saying the first good word about me since I had joined his school.*
> *'Odili, the great,' said the Minister boyishly.... (P. 8)*

These dialogues are throughout the narrative with this involvement of the narrator. Genette distinguished two types of transposed speech.

5.4.3 Transposed speech

The difference between the indirect style and the free indirect style in the transposed speech is signalled by the use of the conjunctive 'that' in the indirect style. The absence of the word 'that' in the free indirect style leads to an economy of subordination which allows a greater extension of the speech. The narrator in *A Man of the People* economises the use of the transposed speech be it indirect style or free indirect style. These two styles are used in a futile way in the narrative. An example can be given at the outset of the sixth chapter: 'Then she remembered to add graciously that a swop would not be necessary as her friend was the more beautiful of the two'. This indirect style comes in the meanders of a dialogue. That is

why it is too short. When it comes to be more important, it is a mixture of the two styles. A example can be given in the same chapter:

> *It had been a bit of surprise to me when Chief Nanga had announced he was coming with me to the hospital. I couldn't very well advise him coldly to stay behind and read through his speech. But I had a strong suspicion he had forgotten all about it and I felt it was only fair that I should remind him. I considered various approaches and then decided on the one that seemed to me to conceal most satisfactorily the small element of self-interest (p.60).*

This mixture is used to signal the presence of the narrator. In fact, the actual transposed speech is the first sentence of the quotation in which Chief Nanga's speech is actually transposed. But the remaining speech is by the narrator; it is actually an inner thought. The narrator is thinking at how to proceed to prevent Chief Nanga from going with him to the hospital.

Compared with what Genette identified as states of characters' speech in his study of *A la recherche du temps perdu* in which the transposed speech is most of the time clearly used, the different speeches are used with differences governed by combinations that the narrator has made in *A Man of the People*. These combinations make the four types non-matching with what is identified in Achebe's novel. Only the reported speech matches with what has been displayed in Proust's narrative. And even here, the narrator accompanies it with narrating that leads to the other types of character's speech. This difference is in fact a sign that Achebe's novel, though narrated in the first person as *A la recherche du temps perdu*, does not share the same technical characteristics with Proust's novel whose period of writing goes back to the end of the nineteenth century. The particularities that have been shown through Genette's application seem to stand the world that the author of *A la recherche du temps perdu* embodies when he was writing his book. In the same way, Achebe, though having changed the type of narrator in his fourth novel, still maintains his gift of orator. It this

gift that allowed him to softly combine narrative movements with the different types of expression or narrating of the characters' speech by the narrator. Even if it use useless to recall that Achebe belongs to the modern writers' category, I think it is of great importance here to mention that, in this modernity, he is recreating the African past.

So, mainly, the novel contains indications of the total involvement of the narrator with several narrative functions. Narrative functions are part of the analytical category that Genette calls voice.

5.5 Voice in *A Man of the People*

In evoking mood and voice in the transition that allowed me to end my analysis of temporal aspects of narratology, I mentioned that they are the psychological considerations that constitute the part where temporal considerations leave place to the individuals involved not only what is being told but also who is telling it with all the possible relationships that are established between the teller and the protagonists concerned. From the choice of this or that relationship comes the excitement of the reader. This excitement is in fact the concern of voice as an analytical category of narrative study. In the present study, I would like to deal with the time of narrating, the narrative levels and then the functions of the narrator.

5.5.1 Time of narration

The involvement of the narrator in his own story is indicative here of the interpolated nature of the narration. The narrator opens the story with a kind of impressions of what he knows of the past story that he wants to tell: 'No one can deny that...' He continues on page 5 with impressions: 'I cannot now recall exactly what my feelings were at that point. I suppose I remember that at that point no one had any reason to think there might be another side to the

story'. And then the actual impressions come as follows: 'The reason I have gone into that shameful episode in such detail is to establish the fact that I had no reason to be enthusiastic about Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga who ...' These details are written in past tense as related with the subsequent narration, whereas the expression of the impressions about these details are in present tense, indicating then the simultaneous narration. This variation or let's say mixture of narrations is a choice just to show in another way the involvement of the narrator in the story he tells. This mimetic nature of the narration brings the illusion of reality. The narrator creates points of narration-now to bring the reader to consider them as real. And for this illusion, the narrator seems to be trapped in Achebe's technical slippery in confusing 'telling' to 'writing'. But before coming back to the narrator's case, I may say that Achebe seems to have replaced his narrator in that the diction of the following paragraph is not one of a narrator. Achebe writes:

> *Well, Elsie! Where does one begin to write about her? The difficulty in writing this kind of story is that the writer is armed with all kinds of hindsight which he didn't have when the original events were happening. When he introduces a character like Elsie for instance, he already has at the back of his mind a total picture of her; her entrance, her act and her exit. And this tends to colour even the first words he writes. (PP. 23-24)*

The author is hence confused to the narrator. This is a practical clue that may help to account for autobiographical elements in the book. And then the narrator comes back: 'I can only hope that being aware of this danger I have successfully kept it at bay. As far as is humanly possible I shall try not to jump ahead of my story'. So, any jumping of the story may be felt as human defection. This is a psychological preparation of the reader to play his partition in terms of what Barthes calls the reader's writing of the story that he reads.

The novel contains a mixture of third person narrator and first person narrator. This gives the narrator a double face rendering the narrative heterodiegetic and autodiegetic at the

same time, but from a compartment to another in the narration. Many examples have been given on the opening of the narration. Whenever the narrator is displayed heterodiegetic, the reader discovers it through the scenes in which the narrator may or may not be actor. An example can be seen on page 18 where the narrator is in conversation with Chief Nanga when he has come to his home village Anata where the narrator teaches:

> *'If you come as soon as you close,' he said, 'you can stay in my guest-room with everything complete – bedroom, parlour, bathroom, latrine, everything – self-contained. You can live by yourself and do anything you like there, it's all yours.'*
> *'Make you no min' am, sha-a,' said Mrs John to me. I kin see say you na good boy. Make you no gree am spoil you. Me I no de for dis bed-room and bath-room business-o. As you see dis man so, na wicked soul. If he tell you stand make you run'.*
> *Everybody laughed*
> *'Eleanor, why you wan disgrace me and spoil my name so public for nothing sake. Wetin I do you? Everybody here sabi say me na good Christian. No be so James?'*
> *'Ah, na so, sir,' replied the journalist happily. (p. 18)*

This scene is preceded and followed by autodiegetic narrations and the intertwinement is throughout the novel. The use of 'you' in 'if you come as soon as you close' is a sign of the presence of the narrator as an addressee, appearing then as a protagonist in his own story. He is addressed by another character, the Minister. The narrator's involvement is once again shown.

Of course the narrator in *A man of the People* is omniscient, but his views are from the interior of his act of narrating so that it is subjective to some extent. The narrator knows as much as the focal character. This character governs the flow of information provided to the reader. He can report the thoughts of other characters. This focal character is at the same time the narrator, Odili. He knows about every character. However he comes to narrate through another character, showing his limit of Omniscient narrator that he loses on the election day if not before it:

> *It was in fact election day as we spoke. My father found it easy to conceal the fact from me because they had put me in a special isolated ward. That same night Max was killed in Abaga but I didn't hear of it either, until two days after, and then I wept all*

> *day that day, and the pressure inside my head returned and I hoped I would die, but the doctor put me to sleep (p.142).*

Then all the events of the election day seem to be narrated through the eye of the trade-unionist called Joe:

> *As I got the story later from Joe, the trade-unionist, Max had been informed by our party intelligence that Chief Koko's resourceful wife was leading the Women's Wing of the P.O.P. in an operation that one might describe as breast-feeding the ballot, i.e. smuggling into the polling booths wads of ballot paper concealed in their brassieres. Max immediately investigated. But as soon as he alighted from his car, on of Chief Koko's jeeps swept up from behind, knocked him over and killed him on the spot (p.142).*

The chief temporal determination in the novel of what Genette calls the narrating instance is obviously the subsequent narration. Even the after thoughts of events are narrated subsequently: 'It was only after Max had left for Court at around nine that I finally felt the full weight of the previous night's humiliation settling down on me.' (p.75) It is in this way that the narrative is organised with some false instances that try to entangle the story and the narrating in such a way that hides the stories of different levels in the narration.

5.5.2 Narrative levels

The texture of *A Man of the People* is presented in a way that shows some point of the story like embedded stories. This demands from the reader a careful decoding. Odili as the narrator is 'going to tell' a story that 'will make no sense'. Odili is giving his present impressions of the story that he is going to tell. This concern of presenting impressions of a story that will come in subsequent narration poses the problem of narrative time combined with the narrative instance. The novel opens as follows:

> *No one can deny that Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga, M.P., was the most approachable politician in the country. Whether you asked in the city or in his home*

> *village, Anata, they would tell you he was a man of the people. I have to admit this from the outset or else the story I'm going to tell will make no sense.*
> *That afternoon he was due to address the staff and students of the Anata Grammar School where I was teaching at the time... (p.1)*

Though the first paragraph indicates the beginning of the narration, the reader discovers the beginning of the story from the second paragraph and only four pages after the narrator says: 'I cannot now recall exactly what my feelings were at that point. I suppose I thought the whole performance rather peculiar. You must remember that at that point no one had any reason to think there might be another side of the story...' (P.5)

He then carries on with an episode about how the ex-Minister of finance had been ridiculed by Chief Nanga and the like and very soon marks a pause to apologize in a way for the detail in that episode: 'The reason I have gone into that shameful episode in such detail is to establish the fact that I had no reason to be enthusiastic about Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga who, seeing the empty ministerial seats, had yapped and snarled so shamelessly for the meaty prize.' (PP. 6-7).

All these narrative strategies present the whole story as an analepsis with only the opening paragraph containing a simultaneous narration that, though informing on the future, cannot stand a prolepsis. This future is simply a narrating strategy to bring the reader with to the whole extent and depth of the story to be told. This way of presenting the attack point of the discourse is at the same time some technical clues signalling a variety of narrative functions that the one concerned in the present narrative plays, mainly in relation to the narratee whose presence is signalled at the attack point.

