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THEME:

**The Issue of Leadership and Continuity**

***In Things Fall Apart* By Chinua Achebe.**

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# **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my wife Clementine, my children Claudia, Christiana, Triumph and Abiathar.

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Who could believe? “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”.

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# INTRODUCTION

According to James MacGregor Burns in his *Spiritual Leadership*, “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth.”<sup>1</sup> From James’ assertion, I clearly see that this topic of leadership and continuity is capital, because if leadership itself is less understood, therefore its continuity must raise difficulty. Our societies, since immemorial times, are confronted not only with the issue of good leadership or good governance but also and especially with the **question of good continuity. This phenomenon is antique and can be observed** all over the world. Leadership and continuity are sensitive subjects that need to be treated with acuteness. So, the way African nations have been ruled before independences and till now is unfair. Some leaders are misusing the resources under their responsibility and, for a nation to be developed and prosper; it mostly depends on its leaders. Myles Munroe, in *Becoming a Leader*, is right in his assertion when he writes:

Whenever a nation has a lack of quality, legitimate and just leaders, national deterioration occurs. It is obvious that our nations are painfully in need of such leaders. The church is desperately in need of leaders. Our homes are crying for leadership. Our youth are begging for leaders. God’s answer to all our social, moral and economic problems is qualified on having just and righteous leaders<sup>2</sup>

This means that leaders have preponderant role to play for the development of their nations. From the quotations above, I can say that leadership is essential to the evolution of human society. It also appears that a society without good leaders is doomed to destruction, to underdevelopment. In fact, the real problem of humanity is leadership. Leaders can change either positively or negatively their people if leadership is influence really. In this regard, the sociologist Robert Dussey is right in saying: “L’Afrique malade de ses hommes politiques.”<sup>3</sup> This means, Africa is sick of its political men. But I will say that Africa is sick not only of its political men but of its leadership in general. Leaders, Africans or not must be conscious of their determining

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<sup>1</sup> ,Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, Evangel Publishers Ltd, 2001, p 16

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Adei, *Called to Lead*, Accra, Colorado Springs, 2005, p 12

<sup>3</sup> Robert Dussey *,L’Afrique malade de ses hommes politiques*, publié le 21 Avril 2008, édition Picollec.252 pages

position in any organization. A popular proverb of unknown source has said: “Le poisson pourrit toujours par la tête” which means, a fish always spoils from the head. Leaders are compared to the head; the body’s life depends on the head. Dr Kenneth O. Gangel in his *Team Leadership* has made the same remark. According to him, despite the multiplication of books on leadership the question of leadership is being asked everywhere these days and he concludes:

In the day in which books about leadership are being published at an unprecedented rate, there seems to be little evidence of their influence. We live in a culture which is crying out for effective leaders. Where are the leaders? is a question being asked in business, government, education and even in the church.<sup>4</sup>

If the culture in which we live is crying for effective leaders, then our societies are in trouble. Where are the leaders? is still today a question being asked in all domains. The Bible also does not occult this question of leadership. According to the Bible leadership must start from home and if someone could not be a good leader at home, he must not be expected to be good in the affairs of the society. “For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?”<sup>5</sup>

In the same perspective Dr. Stephen Adei in his *Called to Lead* writes: “Increasingly, men are abandoning their leadership role as models and instructors in society.” This clearly stipulates that the subject of leadership and continuity is a relevant issue. If there is no leadership then there is no continuity and if there is no continuity there is no leadership as well. People are looking for good leaders everywhere. People are crying everywhere for leadership and its continuity. Unfortunately, men are abandoning their leading role in society. When I was a boy, I saw leaders.....Teachers, Doctors, Pastors, Coaches, Politicians and more....who were admired because of the quality of their leadership and just after their departure, their successor were shouted down because of their new style of leading. When I have

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<sup>4</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership*, Chicago, The Moody Bible Institute, 1970 p 7

<sup>5</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, Nashville, Maxwell Motivation 2007

grown up taking into account my career of Pastor, I have realized that it is not easy to be a good leader. This phenomenon has become a burden on my heart. As administration is continuity, leadership and continuity should not have been a big issue. My purpose in this thesis is to show how the inadequacy of leadership and the break in the ruling system can affect the development of a given society or nation.

As I have already said, the question of leadership and continuity is being raised everywhere. Another problem is the fact that many people do not reckon the importance of this topic. They never think of how to be or become good leaders. John C. Maxwell in this regard has to say:

Many people fail to recognize the value of leadership. Some don't recognize its importance. Others believe that leadership is only for a few...for the people at the top of the corporate ladder. They have no idea of the opportunities they're passing up when they don't learn to lead..... Why? Only a few thought of themselves as leaders. If they had understood that leadership is influence, and that in the course of each day most individuals usually try to influence at least four other people, their desire might have been sparked to learn more about the subject. It's unfortunate because as long as a person doesn't know what he doesn't know, he isn't going to grow.<sup>6</sup>

This above quotation shows that people do not perceive the importance of leadership. Therefore Maxwell is telling us that we need to learn and know more about leadership. So, when I started the first year in the English Department while we were studying this novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, I was confronted with this same issue where on Rev. James Smith came to pull down all Mr. Brown's exploits. Since then, I was distressed because of this common problem I met everywhere. This is the reason why I have chosen to deal with this topic. So by working on this subject, I will acquire wisdom and overcome this question of bottleneck, for William Saroyan writes: "Good people are good because they have come to wisdom through failure. We get very little

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<sup>6</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, Tennessee, 1998, p 27

wisdom from success.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore we need to forget about our past failures in term of leadership and well equip ourselves for the future. By finding solutions to the questions this topic raises; I will help a lot of people become better leaders. It will help Africans to become more responsible at home; in community and in administration. Finding solutions to this sensitive subject will help me correct much misbehavior and bring development to our nations in all domains. By dealing with this topic, the issue of leadership and continuity in *Things Fall Apart*, I will like to demonstrate how this old and phenomenal problem continues to corrupt our societies and nations. In the same way, I want to show that it is not an incurable evil, but there is hope for the evil will go under a drastic cure. To reach this goal, the first part of my work will take into account the ground clarification of concepts. In the second part, I will cover leadership and its impacts on British and Umuofian people, and then in the third part, I will tackle the continuity break among British and Ibo in Umuofian community. Since this novel *Things Fall Apart* was published in 1958, I hope that many similar research works would have been done by other researchers, so to avoid repeating them; I have applied hermeneutics process which is the science or art of interpretations of a literary work whereby exegesis, a critical explanation of a text is done. To achieve this goal, my primary source is the novel from which the topic is drawn that is *Things Fall Apart*. I have also exploited *A man of the people*, and *Arrow of God* both by the same author Chinua Achebe. I have read many books on leadership which I have referred to. I have also studied novels like, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* by Ayi Kwei Armah, *Animal Farm* and *1984* both by George Orwell. I have also made reference to *African oral tradition* and to *Internet* to product an attractive work. I have lastly resorted to my theology courses which I received in Pentecost University College – PUC Accra Ghana 2009 -2010.

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<sup>7</sup>John C. Maxwell, *Leadership Gold*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson 2008 p 109

## PART ONE: GROUND CLARIFICATIONS

# Chapter 1: Leadership and its Hindrances

## 1-1 Definitions of Leadership

I will first and foremost look at Dictionaries for the meaning of leadership. I will also examine leadership in the context of the novel before other author's definitions.

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, leadership is "the state or position of being a leader. It is the ability to be a leader or qualities a good leader should have. It is also a group of leaders of particular organization."<sup>8</sup> As for me, a leader is a person who leads a group of people, especially the head of a country or an organization. From *The Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English* "to lead is to go with or in front of (a person or animal) so as to take them to a place or show them the way."<sup>9</sup> Among all human societies, and among animals, even small animals and insects like ants, I can observe leadership. So leadership is everywhere and at anytime. I will deeply handle this later. I have also examined leadership in the context of *Things Fall Apart*. I have made research work on the meaning of leadership and continuity in this novel. In *Things Fall Apart*, the leaders of Umuofia are men of titles, elders who often met for decisions making. They are men of respect who are not allowed to practise certain activities like tapping palm-wine, fetching fire wood and water and pounding foo-foo. When they take the ozo title they are considered as lords of the clan. Their name is ndichie which means elders or leaders. They constituted a closing circle. When Okonkwo's senior wife wants to know how long Ikemefuna would stay with them, the answer is prompt and categorical. "When did you become one of the ndichie of Umuofia?"<sup>10</sup> They have their pattern of leadership. They respect and make people respect the laws of the land. Even though their own tradition contains biases some are proud of it. Obierika and Okonkwo have discussed once on this subject.

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<sup>8</sup>Oxford University Press , 2005 Seventh Edition

<sup>9</sup>Abraham A. Agyemang, *You Are A Leader Of Leaders*, ACCRA , JAK-HAK VENTURES, 2009, p 21

<sup>10</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann,1958, p 11

Sometimes I wish I had not taken the ozo title, said Obierika. It wounds my heart to see these young men killing palm trees in the name of tapping. It is so indeed, Okonkwo agreed. But the law of the land must be obeyed. I don't know how we got that law, said Obierika. In many other clans a man of title is not forbidden to climb the palm tree. Here we say he cannot climb the tall tree but he can tap the short ones standing on the ground.<sup>11</sup>

This quotation calls into question the quality of the leaders and the pertinence and impertinence of the laws of this community. Okonkwo, the main character in *Things Fall Apart* has also made a very nice typology to portray leadership and continuity when he compares leadership to **the old banana tree** and continuity to **the young suckers** to show that the new rod is tied on the old one. I willfully deal with this imagery later.

I have found definitions from various authors that will help back up my point of view:

**J. Oswald Sanders**

Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others. (The ability to persuade and get followers).

**Leighton Ford**

True leadership does not emerge until one avails himself to learn from the model of Jesus the transformational leader.

**J. Robert Clinton**

Leadership is a lifetime process that derives its theory from biblical principles.

**Garry Wills**

Leadership is mobilizing others towards a goal shared by the leader and followers.

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<sup>11</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 48

**Louis A. Allen**

A leader is someone who guides and directs other people

**John Mot**

A leader is a man who knows the road, who can keep ahead and who can pull others after him.

**President Truman**

A leader is a person who has the ability to get others to do what they do not want to do and like it.

**James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership***

Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers.

**George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership***

A Christian leader is someone who is called by God to lead; who leads with and through Christ like character; and demonstrates the functional competencies that permit effective leadership to take place.

**Robert Clinton, *The making of a leader.***

The central task of leadership is influencing God's people toward God's purposes.

**John W. Gardner, *On Leadership***

Leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by a leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers.

**Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, (Current Ashanti King/Ghana)**

Leaders, real leaders look at the big picture; indeed, we must use the lessons of the past to guide our future actions.

## **1-2 Hindrances to Leadership in the Novel**

What then can cause leadership break? After detecting some factors, I will propose some solutions for them.

### **1-2-1 A Sudden Death or Serious Sickness of the Leader in Charge.**

When the leader, without preparing the succession becomes an incapable because of sickness or accident or passes away prematurely, this can create a gap or break in term of leadership. I have seen this with Mr. Brown, who has started a wonderful mission but is obliged to leave everything because of his health. A good leader must cultivate the habit of keeping good health by controlling his foods, by making blood shacking or taking medical precautions and praying God's favor for good health. A good leader to maintain good health must also like regular sport. I have realized in the novel that the missionaries in the beginning of their evangelism do not take a good care of their health. And the narrator to remark:

“The missionaries spent their first four or five nights in the market-place, and went into the village in the morning to preach the gospel.”<sup>12</sup>

How can a white man spend four or five nights in the market-place in Africa, where malaria causes by mosquito bite is frequent? Perhaps, this was the reason why many first missionaries died in Africa for some were doing well the mission but neglecting their health. And the narrator to add:

“Mr. Brown himself was breaking down in health. At first he ignored the warning signs. But in the end he had to leave his flock sad and broken.”<sup>13</sup>

A good leader should not ignore the warning signs in term of health; otherwise he would be obliged to leave prematurely his followers. Unfortunately, the African olds prefer to die without transmitting their knowledge. Talking of the death of African olds, Amadou Hampâthe Bah writes: “En Afrique, un vieillard qui meurt est une

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<sup>12</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 105

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p 128

bibliothèque qui brûle’’<sup>14</sup>. This means that if an old African dies, it is a bookshop which burns.

The old must know that they are like banana tree which will surely die, so they have to transmit their riches, talents and knowledge to the young suckers before passing away if not, their life on earth will be useless.

### **1-2-2 The Ruling System**

In Africa, certain cultures could not make easy the issue of leadership and its continuity. For example, in the Ibo society, cultures and customs were very hard and could not make leadership and its continuity easy for young people. The circle of elders and leaders was much locked. Only Okonkwo succeeded in penetrating in it as a young boy of eighteen through his achievement. Today, some leaders still hold on power and do not allow younger generation to take over. Some leaders elaborate suitable constitution or laws to be maintained in power. They are allergic to any form of change or succession. An elderly man has said in *A Man of the People*: “I always say that what is important nowadays is no longer age or title but knowledge.”<sup>15</sup>

The sine qua non condition today to become a leader is knowledge. Sir Francis Bacon has said: “Knowledge is power.”<sup>16</sup> If someone deserves a leader position, is better to let him or her occupy that very position. J. J. Rousseau can say that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely and according to him, to avoid such corruption, power must stop power. That is why solid institutions and rigid laws are needed. Barack Obama, current United States President said during his visit in Ghana four years ago: “We do not need strong leaders for good governance, what we need is strong institutions.”<sup>17</sup> But it is obvious that nations still need strong and bold men to establish strong institutions like Peter Abraham has said: “But to be a good leader, you must be

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<sup>14</sup> Amadou Hampâthé-Bah, *Civilisation Africaine*, Dakar/Abidjan, Nouvelle Edition Afrique 1976

<sup>15</sup> Chinua Achebe, *A man of the People*, Ibadan, Heinemann 1959, p 137

<sup>16</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, Tennessee, 1998, p 14

<sup>17</sup> Barack Obama’s speech in Accra-Ghana, June 2009

a good worker”<sup>18</sup> Okonkwo knew this and worked very hard to avoid being called failure like his father. Some leaders practise dynasty whereby the leadership is from father to son. All these systems are hindrances to leadership and continuity. So in this twenty first century, leadership must not continue to be heritance affair. These chiefs, kings or queens must not die before succession process takes place. In reality a chief is competent at certain age. That is why the notion of mandate is important. It encourages succession. The lack of strong criterion for choosing leaders can also bring leadership break because it is not everybody who can be good leader. So, leadership is not for the one who wants but for the one who can.

### **1-2-3 The Role of the Predecessor and Successor**

If the predecessor does not lay a solid foundation, the continuity can be very difficult. In the same way, if a successor is not strong and wise enough, he cannot continue and perform well what has been started. Both need to be strategic. I have noticed this with Mr. Brown and Rev. Smith. Mr. Brown has done his best by training young religious and educational leaders such as Mr. Kiaga, Nwoye, Akunna’son and more. In my point of view, Mr. Kiaga was fully prepared to replace his boss Mr. Brown but the white would not allow a black to take over from him especially at that time. Unfortunately, Rev. James does not respect principles of leadership in term of continuity. It is because Mr. Brown has laid good foundation that the churches and schools have prevailed during oppositions in Rev. James time. It is true a church temple is burnt but the new converts remain unshakable in their faith. After continuity act, the substitute is expected to do better than his predecessor. If the substitute or the successor is a worthy person who knows that he or she has to perform better, no matter how good or bad his predecessor is, then he or she will do all his or her best to fulfill his or her mission with excellence. To do so, he or she will not rush to change

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<sup>18</sup> Peter Abrahams , *Mine Boy*, Faber and Faber Ltd 1946, p 46

things and condemn openly the predecessor's policy like Rev. James. He needs to take time to learn from the pitfalls and the weaknesses of the predecessor. He also needs wisdom to deal with people the predecessor has left to him because even if the predecessor is bad, he will still have some friends among them. So, the successor must not say evil things against the predecessor and the predecessor also must prepare the field for the one coming by appreciating him.

### **1-2-4 The Role of the Bosses**

Bosses must test their workers to know how to put the required person at the right place. Leadership is all about placing people in the right place so they can be successful. That is what Dr. John C. Maxwell has expressed in his *Leadership Gold* in the following words:

When the right person is the leader, he does even better during tough times." And If you send Ducks to Eagles School, you will frustrate the Ducks, the Eagles and yourself. And he adds, as leader, your job is to help your ducks to become better ducks and your eagles better eagles, to put individuals in the right places and help them reach their potential. He ends in this way: Cats do what cats do, ducks do what ducks do, and eagles do what eagles do. If you take a duck and ask it to do eagle's job, shame to you.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps Rev. James is not the right person to replace Mr. Brown. The bosses in England do not take time to know the wonderful work Mr. Brown has done in Umuofia and if Rev. James Smith could be able to take over from him. Perhaps Mr. Kiaga would have been a good successor for Mr. Brown. Apart from these handicaps to leadership and its continuity, I can also notice the importance of training.

### **1-2-5 Lack of Teachable Mind**

Sometimes, leaders think they know everything. As people use to say, you can finish growing but never finish learning. Leaders need to be trained or taught both mentally

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<sup>19</sup> John C. Maxwell, *Leadership Gold*, Tennessee, Thomas Nelson 2008, p 89

and on characters or behaviors. In *Things Fall Apart* Okonkwo appears as Mr. knowing all. In his time, elders were considered as references and people went to their school or referred to their behaviors. People requested their advice in whatever they wanted to do. Many times, I have found Okonkwo breaking the land's law and rejecting the elders' advices. For example, he beats his wife Ojiugo during the week of peace, shoots and quite unhurts her. The worst of all is that he rejects the oldest Ogbuefi Ezeudu's advice and bears hand in the death of Ikemefuna. Okonkwo needs self control and character training to be a good leader. John C. Maxwell in his *Leadership Gold* instructs:

If you want to lead, you must learn. If you want to continue to lead, you must continue to learn. The moment you stop learning is the moment you stop leading. This will guarantee that you will be hungry for ever greater accomplishments. And it will help you to maintain credibility with your followers.<sup>20</sup>

A leader needs to have a teachable mind and also to be hungry for learning and therefore for greater accomplishments. A good leader must not think he knows everything. To become good leader, it takes good character. Frank Outlaw in *Know Your Limits* by John Mason has said: "Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny."<sup>21</sup> Okonkwo could neither watch his actions nor his habits or character. Of course, his destiny is fatal. His *chi* has said no to his destiny.

### **1-2-6 Problems of Jobs Choosing.**

Some are where they are not supposed to be and they are finding difficulty to perform well their assignments and become good leaders. In this regard, Unoka, Okonkwo's father is declared agbala and failure, even though he is good at music. At that time, his community did not praise musical values. In the same time, Nwoye is called useless

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<sup>20</sup>John C. Maxwell, *Leadership Gold*, Tennessee, Thomas Nelson 2008 p 126

<sup>21</sup>John Mason , *Know Your Limits*, Nigeria 1999 p 103

and cursed and is compared to his grandfather. He is not good at farming and wrestling but can excel at school.

Peter Drucker in *Team Leadership* has said: “There are no bad people, only people in the wrong place.”<sup>22</sup> This does not mean that Drucker does not know there are bad people. Of course, there are bad people, but if they are put at the right place, they will perform well even above expectation. And Kenneth O. Gangel has observed the following: “When the goals of the individual can correspond directly with the goal of the organization, we are on our way to developing an effective leader.”<sup>23</sup>

Some are doing the job they are not supposed to do because the situation has obliged them. They do not find the opportunity to exercise what they have learnt as job. If the person is not at the right place how can he/she perform well or better? Many people have failed in choosing their job and this is increasing leadership issue. Some parents without considering their children’s ability want them to become what they desire. I have seen this through the novel but I can say that they were right because in those days, their main activity was farming and Okonkwo wanted his son Nwoye to be the best farmer in Umuofia. But today, things have changed. If our societies want good leaders, both government and parents must help the young people to make good choice in term of career plan.

In addition to these problems of leadership and continuity, I can also mention the responsibility aspect.

### **1-2-7 The Old And the Young Generations**

The old must know that it is their duty to prepare young people for relief or succession sake. Here, I can mention Nwakibie, a worthy man in Umuofia. When Okonkwo went to him for some yam seeds, he trusted Okonkwo and borrowed him some. He then

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<sup>22</sup>Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership*, The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1970 p 323

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p 323

says: “You can tell a ripe corn by its look.”<sup>24</sup> Nwakibie knows that the young people who are willing to go forward need help from the old ones. Leaders should examine the young people to know what is in them and where they can perform better in order to empower them to improve as good leaders in the future. In the book of Proverbs 20:11, the Bible says: “Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.”<sup>25</sup> All the children or the young are not the same. It is true some young are lazy but others are willing to work. It is ought to the old to test them like Nwakibie to see if the corns are ripe or not. They should know the performance zone of each future leader to know how to help them. The old should not make continuity conditions too hard for the young and in the same way the young also need to deserve their position by respecting the old and do well what they are asked because it is said in *Things Fall Apart* “If a child washed his hand he could eat with king”.<sup>26</sup> And also; “A man, who pays respect to the great, paves the way for his own greatness”.<sup>27</sup> This greatness here is about leadership, how to enter the elders palace.

## **1-2-8 Laziness, Carelessness and Corruption Impacts on Umuofian Leadership.**

Here I can mention Unoka who is lazy, careless, drunkard and debtor and the court messengers with the interpreters. Unoka behaviour has affected negatively not only his own life but also his son Okonkwo’s leadership.

In his day he was lazy and improvident and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow....Unoka was, of course, a debtor and he owed every neighbor some money, from a few cowries to quite substantial amounts.....That as years ago, when he was young, Unoka, the grown-up, was a failure. He was poor and his wife and children had barely enough to eat. People laughed at him because he was a loafer, and they swore never to lend him any more money because he never paid back. But Unoka was

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<sup>24</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p15-16

<sup>25</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, Second Edition, 2007 Maxwell Motivation

<sup>26</sup> Op.cit, p 6

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p 14

such a man that he always succeeded in borrowing more, and piling up his debts<sup>28</sup>.

If a leader is incapable of thinking about tomorrow then he cannot be a good leader.

It is then obvious that Unoka is lazy and careless because for a leader to perform well, he needs to be a hard worker and someone who foresees things. So, when

Unoka went to Chica the priestess to consult Oracle, she told him:

You, Unoka, are known in all the clan for the weakness of your machet and your hoe. When your neighbours go out with their axe to cut down virgin forest, you sow your yams on exhausted farms that take no labour to clear. They cross seven rivers to make their farms; you stay at home and offer sacrifices to a reluctant soil. Gohome and work like a man.<sup>29</sup>

Unoka is the image of all the things his clansmen hate. He is lazy and of course a debtor that is why Chica the priestess tells him to go home and work like a man. By sowing yams on exhausted farms, which takes no labor to clear, Unoka is showing his incapacity to work like a man. Here, to work like a man is to be a good leader, to be able to take care of his family, what Unoka is not able to do.

This has brought bitterness in Okonkwo's heart. He is ashamed of his father. Imagine a young boy whose life is ruled by a great passion and whose father is drunkard, lazy and debtor.

"His life had been ruled by a great passion to become one of the lords of the clan. That had been his life-spring."<sup>30</sup>

Of course, Okonkwo is ashamed of his father and so he becomes harsh in his relationship with all.

Okonkwo's fear was greater than these. It was not external but lay deep within himself. It was the fear of himself, lest he should be found to resemble his father. Even as a little boy he had resented his father's failure and weakness, and even now he still remembered how he had suffered when a playmate had

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<sup>28</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 3-4

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p 13

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid*, p vii

told him that his father was agbala. That was how Okonkwo first came to know that agbala was not only another name for a woman, it could also mean a man who had taken no title. And so Okonkwo was ruled by passion; to hate everything that his father Unoka had loved. One of those things was gentleness and another was idleness.<sup>31</sup>

So Unoka is a failure and is called agbala which means a man who has taken no title.

All these have affected negatively Okonkwo's leadership.

Leaders must also avoid being corrupted and being after personal interests only. In this regard, I can cite the court messengers or Kotma and the interpreters of the white. For example, when the District Commissioner has asked the six elders in prison to bring two hundred bags of cowries before being released, the court messengers have added fifty bags for themselves. "I have decided that you will pay a fine of two hundred bags of cowries. You will be released as soon as you agree to this and undertake to collect that fine from your people. What do you say to that?" Hear what the court messengers do: "As soon as the six men were locked up, court messengers went into Umuofia to tell the people that their leaders would not be released unless they paid a fine of two hundred and fifty bags of cowries. Unless you pay the fine immediately, said their headman, we will take your leaders to Umuru before the big white man, and hang them."