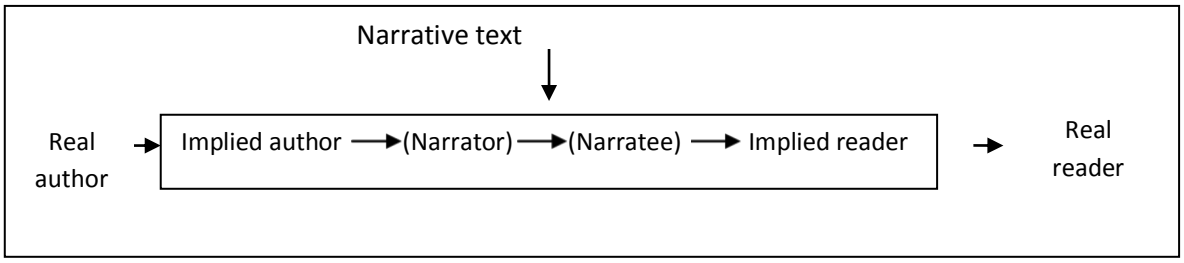
5.5.3 Functions of the narrator

A Man of the People is a narrative in which, besides the traditional narrative function, three important functions manifest themselves. The narrator exercises the communication

function in his telling of the story. In the first quotation of this section is used the personal pronoun 'you' that signals the presence of a narratee, that is, somebody whom the narrator addresses his story to. The narrator says: 'I cannot now recall exactly what my feelings were at that point. I suppose I thought the whole performance rather peculiar. You must remember that at that point no one had any reason to think there might be another side of the story' (P. 5). The presence of 'you' shows the presence of the narratee. It is a device that allows writers to involve in a way or in another the reader in the telling of the story. Here, it is as necessary to distinguish among narratees, implied readers and real readers as it is among narrator, implied author, and real author. The 'you' who is addressed by the narrator of *A Man of the People*, conventionally, is no more I, Abdoulaye, than is the narrator Odili. When a reader enters 'the fictional contract' he adds another self: he becomes an implied reader. And just as the narrator may or may not ally himself with the implied author, the implied reader furnished by the real reader may or may not ally himself with a narratee. The format that the narrator prints in *A Man of the People* is presented with a combination of narrative functions that reasonably open the alliance. No considerable distance is felt between the 'you' and the reader. Thus, the real reader feels implied through 'you' and by the same token feels narratee. This is a particularity in Achebe's organisation of his materials. This produces fresh-like effects on the reader.

The narrator also exercises the testimonial function in the narration. He tries to show signs of certification of the truth of the events by challenging in a way the reader. 'No one can deny that Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga was the most approachable politician in the country.' And he ends the paragraph in the following terms: 'I have to admit this from the outset or else of the story I'm going to tell will make no sense.' The narrator expresses his knowledge of the story that he wants to tell. This anticipated assurance not only draws the

attention of the reader but also brings the reader to ally himself to the narrator's cause. So, the above distinctions are made to reinforce the artistic side of these literary works. At this end, Chatman diagrammed the whole narrative-communication situation as follows:



The artistic game is played in the 'box that indicates that only the implied author and the implied reader are immanent to a narrative, the narrator and narratee are optional. The real author and real reader are outside the narrative transaction as such, though, of course, indispensable to it in an ultimate practical sense'. (Chatman, 1978, P. 151)

The narrator also plays the ideological function of narration. This function is hidden in thoughts that the narrator comes with as the story goes on. For example, Odili's travel to Bori plunges him in the following thoughts:

> *A man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes is more reluctant to go out than another who has been indoors all the time. The trouble with our new nation - as I saw it then lying on the bed - was that none of us had been indoors long enough to be able to say 'to hell with it'. We had all been in the rain together until yesterday. Then a handful of us – the smart and the lucky and hardly ever the best – had scrambled for the one shelter our former rulers left, and had taken it over and barricaded themselves in. And from within they sought to persuade the rest through numerous loudspeakers, that the first phase of the struggle had been won and that the next phase – the extension of our house – was even more important and called for new and original tactics; it required that all argument should cease and the whole people speak with one voice and that any more dissent and argument outside the door of the shelter would subvert and bring down the whole house. (p. 37)*

This comment that the narrator calls thought is a hard piece in the story that he tells, a piece in which he condenses the final picture of the whole situation after the independence. The coloniser has built a house that 'a handful of us' have scrambled and closed to the rest

that stay in the rain. This comment portrays the circumstances that Achebe, via Odili, ridicules and condemns with his artistic talent. Those circumstances determine the moral pattern of *A Man of the people* as Achebe seems to say of his fourth novel:

> *A Man of the People is a rather serious indictment – if you like – on post-independent Africa. But I don't despair because I think this is a necessary stage in our growth. ... If you take the example of Nigeria, which is the place I know best, things had got to such a point politically that there was no other answer – no way you could resolve this impasse politically. The political machine had been so abused that whichever way you pressed it, it produced the same results...*[15]

Achebe shows this through the attempt of the narrator and his friends to take part in the last election in which violence has been used and the same party has won. Achebe, then, justified his choice of the coup as the eventual solution of change. The teacher added:

[...] and therefore another force had to come in. Now when I was writing A Man of the People it wasn't clear to me that this was going to be necessarily military intervention. It could easily have been civil war, which in fact it very clearly was in Nigeria. But I think the next generation of politicians in Nigeria, when we do have them, will have learned one or two lessons, I hope, from what happened to the First Republic. This is the only hope I have and if it turns out to be vain, it would be terrible... (ibid.)

Taking these three essential functions of the narrator in *A Man of the People*, the reader realises that they are complementary to the production of effects on him. The involvement of the narrator leads to the reader's feeling of involvement. And, whenever a reader has such a concern of being involved, the writer has succeeded in his teaching role. The effect of this distancing and involvement on the part of the narrator is to intensify diegesis as the narrative mood. For the involvement of the narrator in a monotone way can give the impression of mimesis. As the idea is that all narratives should be considered as fictional acts of language, the combination seems to be compulsory to authors.

[15] Serumaga, 'Interview with Chinua Achebe'

5.6 Partial conclusion

Starting from the last aspect in the analysis of *A Man of the People*, I can say that the narrating instance of the novel bears some subtle marks of duration organised in a way that everywhere the narrator's presence is signalled, it is mingled with both his past and Chief Nanga's. This brings me to argue that the narrative has a double narrating instance. Of course the first is related to the narrator's traditional role as the guide in the progression of the story, but another narrating instance is one carried by the same narrator via what he wants the reader to know about Chief Nanga in particular and generally about the regime.

Rewinding to the functions of the narrator, I can say that my assertion is supported by the directing function played by the narrator in the narrative. This directing function is signalled by the use of 'you' as a narratee and even a subtle directing as this: 'The reason I have gone into that shameful episode in such detail is to establish the fact that I had to reason to be enthusiastic about Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga who, seeing the empty ministerial seats, had yapped and snarled so shamelessly for the meaty prize'. This directing function is strengthened by a mixture of the states of characters' speech to express the narrative distance which in the case of *A Man of the People* is the involvement of the narrator. The narratized speech in reduced to the profit of dialogue through which the narrator comes with transposed speech in order to be free in his comment with the possibility of extending it where he feels the need.

The novel, in terms of order has a trompe-l'oeil start which I called false prolepsis. In the first paragraph of the narrative, the narrator shows a king of certitude of his story by adding: 'I have to admit this from the outset or else the story I'm going to tell will make no sense'. The reader already has a psychological conclusion about the story before it can start. This presents the entirety of the story as a prolepsis. This is a technique of tale telling just to

draw attention on it. However the story has been told with a kind of concatenation of analepses. This condensation of analepses is organised in a way that brings an analepsis to bring forth another one like in a cause-effect manner. Examples have been given and one of which is the narrating of the arrival of the Minister in Anata. The narrating of that visit which is an analepsis leads the narrator to deal with analepses related to the moment when Chief Nanga is teaching, the moment when he enters politics and his winning of a seat in the parliament. This series of analeptic events, coming in the narration of the visit, renders the event of the ministerial visit the main of the whole discourse. It creates other events that make the story progress such as the narrator's travel to Bori with a double objective. The first is the main and internal objective is to go to Bori and meet Elsie. The second objective which the narrator ties to the will of Chief Nanga is to get a scholarship for studies overseas.

All these events have been narrated in an almost close connection that shows the continuity of the narrative in spite of the gaps which signal ellipses. Scenes are mixed with small summaries. This has presented the beginning of the narrative as slowed down, the time of narration being equal to the story time in a scene, combined with summary where the time of narration is less than that of the story.

The individual unity of these different analytical categories confer *A Man of the People* a global unity that helps to display the deception of Odili not because his party fails to win a least seat in the parliament but because of his conviction that people are taking more than the owner. The autodiegetic nature of *A Man of the People* changes a bit the mood and voice relation. Odili tries to show that everything is under his sole control. He even breaks the fourth wall in the narration: 'Whether you asked in the city... they would tell you'. This direct address is intended to create an illusion to the reader and carry him to the inside of what he experiences, and to suppress inexorably the narrative distance.

Thus, complaint and accusation dominates the narration of the story in *A Man of the People*. This portrays a great part of the suffering of the masses whose voice does not sway in the newly independent country. The rulers take their time and energy to strengthen their power in order to maintain it through oppression of those who tend to display counter will. Chief Nanga shows this in the novel when he punishes the defection of the narrator's father, Hezekiah Samalu, by reassessing the old man's income for taxation and by removing the pipes deposited for the new water project at Urua.

What is important for the reader is to understand that Odili is troubled by the fact that there is no owner in the case of what is commonly called national cake. Achebe seems to say that those who hold the public power think that they are the owners. This can help to justify the abuses that the citizens undergo.

CHAPTER SIX: ORDER, DURATION, FREQUENCY, MOOD AND VOICE IN *ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH*

Anthills of the Savannah is a novel of rupture at many regards. It is first of all a novel written after a twenty year break. Secondly, it is a narrative of major change in the choice of narrative techniques, notably multiple narrators giving the impression that the novel is a set of several narratives compiled under the title of *Anthills of the Savannah*. In this compilation any of the narrators appears in a way or in another like Odili in *A Man of the People*. All of these narrators give their personal view about the failure of our rulers who have acceded to power after the departure of the colonisers. In this context, the writer demands from the reader a choice as to who is the most truthful. Forcebly, there are multiple points of view that are expressed in subtle anachronies that demand great effort from the part of the reader in order to come with the meaning. The first section of the chapter is concerned with these anachronies.

6.1 Order in *Anthills of the Savannah*

The narrative opens on a Cabinet meeting in which Mr Commissioner for Information proposes that His Excellency go to Abazon. With this evocation of Abazon at the outset of the discourse, the reader may infer to the narrative role the town is going to play in the telling of the story of Kangan.

The main story is related to the Abazon case of suffering. People from that town want His Excellency to pay them a visit in order to see the so many problems they suffer from. The struggle of the president is to show that he is excelling in the resolution of these problems. However he does not want to go to there. Instead, the citizens of the town decided to come and meet the president in a riot manner. He then asks professor Okong to go and meet them in

his name. The meeting has been suspended and His Excellency goes back to his office from where he calls for Professor Okong: 'Very few words are spoken in the next half hour. When the doors swing open again, an orderly announces: *Professor Okong Wanted by His Excellency*'. The narrator seizes this opportunity to tell the story of how he becomes professor:

> *As a bright pupil-teacher in lower primary school Reginald Okong had attracted the attention of American Baptist missionaries from Ohio who were engaged in belated but obdurate evangelism in his district. They saw a great future for him and ordained him at the age of 26. In their Guinness Book of Records mentality they often called the youngest native American Baptist minister in the world. Native American? Good heavens no! Native African. But, while they were conscientiously grooming Okong slowly but surely into the future head of their local church in say twenty or thirty years, the young Reverend, bright, ambitious and in a great hurry was working secretly on schemes of his own, one of which was to take him away altogether from the missionary vineyard to the secular campuses of a southern Black college in the United States of America itself to the dismay of his Ohio patrons who did not stop at occasions of ingratitude but mounted a determined campaign with US Immigration aimed at getting him deported. But he too was tough and overcame all his difficulties. Augmenting his slender resources by preaching and wrestling he graduated in record time by passing off his Grade Three teachers' certificate as the equivalent of two years of Junior College. Four years later he was back home with a Ph.D. in his bag, and went to teach at the university (p.11).*

A paragraph after, the narrator recalls an affair they deal with by adding that he 'was editor of the *National Gazette* at the time and he approached me with a proposal for a weekend...'

It is then that in the second chapter the narrator Chris comes back in the scene between his Excellency and Professor Okong. 'I want to you to go over to the reception quadrangle and receive the delegation waiting there...' His Excellency wants a picture of the reception and asks that a photographer be sent there. This point in the story is where Ikem is introduced as the one in charge to send for a photographer. This last part of Christopher Oriko's witness prepares Ikem to become the narrator by presenting his own copy of the witness.

Ikem recalls part of their schooling and mainly the first intention of His Excellency with a glance at his private life:

> *TO SAY THAT SAM was never very bright is not to suggest that he was a dunce at any time in the past or that he is one now. His major flaw was that all he ever wanted was to do what was expected of him especially by the English whom he admired sometimes to the point of foolishness. When our headmaster, John Williams, told him that the Army was the career for gentlemen he immediately abandoned thoughts of becoming a doctor and became a soldier. I am sure the only reason he didn't marry the English girl MM found for him in Surrey was the shattering example of Chris and his American wife Louise who he married, if you please, not in New York which might have made a certain sense but in London… (p.45)*

From this point of the narration, a change is introduced. Ideas are expressed as they flow into the mind. When offering a description of Sam, Ikem begins to discuss Mad Medico before the character has been formally introduced. This signals the intertwinement of past events but in a linear way till chapter seven where a new narrative seems to start:

> *For weeks and months after I had definitely taken on the challenge of bringing together as many broken pieces of this tragic history as I could lay my hands on I still could not find a way to begin. Anything I tried to put down sounded wrong - either too abrupt, too indelicate or too obvious - to my middle ear.*
> *So I kept circling round and round. Until last Saturday; after my weekly ordeal at the market. Hot and grimy from hours of haggling in the sun and now home and fighting for breath after the steep climb with the grocery up the dizzying circular staircase to the kitchen table I dumped the bags and wraps there in transit as it were to get a cold drink, and never went back… (p. 75)*

The events until this point had occurred in the present, however in this chapter the time shifts to the future and the lives of Sam, Chris, and Ikem are remembered by Beatrice. This subtle shift is reflected by brief, off handed comments by Beatrice:

> *But something had happened not so long ago to change our lives and, on this particular Saturday, Agatha must have been so overcome by the sheet power of something else quite extraordinary happening in the house that she set the law of the Sabbath aside and put away the meat, already a little high, and the wilting vegetables…*
> *My name is Beatrice, but most of my friends call me either B or BB. And my enemies – that's one lesson I've learned from the still unbelievable violences we went through – that even little people like me could also rate enemies, I had naively assumed that enemies were the privilege of the great. But no. Here was I keeping quite a few hands*

> *busy fashioning barbed and poisoned aliases for me as readily as they were renaming the heroes fallen, as our half-literate journalists say, from grace to grass (PP.76-77).*

In this non-linear narration, the quotation contains two remarks by the narrator. Both remarks reflect the hindsight of the narrator expressing of theorists call stream of consciousness.

Following this chapter comes a seemingly out of place chapter on myth, offering one more example of writing and non-linear narration:

> *At first that holy lake was the sole shrine to Idemili. But as people multiplied and spread across the world they built little shrines farther and farther away from the lake wherever they found good land and water and settled. Still their numbers continued to increase and outstrip the provisions of every new settlement; and so the search for land and water also continued (p.94).*

I think that this chapter about the myth which is not clear in the discourse, Achebe refused any possible explanation of it, is Achebe's way of connecting the novel to some aspect to his previous narratives. It intervenes at the climax of the story without having the impression. The rest of the narrative comes with the disaggregation of the harmony that brings these old friends to be together, expressing in a way or another the Kangan political chaos, though the novel ends with a hope around Elewa's daughter:

> *Abdul's head was tilted towards Emmanuel who was translating the old people for him. Now all eyes turned to Beatrice. She had picked up the baby again, but instead of handing her to the old man who had set down his glass once more to receive it she said:*
> *'This baby has already received its name. She is called Amaechina.'*
> *The old people were visibly stunned. The man recovered first and asked: 'Who gave her the name?'*
> *'All of us here,' said Beatrice.*
> *'All of you here,' repeated the old man. 'All of you are her father?*
> *'Yes, and mother.'*
> *His explosion into laughter took everybody by surprise and then dragged them all into his bombshell of gaiety. Except Elewa's mother (P.209)*

This naming-ceremony event ends in gaiety may be a hope that the child continue on the path followed by Ikem, the path to establishing an equitable government.

The whole narrative has been made of witnesses that come in the narration as they come in the mind of these narrators. Though the opening seems linear from the beginning to chapter six, the discourse contains some analepses that come with details about the relationship among the protagonists. But the real discontinuity begins from chapter seven with a signal of a new aspect in Achebe's writing at the end of chapter four where a character to appear later is announced without any indication for the reader. Many of the analepses that seem to lack clarity to my mind are in fact retrospective. All that is narrated is about the narrator and his environment, but in taking it in the discourse it presented as subjective retrospection. The narrator has lived the event but it is through his present thought that the narrator brings the reader to view it. This renders difficult the analysis of temporal relationship between the story and the discourse in the novel.

6.2 Duration in *Anthills of the Savannah*

The analysis of duration in *Anthills of the Savannah* reveals the absence of pause in the narrative. Summaries and mainly scenes dominate the discourse of the narrative. The absence of pause in *Anthills of the Savannah* can be understood as a choice to avoid narration without the progression of the story. Achebe avoids through this choice subjective ideology in relation to His Excellency. The hidden divergence of the protagonists of the narrative, mainly the narrators, allows reducing the feeling of not knowing who is truthful.

Some of the many scenes come with long intervention that may at times contain comments that cannot stand for ideology. In this way, I can say that the discourse is always with the progression of the story. If I consider the numerous scenes in *Anthills of the*

Savannah and whatever may be the power of ellipses in the narrative, the latter is practically in its whole a series of scenes, mainly that the iterative possibility is not to be taken into account. All in all, Achebe is in what Genette calls the traditional alternation summary/scene. It is a choice of Achebe to modify the structural role of scene. I may recall that the structural role of a scene is to give the floor to the characters to come with what may allow the narrator to retreat without surrender. In novelistic narrative as it functioned, the alternation between scene and summary is an alternation between the dramatic and the non-dramatic. Achebe wanting to carry away the reader tries to play equilibrist between scenes and summaries through out the narrative. Chapter eight entitled 'Daughters' comes in its entirety with a summary about the traditional notes that links *Anthills of the Savannah* to the previous novels:

> *The story goes as that in the distant past a certain man handsome beyond compare but in randiness as unbridled as the odorous he-goat from the shrine of Udo planting his plenitude of seeds from a huge pod swinging between hind legs into she-goats tethered for him in front of numerous homesteads; this man, they said, finally desired also the ozo title and took the word to Idemili. She said nothing. He went away, performed the rites, took the eagle feather and the titular name Nwankibie , and return to tell her what he had done… (p.95)*

Udo and Idemili are terms and realities evoked in some the previous novels. All this plays against the temporal relationship between the actual story of the novel and its discourse. The story of these deities goes back to *Arrow of God* whose temporal setting is in the nineteenths. Still there is no precision since the deities exist before the white invasion. Hence, there is no exact referencing about the evocation of those deities. The least I can assert is that Achebe, though he operates some technical changes in the conception of the narrative, is still connected to his ancestral world with its realities. But the connection sounds ironic and metaphoric:

> *THAT WE ARE SURROUNDED by deep mysteries is known to all but the incurably ignorant. But even they must concede the fact, indeed the inevitability, of the judiciously spaced, but nonetheless certain, interruptions in the flow of their high art*

> *to interject the word of their sponsor, the divinity that controls remotely but diligently the transactions of the marketplace that is their world.*
> *In the beginning Power rampaged through our world, naked. So the Almighty, looking at his creation through the round undying eye of the Sun, saw and pondered and finally decided to send his daughter, Idemili, to bear witness to the moral nature of authority by wrapping around Power's rude waist a loincloth of peace and modesty (P.93).*

The temporal value of the quotation dealing with the origin of power is generic and brings the story far back 'In the beginning'. This beginning has no time precision. This produces the effect of lengthening the story. In summaries the narrative time is less than story time.