Another issue of corruption here is about a piece of land in dispute. "The white man's court has decided that it should belong to Nnama's family, who had given much money to the white man's messengers and interpreter." A good leader must fight against corruption. He must not encourage it in any case.

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<sup>31</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 9, 20

## **Chapter 2: Continuity and its Necessity**

Continuity is very necessary in matter of leadership because when there is lack of continuity there is abuse of power which is adverse to good governance.

### **2-1 What is Continuity?**

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Continuity is the fact of not stopping or changing. It means to ensure, to provide, to maintain. It is a logical connection between the parts of something or between two things. Continuity is allowing relief. It is preparing the young generation to take over from the old. Continuity is also about succession which is a number of people or things that follow each other in time or order. It is the act of taking over an official position or title; the right to take over an official position or title, especially to become the king or queen of a country. So to succeed in this regard, means to come next after somebody and take his/her place or position. It is a link between the past and the present to build the future.

### **2-2 Factors Leading to Continuity**

Many factors could favor continuity or succession in term of leadership and continuity in *Things Fall Apart*. Here, I will deal with some as to clarify the point.

#### **2-2-1 Appointment and Replacement**

It occurs when someone is appointed to leave one station to another under his bosses' authority. When it is a new field or post, the person will work as a pioneer like Mr. Brown, but if it is to replace somebody else, the one who is taking over the position is the successor as Reverend Smith, and the one going is the predecessor. The examples of the new evangelists, teachers and nurses, court messengers or interpreters who are trained and are sent on the field are many to understand the system. For example, Mr. Kiaga has left his home town for Mbanta as evangelist. If he has to leave Mbanta to another village, then somebody else must replace him for continuity sake.

## **2-2-2 Sickness, Accident and Death**

If a leader is sick or has an accident and is supposed to abandon temporary his or her post, then he must be replaced till he or she recovers to continue. If he could not continue like Mr. Brown or if he or she dies, someone else must replace him or her. Another example is the white man who was killed by the people of Abame. For continuity sake, this missionary could be replaced like Mr. Brown if need be.

## **2-2-3 Dismissal**

According to *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, to dismiss is to decide that somebody is not important and worth thinking or talking about. To dismiss is to remove from. When a community member commits a grave fault, an abomination and rebellion's act which can bring the gods' wrath on the clan, he or she can be dismissed from the clan and be replaced if necessary by somebody else more trustworthy. I can mention the case of Okonkwo who is very famous in all Umuofia and has to be dismissed for committing a murder by misfortune. He is obliged to leave his lovely clan for seven good years in Mbanta his motherland. Even though his act has been with inadvertency, the land's laws must be respected.

All was silent. In the centre of the crowd a boy lay in a pool blood. It was the dead man's sixteen years old son, who with his brothers and half brothers had been dancing the traditional farewell to their father. Okonkwo's gun had exploded and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart.....The only course opens to Okonkwo was to flee from the clan. It was a crime against the earth goddess to kill a clansman and a man who committed it must flee from the land. The crime was of two kinds, male and female. Okonkwo had committed the female, because it had been inadvertent. He could return to the clan after seven years. The night he collected his most valuable belongings into head-loads. His wives wept bitterly and their children wept with them without knowing why. Obierika and half dozen other friends came to help and to console him. ....And before the cock crowed Okonkwo and his family were fleeing to his motherland.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 86-87

During these seven years in exile, Okonkwo had lost his position in Umuofia. So the white came and took his place. Okonkwo is now dismissed from his clan not only for the seven years but forever because later when he is back his place is filled and nobody could listen to him:

Seven years was a long time to be away from one's clan. A man's place was not always there, waiting for him. As soon as he left, someone else rose and filled it. The clan was like a lizard, if it lost its tail it soon grew another. Okonkwo knew these things. He knew that he had lost his place among the nine masked spirits who administered justice in the clan. He had lost the chance to lead his warlike clan against the new religion, which he was told, had gained ground. He had lost the years in which he might have taken the highest titles in the clan.<sup>33</sup>

Okonkwo's dismissal from his clan for seven years is fatal for him for he has lost his leadership position.

Another case of dismissal in *Things Fall Apart* is Enock who after his conversion becomes overzealous. Despite his father being priest of snake cult, he has killed and eaten sacred python. To crown all these grave faults he has unmasked egwugwu. His father has cursed him. That means, he is dismissed from the family and the clan. "One member in particular was very difficult to restrain. His name was Enock and his father was the priest of the snake cult. The story went around that Enock had killed and eaten the sacred python, and that his father had cursed him."<sup>34</sup> To be cursed in one clan is to be dismissed from that clan or community. And so Enock was dismissed from Umuofia culture for violating the sacred things of the clan.

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<sup>33</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 121

<sup>34</sup> Ibid; p 126

Another case is Nwoye who finally has attended the first church service and when he is back he is seriously beaten by his father Okonkwo. When he is left hold he has ran away.

“But he left hold of Nwoye, who walked away and never returned.”<sup>35</sup>

Here, it is Nwoye himself who has walked away and has never returned but that first portion of the sentence contained all the meaning; “but he left hold of Nwoye”, in this, I can say that Nwoye is rejected. So from that event “nothing between Okonkwo and Nwoye.” He is cursed and rejected by his father and that is why, when he runs away he is never returned. Okonkwo also has never asked about him.

He sent for his five other sons and they came and sat in his obi. The youngest of them was four years old. You have all seen the great abomination of your brother. Now he is no longer my son or your brother. I will only have a son who is a man, who will hold his head up among my people. If anyone of you prefers to be a woman, let him follow Nwoye now while I am alive so that I can curse him. If you turn against me when I am dead I will visit you and break your neck.<sup>36</sup>

Okonkwo has abandoned Nwoye since and has planned for his other sons to initiate them into the ozo society. Unfortunately that year is wrong too and Okonkwo has to wait for another two years to pacify the clan and ancestors because of the shame Nwoye has brought on him. Later on, when Okonkwo is back to Umuofia, Mr. Brown has paid him a visit but Okonkwo has driven him away with the threat that if he comes in his compound again, he would be carried out of it.

It was in the first rainy season after Okonkwo’s return to Umuofia that Mr. Brown left for home. As soon he had learnt of Okonkwo’s return five months earlier, the missionary had immediately paid him a visit. He had just sent Okonkwo’s son Nwoye who was now called Isaac, to the new training college for teachers in Umuru. And he had hoped that Okonkwo would be happy to hear of it. But Okonkwo had driven him away with the threat that if he came his compound again, he would be carried out of it.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 107

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p 121-122

<sup>37</sup> Ibid; p128-129

Mr. Brown, in paying Okonkwo this visit has shown maturity of a good leader. He is not afraid of Okonkwo, but hopes he would be happy to hear that his son Nwoye will soon become a teacher. Nwoye is now called Isaac which means laugh and happiness according to the Bible. And so, Mr. Brown has thought he would bring good news, happiness and joy to Okonkwo. Unfortunately Okonkwo has seen all these as an abomination and betrayal against the clan. Therefore, he has driven him away.

It is true Nwoye has been dismissed by his father but it is also a resignation act.

### **2-2-4 Resignation**

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, resignation is the act of giving up your job or position. Nwoye goes back to the church and tells the sad event with his father to Mr. Kiaga, who has welcomed him joyfully. Mr. Kiaga's joy is very great and to galvanize Nwoye's faith, he claims this:

“Blessed is he, who forsakes his father and his mother for my sake, he intoned. Those that hear my words are my father and my mother.”<sup>38</sup>

In fact, Nwoye is not only tired of his father's hardship but also of the clan's abominable acts such as the throwing of twins, the killing of Ikemefuna and more. So he has abandoned his position as the first born of Okonkwo. It is not only Okonkwo who has rejected Nwoye but Nwoye himself has given up his position and has rejected his father to be occupied by his studies and the white ways of life.

What moved Obierika to visit Okonkwo was the sudden appearance of the latter 'son, Nwoye, among the missionaries in Umuofia. What are you doing here? Obierika had asked when after many difficulties the missionaries had allowed him to speak to the boy. I am one of them, replied Nwoye. How is your father? Obierika asked not knowing what else to say. I don't know. He is not my father, said Nwoye, unhappily.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 108

<sup>39</sup>Ibid, p 101

When the leader, for one reason or another, resigns, continuity becomes necessary. So Nwoye has resigned his position in his family and the clan to join the new religion.

### **2-3 Consequences of Continuity Issue on Umuofians**

The consequences could be positive or negative and are found on both British and Ibo sides. So, I will tackle these aspects to show the importance of this topic.

#### **2-3-1 Positive Influence of Continuity in Umuofia**

I can mention here the case of Okonkwo who has succeeded miraculously to his father Unoka. In fact, Okonkwo has refused to resemble his father and through personal achievements, he has won fame and has become the main character in the novel. The narrator has said on him:

Fortunately, among these people a man was judged according to his worth and not according to the worth of his father. Okonkwo was clearly cut out for great things. He was still young but he had won fame as the greatest wrestler in the nine villages. He was a worthy farmer and had two barns full of yams, and had just married his third wife. To crown it all he had taken two titles and had shown incredible powers in two inter-tribal wars. And so although Okonkwo was still young, he was already one of the greatest men of his time.<sup>40</sup>

This clearly shows that Okonkwo has positively impacted his clan as young leader. Obierika his best friend in front of his dead body has said ferociously, “That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia.”<sup>41</sup> Okonkwo belongs to a very poor family. But, from nowhere and from nothing he becomes great and famous. Unfortunately his end is a tragic downfall.

Another example is Maduka the son of Obierika who can wrestle and win to show at the age of sixteen that he can follow his father’s steps, what Okonkwo has mostly wished but in vain for his son Nwoye.

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<sup>40</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958 p 6

<sup>41</sup>Ibid, p 147

As soon as the two boys closed in, one of them did something which no one could describe because it had been as quick as a flash. And the other boy was flat on his back. The crowd roared and clapped and for a while drowned the frenzied drums. Okonkwo sprang to his feet and quickly sat down again. Three young men from the victorious boy's team ran forward, carried him shoulder-high and danced through the cheering crowd. Everybody soon knew who the boy was. His name was Maduka, the son of Obierika.<sup>42</sup>

To justify how Maduka resembles his father Obierika, listen to this conversation between Obierika and his senior brother on Maduka:

I sometimes think he is too sharp, said Obierika, somewhat indulgently. He hardly ever walks. He is always in hurry. If you are sending him on an errand he flies away before he has heard half of the message.<sup>43</sup> And his senior brother replied: You were very much like that yourself, said his eldest brother. As our people say, 'when mother-cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth. Maduka has been watching your mouth.'<sup>44</sup>

Here, leadership can be compared with mother-cow and continuity with its young ones. Like father, like son. Maduka resembles Obierika in wrestling and in behavior. This clearly shows that Obierika has someone worthwhile to succeed him.

Among the British, continuity is highly encouraged. So schools, hospitals and court office and commerce store were built and opened and those who were trained became teachers, court messengers, interpreters, financial managers, nurses and evangelists or catechists. This has brought a kind of new style of life in which young people could make career according to their choice. I can mention the cases of Nwoye, Kiaga, Akunna'son and more. All these things have brought positive changes not only to Umuofians but also to British. So Mr. Brown's prophecy has come to pass

Mr. Brown begged and argued and prophesied. He said that the leaders of the land in the future would be men and women

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<sup>42</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 34

<sup>43</sup> Ibid; p 49

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p 49

who had learnt to read and write. If Umuofia failed to send her children to the school, strangers would come from other places to rule them. They could already see that happening in the Native Court, when the District Commissioner was surrounded by strangers who spoke his tongue. Most of these strangers came from the distant town of Umuru on the bank of the Great River where the white man first went.<sup>45</sup>

According to Mr. Brown the future leaders of Umuofia will be educated people not people with title, or people who are good wrestlers or people who marry many wives or have many bands of yams. Anyway, Nwoye has understood this and has done his best to be among Umuofia great men of tomorrow.

Dr. Kwame Bediako in his *Jesus in Africa* is right when he says:

“Christianity has played an important role in Africa politics. At first this came through education, producing the first generation of nationalists who led African countries to independence.”<sup>46</sup>

Among those leaders who have represented the first elites of Africa, I can cite, Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Sékou Touré, Félix Houphouet Boigny. Their efforts have led African countries to independence.