In opting for scenes in the discourse, the narrators are eager to show how truthful they are. And this gives the narrative a sense of action. Even in interactions where the narrator has no access to, he tries by eardrop to catch the conversation and render it with the possible details. An example is given in chapter two where His Excellency has invited Professor Okong in his office after the suspension of the meeting of the cabinet:

> *So when Professor Okong was marched in by the fierce orderly he found His Excellency in a tough and self-confident mood.*
> *"Goog day, Your Excellency, Mr. President," intoned Professor Okong executing at the same time a ninety-degree bow.*
> *No reply nor any kind of recognition of his presence. His Excellency continued writing on his drafting pad for a full minute more before looking up. Then he spoke abruptly as though to an intruder he wanted to be rid of quickly.*
> *"Yes, I want you to go over to the Reception quadrangle and receive the delegation waiting there... Well, sit down!" (p.14)*

A summary would have reduced the time of the narration. The multiplicity of the scenes gives the narrative a temporal balance which ellipses try to unbalance.

The notion of ellipsis is difficult to analyse in *Anthills of the Savannah* for the simple reason that it is difficult to determine the gaps there are between the different narrations. In the discourse, Oriko is the first narrator. His narration is in its great part concerned with the cabinet meeting and the tête-à-tête between His Excellency and Professor Okong. The object

of these events is the reception of the delegation from Abazon to meet His Excellency. His Excellency does not want to meet them and wants Professor Okong to do it in his name. This is clear in the narration in which it is said that it is not the first time that Abazon people are involved in such movements. But the details of the previous cases are not mentioned. An example of temporal ellipsis is the period of their studies at Lord Lugard College. One can simply read: 'I had known him then for close on twenty-five years, from that day long ago when we first met as new boys of thirteen or fourteen at Lord Lugard College...' (p.11).

Another important ellipsis is the one related to how His Excellency accedes to power. The narrator is tormented by the contrast between how His Excellency comes to power, how he is and how he becomes today. The reader has no detailed narration of these things. The narrator simply comes with what he calls explanation and justification:

> *This calls for some explanation and justification. His Excellency came to power without any preparation for political leadership – a fact which he being a very intelligent person knew perfectly well and which, furthermore, should not have surprised anyone. Sandhurst after all did not set about training officers to take over Her Majesty's throne but rather in the high tradition of proud aloofness from politics and public affairs. Therefore when our civilian politicians finally got what they had coming to them and landed unloved and unmourned on the rubbish heap and the young Army Commander was invited by the even younger coup-makers to become His Excellency the Head of the State he had pretty few ideas about what to do.*

The narration evokes twenty-years of acquaintance between the narrator and His Excellency without mentioning all the events happened in the course of that period from the Lord Lugard College to the narration now.

Another example of temporal ellipsis, without clear notification of time, is the one related to the national Gazette management. Ikem is the present manager of the newspaper. But it is mentioned that he takes it over from Chris. The narration mentions nothing about this. We only have: 'When I took over the National Gazette from Chris I had no strong views

one way or another about capital punishment' (p.35) and before this, a similar mention by Oriko himself: 'I was editor of the National Gazette at the time and he approached me with a proposal for a weekend current affairs column...' (p.10).

Some of the ellipses in the narrative are out of its temporal expected temporal extension. The white man leaves the supposed Kangan in the sixties. About thirty year after, an allusion in made to the time of ruling of the white man. But the ruling is only evoked in a circumstance of comparison. This gives way to a particular ellipsis which content has been the essential of some previous stories: '... The very words the white master had said in his time about the black race as a whole. Now we say them about the poor.'

The study of duration in a narrative is concerned mainly with the analysis of that narrative in a way that elucidates its temporal relationships between the story and the discourse. At the present point of my analysis of this aspect in *Anthills of the Savannah*, I can conclude that Achebe used in part the traditional movements of a narrative. No narrative of fictional dimension can be created without ellipses of parts of the story in the discourse. Achebe's narrative at study contains examples of ellipses. Summaries and scenes form the physical core of the narrative from its outset to the end. It is only pauses that Achebe did not use in *Anthills of the Savannah*. This has been intentional for the simple reason that the different narrators are mainly concerned with their witnesses about how His Excellency governs Kangan. These individual opportunities suffice to expose one's view of the situation. The three traditional narrative movements used in the present novel combine to show the length of the story time. The analysis of the frequency aspect helps grasp the temporal abstraction of the narrative.

6.3 Frequency in *Anthills of the Savannah*

The main story of the narrative is at the iterative position with a mixture of sigulative and repeating narrating. The repetition comes at times even if it is simple evocation of what has happened before. The main story as I have said it is the arrival of a delegation from Abazon to meet His Excellency for the many problems of the region. Oriko, Isodi and Okoh, as the three protagonists concerned in the narration of the first part of the novel, axe they witness on the ruling of His Excellency by relating the evidence of what they say to the Abazon case:

> *'YOU'RE WASTING everybody's time, Mr. Commissioner for Information. I will not go to Abazon. Finish! Kabisa! Any other business?'*
> *'As Your Excellency wishes. But...'*
> *'But me no buts, Mr. Oriko! The matter is closed, I said. How many times, for God's sake, am I expected to repeat it? Why do you find it so difficult to swallow my ruling. On anything?'*
> *'I am sorry, Your Excellency. But I have no difficulty swallowing and digesting your rulings.'*

The narrative opens on the Abazon case with the reaction of His Excellency to Oriko's proposal to His Excellency to go to Abazon. A presidential visit to Abazon may help to cool the population down. This reaction of His Excellency is clear that in the present and actual political circumstances it is indicated to him to go there. The matter has just been opened though His Excellency thinks that 'The matter is closed'. He then invites Professor Okong to his office after having suspended the meeting without allowing the attendants to leave:

> *'[...] Now can anyone here tell me anything about that crowd screaming out there?' He looks at each of us in turn. No one stirs or opens his mouth. 'That's what I mean when I say that I have no Executive Council. Can you see what I mean now, all of you? Take your seats, gentlemen, and stay!' He rushes out again...*
> *Very few words are spoken in the next half hour. When the doors swing open again, an orderly announces: Professor Okong Wanted by His Excellency!*
> *This invitation is not a priori for the Abazon case according to the feeling of the meeting attendants and mainly for professor Okong who is invited: 'I go to prepare a place for you, gentlemen ... But rest assured I will keep the most comfortable cell for myself.' He went out laughing. I too began to laugh quite ostentatiously. ...' (P.9).*

The nervous state in which the president has left the meeting room is considered as sufficient to finish with them. But rather, it is to see how to solve the Abazon case. The narration then becomes repetitive of the case:

> *'Yes, I want you to go over to the reception quadrangle and receive the delegation waiting there ... Well, sit down'.*
> *'Thank you, Your Excellency.'*
> *'I suppose I ought to begin by filling you in on who they are and what they are doing here, etc. Unless, of course, by some miracle you made the discovery yourself after I left you.'*
> *'No, sir. We didn't. I am sorry.'*
> *This Abazon case is now recalled in its detail by Professor Okong of whom the narrator says that he is 'A man who will not piss in his trousers at the first sound of danger.' Before Professor Okong can recall all the Abazon case, His Excellency has wanted to be sure that the matter is not to be treated as rebellion:*
> *'But whatever you do, make sure that nothing about petitions gets into the papers. I don't want to see any talk of complaints and petitions in the press. This is a goodwill visit pure and simple.'*
> *'Exactly. A reconciliation overture from Your Excellency's erstwhile rebellious subjets.'*
> *No no no! I don't want to rub that in. Let's leave well alone.'*
> *'But Your Excellency, you are too generous. Too generous by halt? Why does every bad thing in this country start in Abazon Province? The rebellion was there. They were the only ones whose Leaders of Thought failed to return a clear mandate to Your Excellency. I don't want to be seen as a tribalist but Mr. Ikem Osodi is causing all this trouble because he is a typical Abazonian. I am sorry to be personal, Your Excellency, but we must face facts. If you ask me, Your Excellency, God does not sleep. How do we know that that drought they are suffering over there may not be God's judgement for all the troubles they have caused in this country. And now they have the audacity to write Your Excellency to visit their Province and before you can even reply to their invitation they carry their nonsense come your house. I think Your Excellency that you are being too generous. Too generous by half, I am sorry to say.'*

In his ironic tone Professor Okong points to the central problem of Abazon in the way that shows that it is not the end of the episode.

Of course the Abazon case is the main event of the narrative and I have shown how its importance has been revealed through the many examples of its recurrence in the discourse, but other events have been the object of repetition in the narrative. Ikem Osodi has been cited as a protagonist of the recurrent rebellion of Abazon. The narration takes in account his charisma and as such mentions several times the visit the taxi-drivers pay him after the

incident of the traffic when Ikem is going to the Presidential Palace. The visit intervenes in chapter ten: 'By this time Ikem had realized who one of the visitors was...' A few pages after, one can read about the same visit:

> *As he drove to Mad Medico's place that afternoon Ikem turned over and over in his mind one particular aspect of the visit of the taxi-driver and his friend - how it seemed so important to him to explain his failure to recognize an admired "personality" like Ikem; and how adroitly he had shifted the guilt from this failure round to the very same object of admiration for driving a battered old Datsun instead of a Mercedes and for driving with his own hands instead of sitting in the owner's corner and being driven. So in the midst of all their fulsome and perfectly sincere praise of Ikem those two also managed to sneak in a couple of body-blows (P.127).*

In the following, the narration comes again in the same event with a specific sense: "THE SENSE OF EXHILARATION which had descended on Ikem after the taxi drivers". visit stayed with him all afternoon and into the night, a night in which Elewa, touched by the flame of his novel excitement opened to him new reserves of tenderness exceptional even for her...' (p.129).These repeating narrating allow the narrator to come with at least a piece of precision is what has been narrated before. This has lengthened the time of the narrating. The repeating narrating is mixed with singulative and iterative narrations.

The iterative narrating is concerned with recurrent events in the narrative. They are recurrent in their nature and form. Though the agenda of the Cabinet meetings can varies from a session to another, it is iterative in the discourse. And even the parallel invitation of Professor Okong is also iterative. A single meeting is concerned in the discourse. But it is clear that the cabinet has a periodicity to which it holds its meeting. Thus, the evocation of this single one in the narration renders it iterative. For a cabinet meeting to be suspended is not a unique event. The present case about Professor Okong is then iterative. Many other iterative events are throughout the narrating. They come with daily routines that the narration evokes only once just to blur the reality in its actual form. I think that through the story,

travelling through the "great north road" is not a single event. The Abazon delegation uses it to come to Bassa. But nothing is said about it until chapter seventeen:

> *The bus had been travelling for a little over five hours when it pulled up in the famous dusty and bustling market-town of Agbata, rather large and active for that part of the country. It was the main watering-place of the Great North Road beloved of seasoned travellers on his route. The passengers were glad to escape from the stagnant, cooped-up heat inside the bus into the dry hot waves of the open air. As they disembarked they kicked the cramps out of their leg-joints and sought out what privacy they could find in that unsheltered, sandy terrain to ease themselves. Proprietors of eating-houses and other shacks had regular running battles with every batch of freshly disembarked passengers especially the women eyeing their backyards in spite of many bold scrawls: DON'T URINATE HERE. Most of the men emboldened by tradition and regular travel did not wander around to the same extent like a hen looking for a place to drop her egg but simply picked a big parked track, moved up close enough and relieved themselves against one of the tyres (p.192)*

The narration about this famous village, here in the narration now, is to prepare the reader to the conditions under which Chris and his companions are fleeing to the North after the murder of Ikem. In this sense the narrating becomes singulative. The singulative narrating comes with most of the repetitions. I can justify this assertion by the narrating that shows how Okong has become Professor. The event is an analepsis that comes when the narrator is accompanying the invitation of Okong ny His Excellency in his office:

> *Professor Reginald Okong, though a buffoon, is a fighter of sorts and totally self-made. Unfortunately he has no sense of political morality which is a double tragedy for a man who began his career as an American Baptist minister and later became Professor of Political Science at our University. Perhaps he has more responsibility than any other single individual except myself for the remarkable metamorphosis of His Excellency. But, perhaps like me he meant well, neither of us having been present before at the birth and grooming of a baby monster.*
> *As a bright pupil-teacher in lower primary school Reginald Okong had attracted the attention of American Baptist missionaries from Ohio who were engaged in belated but obdurate evangelism in his district. They saw a great future for him and ordained him at the age of 26. In their Guinness Book of Records mentality they often called the*

> *youngest native American Baptist minister in the world. Native American? Good heavens no! Native African. But, while they were conscientiously grooming Okong slowly but surely into the future head of their local church in say twenty or thirty years, the young Reverend, bright, ambitious and in a great hurry was working secretly on schemes of his own, one of which was to take him away altogether from the missionary vineyard to the secular campuses of a southern Black college in the United States of America itself to the dismay of his Ohio patrons who did not stop at occasions of ingratitude but mounted a determined campaign with US Immigration aimed at getting him deported. But he too was tough and overcame all his difficulties. Augmenting his slender resources by preaching and wrestling he graduated in record time by passing off his Grade Three teachers' certificate as the equivalent of two years of Junior College. Four years later he was back home with a Ph.D. in his bag, and went to teach at the university (p.11).*

Okong has become Professor once and the event is narrated once. Many other examples of singulative narrating can further be given in the narrative. Most of them are analepses. For instance the evocation of the nickname "So Therefore" is unique and has been narrated once on page 32. There is a double event there. The narrating is first of all about the neighbour who beats his wife. It is in the narrating of this event that the evocation of the nickname comes: 'Later I hear how a concerned neighbour once called the police station – this was before I came to live here – and reported that a man was battering his wife and the Desk Sergeant asked sleepily: 'So Therefore?' So, behind his back, we call him Mr. "So Therefore." I can never remember his real name.'

The travel of Chris and his companions to the north is singulative, not because of the action of travelling but because of the specific circumstances under which they are travelling:

> *[...] In the bus the three had prudently behaved like total strangers. But the last hundred and fifty or so kilometres had shown that they did not need that level of caution. And so now they sat boldly at one table and ordered their food [...]*
> *They still did not talk much among themselves and could quite easily have passed for three travellers who perhaps knew each other slightly or even struck up acquaintance in the course of the journey (p.193)*

The concretisation of a narrative demands what Genette called determinations and specifications to offer a means of diversification or of variation in the global discourse of the

narrative. These aspects help the narration to show delimitations of the narrative in its discourse. Now, I would like to turn to the narrative mood of the same narrative so as to analyse the relationships between the different protagonists and the narrative they are engaged in.

6.4 Mood in *Anthills of the Savannah*

The essential of what is my contention in the study of Mood is the notion of distance. This notion is simply the relative position of the narrator vis-à-vis of the story he tells. From the outset of the present chapter I said that *Anthills of the Savannah* is a novel of great change in Achebe's writing panorama. One of the analytical categories concerned with in a study of a narrative is the mood aspect in which the notion of distance is mainly about two types of narratives: the narrative of events and the narrative of words. Both are related to the presence or not of the narrator. But it is with the narrative of words that the narrator expresses his position in relation to the story. This analysis is done through the famous three states of characters' speech: narratized speech, transposed speech and reported speech.

Anthills of the Savannah is a narrative dominated by scenes, so by reported speech. Though the novel presents two types of narrator, it maintains its scenery till the end of the discourse. In fact, there are three narrators enjoying the characteristics of first person narrator and the traditional third person narrator. The three first person narrators come separately with their witness about the ruling of their school friend become His Excellency.

Christopher Oriko is the first witness. In his narration, in the first two chapters of the novel, he tries to show his closeness to His Excellency and his involvement in the story or at least the part of the story he tells. His narration starts from the Cabinet meeting with a cut up discussion about the the president's going to Abazon: "YOU'RE WASTING everybody's

time, Mr. Commissioner for Information. I will not go to Abazon. Finish! Kabisa! Any other business?". The narrator gives up but refuses to capitulate: "As Your Excellency wishes. But...". The narrator then comes to deal about his feeling of what has happened: 'I have thought of all this as a game that began innocently enough and then went suddenly strange and poisonous..." This opens the details that the narrator comes with through the discourse of the part he is concerned with. Between two strands of dialogue, the narrator inserts summaries which are for the essential narrative of events. In such a context the narratized speech and the transposed one which are realities of the narrative of words are rarely used. A single sentence can be a comment about a given speech. An example is given at the very beginning of chapter two where the narrator is concerned with a description though one can notice in it this sentence: 'He[the Director of the State Research Council] proved one again in His Excellency's words as efficient as the Cabinet was incompetent.' This sentence contains the phrase "His Excellency's words" as the traces of his having spoken. Another example of this kind of mixture: 'WHAT EXACTLY did the fellow mean, His Excellency wondered. I handled him pretty well, though. I certainly won't stand for my commissioners sneaking up to me with vague accusations against their colleagues...' This last example contains abnormal grammatical form used to signal that His Excellency has asked a question that the narrator narratizes by leaving the interrogative mark that would have marked the reported speech. Then the phrase "vague accusations against their colleagues" shows another narratized speech related to speeches coming from some commissioners. The rest of the paragraph contains other episodic traces of narratized and transposed speech:

> *[...] No wonder they say he now heads a handclapping, spiritualist congregation on campus... My semi-literate uncle was right all the way when he said that we asked the white man to pack and go but did not think he would take with him all the utensils he brought when he came... (p.19).*

This passage is a discourse without narrator or precisely with a distant narrator who just mention his presence with a false reported speech that I mentioned above. Christophe Oriko announces himself in his narrative role and disappears leaving the room to His Excellency to soliloquy. It is in fact an imagination of the narrator of what may have been His Excellency's attitude after he has left his office. In the same strand is the following sentence at the beginning of Chapter three: 'CHRIS CALLED IKEM on the telephone and asked him to send a photographer to the Reception Room of the Presidential Palace to cover a goodwill delegation from Abazon.' From this quotation on realises that the narrator changes. It is no more a first person narrator but rather a third person narrator. In chapter four the narration becomes first person again, with Ikem the narration.

These changes of types of narrators constitute to my opinion a super dialogue in which each of the first person narrators is participant and that the traditional third person narrator is the reporter of that super narration. Achebe appears here as a fully literary creator. His narrators then bear multiple voices.

6.5 Voice in *Anthills of the Savannah*

The notion of voice is a notion connected to mood in the structural analysis of a narrative. These notions are concerned with the psychological aspects of the narrative. And dealing with psychological aspects supposes the analysis of the narrative in terms of the relationships between the text and its narrator in the one hand and in the other hand the relationships between the narrator and the protagonists of the story he tells. The analysis is brought in the field of the narrating.