### **2-3-2 Negative Influence of Continuity in Umuofia**

The fact that the majority of the young generation in *Things Fall Apart* is not so dynamic to preserve the old ways has brought lack of confidence between the two generations. In fact, many elders have expressed it through the novel. When the confidence is lost, there is no hope any more. In this vein, Enock, Chief of the python's son has broken Umuofian tradition and customs. He has killed and eaten sacred python and to crown all has unmasked Egwugwu. All the same, Nwoye has rejected his father's ways of life. Even a worthy man like Ogbuefi Ugonna has joined the missionary too. This has put knife into the things that have hold Ibo community

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<sup>45</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 128

<sup>46</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p xiii

together. The clan can no longer act like one. The oneness and togetherness formerly observed among them have fallen apart. The white man's arrival does not only bring positive impacts in Umuofia but also negative ones. Obierika, during his first visit to Okonkwo at Mbanta his mother's land has reported the following:

“The elders consulted their Oracle and it told them that the strange man would break their clan and spread destruction among them.”<sup>47</sup>

The Oracle has seen well, but could not indicate the way to anticipate the danger coming upon the Umuofians. The elders also have received the Oracle and to stop the evil, have killed the first white in their village but in vain for as a prophecy, the Oracle has come to pass unavoidably. It has been fulfilled indeed. Another negative influence in continuity is that after independence, the African leaders who have fought the whites for exploiting them have become worst, and creating one political organization to dominate their own brothers with dictatorial rule. Dr Kwame Bediako has put it clearly this way:

However, soon after independence, over much of Africa one party states came into being, sanctioning dictatorial rule by leaders who aspired to be presidents for life. They sacralised their power by assuming the titles and roles ascribed to ancestors. One of the best-known of these leaders was Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, who assumed the ancestral title, 'Osagyefo', meaning 'Redeemer'.<sup>48</sup>

Some of those so-called African's redeemers had sacrificed their lives for Africa's sake. Among these leaders I can cite Patrice Emery Lumumba, Sekou Touré, Thomas Sankara, and more. African leaders are used to Chieftaincy for life and that is why even till now some leaders especially some presidents are still practicing presidents for life and some can prepare their sons for continuity. This is one of the negative influences in matter of leadership and continuity.

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<sup>47</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 97

<sup>48</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in Africa*, p xiii

With the British, Rev. James' poor continuity is a very good example to portray a negative impact of continuity on that society.

**PART TWO: LEADERSHIP AND ITS IMPACTS  
ON THE BRITISH AND UMUOFIAN COMMUNITY**

## **Chapter 3: The British Leadership issue in Umuofia**

Why do some leaders perform well their leadership assignment and others do not? This question is the main reason of this topic. How leadership and its continuity are an issue?

### **3-1 The Three Cs(Christianity, Colonization and Commerce)**

#### **Leadership**

With the British, one can note a very organized leadership in religious, government and commercial affairs.

#### **3-1-1The Case of Mr. Brown, Founder of Christianity in Ibo Clan**

Mr. Brown is a very good missionary who has done his best to conquer Umuofia and all neighboring villages through the gospel by applying missionary strategies such as social works, identification with the indigenus, introduction of education and hospital.

Mr. Brown is a relational leader. He has a goal to achieve and he remains focused. He has come to help Umuofia give up some abominable deeds they are used to in the name of their gods or goddess such as the killing of human being to pacify the gods or the throwing of twins and albinos who are considered as outcasts and also the inter-tribal wars. Mr. Brown through his teachings has to show Umuofia how wicked their gods are and convince them to stop unfair practices. He has to preach the equality of all men and then converts the outcasts called the clan's excrements.

They were mostly the kind of people that were called efulefu, worthless, empty men. The imagery of an efulefu in the language of the clan was a man who sold his matchet and wore the sheath to battle. Chielo, the priestess of Agbala, called the converts the excrement of the clan, and the new faith was a mad dog that had come to eat it up.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 101

You can imagine how painful those insults are to the Christians but they have stood firm. Chielo the priestess has forgotten that apart from those people he calls the excrements of the clan there are also worthy men like Ogbuefi Ugonna and worthy women like Nneka the wife of Amadi. It is not an easy task for Mr. Brown and Mr. Kiaga to do brains watch works like the Big Brothers in the novel, *Eighteen Eighty Four* by George Orwell. So the new converts need to be taught well to avoid frontal attack. Even though the clan's customs present many biases, some Umuofians as Okonkwo are very conservatives. He calls Mr. Brown's church an abominable religion.

An abominable religion has settled among you. A man can now leave his father and his brothers. He can curse the gods of his father and his ancestors, like a hunter's dog that suddenly goes mad and turns on his master. I fear for you, I fear for the clan.<sup>50</sup>

Former General Electric chairman Jack Welch asserts, "A good leader remains focused... Controlling your direction is better than being controlled by it."<sup>51</sup> And Leroy Eims to write: "A leader is one who sees more than others see, who sees farther than others see, and who sees before others do."<sup>52</sup> Mr. Brown reflects that kind of leader. He sees more and farther than others see; and before others do. That is why in the beginning, when people were reluctant about his message, he changed methods. He pays regular visit of discussion to evangelize people. He makes friend with some of the great men of the clan like Akunna even though he could not convert him.

And so Mr. Brown came to be respected even by the clan because he trod softly on its faith. He made friends with some of the great men of the clan and on one of his frequent visits to the neighboring villages he had been presented with a carved elephant tusk, which was a sign of dignity and rank. One of the great men in that village

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<sup>50</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p viii

<sup>51</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Tennessee, 1998, p 38

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p 38

<sup>37</sup> *Op.cit*, p 126

was called Akunna and he had given one of his sons to be taught the white man's knowledge in Mr. Brown's school.<sup>53</sup>

In this regard, I can paraphrase the philosopher Socrates in this way, if you want better manage the city affairs, you need to seat among the city rulers. So Mr. Brown knew these principles and applied them. He is also firm in restraining his flock from provoking the wrath of the clan. He has done everything to avoid frontal attack for he has known this would not help him achieve his goal. That is the reason why he lets religion and education go hand in hand.

But at first they only sent their slaves or sometimes their lazy children. Mr. Brown begged and argued and prophesied. He said that the leaders of the land in future would be men and women who had learnt to read and write. If Umuofia failed to send her children to the school, strangers would come from other places to rule them.....In the end Mr. Brown's argument began to have an effect. More people came to learn in his school, and he encouraged them with gifts of singlets and towels..... They worked on their farms in the morning and went to school in the afternoon. And it was not long before the people began to say that the white man's medicine was quick in working. Mr. Brown's school produced quick results. A few months in it were enough to make one a court messenger or even a court clerk. Those who stayed longer became teachers, and from Umuofia labourers went forth into the Lord's vineyard. New churches were established in the surrounding villages and a few schools with them. From the very beginning religion and education went hand in hand. Mr. Brown's mission grew from strength to strength, and because of its link with new administration it earned a new social prestige<sup>54</sup>.

He has also taken time to study Ibo's culture to know how to deal with them. In *Cross Cultural Christianity*, it's said:

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<sup>53</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 128

<sup>54</sup> Ibid; , p 128

“The cultural barriers are very formidable in missions. That explains why a missionary cannot communicate effectively unless he understands the culture of the people among whom he is working”.<sup>55</sup>

Mr. Brown knows well like J. C. Maxwell in his *Leadership Gold* that:

“Leadership is relational as much as positional.”And “Positional people desire to climb the ladder; relational people are more focused on building bridges.”<sup>56</sup>

Mr. Brown by making friend with all has won more of people of the clan to Christ. He builds bridges which mean he poses acts to attract people. He knows how to approach and convince people in his evangelism. He goes from house to house to preach. Of course, the church has started growing, in Umuofia and the surrounding clans like Mbanta.

The Christians had grown in number, and were now a small community of men, women and children, self-assured and confident. Mr. Brown, the white missionary, paid regular visits to them. When I think that it is only eighteen months, since the Seed was the first sown among you, he said, I marvel at what the Lord hath wrought.<sup>57</sup>

So I find Mr. Brown working and dealing with people as good leader who knows his mission and how to prepare the continuity. From his leadership’s skills, he could win with the Gospel Umuofia and the surrounding villages like Mbanta and Abame and start the continuity task with Mr. Kiaga, Nwoye and Akunna’s son. “We have now built a church, said Mr. Kiaga, the interpreter, who was now in charge of the infant congregation”.<sup>58</sup> Mr. Brown has already prepared people for a good continuation of his mission.

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<sup>55</sup> A. H. Clement, Raymond Hassan, Moyo Ozodo and Dr Bill Kornfield, *Cross Cultural Christianity*, p 39

<sup>56</sup> John C. Maxwell, *Leadership Gold*, Nashville, Tennessee, Thomas Nelson 2008 p 175

<sup>57</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 113

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p 106

### **3-1-2 The Case of the District Commissioner, the Chief Colonizer**

On the government side, I can talk of the District Commissioner who also has trained Kotma or courts messengers to help him. They are there to maintain order and arrest rebels. The Chief Colonizer is there to punish inhuman acts such as throwing of twins, the outcasts and unburied bodies into the forest, the inter-tribal wars and the killing of people for titles, and the submission to other taboos which are unfair. The government can also intervene in land issues. So, a prison is built and rebellious are put in jails. This has helped for African colonization. Before the arrival of the colonizer, Africans especially the leaders are comparable to savage animals; killing human being was showing bravery. I can see how Okonkwo draws his machet and without shaking cuts down Ikemefuna because he is afraid of being thought weak. How can a man kill his neighbor, especially the one who calls him father without trembling? After the church has taught the criminals to stop their ugly duties in the clan, a court is built and the rebels are brought before the District Commissioner for judgment and punishment. By so doing, the colonizer in accord with the missionary has decided to clean all biases in Ibo's customs. Like Mr. Brown, the District Commissioner has also learnt a good deed concerning Umuofian's tradition. Listen to this conversation between Obierika and the District Commissioner in front of the dangling body of Okonkwo from a tree:

Perhaps your men can help us bring him down and bury him, we have sent for strangers from another village to do it for us, but they may be a long time coming. The District Commissioner changed instantaneously. The resolute administrator in him gave way to the student of primitive customs. Why can't you take him down yourselves? He asked. It is against our customs, said one of the men. It is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offence against the Earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen. His body is evil, and only strangers may touch it. That is why we ask your people to bring him down, because you are strangers? Will you bury him like any other man? Asked the Commissioner. We can't bury him. Only strangers can.

We shall pay your men to do it. When he has been buried we will then do our duty by him. We shall make sacrifices to cleanse the desecrated land. Take down the body the Commissioner ordered his chief messengers.<sup>59</sup>

This conversation has clearly shown that the Commissioner has learnt one good deed from Umuofia customs to confirm that all are not bad in African customs or tradition. The Bible condemns suicide and so does African tradition. The narrator has commented on it this way:

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<sup>60</sup>.

But, I will not look at this scene that way. For it is an opportunity to help the Commissioner, the white at least to notice some similitude between European and African customs. As the white religion teaches that suicide is forbidden also African customs do. For me, it is not a mistake for the Commissioner to assist to that event but it is a mark for African leaders, because apart from Mr. Brown who has learnt a good deal about the clan's customs, it is now the turn of the Chief Colonizer to realize that African Societies are not nil in term of civilization before they have come. I have seen the colonizer also bowing to Umuofian tradition. For the first time, Obierika and his merest have drawn the Chief Colonizer's attention on a big issue and have been able to convince him. This point has really honored Africa for a white to make black request executed at that time. Here, I have found the relation of reciprocity. The white has come to colonize and civilize Africa, but before they have come, Africa is not empty

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<sup>59</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 147

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p 147

or filled with bad things. The African leaders have done at least something good which needs to be appreciated and perpetuated.

I have also discovered in this serious conversation that Obierika does not fear for the white to express his emotion in front of the body of his best friend.

Obierika...turned suddenly to the District Commissioner and said ferociously: That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself, and now he will be buried like a dog, and he asked: Will you bury him like any other man?<sup>61</sup>

This declaration from Obierika has penetrated the Commissioner's heart For me, all this conversation is very interesting and instructive.

### **3-1-3 The Staff of Commercial Affairs**

Beside Christian leaders and colonizers, there is another staff of trading or commerce and a trading store is built and for the first time palm-oil and kernel have become things of great price in Umuofia. So, to manage this trading store the white man needed a leading committee to insure commercial affairs. "The white man had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had built a trading store and for the first time palm-oil and kernel became things of great price and much money flowed into Umuofia."<sup>62</sup>

So in Ibo clan, the white man came with the 3Cs: Christianity, Colonization and Commerce. I have seen even at that time an Africa present everywhere because of the fantastic work of the leaders. Religiously present, commercially present and culturally present. In religious area, I have seen Akunna teaching the good deeds of African's religion to Mr. Brown who could not convert him but becomes his best friend. In cultural terms, Obierika has met the District Commissioner and convinced him on at least one nice aspect of African customs. Here in commercial business, I have also

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<sup>61</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann,1958, p 147

<sup>62</sup> Ibid; p 126

found African, making money through partnership with the white even if the black is exploited.

### **3-2 Some White Leadership Skills in Ibo's Clan**

Many leadership factors have favored the fast rooting of the white in Ibo's clan. Among these I will mention some to clarify the point.

#### **3-2-1 The White Leadership Structure**

The white have an organized and structured leadership. So their leadership is centralized from top to down. They have a Queen in Great Britain. She has sent missionaries all over the world to represent her and her Government. So in the Ibo clan, many Missionaries are sent in various Departments like Religion, Education, Health, Government and Commerce. One of them is appointed as overseer in Umuru, the Ibo Headquarter. Umuru was the village where the white men first came many years before and where they had built the Centre of their religion and trade and government. I can also see this in the conversation between Mr. Brown and his friend Akunna and also when the Commissioner is rebuking the six arrested Umuofian elders.

We have brought a peaceful administration to you and your people so that you may be happy....We have a court of law where we judge cases and administer justice just as it is done in my own country under a great Queen.....That must not happen in the dominion of our Queen, the most powerful ruler in the world, and the court messengers went into Umuofia to tell the people that their leaders would not be released unless they paid a fine of two hundred and fifty bags of cowries. Unless you pay the fine immediately, said the headman, we will take your leaders to Umuru before the big white man, and hang them.<sup>63</sup>

This clearly shows that the white man at Umuru is the boss to whom others leaders would give reports and he has to report to the Queen in Great Britain.

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<sup>63</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 138

### 3-2-2 The White in the Beginning came with Quietness and Peace

As Obierika, Okonkwo's best friend has said:

The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allow him to stay. Now he has won our brothers and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart<sup>64</sup>.

It is true they have first come with the Good News. So they preach love and forgiveness and talk about equality between races and people. They show Umuofians and the neighboring villages that throwing twins into the forest is not fair. In Umuofia some people are declared outcasts and some bodies unburied. Also the dreadful wrestling matches which characterize the clans are found inadmissible. All these practices are forbidden by the new religion. From there, those who are doubting the clan's tradition begin to see clear. So I have found Mr. Brown doing all he could to win Umuofia into the white man's religion. To well fulfill his mission, the white has instituted education and even the old are invited into the school in afternoon when they are back from farms.

In the end Mr. Brown's arguments began to have an effect. More people came to learn in his school, and he encouraged them with gifts of singlets and towels. They were not all young, these people who came to learn. Some of them were thirty years old or more. They worked on their farms in the morning and went to school in the afternoon. And it was not long before the people began to say that the white man's medicine was quick in working. Mr. Brown's school produced quick results. A few months in it were to make one a court messenger or even a court clerk. Those who stayed longer became teachers; and from Umuofia labourers went forth into the Lord's vineyard<sup>65</sup>.

Hospitals are also built to take care of people's health. So at first, religion, education and health go hand in hand. I have seen Mr. Brown as a strategic man of God who has

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<sup>64</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 124, 125

<sup>65</sup> Ibid; p 128

sacrificed his health to reach Umuofia through his dynamism and creative spirit. The white, in the beginning, has shown kindness and peace to enter into Ibo clan.

### **3-2-3 Complementarities between Religion; Government and Trade**

#### **Leaders.**

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, two people or things that are complementarities are different but together form a useful or attractive combination of skills, qualities or physical features. There are complementarities between the main activities sector of the white in Umuofia. "Many of these messengers came from Umuru on the bank of the Great River, where the white men first came many years before and where they had built the centre of their religion and trade and government."<sup>66</sup> Beside religion they practise commerce of palm-oil and kernel which become things of great price and much money flow into Umuofia. And even in the matter of religion there is a growing feeling that there might be something in it after all.

To well root the religion and commercial affairs, the white men have allowed government to accompany them. So, a prison is built and those who break the white men's law are put into jail. So, I have found a good organization between the leaders in all areas. There was a kind of complementarities between the bosses over churches, government and the commercial affairs to make their decisions prevail. This has made possible their colonization mission and as a matter of fact the religious mission too is settled down. So this interaction between religion, education, trade and government with court all together at the same time has helped the white to make terrible progress among the black.

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<sup>66</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 123

## **Chapter 4: The Issue of Leadership among Ibo**

Among the Ibo society, it has been observed bad, harsh, tough and good leadership. Here, I will deal with characteristics of Ibo leadership before examining some of their leaders.

### **4-1 The Characteristics of Elder's Leading System in the Ibo**

#### **Society**

I have discovered in *Things Fall Apart* that in Ibo society, the elders do not trust the new generation to make easy leadership and continuity issue. To become a leader in that society, you must have titles, and achieve a lot; be able to wrestle and win, to fight and kill human being, to cultivate very wide space of land, to marry many wives and more...All these conditions are not easy tasks for the young people to perform. Many things characterized Umuofia leading system.

#### **4-1-1 Polycephalic Leadership**

In Umuofia, contrary to the white organization, the ruling hierarchy is made with many leaders together for decision making. They do not have one king or chief, but elders have to meet for decisions. Therefore I have found many classes. Firstly, I can see the ruling class which is composed with the college of elders of the clan, who are married and worthy men, who have got many titles in the clan, they are overall bosses. I also have noticed the chief priests, the war medicine makers. The Second class is the young men, immediate successors of the great. Here, it is not all the young men who are qualified to belong to that second class because they also have their battle field or battle ground to measure their capacity and are to be told stories of wars not stories of women and children. Those who have succeeded in overcoming these steps brilliantly are admitted into the circle of the great. The case of Okonkwo who has become famous at the age of eighteen is imminent. And of course, the third class is made with women and children or slaves and those who are not in any first class. They are

considered as the outsiders. The last class is the one of the outcasts. These people are casted from their families because of some handicaps or malformations and could not cooperate with normal people.

#### **4-1-2 The Convincible Case of Mbanta**

In Mbanta, the leading class is almost the same with Umuofia and is made up with men with high titles, the chief priests and the elders:

The missionaries spent their first four or five nights in the market place, and went into the village in the morning to preach the gospel. They asked who the king of the village was, but the villagers told them that there was no king. We have men of high title and the chief priests and the elders they said.<sup>67</sup>

The missionaries want to know if in Mbanta they have a central leader, or king. But the villagers answer no and give the structure of their leadership. Dr. Yelian Constant Aguessy has given his point of view on this kind of leadership in his Thesis Defense of 2005-2006.

Indeed, as it is said by a distinguished political scientist in *The Trouble with Nigeria* by Chinua Achebe. "Nigeria has an Igbo problem." The Igbos never achieve consensus on matters. They are portrayed as aggressive, arrogant, greedy grasping and clannish. Referring to their past, we can assert that the Igbos never possess a kingdom or central leadership. As a matter of fact, the lack of real leaders helps the crushing of any Igbo resistance by the colonial administration.<sup>68</sup>

According to Dr. Aguessy, this lack of a central leadership or kingdom has favored the easy penetration of the white in Umuofia. This is one inconvenience of leadership with many heads. Such a leadership does not encourage consensus on matters and can delay the settlement of issues.

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<sup>67</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 105

<sup>68</sup> Yélian C. AGUESSY, *Mémoire de Maîtrise*, 2005, p 17

### **4-1-3 Unoka's Poor Leadership**

In the novel *Things Fall Apart*, Unoka, Okonkwo's father is viewed like someone who cannot be a good leader and of course cannot make easy its continuity:

“In his day he was lazy and improvident and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow.... 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.”<sup>69</sup>

For him tomorrow does not matter. John C. Maxwell in his 21 irrefutable laws of leadership has said: “Leadership ability determines a person's level of effectiveness.”<sup>70</sup> So Unoka's leadership level is very poor in such a way that his son Okonkwo is negatively influenced.

### **4-1-4 Okonkwo's Harsh Leadership in Umuofia**

Okonkwo has refused to resemble his father Unoka. He has become leader through achievement but is not a kind of leader to encourage leadership and its continuity. So either at home or in the community; Okonkwo's leadership is of heavy hand. In African context, good education leads to good leadership. According to Okonkwo, this good education must be transmitted with heavy hand. By so doing, Okonkwo is in lack of patience and self-control. I can see this impatience in Okonkwo's life, especially in the way he leads his family. Look at here how he has trained Ikemefuna and Nwoye his son about preparing seed yams:

Sometimes, Okonkwo gave them a few yams to prepare. But he always found fault with their effort, and he said so with much threatening. ‘Do you think you are cutting up yams for cooking,’ he asked Nwoye. ‘If you split another yam of this size, I shall break your jaw. You think you are still a child. I began to own a farm at your age. And you, he said to Ikemefuna, ‘do you not grow yams where you come from?’ Inwardly Okonkwo knew that the boys were still too young to understand fully the difficult art of preparing seed yams<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 3

<sup>70</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, Tennessee, 1998, p 1

<sup>71</sup> Op.cit, p 23

Because of his impatience, he wants the boys to act like mature people. With this character, Okonkwo could not encourage leadership and its continuity. Even his best friend Obierika has noticed this in his life. During one conversation they have had upon their children Obierika tells him: “You worry yourself for nothing. The children are still too young.”<sup>72</sup> This statement of Obierika can show how impatient Okonkwo is. He also beats his second wife Ekwefi and quite kills her with gun for cutting a few leaves of banana tree. Even the third wife Ojiugo is beaten for going to plait her hair without preparing the afternoon meal. All this shows that he lacks self-control. “Okonkwo was not a man of thought but action”<sup>73</sup> said the narrator. If a man cannot think before acting, personally I think that person cannot be a good leader. Okonkwo is a man with big dreams, and is filled with great hope. Unfortunately he lacks character. Let’s look at here what the narrator has said on him:

And he did pounce on people quite often. He had a slight stammer and whenever he was angry and could not get his words out quickly enough, he would use his fists. He had no patience with unsuccessful men. He had had no patience with his father.<sup>74</sup>

In *Know Your Limits*, Jean Dutourd has said: “Impatient people always get there too late.”

And Hugh Prather to add: “There is a time to let things happen and a time to make things happen.”<sup>75</sup>

John Mason in *Know Your Limits* has said: “The greatest assassin of dreams is haste, the desire to reach things before the right time.”<sup>76</sup> So Okonkwo has assassinated his dreams.

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<sup>72</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 46

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p 48

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p 3

<sup>75</sup> John Mason, *Know Your Limits*, Nigeria 1999, p 107

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 108

He had lost the chance to lead his warlike clan against the new religion, which, he was told, had gained ground. He had lost the years in which he might have taken the highest titles in the clan. But some of these losses were not irreparable. He was determined that his return should be marked by his people. He would return with a flourish, and regain the seven wasted years.<sup>77</sup>

Later on, when he has returned from exile, he could not understand the way the colonizer is treating the people of the clan especially the elders and men with titles. He is greatly disappointed with the new behavior of his people who has become womanly clan with no vindictive spirit. Let's remember he has had this same disappointment with Mbanta people in his mother's land.

But, all the same, the rulers and elders of Mbanta assembled to decide on their action. Many of them spoke with at great length and in fury. The spirit of war was upon them. Okonkwo, who had begun to play a part in the affairs of his motherland, said that until the abominable gang was chased out of the village with whips, there would be no peace..... But there were many others who saw the situation differently, and it was their counsel that prevailed at the end. It is not our customs to fight for our gods, said one of them..... Let us not reason like cowards, said Okonkwo. If a man comes into my hut and defecates on the floor, what do I do? Do I shut my eyes? No! I take a stick and break his head. That is what a man does. These people are daily pouring filth over us, and Okeke says we should pretend not to see. Okonkwo made a sound full of disgust. This was a womanly clan, he thought. Such a thing could never happen in his fatherland, Umuofia.<sup>78</sup>

Unfortunately, before Okonkwo has come back to his fatherland Umuofia, things have also changed there. So, when Obierika during his first visit told him how the clan has changed, he could not believe so he says: "Perhaps I have been away too long, Okonkwo said almost to himself. But I cannot understand these things you tell me. What is it has happened to our people? Why have they lost the power to fight?"<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 121

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p 113

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p 124

As he lay on his bamboo bed he thought about the treatment he had received in the white man's court, and he swore vengeance. If Umuofia decided on war, all would be well. But they chose to be cowards he would go out and avenge himself. He thought about wars in the past.<sup>80</sup>

So, his leadership is with hardship and violence. Okonkwo has forgotten that vengeance belongs to God.