The narrating situation is a complex whole whose analysis is normally to be done globally. But the demands of the work of the critic are that he or she must expose things in his

critical discourse since he or she cannot deal with the different element at the same time. In this context, Genette (1980) distinguished some elements whose functioning is simultaneous. From the list identified by Genette, my contention is concerned with two which are 'time of narrating' and 'narrative level'.

In an a priori determination of the narrating instance, it is obvious that the narrating is subsequent to what it tells, that is, the discourse comes after the story has happened. But the evolution of subtlety in the domain of creative work, this came to be over passed and now four types of narrating are differentiated.

The subsequent narrating being the traditional one is very easy to identify in a narrative. For example the novel opens with a cabinet meeting. This event happens before the opening of the discourse. Its narration is subsequent. Many other events are narrated subsequently. The simultaneous narrating is the one that comes with the events as they happen.

In the novel, there are some simultaneous narratings. When it comes to be used, the simultaneous narrating is concerned with thoughts and feelings about past events. The very first example comes on page 2 of the novel when Christopher Oriko, the narrator, stops to express his honesty vis-à-vis of the story he tells: 'And of course, complete honesty demands that I mention one last factor in my continued stay, a fact of which I'm somewhat ashamed, namely that I couldn't be writing this if I didn't hang around to observe it all. And no one else would.' The narrator, dealing with the event about the Cabinet meeting, gives up momentarily the concern with the meeting and is now commenting the behaviour of some of his colleagues. Another example of thinking after the real event can be given in chapter four where Ikem Osodi is the narrator:

> *Chris keeps lecturing me on the futility of my crusading editorials. They achieve nothing. They antagonize everybody. They are essays in overkill. They're counter-*

> *productive. Poor Chris. He probably believes the crap too. Amazing what even one month in office can do to a man's mind. I think that one of these days I shall set him down in front of a blackboard and chalk up for him the many bull's-eyes of my crusading editorials... (p.35).*

A further example of simultaneous narrating is the comparison that Ikem makes between him and Chris:

> *IT SEEMS CHRIS has tortured himself for nothing. A week has gone by and no despatch-rider has delivered a query to in the loud type-face of palace Remingtons. No green army jeep or blue police jeep has pulled up outside the Gazette or in front of the flats. Chris is totally shamefaced...*
> *... But the great difference between me and Chris is that I never did expect to be told... I keep telling Chris that life is simpler that way... (PP.41-42).*

Generally stating things about the simultaneous narrating, I can say that it allows the narrator in the case of those we have in the novel to expose their insight and some character traits to the reader.

As for the prior narrating, less used in narratives, is the narration of events before their occurrence in the story. In Anthills of the Savannah, there are some hints of prior narrating which come in some detours of simultaneous narrating, may be, to reinforce the narrator's thought and feeling about what has happened and which is the object of his comments. Ikem Osodi finishes a simultaneous narrating with a formulation that contains a future tense: 'I'll have to go over to his [Chris's] place this evening and see if I can make him feel better.' Two actions are concomitant in this sentence. They constitute the future event that the narrator is now dealing with in the discourse.

Another example of prior narrating that I can is rather a prophecy. This prophecy is about the death of Ikem and mainly its circumstances: 'He'd sooner be found dead'. May be a pure coincidence, it is in the realisation of the first example of prior narrating that the second is signalled. Now I would turn to the narrative levels in the novel.

Dealing with narrative levels is identifying the diegetic narrative, the extradiegetic narrative and the intradigetic narrative in the discourse. All narrative is first all diegetic. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, the story of Abazon is the first narrative. This narrative is extradiegetic. In its telling the narrator comes with Professor Okong's story. This one is intradiegetic.

In the second chapter of the present dissertation I evoked a narrating form that comes with embedded tales in the discourse. Obiechina (1993) called it narrative proverb. Apart from *Things Fall Apart* where Achebe much used narrative proverbs, the other novels contain episodic examples of them. The case of *Anthills of the Savannah* is worth mentioning here because the novel, in spite of its so many technical changes announced, contains some examples of narrative proverbs. The real example comes on page 117:

> *Once upon a time the leopard who had been trying for a long time to catch the tortoise finally chanced upon him on a solitary road. 'Aha,' he said; 'at long last! Prepare to die.' And the tortoise said: 'Can I ask one favour before you kill me? The leopard saw no harm in that and agreed. 'Give me a few moments to prepare my mind'....*
> *At the end of some strange actions by the tortoise, the leopard asks her: 'Why are you doing that? And to the tortoise to reply: 'Because even after I am dead I would want anyone passing by this spot to say, a fellow and his match struggled here.'*

It is clear that this embedded tale plays the same role as the ones evoked in the analysis of *Things Fall Apart*. The connection of this tale with the discourse here is that the delegation of Abazon is deceived by not being received by His Excellency. And to encourage themselves for their decision to come to see His Excellency as he refuses to pay a visit to them in their village, the speaker tells the story of the leopard and the tortoise. And exactly as in *Things Fall Apart*, the narrative proverb is preceded by a proverb. The proverb used here is intended as always to justify the arrival of the delegation in Bassa: ... 'It is proper that a beggar should visit a king. When a rich man is sick a beggar goes to visit him and say sorry. When the beggar is sick, he waits to recover and then goes to tell the rich man that he has

been sick. It is the place of the poor man to make a visit to the rich man who holds the yam and the knife' (p.117). This proverb justifies well the effort of Abazon in coming to visit His Excellency and as he refuses to receive them in person, the speaker adds the story of the leopard and the tortoise, and he finishes up with this: "My people, that is all we are doing now. Struggling. Perhaps to no purpose except that those who come after us will be able to say: *True, our fathers were defeated but they tried.*"

The narrative proverb is in fact the only and real embedded narrative in *Anthills of the Savannah* in which the multiplicity of narrators renders complex the choice of the hero/narrator, as the book is written in first person with three different narrators and also written in third person. The combination of first person and third person is not the problem. The problem is that at the first person level, Chris, Ikem and Beatrice are all narrators and even narratees, and as such, it is not easy to say this or that narrator is the hero. This difficultly is solved by the notions of perspective and characterisation which are not part of what I decided to do in the present dissertation. Moreover, this juxtaposition of different narrators, which simply expresses a shift of point of view and the degrees of focalisation, reduces the functions of the narrator, at least the first person narrating functions, to mere attestation of what one tells after the traditional narrative function. But in the exercise of these functions, they come with the directing function which helps them verify the contact with the narratee in a way or in another. At the beginning of the narrative the narrator Christophe Oriko, in a stream of consciousness, expresses his feelings as they come to him about his presence in the cabinet with his stay in spite of his suffering in it, suffering not only related to His Excellency, but also related to the actions of his colleagues. Finally he accuses himself: 'I find their actions not merely bearable now but actually interesting, even exciting. Quite amazing! And to think that I personally was responsible for recommending nearly half of

them for appointment.' Then he draws the attention of the narratee on his sincerity: 'And, of course, complete honesty demands that I mention one last factor in my continued stay, a fact of which I'm somewhat ashamed, namely that I couldn't be writing this if I didn't hang around to observe it all. And no one else would.'

In the same logic of directing function of the narrator, another example can be given in the narrating of Ikem Osodi. He shows how he tries to understand Christopher Oriko in their struggle around His Excellency or as he says their worshipping of him. He then draws the narratee's attention on the veracity of he says by stating his difference with Oriko:

> *Nobody told me either. But the great difference between me and Chris is that I never did expect to be told. I happened to feel a certain way in the matter and like a free agent, sat up at night after Elewa had gone away in the taxi and composed my thoughts. I keep telling Chris that life is simpler that way. Much simpler. Stop looking back over your shoulder, I tell him... (41-42).*

In the general narrating state of *Anthills of the Savannah*, the intertwinement of the narrating instance is the display of the intertwinement of the protagonists each of whom is trying to show his sincerity vis-à-vis of the version of the story he tells. In such a context, the reader may finish the reading of the narrative without knowing pieces to put together. That is the main reason why Achebe chose to add to these multiple first person narrators a third person one that should embody objectivity through omniscient consciousness. What is important to mention in the narrative situation of *Anthills of the Savannah* is the non monopoly of the first person narration in their attesting attempts. Each of the narrators gives the floor to the other characters involved. That is the reason why there are many scenes in the discourse. A partial conclusion is essential to end this chapter.

6.6 Partial conclusion

Modernist writing is organized in a way that shows a lack of clarity and straightforwardness of the pioneering work done in the preceding centuries. They therefore place great demands on the audience in terms of reconstituting the order of the story. Despite being inundated with an abundance of description, modernist writing places equal emphasis on each detail, forcing the reader to decide the importance of each. In a similar fashion, by shifting narrators, Achebe presents many views of characters, allowing the reader to choose the most truthful perspective. Known as stream of consciousness writing, this modernist style often also ignores strict chronology. Ideas are expressed as they flow into the mind about the events. When offering a description of Sam, Ikem begins to discuss Mad Medico before the character has been formally introduced, an example of the non-linear narration as mentioned in the chapter.

With a major shift in the technique and point of view, chapter seven seemingly offers another beginning to the book and an additional example of non-linear narration: 'For weeks and months after I had definitely taken on the challenge of bringing together as many broken pieces of this tragic history as I could lay my hands on I still could not find a way to begin. Anything I tried to put down sounded wrong — either too abrupt, too indelicate or too obvious — to my middle ear'. (p. 75)

The events until this point had occurred in the present, however in this chapter the time shifts to the future and the lives of Sam, Chris, and Ikem are remembered by Beatrice. This subtle shift is reflected by brief, off handed comments by Beatrice: "But something had happened not so long ago to change our lives and, on this particular Saturday . . ." and "that's one lesson I've learned from the still unbelievable violences we went through" (pp. 76-77). Both remarks reflect the hindsight of the narrator. Following this chapter comes a seemingly

out of place chapter on myth, that is not fully explained by Achebe, offering one more example of stream of consciousness writing and non-linear narration.

In sum, *Anthills of the Savannah* is a narrative that seems to have a trompe-l'oeil structure as to its order. It starts with a linear narration but very soon the discourse comes with anachronous events, mainly analepses. Beatrice, one of the first person narrators evoked in my analysis, starts her narrating with the current story, notably her invitation to private dinner by His Excellency, but gives it up and carries on with an analepsis:

> *In the early days of his coming to power I had gone fairly often to the palace with Chris and sometimes Chris and Ikem. But then things had changed quite dramatically after about one year and now apart from viewing him virtually every night on television news I had not actually set eyes on him nor had any kind of direct contact for well over a year... (p.65).*

This intertwinement of the current narration and past events of the story continues through the rest of the discourse. Another example can be given on page 73:

> *And then came the master's voice summoning me to have my turn in the bedchamber of African polygamy!*
> *The first time it happened I was a student in England. My boyfriend had taken me to an end-of-year dance at St. Pancras Town Hall. It was crowded and we eventually had to share a table with someone my boyfriend knew who was already seated with a white girl. After a couple of dances I whispered into Guy's ear that we should exchange partners out of politeness. After two dances with the white girl Guy went completely berserk. He would withdraw with her to the farthest corner of the huge dance-hall and stay there at the end of one dance waiting for the band to strike up another number...*

In terms of frequency, the narrative is a mixture of singulative, repeating and iterative narrative. The above example given for order aspect contains an example of iterative. The phrase "the first time it happened" shows that that event happens several times, but it is narrated once.

As for the duration in the same narrative, scenes have dominated the discourse presenting a balance between its time and the story time, balance that summaries and ellipses annihilate in the course of the narrative. Globally examining the narrative pacing of *Anthills of*

the Savannah, one notes the almost total absence of pause. This considerably reduces the discourse time and allows the production of live effect on the reader.

This live effect is reinforced by the fully involvement of the narrators in their respective turns of narrating. Even with the third person narrator, his omniscience is limited to what some characters know:

> *THE KING OF PEOPLE – local bourgeoisie and foreign diplomats – who sidle up to you at cocktail parties to inform you that Bassa was not Kangan are the very ones who go on behaving as though it was. Why? Because, like the rest of the best people, they have never travelled by bus out of Bassa on the Great North Road. If they had, even once, they would have believed and stopped prating! But they always proffer the excuse that it is too dangerous, too sweaty and, above all, too long a journey for busy people.*
> *Now, as the overwhelming force of this simple, always-taken-in-vain reality impinged on each of Chris's five, or was it six, senses even as hordes of flying insects after the first rain bombard street lamps, the ensuing knowledge seeped through every pore in his skin into the core of his being continuing the transformation, already in process, of the man he was (P.189)*

The involvement of the narrators confers them, apart from the traditional narrative function, a directing function backed by the function of communication. All this leads to an intertwined narrative instance with a shift of point of view from one narrator to another with the same focus on His Excellency and their relation with him and his governance.

As for the narrative level, there is essentially one level in the governance of *Anthills of the Savannah*. The only real embedded narrative is a narrative proverb that intervenes to reinforce the thematic strand of the main narrative. On this point, *Anthills of the Savannah* joins *Things Fall Apart.* The story about the leopard and the tortoise prepares the understanding of the struggle of the people of Abazon.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Most of the doctoral dissertations that I have come across deal with pure thematic contents and I had been embarrassed by a dilemma of choice at the doctoral level. But, as I considered a doctoral dissertation in applied linguistics mainly about narrative structures as a discovering and uncovering exercise, I felt an intrinsic motivation mount into my mind. Thus, I decided to carry on with the same author by extending the scope of my research to all his novels to date. The choice of Achebe's novels has been governed by the emotion of first contact and love of a story-teller style. Almost the same thing is my choice of Genette's theory. He has been the first theorist I have been supplied with during DEA lectures.

Genette applied his own theory to *A la recherche du temps perdu* by Marcel Proust whose narrative went back to the end of the nineteenth century whereas Genette's theory went back to the seventies in the twentieth century. As at that time Achebe had already written four of his five novels, I decided to carry out my research work on this theory with its application to these five novels. This would allow me to come with pronouncements relative to whether Achebe's attempts to recreate the African past, with a teaching role, allowed him or not to write his novels with techniques that are not in the past he attempted to recreate.

In this context, I organised the dissertation in six chapters the first of which is concerned with literature review and the second my theoretical framework. The four other chapters deal with the application to Achebe's novels, respectively *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God, No Longer at Ease, A Man of the People,* and *Anthills of the Savannah.* The present general conclusion is in a way or in another the synthesis of what has been done or found in these chapters.

My literature review has been focussed on Genette's application of his own theory on Marcel Proust's novel entitled *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1954) which is a particular narrative for two reasons. The novel is older than the theory and is written with a certain

freedom that gives it volume and a kilt form where pleats go forwards and backwards. It is webbed with anachronies which render the discourse sometimes hovering, other times diving like a kestrel in search of prey. The narrative has some temporal sections, some evoking moment impossible to date with their occurrence late in the hero's life and others dealing with the accounts given by the narrator to past events from his reminiscences. Hence the global order being embroidered with late events coming in the first time of the narrative time but far from the first time in the diegetic.

In terms of duration, summary and descriptive pause are almost absent in *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Scene and ellipsis have marked the temporality of the narrative with the dominance of scenes. This renders many moments of narration resembling and blending with each other. In dealing, for instance, with the Swann, the narrator comes to speak of the Guermantes landscape, a landscape 'whose individuality sometimes, at night, in my dreams, binds me with a power that is almost fantastic' (P.124). This illustrates Proust's singularity of his spatial sensitivity and the iterativeness of his temporal sensitivity. This even renders the mood tied to the activity of the narrator himself in the disturbing intervention of the narrative source, of the narrating, rather than his narrative presence.

In sum, *A la recherche du temps perdu* is fundamentally an autodiegetic narrative in which the narrator/hero never yields the privilege of the narrative function to anyone. This renders the distinctive relations between the hero as such and the hero as narrator characteristic of the narrative. This application being at the same time the source of the theory gives power to Genette's work by taking into account most of the complexities of Proustian narrative. At the same time, the source inclines to critical reserve that allows me to apply the same theory to newer narratives in order to verify the theoretical greatness of Genette's work.

In my theoretical framework, though I consider all the five analytical categories identified by Genette in his theory and as applied to *A la recherche du temps perdu*, I spotted some aspects of these categories. In order, I focussed on anachronies and in duration on the four narrative movements, notably pause, scene, summary and ellipsis. Order and duration together with frequency, in which the focus is on the relationships established in terms of repetitive capacities between story and discourse, are concerned with temporal abstractions in the organisation of a narrative. As for mood and voice, the stress is put on the narrator in terms of his distance vis-à-vis of the story he tells, his organisation of the characters speeches, the narrating instance and his narrative functions. Through all this, my contention has not been to interpret literature, but rather investigate narrative structures and devices. To achieve this goal, the application has been organised in four chapters the first of which is the third chapter about *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God.*

In this chapter, essentially, though the units are not physically transferable from Proust's work to Achebe's, mainly at the narrating level, simply because of the difference of type of the narrator, I can nevertheless state structural unit correspondences that help to receive the two narratives in the sphere of novels. The fact that anachronies are distinguished in these books as theorised by Genette, combined with the narrator's different functions exposed in my analysis, expresses that these novels contain devices corresponding to many of the criteria-features developed by structuralists in general and by Genette in particular. However, orality finds its place in Achebe's work and fortifies it. There is the point where critics address a rigid distinction that sticks literacy only to novel and orality to story in terms of tale or the like. The fourth chapter has been concerned with *No Longer at Ease.*

Throughout the narrative, the narrator presents summaries sometimes intermixed with scenes. These scenes are occasions when the narrator reinforces the singulative mood of

narration. The singulative narration is the one that dominates the narrative with episodic repetitions of not the narrated events but rather the narrated statements. The narration mentions few certifications of what is being told. But the nature of the descriptions is close to something that looks like testimony. The soft combination of all these techniques confers the work a kind of unity that depicts the decay of that country, decay that recalls the disorganisation of Umuofia and Umuaro respectively in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* as it followed with *A Man of the People*.

The narrating instance of *A Man of the People* bears some subtle marks of duration organised in a way that everywhere the narrator's presence is signalled, it is mingled with both his past and Chief Nanga's. This brings me to argue that the narrative has a double narrating instance. Of course the first is related to the narrator's traditional role as the guide in the progression of the story, but another narrating instance is one carried by the same narrator via what he wants the reader to know about Chief Nanga in particular and generally about the regime.

Rewinding to the functions of the narrator, I can say that my assertion is supported by the directing function played by the narrator in the narrative. This directing function is signalled by the use of 'you' as a narratee and even a subtle directing as this: 'The reason I have gone into that shameful episode in such detail is to establish the fact that I had to reason to be enthusiastic about Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga who, seeing the empty ministerial seats, had yapped and snarled so shamelessly for the meaty prize'. This directing function is strengthened by a mixture of the states of characters' speech to express the narrative distance which in the case of *A Man of the People* is the involvement of the narrator. The narratized speech is reduced to the profit of dialogue through which the narrator comes with transposed

speech in order to be free in his comment with the possibility of extending it where he feels the need.

The novel, in terms of order, has anachronies. In the first paragraph of the narrative, the narrator shows a kind of certitude of his story by adding: 'I have to admit this from the outset or else the story I'm going to tell will make no sense'. The reader already has a psychological conclusion about the story before it starts. This presents the entirety of the story as a prolepsis. This is a technique of tale telling just to draw attention on it. However the story has been told with a kind of concatenation of analepses. This condensation of analepses is organised in a way that brings an analepsis to bring forth another one like in a cause-effect manner. The series of analeptic events, coming in the narration of the visit, renders the event of the ministerial visit the main of the whole discourse. It creates other events that make the story progress such as the narrator's travel to Bori.