## **4-2 Exceptional Leaders among Ibo**

In *Things Fall Apart*, I have discovered men and women who are not among the least. They do their best to make difference in matter of leadership. I will firstly look at the masculine leaders and then the feminine at last.

### **4-2-1 Influent Men's Leadership**

- **Obierika**

I can take for example Obierika, Okonkwo's best friend. He is a good model; we see it in his behavior toward Okonkwo. He is not of a nature to abandon his friend during time of misfortune. He took care of Okonkwo's compound and farm when he was obliged to flee to his mother's land. He visits twice Okonkwo at Mbanta. He knows how to make good analyses before acting. Let's look at some of his wise conversations with Okonkwo. For example, two days after Ikemefuna is killed, Okonkwo visits him to escape from his sadness. Here is their conversation:

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 do 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

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<sup>80</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 141

will not please the Earth. It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families.<sup>81</sup>

If I were Okonkwo, at this level, I would have cried and asked for help and forgiveness. Obierika has prophesied to his friend who does not understand. It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families. Okonkwo does not take it into consideration till it has come to pass and he is forced to find refuge in his motherland for seven good years. So, Okonkwo has replied:

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.<sup>82</sup>

I'm sure if the fingers of the mother are scaled with the hot yam, then the palm of the child will not escape. This is one interesting conversation in *Things Fall Apart* that I appreciate.

During his second visit when Okonkwo has thought they could fight and drive away the white from Umuofia, Obierika has replied:

It is already too late. Our own men and our sons have joined the ranks of the stranger. They have joined his religion and they help to uphold his government. If we should try to drive out the white men in Umuofia we should find it easy. There are only two of them. But what of our own people who are following their way and have been given power? They would go to Umuru and bring the soldiers, and we would be like Abame<sup>83</sup>.

By saying our men and our sons have joined the ranks of the stranger, Obierika wants to tell Okonkwo that even his son Nwoye is one of them, so he adds:

Does the white man understand our customs about land? How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad; and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and

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<sup>81</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 46-47

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p 46-47

<sup>83</sup> Ibid; , p 124

peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.<sup>84</sup>

Obierika is a very reasonable leader who foresees things before they come to pass. Only Obierika could not change Okonkwo despite all his will and advices. He also gives good education to his children without heavy hand. Obierika is a noble and wise leader that I appreciate in the novel.

- **Egbuefi Ezeudu**

He is the oldest man of the clan. He has taken three titles in his life. It is a rare achievement. There are four titles in the clan, and only one or two men in any generation have ever achieved the fourth and highest. When they do, they become the lords of the lands. Ezeudu was a great man of war.

“He had been a great and fearless warrior in his time, and was now accorded great respect in all the clan.”<sup>85</sup>

Sometimes he has realized that the punishment for breaking the clan’s law has become mild and he treats other clans as people who lack understanding. He is proud of his customs. He disagrees with Obodoani’s people who throw into Evil Forest the bodies of those who die during the Week of Peace. Only, I do not understand why the throwing of dead bodies into Evil Forest is worse than the throwing of the living twins into the same Forest. For me, throwing the livings is the worst. So, when Ezeudu is criticizing Obodoani’s people, he has forgotten that they were doing the same things even worse.

He has wisely advised also Okonkwo not to bear hand in Ikemefuna’s death. This position of Ezeudu the oldest man, the custodian of Umuofian’s customs has impressed me. Is it only because Ikemefuna becomes too close to Okonkwo whom he

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<sup>84</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 124

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p 40

calls father or the old man comes to realize that the clan's customs possesses some rituals which need to be revisited? And, to show Okonkwo that he is serious, he has refused to join the meal. Probably, the old man has seen finally all the biases Umuofia's tradition has carried on and his incapacity to reveal this to Okonkwo, so he tells him: "That boy calls you father."<sup>86</sup> He has realized maybe the damage this is going to create in Okonkwo's house. Unfortunately, Okonkwo does not listen to him. So, after this appearance of the old man in Okonkwo's house I do not see him anywhere else in the novel before his death.

He is in fact an old who deserves honor and I have seen it through his funeral which the clansmen have organized with greatness.

- **Ezeani, the Priest**

He has penalized Okonkwo for beating his third wife Ojiugo and breaking the week of peace. He does not fear him but after reprimanding him he has given a list of items he should pay to pacify Ani. At first, Okonkwo wants to bribe him but Ezeani has rejected his presents. So I find in this priest honesty and integrity which must characterize a good leader. He has refused to be involved in corruption. This is a good example for leaders. For the Bible says that presents blind the leader. So Ezeani knew it and refused to be trapped. He said: "Take away your kola nut. I shall not eat in the house of a man who has no respect for our gods and ancestors."<sup>87</sup>

#### **4-2-2 Exceptional Women's Leadership**

- **Chica, the Priestess**

The priestess, a woman who does not fear Unoka but tells him the truth.

"Hold your peace!...You have offended neither the gods nor your fathers. ...They cross seven rivers to make their farms; you stay at home and offer sacrifices to a

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<sup>86</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 40

<sup>87</sup> Ibid; p 21

reluctant soil. Go home and work like a man.”<sup>88</sup>The truth is always bitter but frees from all kind of slavery. It is true that in Umuofia women are discriminated and are not allowed to take the lead but there are some areas in which they are not absent

- **Chielo, another Bold Priestess**

A priestess who goes to carry Ezinma in the presence of Okonkwo and Ekwefi to a cave in a dense forest for a ceremony. She returns in a profound night with songs and cries without riposte from Okonkwo. She said: “Beware of exchanging words with Agbala. Does a man speak when a god speaks? Beware!”<sup>89</sup>

- **Ozoemena**

Another woman in *Things Fall Apart* is Ozoemena. She is Ndulue’s wife Umuofia’s war leader. This woman, during that time when women were not giving chance or opportunity even to reply to their husbands or to the elders could conquer this great man of war. She does not behave like Ekwefi, Nwoye’s mother

He belongs to the clan; he told her. So look after him. Is he staying long with us, she asked. Do what you are told, woman, Okonkwo taunted and stammered. When did you become one of the ndiche of Umuofia? And so Nwoye’s mother took Ikemefuna to her hut and asked no more questions.<sup>90</sup>

Ndulue is so lovely to his wife Ozoemena that the same day he dies, the wife also dies.

He is criticized for having a relation of equality with his wife what none of his pairs could do.

That is very strange indeed said Okonkwo. They will put off Ndulue’s funeral until his wife has been buried. That is why the drum has not been beaten to tell Umuofia. It was always said that Ndulue and Ozoemena had one mind, said Obierika. I remember when I was a young boy there was a song about them. He could not do anything without telling her.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 12-13

<sup>89</sup> Ibid; p 70-71, 77

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p 10-11

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p 47-48

This man of war is dominated by his wife at a point where he could not do anything without telling her and is said to share the same mind with her. She would have been a good wife for her husband, a woman with a noble character. This woman is among the rare women in *Things Fall Apart*. She is able to lead her house in peace and harmony until she dies. According to the Bible, if one can lead his or her family then he or she can also lead the society. And Dr Stephen Adei to explain that the house is the first place of governance. So this woman is a good leader in Umuofia even though she is not well known.

**PART THREE: BREAKDOWN OF CONTINUITY  
AMONG BRITISH AND IBO IN UMUOFIA**

## **Chapter 5: Disruption of Continuity among the British in the Ibo's Land**

Continuity has been a big issue both among British and Ibo in this novel *Things Fall Apart*. I will find out among this two people how continuity in term of leadership has been disrupted.

### **5-1 Discontinuity of the Ruling System among the British**

Apart from an albino who is killed by the people of Abame, I have also the remarkable case of Rev. James Smith to show how continuity can be broken in term of leadership.

#### **5-1-1 The Misfortune of a Leader**

Obierika during the first visit to his friend Okonkwo, has told him how a white on iron horse is assassinated by the people of Abame.

During the last planting season a white man had appeared in their clan.....And he was riding an iron horse. The first people who saw him ran away, but he stood beckoning to them. In the end, the fearless ones were near and even touched him. The elders consulted their Oracle and it told them that the strange man would break their clan and spread destruction among them.....And so they killed the white man and tied his iron horse to their sacred tree because it looked as if it would run away to call the man' friends.<sup>92</sup>

When a leader by misfortune is killed or dies without preparing succession, this can create a gap or break in term of leadership and continuity. Who knows the ability or capacity of that white man? As he is assassinated, who could replace him and improve effectively and efficiently like him? That day he is riding his bicycle to explore the terrain, maybe he would have taken with him an interpreter. He could not imagine that day is the end of his life. So it is important for a leader to transmit his knowledge to

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<sup>92</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann,1958, p 97

others for continuity sake, because no one knows when and how he or she is going to die.

### **5-1-2 Inefficient Continuity of Rev. James Smith**

Contrary to Mr. Brown, Rev. James Smith his substitute has come with a great title Reverend. According to the narrator, Rev. James Smith is a different kind of man. The title Reverend is to command respect. Why has Achebe called Brown, Mister and James, Reverend? It is perhaps to tell the readers of the novel the kind of leaders the two are. Perhaps he has found in Mr. Brown, humility and self denied and in James an authoritarian leader. In his 21 irrefutable laws of leadership, Dr. John C. Maxwell has said:

Leadership is often misunderstood. When people hear that someone has an impressive title or an assigned leadership position, they assume that individual to be leader. Sometimes that's true. But titles don't have much value when it comes to leading.<sup>93</sup>

He has also observed:

Being in power is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren't. If you watch the dynamics that occur between people in just about every aspect of life, you will see some people leading and others following and you will notice that position and title often have little to do with who is really in charge. That being the case, why do some emerge as leaders while others can't influence people no matter how hard they try?<sup>94</sup>

In his book, *Developing the Leader Within You*, Dr Maxwell mentions five levels of leadership namely; Position, Permission, Production, People Development and Personhood. He encourages every leader not to remain at the lowest level but to aspire for the highest. According to him, position is the

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<sup>93</sup>John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, Tennessee, 1998 p 13

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p 6

lowest level of leadership. At this level, people follow you because they have to. The only influence you have is that which comes from with the title. Permission is the second level of leadership. At this stage, people follow you because they want to. People sometimes don't care about your position but about how you treat them. Production is the third level of leadership. Here, people follow you because of what you have done for the organization you are leading. For example, the results you have achieved. People Development is the fourth level of leadership. Here people follow you because of what you have done for them. A leader is great not because of his power, but because of his ability to empower others. Personhood is the fifth and the last level of leadership. Here, people follow you because of who you are and what you represent. For example, "Who do men say you are"? This level belongs to leaders who spend time growing people and the organizations. From the above, I can boldly affirm that, leadership is not only the title or the position matter. And Stanley Huffy has added: "It's not the position that makes the leader; it's the leader that makes the position."<sup>95</sup> So, Rev. James Smith is like a positional leader who climbs the ladder. His teachings instead of edifying the church members have revolted the weak souls. He condemns openly Mr. Brown's policy. He sees things as black and white. He is distressed greatly by the ignorance which characterizes the flock Mr. Brown has left him. So, within a few weeks of his arrival in Umuofia, he has suspended a young woman from the church for allowing her heathen husband to mutilate her dead child. How can he do such a thing? Has he taken time to study African customs like Mr. Brown to know that women do not have power on their husbands? If a heathen husband decided to mutilate his dead child, of which right his wife could stop

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<sup>95</sup>John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville, Tennessee, 1998p 15

him? So, by suspending this woman, Rev. James does not favor his continuity task. Also, by condemning openly Mr. Brown, his predecessor's policy, he lacks wisdom of a good successor.