All these events have been narrated in an almost close connection that shows the continuity of the narrative in spite of the gaps which signal ellipses. Scenes are mixed with small summaries. This has presented the beginning of the narrative as slowed down, the time of narration being equal to the story time in a scene, combined with summary where the time of narration is less than that of the story.

The individual unity of these different analytical categories confer *A Man of the People* a global unity that helps to display the deception of Odili not because his party fails to win a least seat in the parliament but because of his conviction that people are taking more than the owner. The autodiegetic nature of *A Man of the People* changes a bit the mood and voice relation. Odili tries to show that everything is under his sole control. He even breaks the fourth wall in the narration: 'Whether you asked in the city... they would tell you'. This direct address is intended to create an illusion to the reader and carry him to the inside of what he

experiences, and to suppress inexorably the narrative distance as is almost the case in *Anthills of the Savannah*.

In sum, *Anthills of the Savannah* is a narrative that seems to have a trompe-l'oeil structure as to its order. It starts with a linear narration but very soon the discourse comes with anachronous events, mainly analepses. Beatrice, one of the first person narrators evoked in my analysis, starts her narrating with the current story, notably her invitation to private dinner by His Excellency, but gives it up and carries on with an analepsis. This intertwinement of the current narration and past events of the story continues through the rest of the discourse. In terms of frequency, the narrative is a mixture of singulative, repeating and iterative narrative.

As for the duration in the same narrative, scenes have dominated the discourse presenting a balance between its time and the story time, balance that summaries and ellipses annihilate in the course of the narrative. Globally examining the narrative pacing of *Anthills of the Savannah,* one notes the almost total absence of pause. This considerably reduces the discourse time and allows the production of live effect on the reader. This live effect is reinforced by the fully involvement of the narrators in their respective turns of narrating. Even with the third person narrator, his omniscience is limited to what some characters know.

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joins *Things Fall Apart.* The story about the leopard and the tortoise prepares the understanding of the struggle of the people of Abazon.

A la recherche du temps perdu and Achebe's novels do not share the same period and the same historical context. However, they share some common literary devices as identified and defined by Gerard Genette in his book *Narrative Discourse: an Essay in Method*, the translated edition, 1980. Only, Achebe succeeded in inserting harmoniously oratory devices in his exercise of the written ones. Achebe's work inspires a new way of viewing creative work so as not to be putting everything on the sphere of writing. Oral language being of primary interest for a linguist, he will never blame a writer in taking oral devices into a written narrative. This will rather give him the opportunity to measure the real extent of literary artistry.

For my general pronouncements, I can say that Achebe draws our attention on the fact that Africans should know where 'the rain begins to beat them' in order to see where they can dry up. By doing so, Achebe showed balance of awareness in terms of narrative contents, narrative form and narrative techniques.

If in the context of content an African may read about what he is supposed to know, it is not obvious that he is familiar with the form since the written form is new to him. In order to help to overpower that insufficiency of his African readers, Achebe used some techniques that conciliate the African folklore and story- telling and the western conception of narrative. This objective is reached through the use of narrative proverbs as evoked in the present work. If theories are invaluable for their contribution to technical and critical reading of narratives by any beginner, their application through creative writings without any local sign will sound pure mimesis and may be treated as such. For, theories do not create narratives, they only account for the life of created narratives. This means that the understanding of Marcel Proust

through Gerard Genette's theory (1978) is an aspect of Proust in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, showing that it is possible to have other readings of the same book. This supposes that the universality of the existing narrative theories is relative to some extent. This implies that narrative theories, as elaborated by western critiques, can fit, some way but not all the way, the analysis of narratives written by Africans. The present research work is an example in which I combined Genette and the like, as theoreticians, and Achebe's novels, as narratives written by an African. Some lessons have been drawn from this combination.

Structural analysis is far from being a harmonious school of thought. The authors who are members of structuralism are not linked by any thought solidarity. It is the reason why Barthes (1970) said that any student who decides to carry a structural analysis of a literary work is supposed to be enough informed in order not to be surprised by the divergences of the approaches that one inwardly put under the term structuralism; enough wise to realise that there is no base method in structural analysis as there is in sociology or philology; enough courageous to support the false starts and deceptions related to the analysis; enough free to dare use his own structural sensitivity; enough dialectical to realise that the job is not to get an explanation but rather to go into the text and work out its plurality.[16] This indicates difficulties in defining the word structure. Beyond the linguistic and anatomistic origin of the word and with the help of Jean Piaget's definition[17] of it, I considered structure in my work as a closed system that draws its autonomy from the fact of being closed. However the 'empiristical'

[16] Roland Barthes, *Par où commencer*, In Poétique I, Paris, éditions du Seuil, 1970. (my translation of the paraphrase)

[17] Une structure comporte d'abord des lois de totalités distinctes de celles de ses éléments et permettent même de faire abstraction complète de tels éléments ; en second lieu ces propriétés d'ensemble sont des lois formelles quelconques ; en troisième lieu toute structure comporte un autoréglage en ce double sens que ses compositions ne conduisent pas en dehors de ses frontières et qu'elles ne font pas appel à rien d'extérieur à de telles frontières. *Epistémologie des sciences de l'homme*, Paris, Galimard, 1970

illusion is helpful to the beginner since it manifests a kind of complicity between the critique and the writer. The former is to identify the subject, deconstruct it in order to understand its functioning, and finally reconstruct it to render the work more understandable for the common reader. Through the five novels concerned in this research work, in terms of their contents, the common reader may find out the following elements.

Achebe presented two different civilisations from his first novel to the last to date in a way that presents the western one as a civilisation that does not accept the existence of an African one. As some critiques repeatedly said it, Achebe has succeeded in illuminating two emotionally unbearable facets of modern African life: the humiliations visited on Africans by colonialism and the worthlessness of what replaced colonial rule. This aspect is shown through all the five novels. *Things Fall Apart* comes with the existence of the Ibo society before the arrival of the coloniser who comes and settles with some identifying traits that intervene in terms of religion and then, in *Arrow of God*, in terms of colonial political governance. The type of education brought by the coloniser altogether with his religion brings the first followers to become pioneers of the new intelligentsia who come to take the coloniser's place in the running of the society. These new intellectuals are no more than they former masters who simply change their status to neo-colonisers. From Mr Green in No *Longer at Ease* to Miss Cranford in *Anthills of the Savannah*, one may agree with me that Achebe is signalling the white man's presence though he has officially departed. Achebe intertwines these contents with the use of techniques that show his talent of informed artist.

The didactic dimension of Achebe's organisation of his novels is the point by which the beginner in criticism may seize the conducting line of the writer's artistry. In *Things Fall Apart*, the narrator presents Okonkwo as famous with his victory on Amalinze the Cat. The next important event is his success in borrowing yam seeds from the rich Nwankibie, a hard to

be accepted fact at that time in Ibo society. Then the Ikemefuna episode where Okonkwo is the main actor comes. The individual achievement is at stake as embodied by the Ibo tradition. But Achebe succeeded in turning out this series of successes into the characteristic obstinacy that such societal behaviour entails. And the second part clearly shows it through Okonkwo's downfall. The structure is almost the same in the other novels, mainly *No Longer at Ease, Arrow of God* and *A Man of the People*. The misadventure suffered by Obi comes after the long harmonious organisation that has afforded his years abroad. His episode with Clara has been, though important in the structure of the novel, an ingredient. The reader of Achebe should pay attention to his didactic clues.

In the organisation of the materials, Achebe gives clues in a futile way. Only their linguistic connotation may draw the reader's attention. These clues can be a simple statement or a proverb. Ezeudu's sentence related to the killing of Ikemefuna is an example of clue: 'Do not have a hand in the killing of a boy who calls you his father'. This sentence uttered to avoid downfall has no effect on the addressee whose obstinacy has been "rewarded". The general clue of the sense of the novel goes back to its very beginning: '... and during this time Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan'. For a reader who knows about the harmattan should consider that phrase at the measure of the image. Almost the same thing is found in the beginning of *No Longer at Ease*: 'For three or four weeks Obi Okonkwo had been steeling himself against this moment. And when he walked into the dock that morning he thought he was fully prepared. He wore a smart palm-beach suit and appeared unruffled and indifferent'. The last sentence of the quotation above contains the clue as for what is to be awaited. The limitation of the narrator, expressed through the verb 'appeared' sets doubt into the reader's mind; but it enhances reading for discovery. This kind of technique, used at the very beginning of literary works, is known as narrative hook.

In order to consider any work of fiction as a system, three possible principles may govern its study. First, the structure, the organisation of a text is an important factor for understanding it. The text is organised in the respect of a chosen hierarchy in which each part plays a certain role that the critic needs to uncover before he can get the meaning of the text. Second, the different parts of the text are interrelated; change in one part influences change in the whole.

Third, one part of the text cannot be understood in isolation from the whole. The meaning of a part is understood more completely when that part is considered in its relative location in the whole text. Parts function in a kind of patterning. Each pattern is designed to fit a given slot. So, a change of slot is considered as a change of pattern, and then a change of system. That is a major reason why the study of fiction must be carried through systemic approach. In such an approach, creative works and the critique of their organisation through theories must be considered as complementary elements. This relationship does not hide the existing hierarchy between these elements. The artistic nature of creative work cannot militate for neglecting the hierarchy. Literary theory, through critique, signals and reinforces the existence of creative work. As such, it does not create fiction work. To shift from one's role of theorist to the role of writer is simply a double exercise enhanced by the will of showing the existing borders between creation and critique.

This way, the researcher discovers that it is not possible to reduce the writer's specific genius, but rather deconstruct it into its universal units that form a whole proper to the writer. This deconstruction should start from the smallest units to reach the whole. This dissertation, in that sense, has helped to discover Achebe as he displays in his novels his literary conscience through units related to history with some subjectivities, traditional societies in a changing world, and modern nations with their 'hopes and impediments'.

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