The overzealous converts, who have smarted under Mr. Brown's restraining hand, now have flourished in full favor. Consequently, the machine is broken. One of them has unmasked a fetish Egwugwu. The church temple is burnt and the conflict is now opened. Then, all efforts Mr. Brown has made to lay the foundation of churches and build temples are brought to nil.

## **5-2 Weaknesses of the White Leadership in Ibo Clan**

The leadership pattern of the white contains many weaknesses which could bring the lack of confidence and atmosphere of suspicion among the black.

### **5-2-1 The White Vengeance on Abame**

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, vengeance is the act of punishing or harming somebody in return for what they have done to you, your family or friends. In the book of Hebrews chapter 10 verse 30 the Bible says that "For we know Him who said, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord." From this quotation, God is saying that vengeance belongs to Him and He is the one to pay back the work of everyone.

Through the novel *Things Fall Apart*, I have remarked that the whites do not apply sometimes what they teach people in church especially on love, forgiveness and tolerance. I have noticed the case of Abame which the whites have wiped out because the people of Abame have killed one of them. Where are the forgiveness and the tolerance they are preaching? Where is Christ style of leadership he has left to the church when he says in Mark 10: 42-45?

You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles, lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over

them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many<sup>96</sup>.

This time is no more under Moses' law which advocates, eye for eye and tooth for tooth but under the New Covenant or Testament, where Jesus said in Matthew 5:38-43:

“You have heard that it said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also....You have heard that it was said: you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you and do good to those who hate you.”

Where is this kind of love of a good leader Jesus asks the church to practise? In this regard, Dr. Samuel K. Asante has seen well in his *The Beauty of Servant-Shepherd Leadership* when he has explained the contrast between Christian and secular leadership:

For a better contrast, however, Grizzle dichotomizes or separates the positive and negative traits of Servant and Secular leadership. Power, aggressiveness and assertiveness tend to characterize secular leaders, whereas the strength of servant-leaders reflects good values, motivates, methods, and interests that emanate from the love of Christ<sup>97</sup>

I have noticed that the white have used power and aggressiveness upon the black in the novel.

Only one of them is killed and in returns they have shooed all the inhabitants of Abame village apart from the old who could not go to the market. It is unfair. This is

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<sup>96</sup>John C. Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, Second Edition, 2007

<sup>97</sup>Samuel K. Asante, *The beauty of servant-Shepherd Leadership*, Accra, Advocate Pub. Ltd 2007 p

not even an eye for an eye nor a tooth for a tooth so that I can talk of legitimate defense. I am not encouraging Abame people for killing the white man but there is disproportion in the means of the riposte. As Christians, this is worse and wicked. Even in law, the means of riposte must be just and equitable. If they have considered Africans as people without culture and civilization and have come to colonize Africa, is it that way Africans are to be taught the new civilization? Maybe it is to say to the black “never dare try it again”. Comparing to Umuofia’s clan which the white has come to civilize, when Ogbuefi Udo’s wife is killed at Mbaino, only Ikemefuna and a virgin are brought back by Okonkwo for compensation. The virgin is given to the woman’s husband for marriage and Ikemefuna stays with Okonkwo three years before being killed. In this regard, I could say that Umuofia’s leaders are more tolerant than the white.

### **5-2-2 Bad Compromise in Term of Making Money and Serving God**

The system through which commerce can be done together with religion has made a lot of victims. Then living in the truth is quite impossible because the reality of making money is not the same with the preaching of the Bible. The love of money could not go together with the gospel. Jesus has made it clear “No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”<sup>98</sup>

How can people trust you when at the same time you are preaching love, forgiveness, justice and tolerance, you are exploiting them in business and lands issue? Where is the justice they were preaching when they were exploiting the poor blacks in commercial and land issue? Maybe that is the reason why the court messengers also have become corrupted for it is easier for a man to copy bad things than good ones.

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<sup>98</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, Second Edition, 2007

### **5-2-3 Bad Compromise Between Secular and Christian Leaders**

There is a contrast between their teachings and their practices. Perhaps that is why even today some Christians are living in hypocrisy. Some so-called Christians after church service go to consult Oracle and perform sacrifices. Perhaps that is the reason why some educated persons take religion as a means to satisfy one's desire. In my point of view this has been one of the weaknesses of the white leadership because later on, it has laid to the slavery and the sharing of Africa. The stories of slavery are spread that time.

They have paid for their foolishness; said Obierika. But I am greatly afraid. We have heard stories about white men who made the powerful guns and the strong drinks and took slaves away across the seas, but no one thought the stories were true."<sup>99</sup>

That is why some authors like Reverend Desmond Tutu has said in one of his speech on religion that I watch in February 2011 on Ghana TV:

The first missionaries came with Bible in one hand and sword in the second. They asked us to pray and while we were praying with eyes closed, they put the Bible into our hands and left us to share our lands with sword in hand.<sup>100</sup>

This is a big mistake from the missionaries for how could a missionary of the Good News, come together with the missionaries of imprisonment and of cheating people to make money? Despite the truthfulness of the message of the Bible people would still doubt it. For this great man of faith Desmond Tutu, the Bible has been a means to let Africa deny his rights in the profit of the white. Perhaps, imprisonment and exploiting of people could have come first, and then the gospel missionary later so that he can

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<sup>99</sup>Chinua Achebe , *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann,1958, p 99

<sup>100</sup> Reverend Desmond Tutu, Speech on Religion on GTV , February 2010

repair the damage the firsts have caused. But, this is also a style of leadership one has determined to use. The main thing today is how Africans are making good use of these three Cs whether they have come with mistakes or not?

## Chapter 6: The Breakdown of Continuity among the Ibo

Among the Ibo community, things have fallen apart indeed and the Centre cannot hold, mere anarchy is loose upon the land.

### 6-1 The Massacre of Abame

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the massacre is the killing of a large number of people especially in a cruel way; it is the bloody massacre of innocent civilians. The white have sword vengeance on Abame's people for the killing of their brother. In fact, it is a vengeance with bloody massacre for both the killers of the white and the innocents are shouted except someone.

The three white men and a very large number of other men surrounded the market. They must have used a powerful medicine to make themselves invisible until the market was full. And they began to shoot. Everybody was killed, except the old and the sick that were at home and a handful of men and women whose chi were wide awake and brought them out of that market. He paused. Their clan is new completely empty. Even the sacred fish in their mysterious lake has fled and the lake has turned the colour of blood. A great evil has come upon their land as the Oracle had warned<sup>101</sup>

In this massacre, as the narrator has stipulated, Abame' clan is new, completely empty for everybody was killed, except the old and the sick. If the young are killed, and only the old and the sick remain, personally I think this can bring continuity breakdown in that clan. For there is a French popular saying from unknown source which says: C'est au bout de l'ancienne corde qu'on tisse la nouvelle."This means that the old rod is tied on the new one. If the new rod is cut down, then there is discontinuity.

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<sup>101</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 98

## **6-2 Umuofian Leaders Anxiety about Continuity**

The majority of the old generation has expressed their regret concerning continuity issue through the novel *Things Fall Apart*.

### **6-2-1 Obierika's Regret about Continuity Break**

Even from the very title of the novel *Things Fall Apart*, this issue of continuity break can be seen clearly. The old generation has wondered about the future of their clans. Obierika, Okonkwo's best friend has expressed it this way: "Now he has won our brothers and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and; we have fallen apart."<sup>102</sup> This declaration is profound and meaningful. It has been inspired and corresponded to the topic of this novel. The arrival of the white has brought continuity break among Ibo.

### **6-2-2 Okonkwo's Desire to perpetuate Ibo Social Hierarchy**

Okonkwo himself has met this issue of continuity with his son Nwoye and has expressed it:

Okonkwo wanted his son to be a great farmer and a great man. He would stamp out the disquieting signs of laziness which he thought he already saw in him. I will not have a son who cannot hold up his head in the gathering of the clan. I would sooner strangle him with my own hand" and he adds: "But I can tell you Obierika, that my children do not resemble me. Where are the young suckers that will grow when the old banana tree dies?"<sup>103</sup>

Okonkwo through this question is wondering about the continuity. By taking the image of banana tree, Okonkwo wants to show how Africans love children. As an Idatcha popular proverb says "We never see children behind the snake, but banana tree never lacks children"(Dassa- BENIN). The young suckers are good image to portray continuity. In African context, children are inheritance for parents. So, even if parents

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<sup>102</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p v

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p 46

are poor they are glad to have children because children will represent them tomorrow whether they are still alive or not. Children represent all for parents. I have seen this with Unoka, Okonkwo's father. Even though he is poor and a failure, he is proud of Okonkwo because he knows he has a young sucker named Okonkwo, who can represent him valuably. So he says to Okonkwo:

His father, Unoka who was then an ailing man, had said to him during that terrible harvest month; do not despair I know you will not despair. You have a manly and a proud heart. A proud heart can survive a general failure because such a failure does not prick its pride. It is more difficult and more bitter when a man fails alone.<sup>104</sup>

Unoka knows people call him Agbala which means woman or a man with no title. Here, he is very happy because Okonkwo his son has a manly and a proud heart. A manly heart here is a leader heart. What Unoka could not do, his son is there to perform all these in his place.

Children are parent's treasure and the hope of the whole family. I have also seen this when Uchendu, Okonkwo's uncle, the oldest member of his mother's clan was praying to the ancestors during Okonkwo's welfare ceremony:

The kola nut was given to him to break, and he prayed to the ancestors. He asked them for health and children. We do not ask for wealth because he that has health and children will also have wealth. We not pray to have more money but to have more kinsmen. We are better than animals because we have kinsmen. As animal rubs its aching flank against a tree, a man asks his kinsman to scratch him. He prayed especially for Okonkwo and his family. He then broke the kola nut and threw one of the lobes on the ground for the ancestors.<sup>105</sup>

Children are more than gold in African context. That is why the French writer Victor Hugo has said:

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<sup>104</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 18

<sup>105</sup> Ibid; p 117

“Lorsque l’enfant paraît, le cercle de la famille applaudit à grand cri.”<sup>106</sup> This means that at a child’s birth, the circle of the family claps loudly. Money cannot buy a child. He is God’s gift. If an African couple does not have a child, no matter their religion it becomes an issue or a burden and some wish by all means to get at least one. So, Okonkwo wants his children to grow like young suckers and be able to take over when he would die. The same French speaking writer Victor Hugo has said: “Chaque enfant qu’on enseigne est un homme qu’on gagne”<sup>107</sup> which means that each child you teach is a man you accomplish. So, children need to be taught how to become good leaders so that when they grow, they will not miss the way. Okonkwo has known this and therefore he is harsh with his children to transmit the clan’s education to them. Even the Bible urges us in Proverbs 22: 6 to “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”<sup>108</sup> It is our duty to educate our children and for a good education, parents, teachers, government and the children must play each his part.

But Obierika has replied to him: “You worry yourself for nothing. The children are still very young.”<sup>109</sup> As I have already said, Okonkwo is impatient and wants things to happen quickly. Maybe the way he has succeeded, too young, to enter the circle of elders, through personal achievement, has impacted his life. So, he thinks all people can do the same. He has forgotten that human beings are created differently.

Also when Okonkwo has heard his son Nwoye is converted and has joined the white religion; he has sighed heavily and has said:

To abandon the gods of one’s father and go about with a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens was the depth of abomination. Suppose when he died all his male children decided to follow Nwoye’ steps and abandon their ancestors?

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<sup>106</sup> Victor Hugo, *Les feuilles d’automne*, 1831, 234pages

<sup>107</sup> Victor Hugo, *les 4Vents de l’esprit*, 1881, 4chapters

<sup>108</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible*, Second Edition, 2007

<sup>109</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 23-24, 108-109, 46

Okonkwo felt a cold shudder run through him at the terrible prospect, like the prospect of annihilation.<sup>110</sup>

Another issue of continuity break Okonkwo has remarked is about snuff makers. “Idigo was the man who knew how to grind good snuff. But he has recently fallen ill.”<sup>111</sup> Then no one could do it in his way.

Also, in the old days, Okudo was a very good singer of war songs and could turn every man into a lion. And after his death no one could do it like him. So, Okonkwo in his regret has said:

“Worthy men are no more....Those were days when men were men.”<sup>112</sup>

### **6-2-3 One of the Oldest Members of Umanna Fears for the future.**

In the same manner, one of the oldest members of the umunna in Mbanta during the celebration Okonkwo has organized for his kinsmen before returning to Umuofia has said:

I fear for the younger generation, for you people. He waved his arm where most of the young men sat. As for me, I have only a short while to live, and so have Uchendo and Unachukwu and Emefo. But I fear for you young people because you do not understand how strong the bond of kinship is. You do not know what it is to speak with one voice. And what is the result? An abominable religion has settled among you. A man can now leave his father and his brothers. He can curse the gods of his fathers and his ancestors like a hunger's dog that suddenly goes mad and turns on his master. I fear for the clan.<sup>113</sup>

This shows us that the old generation is conscious and anxious of the new generation's going off track. This has confirmed even the title of this novel “*Things Fall Apart The Centre cannot hold, Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world Yeats' Second Coming.*” The white arrival has brought anarchy and confusion upon Ibo's clan.

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<sup>110</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 108

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p 67

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, p 141

<sup>113</sup> Ibid; p 118

### **6-3 Strong Evidences for Separation from the Old Ruling System**

Despite the worries of the old, and their firmest of keeping the tradition, there are strong evidences of breaking with the old leading pattern.

#### **6-3-1 Ibo Tradition was Complex and Questionable**

Even Obierika one of the famous characters of the novel has thought many times about the issue without remedy.

Obierika was a man who thought about things. When the will of the goddess had been done, he sat down in his obi and mourned his friend's calamity. Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offence he had committed inadvertently? But although he thought for a long time he found no answer. He was merely led into greater complexities. He remembered his wife's twin children whom he had thrown away. What crime had they committed? The Earth had decreed that they were an offence on the land and must be destroyed. And if the clan did not exact punishment for an offence against the great goddess, her wrath was loosed on all the land and not just on the offender. As the elders said, if one finger brought oil it soiled the others.<sup>114</sup>

Here, even the elders themselves are finding greater complexities to explain the clan's laws and sometimes have no answer to certain questions. It is then obvious that if the young people have another choice which is better, they must not waste time.

#### **6-3-2 Even Elder Obiako was Fed up of Ibo Tradition**

Another elder is Obiako who consults the Oracle and the Oracle says to him: "Your dead father wants you to sacrifice a goat to him." Unfortunately, Elder Obiako, who was supposed to be the clan tradition keeper or conservative, has replied severely to the Oracle: He says, "Ask my dead father if he ever had a fowl when he was alive."<sup>115</sup> All these interrogations and blasphemes even to sacred things from elders, clearly show that people were getting tired of the old tradition even before the white's arrival.

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<sup>114</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 87

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p 15

### **6-3-3 The Prevailing Power of Christianity**

Another factor which favors this separation from the old things is the protecting power of the new religion. For example, in Mbanta the elders gave a portion of land in sacred forest which is very dangerous for any ordinary citizen to cultivate because evil spirits dwell in. The Christians take such a land and build their chapel on it without any problem. Some Christians also have started killing and eating sacred python, unmasking Egwugwu without any danger. In former time such abominable deeds were automatically punished by the gods. But now, it seems as if the gods are dead. It is like if the Christian religion is more powerful. The Christian religion has prevailed. Mr. Kiaga, could say:

The heathen say you will die if you do this or that, and you are afraid. They also said I would die if I built my church on this ground. Am I dead? They said I would die if I took care of twins. I am still alive. The heathen speak nothing but falsehood. Only the word of our God is true.<sup>116</sup>

Of course, not only the outcasts but also worthy men have joined the white leading system. The church has grown despite all the battles or attacks it has passed through. Jesus himself has said in Matthew 16:18 “And on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades or hell shall not prevail against it.” Indeed, customs and traditions could not stop the prevailing power of the church in Ibo clan.

### **6-4 Drawbacks of the Strong Ruling in Umuofia**

The church has come and led many astray. Not only the low-borns and the outcast's but also worthy men and women have abandoned the strong ruling in Umuofia to join the white system of leading.

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<sup>116</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 112

#### **6-4-1 The Case of Ugbuefi Ugonna a Worthy Man.**

He is a worthy man who has taken two titles. According to the narrator, his conversion is like a madman. He has cut the anklet of his titles and cast it away to join the Christians. The white missionary is very proud of him and he is one of the first men in Umuofia to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, or Holy Feast as it is in Ibo's land. Ugbuefi Ugonna has thought of the Feast in terms of eating and drinking, only holier than the village variety. He has therefore put his drinking-horn into his goatskin bag for the occasion.

#### **6-4-2 Mr. Kiaga, a Man of Faith**

He is one of the first converts of the missionary probably from Umuru, on the bank of the Great River where the white man first went. He has understood the missionary's language and becomes interpreter and then a teacher or catechist. He has been of undeniable help for Mr. Brown and Rev. Smith of course for the whole church. The narrator has qualified him of mad and harmless.

#### **6-4-3 Enock, the Outsider Who Wept Louder Than the Bereaved**

He is the son of the sacred serpent's chief. He has denied his father's tradition to join the new religion then has started killing and eating sacred python which is the emanation of the god of water.

One member in particular was very difficult to restrain. His name was Enock and his father was the priest of the snake cult. The story went around that Enock had killed and eaten the sacred python and that his father had cursed him<sup>117</sup>

Above all, he has unmasked an egwugwu.

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<sup>117</sup>Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 126

“One of the greatest crimes a man could commit was to unmask an egwugwu in public, or to say to do anything which might reduce its immortal prestige in the eyes of the uninitiated. And this was what Enock did.”<sup>118</sup>

He is qualified of overzealous Christian and is called

“The Outsider who wept louder than the bereaved.”<sup>119</sup>

#### **6-4-4 Akunna the Wise Man**

He also has given one of his sons to Mr. Brown his friend to be taught in his school

“One of the great men in that village was called Akunna and he had given one of his sons to be taught the white man’s knowledge in Mr. Brown’s school.”<sup>120</sup>

This man Akunna is very wise because according to him, his son is given to the white to represent him. So, if something good comes from the new religion then the son will bring it at home. He has also given his son to the white to seal his relationship with Mr. Brown. He does not care for what people can say.

#### **6-4-5 Nwoye, the Mad Dog**

Okonkwo ‘son Nwoye also has rejected his father’s tradition to join the white religion.

Although Nwoye had been attracted to the new faith from the very first day, he kept it secret. He dared not go too near the missionaries for fear of his father. But whenever they came to preach in open market place or the village playground, Nwoye was there. And he was already beginning to know some of the simple stories they told.<sup>121</sup> But one day, he overcomes this fear:

One morning Okonkwo’s cousin, Amiku, was passing by the church on his way from neighboring village, when he saw Nwoye among the Christians.....He went back to the church and told Mr. Kiaga that he had decided to go to Umuofia, where the white missionary had set up a school to teach young Christians to read and write.”<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 131

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p 131

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p 126

<sup>121</sup> Ibid; p 106

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p 107

That is how Nwoye, Okonkwo's first born has betrayed his clan's clergy to the new doctrine. Nwoye knows he is not good in farming and wrestling so he has chosen his way despite his father's terror.

#### **6-4-6 Nneka, the Bold Woman**

Nneka, is Amadi, a prosperous farmer's wife. She is tired of Mbanta customs for throwing her twins for the fourth times into the evil forest.

That week they won a handful more converts. And for the first time they had a woman. Her name was Nneka, the wife of Amadi, who was a prosperous farmer. She was very heavy with child. Nneka had had four previous pregnancies and childbirths. But each time she had borne twins, and they had been immediately thrown away. Her husband and his family were already becoming highly critical of such a woman and were not unduly perturbed when they found she had fled to join the Christians. It was a good riddance.<sup>123</sup>

At that time, it is not every woman who is bravery enough to resist Umuofia customs and be the first woman to join the white religion. It takes boldness and a leader heart.

As Dr. Laure Clémence Capo-Chichi has commented on this woman in her *Le Statut de la Femme chez Chinua Achebe*:

Les premiers convertis au christianisme sont considérés comme des traites à la religion de leurs ancêtres. Alors Nneka se veut suprême comme l'indique son nom, en rejoignant le rang des tout premiers chrétiens, elle s'offre en holocauste parce qu'au fond d'elle-même, elle ne veut pas courir d'avoir encore à jeter ses propres enfants, comme auparavant....Nneka brave les membres de sa propre société afin d'exercer son pouvoir de donner la vie et de la préserver contre vents et marées. La mère est suprême et Nneka, la toute première femme convertie à la religion occidentale, renie ses propres croyances pour la préservation de la vie.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ibadan, Heinemann, 1958, p 107

<sup>124</sup> Laure Clémence CAKPO-CHICHI, *Le Statut de la Femme Chez Chinua Achebe*, CAAREC Editions, 2008, p 54-55

In fact, this woman knows that she has the right to procreate and keep her children whether they are twins or not. She does not care for what her husband or other keepers of Umuofian traditions can say. She has had a leader's heart to show that mother is truly supreme. According to the narrator, the white medicine has worked. Because the Ibo tradition at that time has many biases, there are a lot of people who are tired of it and are expecting a saving hand to get out from it. Jesus has said in Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all of you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

An African popular proverb has said that a child, who does not travel, will always think his mother's meal is the best one. So the time has come for Umuofians to taste new meals, the time has come to experience another face of life for no condition is permanent. There is time for everything, time for crying and time for laughing, time for suffering and time for rejoicing. The elders are used to say that you can be bound behind during one king reign and bound forward in another's reign and vice versa. This means that two leaders cannot be the same. One can be very tough while another is flexible. But, what is important is how one applies wisdom to lead with efficiency. So, these women and men are bold enough to leave Umuofia tradition hierarchy to the new religion.

## CONCLUSION

The topic of leadership and continuity is really an issue. This phenomenal subject is antique and can be observed everywhere. It is an evil which is infesting our societies and drawing back their development. As Dr. Maxwell has remarked, it is true that “Everything rises and falls on leadership”<sup>125</sup>. That is the reason why our nations are suffering because many of our leaders do not understand what is their responsibility. As I have said above, this leadership problem has become gangrene for the growth and the development of African countries. But the good news is that this gangrene is not incurable. If our current leaders at any place and any level can play well their responsibility role and encourage continuity, if the young, today’s learners and tomorrow’s leaders can seek for training on leadership, can avoid imitating bad leaders who like politician politics, by which they quickly make money, if the young can seek and follow the good models, then the evil can be healed. As stipulated by Harold Geneen: “The best example of leadership is leadership by example”<sup>126</sup>

In the novel *Things Fall Apart*, I have discovered many categories of leaders and many types of leadership. Before the arrival of the white, the Ibo leadership due to the lock of it circle and the committing of some acts of barbarism; was shakable, questionable and complex and the Umuofians were fed up with it. This has favored the easy installation of the white leadership which is not without blame. Many leaders and oracle have predicted the disruption of Ibo clergy which comes to pass unavoidably. In term of continuity I have seen the old, very conscious and anxious of continuity break which is imminent in Umuofia and the surrounding villages. In the white side, I have seen Rev. James Smith the poor successor of Mr. Brown his predecessor who, through his leadership has won Ibo clan into Christianity. Rev. James Smith, at his arrival, has

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<sup>125</sup>John C. Maxwell, *Leadership Gold*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2008, P74

<sup>126</sup>Abraham A. Agyemang, *You Are A Leader Of Leaders*, Accra, JAK-HAK VENTURES, 2009, p 41

pulled down the nice work of Mr. Brown because of lack of some leadership skills. All these problems have led me to find out that for good leadership and continuity, good model of leaders are needed. To stop the crying for leadership that is being heard everywhere, Government must establish leadership and continuity courses in the school programs. It is not fair to wait to let the young become leaders before teaching them courses on leadership. This will not have much impact on them for a popular saying from unknown source has stipulated that, one cannot shape an old plant but it is easy to do it when the plant is still very young. If really today's learners are tomorrow leaders, they must be prepared to become good leaders. In *Things Fall Apart*, leadership and continuity have been a challenge for both the black and white. This reminds me the case in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* where Ayi Kwei Armah has shown that the black who criticized the white leadership yesterday became worse once they got independence and power to tell us that perfect and true leaders are not yet born. But the main questions are if after more than fifty years even if it is not possible to get perfect leaders, where are at less the good ones? And if they are there, what are they doing to impact the rest especially the young? Will Africans perpetually suffer for leadership? And for continuity sake, this Okonkwo question comes to the mind "where are the young suckers who will grow when the banana tree dies"? Let Africans, current and tomorrow's leaders think on these questions for adequate remedy for there is a popular saying from unknown source, great diseases, and great remedy. May the problem of leadership and continuity becomes a question of great diseases like HIV for all Africans at any level.

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